

THE
Seventh Armored Division
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HEADQUARTERS

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FARMINGTON HILLS, MICH. 48024

Norman G. J. Jones, Memorialization Chairman
Seventh Armored Division Association
1615 Washburn Street
Scranton, Pa. 18504

2 December 1980

Dear CALVIN, (Would appreciate prompt reply-deadline 31 Dec)

The enclosed "QUESTIONNAIRE" was sent to Hy Horowitz by Harry Matzen, Professor of History at Ulster Community College, Stone Ridge, New York 12484, on behalf of two Dutch authors, Dr. N. I. Veld and Dr. A. K. Altes. Mr. Matzen sent the request to "Hy"-with the request that the "QUESTIONNAIRE" be placed in Workshop News, however the authors have a deadline date of the 31st of January 1981. This deadline date negates the use of our publication,-on this date our next edition will be in the process of editing, printing or mailing. I have selected 50 members of the association who I deem responsible to respond to the "QUESTIONNAIRE". This-50 members-is a "mix" of people from each unit-that would give the authors a comprehensive and composite response to their question

I urge you to answer the "QUESTIONNAIRE",-let us not deprive the authors an opportunity to place in History, the story of the Seventh Armored Division's Combat experience in Holland. Our division has suffered from a lack of such efforts. For example, for our part in the Liberation of France the division was cited with the French Fourragers (Higher Headquarters turned it down), the Story of the Battle of the Bulge is "BASTOGNE". The American Army, to my knowledge, has shown very little interest in what the Division done in Holland. The only gratitude the Seventh Armored has realized is from the People of Holland, the Overloon War Museum, and a letter sent to General Hasbrouck by General Dempsey of British Second Army in which he wrote: "I congratulate you all on the splendid way in which you held off the strong enemy attack which came against you at Meijel. You were heavily outnumbered, but, by holding firm, as you did, you gave me ample time to bring up the necessary reserves. I appreciate the high fighting qualities which your division showed."

Let us not deprive our Division of the chance to receive it's due credit for the action to be depicted in the book, "BATTLE IN THE SHADE".

* NOTE: Do NOT send your replies to the authors in Holland, as directed in the second paragraph of Professor Matzen's QUESTIONNAIRE LETTER. Send your replies to me: Norman G. J. Jones, 1615 Washburn St. Scranton, Pa. 18504.

In writing your replies-please write on one side of sheet, to those who have the opportunity to type it, please make a second copy for our files. I have enclosed an extract from our "Beaches to the Baltic" to refreshen your memory. Please mail the "Questionnaire", to other members you deem worthy. ()

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIVISION HISTORY: "FROM THE BEACHES TO THE BALTIC"

Prior to the move to Holland the Division had been engaged in the Moselle River Crossing, and the towns of Gravelotte, St. Privat, -Pagny will not be forgotten by those that were there. The Moselle River was crossed in conjunction with the 5th (Red Diamond) Infantry Division on the night of the 8 September. This was the area of Fortress Metz, with every advance being bitterly contested by the enemy, the Division had fought to the Seille River, well to the east of the Moselle, when orders arrived on the 24th September which carried it to Holland.

The Division became part of First US Army, and was assigned the mission of clearing the Peel swamp west of the Maas (Meuse) River. Vortum and Overloon were attacked on the 30th of September. CCB liberated Vortum on the 2nd of October-Overloon attacked by CCA was heavily defended by German paratroops and Air Force personnel. CCA's attack was in two forces, one under Lt. Col Richard D. Chappuis of the 48th Armored Infantry Bn, the other under Major John Brown of the 40th Tank Bn. The soft terrain of the area canalized the attack of the tanks to the roads-there were many losses to anti tank guns. The infantry had fought to the outskirts of Overloon by 1 October but the defense of Overloon, though bitter, was but developing as enemy artillery and nebelwerfers (Screaming Meemies) forced the attack to dig in to defend what they had fought so hard to gain.

On 3 October, CCR attacked Overloon from the North, a task force commanded by Lt. Col. John Wemple, of the 17th Tank Battalion was halted by a minefield and a mortar and artillery barrage. Lt. Col. William H. Fuller, commanding the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, led a second task force in a fight through a wooded area to within a quarter of a mile north of Overloon, enemy fire held the force there.

Further attacks on the town (one made at night) were halted by every conceivable defense known to the enemy. There were minefields, wire barricades, elaborate dugouts and entrenchments, supported by cross fire from rifles and machine guns. Mortar and artillery fire was incessant. The 38th and 48th Armored Infantrymen, entrenched as they were, often were within grenade throwing distance of entrenched enemy troops. The enemy counter attacked constantly, Foxholes exchanged hands in hand-to-hand fighting-bayonets and grenades were the weapons of those days. The fires of the 434th, 440th, and 489 Armored Field Artillery Battalions were unable to get at the enemy while he remained in his entrenchments and dugouts, but when the Germans arose to counter attack, the artillery fire, plus the fire of the troops on the ground, cut them down-killed them by the hundreds. On the 4th October, seven separate enemy counter attacks were thrown back at a terrific cost to the enemy, and without the 7th losing any of its previously gained positions. On October 8th, the division was assigned to another Army- this time the British Second, under command of Lt. Gen. Miles C. Dempsey. General Dempsey had a more important mission for us, that of protecting the vital right flank of the British-Canadian drive to clear the northern and western approaches to the strategically important port of Antwerp.(The 7th Armored is now officially credited with saving this campaign from possible disaster.)

The Division's mission was purely defensive - a new role for this armored force - and it was disposed accordingly. There were a few battles to gain ground more advantageous to the defense, and there were local victories gained by the 7th, but for the most part the command was spread out fanlike across the canal-stripped flatlands - watching, patrolling, keeping alert. On October 27th, the 7th was spread thin over a 22 mile front, hinged in the center at Meijel, and stretching both north and south on canal lines. The "line", so called, consisted of a number of outposts of a few men each, sometimes as much as 800 yards apart. German patrols had been active, and the weather had kept Allied air patrols on the ground.

Enemy intelligence had apparently become well informed as to the Division's precarious position, for it was at this time that the German launched his now famous counterattack designed to disrupt British operations on Antwerp. The German, did not, however, give full enough consideration to the fighting spirit of the separated groups of the American 7th Armored Division, or their collective potency.

As soon as the strength of the counterattack became known, General Dempsey ordered additional forces into the battle, and asked the 7th to hold until they arrived. The battle raged bitterly for three days; the 7th Armored, outnumbered three to one, conceded little ground - and killed a lot of Germans.

The counterattack started with a thundering hour and ten minute artillery barrage directed at the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized, which was holding the center of the Division's zone. Three simultaneous infantry attacks followed, with the enemy poring across the separating canal under heavy artillery support. The heaviest blow was directed at Meijel, where there were only two platoons to meet the enemy forces approaching under a heavy fog which cut down the field of fire to less than 40 yards. Flank platoons were ordered into the fight, but outnumbered and hampered by zero visibility, the 7th's men were forced back. Other enemy attacks to the north and south of Meijel, had been contained. Lt. Col. Boylan's 87th Cavalry Squadron launched two counterattacks against Meijel during the morning, but the enemy had a strong enough force in the town to hold off the attackers.

CC R, commanded by Colonel John L. Ryan, Jr. was ordered to take over the Meijel sector. An afternoon attack by the 48th Armored Infantry Bn. was thwarted by an enemy attack in the opposite direction. Many of the troops were cut off by German tanks, which had been put across the canal to support the infantry. The threat of encirclement forced a withdrawal to more advantageous positions. Meanwhile, the enemy was streaming across the canal; an attack near Heittrak, north of Meijel, which was supported by 20 enemy tanks was stopped by D Troop of the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and two companies of Armor from the 17th Tank Bn.

With the line of the Division shortened, CC B attacked along the Liesel-Meijel road on October 28. After an advance of 3500 yards, resistance forced the 23rd Armored Infantry Bn. to dig in and hold on grimly to protect it's gain. A planned secondary thrust down the Asten-Meijel road was cancelled because of the heavy pressure that was being exerted toward the front and infiltrations into positions of the 48th Armored Infantry Bn that threatened the security of the left flank of CC R. Defense was continued the remainder of the day and night.

The German struck again on October 29, pushing an armored column with heavy infantry support into Liesel, cutting the main line of communication with the 23rd Armored Infantry Bn. Enemy Artillery support for all of the operations in this counterattack was heavy and the armor was bountiful. Prisoners yielded the information that the forces involved were the crack 9 Panzer Division and the 15 Panzer Grenadier Division, plus thousands of oddments - mostly engineers and former Luftwaffe personnel.

As the one enemy column struck through to reach Liesel, another attacked to the north-toward Asten-and with a vastly superior force of tanks and infantry was able to make a slight penetration of the lines of the 48th Armored Infantry Bn. Determined troops in newly established strongpoints to the rear of the initial line of contact broke up this attack. The approaches to Asten were denied the Germans.

The defensive positions established by the 7th were consolidated, and were taken over after dusk on the 29th by the reinforcing troops General Dempsey had promised.

The Division had accomplished the assigned mission. At no time during these three days had a superior force of elite German troops been able to crack the will or the lines of CC B and CC R. There had been withdrawals, but it was with the view to economy of personnel and the mission in mind.

Much credit for halting the Germans was due Colonel Orville W. Martin's Division Artillery, which was augmented by British units. Each thrust made by the enemy was met with destructive fire -- when the enemy infiltrated the Battery positions the canoneers took up rifles to beat the enemy off. One German battalion of Infantry preparing to move against CC R from a wooded area north of Meijel was rendered completely ineffective by artillery fire. On the night of the 28th October, a box barrage laid down allowed two companies of the 48th Armored Infantry Bn to get out of a position that was completely cut off from friendly troops.

When the 7th was relieved, the British VIII Corp, under which it had been fighting, ordered it to take over a much narrowed sector south of Meijel, centering on the little canal junction town of Neederweert.

Brigadier General Robert W. Hasbrouck, former Commanding General of Combat Command B, assumed command of the division from Major General Lindsay M. Silvester on November 1st. (He was promoted to the rank of Major General on February 9, 1945.)

From the new position the 7th went on the attack, against a dug in enemy that had strewn mines promiscuously over the landscape, making initial advances slow. From across the canal Du Nord, the 7th's southern boundary came fire from dug in tanks and artillery. These were silenced by British air support and the division artillery, and the attack speeded on toward Meijel. Soggy Holland fields and pure swampland prohibited wide use of armor. The 7th fought an infantry battle. Within sight of Meijel on the 6th November, the 7th Armored Division was ordered to Ninth United States Army.

Thus ended the 7th's Holland Campaign.

In expression of appreciation for the stand the division made at Meijel, Gen. Dempsey, Commander of the British Second Army, wrote the following in a letter to General Hasbrouck:

"I congratulate you all on the splendid way in which you held off the strong enemy attack which came against you at Meijel. You were heavily outnumbered, but, by holding firm as you did, you gave me ample time to bring up the necessary reserves. I appreciate the high fighting qualities which your division showed."

French Croix de Guerre with Silver Gilt Star awarded to the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized for the action at Meijel, Holland.

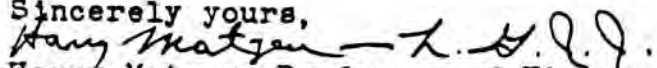
QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir:

This questionnaire has been sent to you by two Dutch Historians who are currently preparing a book on the military events that took place in the Southeastern part of the Netherlands in the fall of 1944. Dr. A. Korthals Altes and Dr. N. In't Veld are both highly regarded in the area of World War II history, and they have long felt that the battle that followed the more famous "Market Garden" was equally important. We are referring to the struggle to dislodge or eliminate the dangerous Meuse Bridgehead. This bridgehead endangered the Allied eastern flank and fortunately was cleared after hard fighting, before the Germans launched the Battle of the Bulge. The fighting was centered around the towns of Venray and Overloon, with your division, the 7th Armored Division, involved at Overloon. All the basic research in the official records has been completed, and the authors are now contacting British, German and American veterans, such as yourselves, as well as some Dutch civilians, in order to get a more complete and personal description of the battle. Can you help us out by answering the attached questionnaire? The experiences of the 7th Armored are very important to this effort.

The book, called "Battle in the Shade" in Dutch, will be published in the summer of 1981 in time for the 37th anniversary of the battle. Because of the time problem, the authors would appreciate it if you would send your answers directly to them in Holland, to: Dr. A. Korthals Altes, Heemskerklaan 44, 3603 GK, Maarssen, Netherlands, by January 31st 1981. On behalf of the authors, may I thank you very much for your cooperation and contribution.

Sincerely yours,


Harry Matzen, Professor of History
Ulster County Community College
Stone Ridge, New York 12484

QUESTIONS

- * Identification questions (Name, age, rank, unit, special task assigned during the battle period September - November 1944).
1. Did you participate in the "first battle of Overloon" (Sept. 30th-October 7th)?
 2. If so, could you give a brief sketch of the experiences you remember.
 3. Did you participate in the defense against the German counterattack near Meijel (October 27-November 7)?
 4. If so, could you give a brief sketch of the experiences you remember.
 5. Are there any particulars in which one or both of the battles differed in your experience from other battles in which you were involved? Please specify.
 6. We would appreciate to have an impression of the everyday life in the front area. Therefore any particulars on how you were billeted or perhaps entrenched whether you managed to get adequate shelter, sleep, rest-what food could be brought up to the front line and whether this was adequate, etc. will be most welcome.
 7. General remarks on morale during this part of your campaign will be of much interest. Did you enjoy any leave or entertainment in the front zone?
 8. What was your impression of the Dutch population in the area? Do you have any particular recollections in this respect?
 9. What was your impression and/or experience about the enemy?
 10. Any other comments you think might be of interest for the book.
- Of course, if you desire, you may answer anonymously or state preference to stay anonymous in the book. Unless other wise desired, the participants statements will be deposited with the Netherlands National War Documentation Institute, Amsterdam, and/or the Library of the Overloon National Museum of War and Resistance, to be available for further research. We will most gratefully receive your reactions.
- Professor Dr. Alexander Korthals Altes Ll. M. Dr. Nanno K.C.A. In't Veld

Dec. 21, 1980

Mr. Norman G.J. Jones
1615 Washburn St.
Scranton, Pa. 18504

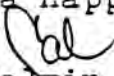
Dear Norman,

Enclosed are two copies of my attempt at answering the questionnaire sent by Drs. Altes and Veld through Professor Matzen concerning the battles at Overloon and Meijel.

Many things I remember quite well, but I have difficulty in trying to pinpoint the time and place. However, this exercise has prompted me to go ahead and complete journals covering my experiences to pass on to my children and grandchildren.

I will be leaving for Botswana in mid-January for six weeks with the U.S. Agency for International Development. Following this, Rosemary and I plan to accept a resident assignment there for about two years. I will notify you of my change of address so I can keep up with the Association's news.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas,


Calvin C. Boykin
Rcn Co. 814th TD Bn.

Calvin C. Boykin, Jr., age 20 years, Private First Class,
2 nd Plt., Recon. Co., 814th Tank Destroyer Bn., attached
to 7th Armored Division. (M-8 armored reconnaissance car
gunner).

1. Not directly.

2. Recon. Co. was attached to Task Force Jones (7th Armd.), which included a number of Belgians picked up as we moved through their country from France on the way to Holland. Our mission was to maintain road blocks at Deurne, Liesel, and Weert. As we moved into Weert, I believe it was, a number of British were in place and remained for some time. The situation was mostly quiet save for a few German artillery shells which seemed to appear every day around 4:00 pm, a jab aimed at interrupting British teatime, we felt. At Weert, or at other roadblocks we inhabited in the vicinity, we ran vehicular patrols and stood guard off and on at night.

One of our Recon. platoons seriously wounded a German soldier one day while on patrol. After being brought to our command post, the soldier was given first aid, but soon died. During the night my lieutenant asked that I take the soldier's body to the church. Two Belgians placed the body on a ladder and, together with another member of my platoon, we eased our way to the church, fearing that in the darkness we would be fired upon by our outposts in the town. We heard the rather feeble challenge and responded correctly, making our way safely to the church. After our knocking, two nuns appeared at a side door and immediately took charge of the body. With apprehension, we ran the gauntlet back to our command post.

During one of the shellings a Belgian was wounded slightly by shrapnel. Not long afterwards all the Belgians returned home.

My platoon continued road patrols and night security guard. A few times we ran mechanized patrols at night, breaking into two sections and relying on our cat-eye lights to keep from running together as we passed each other in the darkness. One morning a Dutch farmer's wagon hit a German mine and was demolished - apparently a German patrol had slipped through and laid the mine during the night.

About October 9th we assembled at a bivouac area near Someren and became part of CCR(7th Armd.). Here we did area and route reconnaissance.

On vehicular patrols it was not uncommon to stop in at small shops and cafes still open for business (See letters home, question 10). On one stop I made friends with a young Dutch woman who spoke no English. I mentioned the location of my outpost town, somehow arranged for a date, and pointed at my watch to indicate a time. Unfortunately, without thinking, I had pointed to 4:00 pm and she arrived by bicycle just as a few rounds of German artillery came in. Luckily, she jumped into a ditch and was unhurt. Then she sprang onto her bike and pedaled away. I never saw her again.

3. To some extent, yes.

4. On Oct. 25 Recon. Co. was attached to CCA of the 7th Armd. and moved to Asten and prepared to defend against a German armor attack near Meijel. Mainly our mission was patrolling in the vicinity of Weert. These were day and night patrols as I recall, which included Asten, Neederweert and Weert. While not on road patrol we were subject to being called out to counter German foot patrols in the area. Reports came in that civilians were being harassed by the German soldiers, who were also stealing food.

Once my section responded to a call that a German patrol had been sighted. Spotting a number of figures in the distance, near a canal, I trained my 37mm and coaxially mounted 30cal. machine gun on them, holding fire and awaiting closer identification. My sergeant in the turret, sensing they were German, tapped the machine gun trigger pedal. Tracers flew among the sprawling figures as I traversed off target. Luckily, no one was hit, for we had been firing at Dutch civilians who had been run out of their homes by the Germans.

In another incidence my section responded to a call that German soldiers had been spotted hiding in a chicken house. One shot of canister from my 37mm scattered a lot of chickens.

Once while on patrol a straggler from a German foot patrol surrendered as we approached. He was from a paratroop unit, he said, and was ready to call it quits. I took his small pocket knife (which I still carry).

As conditions grew more tense for us, around November 1st, Recon Co. was attached to the 38th Armored Infantry Bn (7th Armd.). About this time we parked our vehicles in an apple orchard and began operating on foot.

Once we crossed a canal on a boat or raft manned by Dutch underground, I think. We stayed for awhile at the edge of a marsh in some vacant houses. We helped ourselves to a few jars of canned green beans and cherries. Then we moved on into the marsh, stopping at a peat factory (brick factory). A few British soldiers posted there told of German artillery fire and expectations of an attack (through the marsh?). The British told of Germans being last seen at the edge of an island of trees some three to four miles out into the marsh. After awhile my company commander ordered my lieutenant to take a foot patrol out into the marsh in the direction of the trees. The patrol was made up of volunteers, mainly from my platoon, but included at least two members from Pioneer Platoon. Being armored recon. personnel, we had few rifles, our personal weapons consisting of carbines mainly. I took a captured German Mauser rifle and two bandoliers of ammunition (wooden bullets?), and took the point along with my lieutenant. The cold, misty weather bore in on us despite heavy tankers clothing. We walked for a time on a small railcar bed, used for bringing peat-laden cars from the marshes to the peat factory. As we walked single file, we passed bodies of several German soldiers killed by artillery fire. One body lay

4. (Cont'd.) near a dugout in the railbed, an open jar of green beans sitting nearby. I felt sick, for only a few hours earlier I had helped myself from a similar jar, perhaps from the same shelf. We moved on, spotting large numbers of box mines lying askew along the roadbed. Finally, we made a turn off the roadbed and into the marsh toward the trees. As we slogged through the muck the tanker's suit on top of wool trousers and long underwear and sweater, plus wool knit cap, gloves and heavy overshoes weighed heavy. We were becoming tired as we bogged down with most every step. As we moved onward I asked myself how soon before we heard from the Germans, last seen at the edge of the trees we approached. Bursts from a machine gun answered my question, as we hit the soggy ground. My rifle barrel rammed deep into the muck as I fell into a pool of water. Screams from behind me told of someone hit. Machine gun bursts continued, the bullets spattering mud in my face. I crawled out of the water, but could see no one. Finally, I spotted the lieutenant as he raised his 45 cal. pistol and fired in the direction of the machine gun, then crawled back to help the wounded man. Two or three of us, those up front, remained stranded as the others vanished. Unable to see our way clear for a withdrawal, we held fast. One of the others to the rear moved up and directed us to a pile of peat behind which the others were hiding. One at a time, we made a run for this haven as a few short bursts were fired at us. Reaching the peat pile, I found the others moving out further to the rear, including the wounded man (shoulder wound) in the care of a medic. Exhausted, I took a pocketknife, ripped the seams, and removed my tank trousers. My lieutenant watched until I was unburdened, then we moved on to catch up with the remainder of the retreating patrol. Later, as we approached our CP at the peat factory a tank posted there fired a round at us -- apparently we were thought to be the enemy. Fortunately, no one was hit. On our arrival the British soldiers made tea, added rum, and offered us some. We drank and tried to unwind. I was disgusted for having worn so many clothes on patrol, for jamming my rifle, and for not moving to the aid of the wounded man. Infantry we weren't, but we had learned something about foot patrolling in the marshes. I volunteered to return with the Pioneer Platoon and blow up the mines on the roadbed, but this mission was later cancelled.

Sometime later my platoon set up a listening post in the marshes. Infantry (7th Armd.?) was thinly spread out a mile or so in front of us. Watching through field glasses, one of our men saw a mortar shell drop in on one of the infantrymen. About the same time an American P-51 Mustang flew very low over us, just beneath overhanging clouds, drawing a burst of automatic weapon fire from the Germans beyond. The motor sputtered and the plane plunged toward the ground. The pilot bailed out at once, his chute barely opening before he hit the ground -- back of the German line. The plane exploded on impact, the machine

4. (Cont'd.) gun ammunition crackling afterward, much as fire-crackers. After the explosions stopped, the American infantrymen crawled out of their holes and warmed themselves near the flames.

Later we moved back along a canal. Germans were on the other side. A short American 105mm round exploded near a sergeant from the Pioneer Platoon without inflicting a scratch on him. We watched British typhoons fire rockets into German positions on the other side.

One night several from my section spent the night in a warehouse on a canal. We had a 30 cal. machine gun, unmounted, and a bazooka. As we heard movement on the other side of the canal, we were told that the Germans were trying to build a bridge to cross in an attack. We fired from time to time after being fired upon. No damage done I don't suppose. Not much sleep -- two hours on guard and two off, as was the case with many nights about that time. But I remember we were relieved by a brigade of Scottish tanks. One of our men recalled telling a Scottish tank sergeant to watch out for incoming artillery fire. The sergeant just laughed and said that was the way his boys liked it.

Later, in early December, we moved to another location in Holland, where we lived with a Dutch family. Then we were attached to an American infantry unit up in the Roer River in Germany. My platoon lived in captured German pill boxes and pulled security guard for our tank destroyers supporting the infantry. The weather was cold, wet and miserable. When we got the call to mount up and move out (Dec. 16 or 17) we all felt cheerful, for we were sure we were headed back to Holland. When we bypassed Maastricht and continued south, we figured we were on our way to a rest camp in Belgium. Little did we know, but soon came to realize, that the German armor had broken through in the Ardennes and we were headed for Vielsalm - St. Vith.

5. The action I saw was considerably different than what I experienced previously. Through France my platoon from time to time spearheaded a task force, or served as a security force within a column as combat commander of the 7th Armored moved through one village after the other. Seldom did we leave our vehicles. In Holland we parked our vehicles and fought as infantry. There the lines were more static and the fronts broader.

6. See excerpts from letters written home under question 10. Generally, we were well-housed, except for brief periods as infantry in the marshes. We were well-fed usually, and often traded with the Dutch civilians for a few items, although their rations were quite short. At times getting enough sleep at night was a problem, but this could be made up, sometimes, during the day.

7. Morale generally was good. See letter excerpts under question 10. However, there was a feeling that something had gone wrong, especially during Operation Market-Garden, and as winter was coming on there was every indication the war would go on for a longer time than expected. I did enjoy leave from time to time -

7. (Cont'd.) see question 10. We were shown movies a time or two while in assembly areas.

8. The Dutch were the kindest, friendliest and most helpful of all the civilians I came in contact with during the war. See letter excerpts in question 10. I have included these to emphasize this point especially. And the relationships established then have continued to the present. As soon as she could, my mother mailed a few scarce items to the family who befriended me in Maastricht. The girl Annie (Enny) later married the Dutch boyfriend she had at the time I knew her. I married my wife, Rosemary, in 1946. Enny and her husband, Theo, and I continued to correspond and in October of 1970, while returning from an assignment in Iran with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, Rosemary and I spent three days with them in Maastricht. Enny's husband is public relations officer for the city and graciously took us on tours of familiar sites in Maastricht, Margraten, and down to Vielsalm, Belgium in the Ardennes, where we visited my friend Dr. Maurice Delaval. In 1971 we had another tour in Iran, returning again to visit our friends in Maastricht. They took us to visit the War Museum at Overloon and for a drive around Weert, Nederweert, Meijel, Astin, and Someren. The most heartening thing was to see them living happy, prosperous lives. They have two children, boy and a girl, both married and with children of their own. Enny's brothers, one an official with Dutch Mines, the other a school teacher, have fine wives and children. It is a regular family get-together when we visit. Unfortunately, I did not get to see Enny's mother and father before they died--such fine people they were. During travels to Pakistan for assignments with the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1973 and 1975 I spent additional time with my Maastricht friends., In April 1976 Enny's husband, Theo, accompanied a group of Maastricht runners who brought their freedom torch to New York City and ran it all the way to the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. in commemoration of our Nation's Bicentennial. Once delivered, Theo caught a plane to Houston, Texas where we visited here in College Station. He delivered a gift to my mother who was terminally ill in a hospital in Austin. My wife and youngest son met me in Amsterdam in April of 1979 as I returned from an assignment in Syria. Again we visited our Maastricht friends. In June of this year my daughter and her husband, while on a business tour for Motorola, stopped in Maastricht to visit our friends. We are trying to get both Enny and Theo here for an extended visit.

One sidelight--while I was posted in Someren during the battles just discussed I slept in a dugout outside a house at the edge of town. Two little girls about five or six I guess, kept checking on me and visiting. I brought a sailboat from one of the shops and gave it to them. They gave me a picture of the two of themselves, their names written on the back. I

NAKed again in Maastricht in 1979 and in 1984 on returning from Rotterdam, when returning from Syria and in 1984 on returning from Rotterdam. The 18th of April 1984 with Dutch State News

8. (Cont'd.) sent the card a few years ago to Theo in Maastricht, and he called one of them who now lives in Sittard. She remembered me and sent me pictures of herself and her husband and their children. They seemed to be doing quite well.

Friends such as these in Holland made my small efforts in 1944-45 all worth while.

9. My experience face to face with the enemy was quite limited. A few prisoners here and there were taken, but we made no effort to be particularly friendly. At the time we didn't want to give them the satisfaction or feeling that we held them in awe or that they were exceptional soldiers. The ones I saw didn't appear to be out of the ordinary. Nevertheless, I had a deep feeling that we were up against strong opposition.

10. Excerpts from letters home (1944):

Oct. 2

Dear Mother,

.....I can't tell you where I am anymore - that is what country.We are still seeing quite a lot of rain and it is getting much colder. Hope the war ends before it gets too much colder.Don't worry if you don't hear from me so often because these are some days - in fact lots of them when I am unable to write.

Your son,
Calvin

Oct. 4

Dear Daddy,

.....Today is really chilly - an excellent day for a good football game. I'd have plenty of pep on a day like this. There isn't much news - none that I can tell at least.

Your son,
Calvin

Holland
Oct. 5

Dear Mother,

.....I can tell where I am now so you probably judged by the heading. Sorta getting around to see the world. The buildings here are much more modern than what I've seen yet - they give some of the finest homes in our country a run for their money. Right now I am sleeping in a stall filled with hay and getting the best sleep I've had in weeks. An apple tree nearby has wonderful apples My what a life. Who said there was a war on? How long this will last though I don't know. Went through a windmill the other day - something I've always wanted to do. And many of the people wear wooden shoes too - mostly in the farming districts though. The land is very rich it looks to me and there is plenty of moisture. This country is O.K. by me. The people are mostly blonde

Your son,
Calvin

10. Excerpts from letters home (1944): (Cont'd.)

Holland
Oct. 12

Dear Mother,

How about this stationary? Pretty nifty eh? I got this at a store near here.

Was on a patrol the other day and it was raining cats and dogs and cold as ice. We looked like a bunch of drowned rats. Well, we stopped at a small cafe and got a cup of coffee - soybean coffee it was. There were four nice looking girls there and they talked to us for quite awhile and we found out that one them could play the piano so she played and the other girls sang while we sat by a fire and listened. First thing - they played "Home Sweet Home" and sang it in Dutch. Boy did I get homesick! Then they played "Silver Threads Among the Gold" and a lot of their songs too.

The sun is out today and except for a little wind that is blowing it is a perfect day. Just hope the wind doesn't bring rain.

Your son,
Calvin

Holland
Oct. 15

Dear Daddy,

.....Am going to be able to attend church this Sunday for the first time since I have been here. Needless to say I need to go.

Your son,
Calvin

Holland
Oct. 25

Dear Mother,

.....It is getting colder all the time but as long as the barns and hay stacks hold out I'll manage to keep warm. I wear my long handles all the time. Don't worry - we have plenty of warm clothing.Yesterday wasn't Sunday but we had church services and I went and am sure glad I did. I have a dandy German pocket knife, a German tent and blanket and they all come in handy.

Your son,
Calvin

10. Excerpts from letters home (1944): (Cont'd.)

Holland
Nov. 8

Dear Daddy,

.....Today has really been a busy day for me - cleaning my guns and getting all my equipment in order. After that was finished they took us to the showers where we had real hot water (Heerlen--coal mines). Gee, but it sure felt good!

I have been busy the past ten days and haven't had any time at all for writing.

We were used for infantry the past week and now I have had a sample of what those boys have to go through. Its plenty rough and I'll give the doughboys the credit every time.

It has really been cold and we have had rain almost every day and being out in it all day and night doesn't help matters at all. I am still in good health and don't even have a cold.

Got a harmonica off a German so now I am taking music lessons up where I left off a few years ago.

How did you like the way the election came out? Roosevelt is the man alright as far as I am concerned. Everyone voted except me, but I'll be voting next election.

Your son,
Calvin

Holland
Nov. 12

Dear Mother,

Well - I never thought it would happen, but here I am on a pass - in fact I have had two passes to this city (Maastricht) lately. We are taking things easy right now I guess. Went to a nice dance yesterday and of course I met a very nice girl. All the girls could dance exceptionally well and the orchestra was just like an American one. I enjoyed myself more than I could ever tell you - it just brought all the things of home closer to me. Good music - nice girls - they must have been the nicest in town and they could all speak English - gee what else could a lonesome boy ask for? After what has happened it was certainly a change for me and after I went to bed that night I could hardly sleep because it brought back so many memories and I'll admit it made me mighty homesick.

I have a date this afternoon with the girl I met - she is very sweet.....

It seems that it has been raining for always. I wish the sun would come out one of these days. What I wouldn't give for a little of that West Texas sunshine. I'd gladly take the wind and sand too.

I don't know when this war will be over, but I hope soon.

I love you all,
Calvin

10. Excerpts from letters home (1944): (Cont'd.)

Holland
Nov. 15

Dear Mother,

.....I have been in town (Maastricht) several times now to see the girl that I met at the dance and have really been enjoying myself. She has a very nice family and they have been treating me swell. They all remind me of our family - the girl is twenty, one boy eighteen and another boy thirteen. Seeing their home life makes me homesick, but at the same time it reminds me of what there is waiting for me once I come home. I showed them the pictures of my family and they showed me theirs and Annie (the girl's name) gave me a picture of her and I returned the favor by giving her one of me

I guess you all have been wondering what I have been doing lately - well, I'll tell you all that I can. As you know I was in the Third Army - then awhile back was put in the First Army and was attached to the British Army. Well now I am in the Ninth Army - guess we do get around a bit at that.

God Bless You All,
Calvin

Holland
Nov. 20

Dear Mother,

.....The clipping about the tank battle ("Fighters Tell Story of Fiercest Tank Battle" by B.J. McQuaid, Company Command Post, an American Armored Unit on the Liesel-Meijel Front, Holland, Wednesday, Nov. 1 (Delayed) (CDN), Ft. Worth Star Telegram) was very near correct. We were there alright. You are a darn good guesser.

The weather is really terrible. It is always raining and this mud is just like slop. Believe me I couldn't live in this part of Holland. Other parts aren't so bad.

Your son,
Calvin

10. Excerpts from letters home (1944): (Cont'd.)

Holland
Nov. 23

Dear Folks,

Today is Thanksgiving Day --In time of war one might think that there are few things to be thankful for, but after thinking it over today I find there is much.

We had a good dinner today - turkey, potatoes, corn, celery, gravy, cranberry sauce, peaches, coffee and candy.

Today is wet as usual but it hasn't been so very cold lately. We stay in houses and barns at every chance so we keep dry and that is really something for this weather. But the infantry boys - I don't see how they stand up to it all. They are the number one boys in this war as they have been in the wars of the past.

The news is looking good - I don't see how Germany can last much longer. But they are fanatical people and the going will be tough up until the day they are licked.

With love,
Calvin

Holland
Nov. 26

Dear Mother,

.....I'm saving the chili and beans (you sent) until I can get some onions and then I will have me a real Mexican supper.

The sun was shining yesterday and is also shining today, but there is still plenty of mud. Went to church this Sunday morning

Your son,
Calvin

10. Excerpts from letters home (1944): (Cont'd.)

Holland
Nov. 30

Dear Mother,

.....We are still taking things easy - believe me this is the longest vacation that I've had in a long time. There must be a catch to it somewhere. You remember the girl (Annie) that I was telling you about in one of my letters - well I have been to see her several times since. When I go to see her we enjoy a nice afternoon at her home. Her folks are really swell and she is a girl you would really like.....

I sent you all a Christmas Card.....The insignia on the card was of the Seventh Armored Division with whom we have been attached to since we came to France. Now - don't get it mixed up with the Seventh Army.

We have had no rain in the past few days so the Air Corps ought to be doing alright. The weather has been fairly warm and then too we are sleeping in a building so you can easily see that the situation could be a lot worse.

Your son,
Calvin

Holland
Dec. 2

Dear Daddy,

.....Don't know how much longer this will last, (rest) but I am anxious to start doing something. Just goes to show you that a soldier doesn't know when he is well off.

Your son,
Calvin

10. Excerpts from letters home (1944): (Cont'd.)

Holland
Dec. 7

Dear Mother,

.....Everything is still going easy for me right now so you can see it doesn't pay for you to worry about me.

I have been to see the girl (Annie) since I wrote to you all. The other night we had some mushrooms - I don't remember having had any before.The family has really treated me swell - just like one of them. It is hard to explain, but what they have done for me means more to me than you could imagine. It is the first taste of home life I have had since I left home. I will send you their address as soon as it is permissible and then one day you can write to them.

The last time I saw her (Annie) she gave me a small golden cross which she had had for a long time and I wear it on my chain around neck.She is Catholic as are most people here. I may never see her again, but I sure won't forget her. I feel indebted to her and when I am in the position to do something for her, I will.

Four of us are living in a house with a Dutch family. They have six children - ages 7 months to ten years. Three boys and three girls and they are always fighting and playing.

Am enclosing a clipping about the 7th Armored Division which we are a part of. It is a reprint from the Stars and Stripes.It pretty well covers our work in France.

Your son,
Calvin

Holland
Dec. 14

Dear Mother,

Connie sent me a box of candy and fruit cake which reached me while I was at the front living in a German pillbox - it couldn't have come at a better time: By the way - we were in Germany.

.....I am plenty tired of this whole mess and the sooner it is over the better.....

I am enclosing a picture of the Dutch family I was telling you about in my last letter. Quite a family don't you think? I am pretty anxious to start raising a family myself.

All my love,
Calvin

Belgium
Dec. 25

Dear Mother,

Here it is Christmas Day---my thoughts have been of you all at home remembering all the wonderful times we have had on Christmas past, and looking forward to a Merry Christmas this next year.

We have had a lot of snow the past few days so you can see that we had a white Christmas - it was pretty alright but also very cold. We ate C-rations today and I was plenty glad to get that. Things have been going pretty rough for us for awhile now, but the situation looks better now. A lot has happened the last few days and I am sure glad to be here -- thank the good Lord for that -- it was a good enough Christmas present for me.

Your son,
Calvin

Belgium
Jan. 1, 1945

Dear Mother,

New Year's Eve passed and it was just as any other night only at midnight the artillery really opened up on the Germans.....

It has been a year ago since I last saw you in Dallas and I have been thinking about you quite a lot

The ground is still covered with snow but we don't notice the cold so very much because we usually find a warm place to stay at night

All my love,
Calvin

P.S. --I'm a sergeant.

Hope your book Battle in the Shade is a great success.

Yours sincerely,
Calvin C. Boykin, Jr.
Calvin C. Boykin, Jr.