

Germany

Sat 7/14/1945

Dearest Sweetheart

The news. I love you. It is known all over the world. I feel fine. It is very hot and all is well my love. I wonder if you knew the 809 T.D. Bn was in Boston before I wrote you?

Ruthie darling, I am going to try to give you an account of all since I have gone through since I left you November 28 Sunday. I guess approximately on everything.

Well we did not move out of NY until Nov 30th. We stood one whole day on the French liner LOUIE PASTEUR and I was one of the first ones aboard the ship. So I just gazed over 48th St. and tried to see my honey and home. Boy was my heart heavy for 24 hours. Some big 2 star General inspected us aboard ship. I know his name, but cannot place it right now. He said to me and the other boys "WHAT A HAPPY CROWD." haha.

On the way to England I did KP like a clever boy and so I ate like the officers. We cleaned the ship often.

Water-water everywhere. Sure the boat was crowded but did I mind, heck no and I couldn't help any if I did so there. We saw one movie for 5 days.

We landed in England....Southampton, on Dec 8th 1944. I was homesick and lovesick. We rode ? in a camp called Tatheington Hall. It was huts, same as barracks but not as cozy. It was near a town called Bovinton which was not too far from Manchester and London. We stayed there six weeks. Then we went to Portsmouth to cross the Channel in a LST boat with our tanks on it. 24 hours later we were in Le Havre, France. Rubbles of buildings, the people were shabby and we knew then hell was undertaking. One of the things I will never forget an old woman begging for food and I handed her a sugar cube and gave her some food from my tank and she had tears streaming down her eyes and cried. All the boys then threw everything they had to her.

Snow was on the ground and it was cold....brrrr. We were dressed in warm overcoats but these people had nothing. NOT even socks or shoes. We travelled until we

came to Rouen. The name fit since it was ruined. We slept in a barn and out in a country house in a bombed out building. It was cold but I could take it. Some couldn't very well. We moved often then but not very far. Then we travelled to the outskirts of Paris and then through Belgium and Holland by tank. People were cheering us through the towns and cities. I felt proud and frightened. I consoled myself. Someone has to fight those bastards. We wound up in Simpelveld, Holland and I slept in a train station booth. It was warm. Then we slept on the floor. I went to Maastricht on a pass. We went to Aachen Germany which is past the Siegfried line. We did indirect firing and I slept in my first foxhole. Most shells were going to the enemy. Then we travelled both night and day. Shells were always firing around the convoy, some hit their mark. Some of the rear echelon got hit, cooks and mechanics. No job in the Army is safe in combat. Some may have more chances of being lucky if prayers are with them. We crossed the Roer River watchful of mines.

We were fresh on the Huns retreating. Every so often about a 100 Nazis or so had hands over their heads

yelling "COMRADES"....also I seen many who never could and never will I paid my score for my buddy Phil about around this time and added a few more just in case. Then we made it to Hinesbeck. Before we started to move over to the Rhine, Bob Hamilton wanted my job as a driver so I became a rifle security man and he took my place in the tank.

We came to the Rhine and took place in the biggest bombing of this or any other war across the Rhine. For 3 hours from 2am on a night all sorts of T.D. Bn's were firing across. We were getting those 88mm guns, which is bombing from their guns all around us, some got it. My fox hole was so big that even Stella from Georgia would never worry about it. It was 10 feet down, 8 long and a tunnel inward with wood on top.

Some guys were wounded and killed. We crossed the Rhine on pontoons and bridges built on boats. A good job the engineers did to build this crossing. We rode a few miles in the woods for a time. Before the crossing of the Rhine I had seen many of our planes bombing the

Nazis. Many were shot down but they kept coming. We saw pilots bailing out. I saw the Huns shoot them while they were going down in their parachutes. That is the lowest thing anyone can do. A pilot going down is helpless. I also saw Nazi planes and shot down a few. Our planes were more numerous than theirs. Bernie, my pal, shot a plane down with the 50 caliber machine gun. He was the guy I gave a licking to while wrestling, for the fun of it, we kept praying. He is still in the ole outfit. We saw a lot of good Nazis, DEAD ONES.....and also leaflets telling us to give up since why should we die, German Propaganda. Further down the road we saw our leaflets printed in English and German telling the Huns to give up.

We went to Polsum, another combat team joined us. It was March 29th the first night of Passover. Honey the 3rd platoon of A Co was with CCA Combat Command A of the 8th Armored Division. The platoons of A Co. were broken into platoons and often we were as a BN together and the men of 1st and 2nd and HQ Co platoon until things were settled and quiet.

Many times we would ride in the rear and the middle at this particular time we were up front, of the Spearhead. Infantry had been fighting there in that town and I needed heavy armor. A fight royal was on. I stood back as security man about 2k yards. Many prisoners came back and civilians, women, children and old men. Shells were flying all around us. We took shelter in a cellar. Well one shell hit these poor German civilians. What a sight. The PWs over thank god The German artillery killed their own people. Well up front two of our tanks were hit and knocked out. Another was not much good and only one that was good at all and out of our 4 tanks we could only get on 2, one not dependable. The men were killed and hurt bad. We took that town and slept there. After that we moved forward and saw towns that made me feel good and happy too. Imagine seeing terrible sights too horrible to describe and feel happy? We were all smiling and glad. We travelled so far and long and I thought surely we must be near Berlin. Then we turned around and went all the way back.

The reason was that we had to clean up a pocket in the Ruhr. We then went to Gelnhausen and that town surrendered. We went on our mission after a rest and got the rest of the Nazis but not without fighting hard and always danger from the 88s, snipers, time bursts and etc. At last we headed for Berlin. We reached the Harz Mts. near the Elbe river when our CO told us the war was over for us. The Russians were supposed to meet us in Berlin.

Many boys came in the outfit who gave all for you, me, and our country. I hope I am not too sentimental but this is no laughing matter to the boys in their pitching. We have to take the good with the bad. Here is a poem I kept on me always. It gives me courage of life and shows me of how much I have gained knowing as I now understand it

### A Poem by Frances Angermayer.

Look God, I have never spoken to you but now I want to say How do you do, you see God they told me you

didn't exist and like a fool I believed all of this. Last night from a shell hole under your sky I figured right then they had told a lie. Had I taken time to see the things you made I'd known they weren't calling a spade a spade. I wonder, God if you'd shake my hand. Somehow I feel you will understand. Funny I had to come to this hellish place before I had time to see your face. Well I guess there isn't more to say but I am sure glad god I met you today. I guess the zero hour will soon be here but I am not afraid since I know you're near. Look now this will be a terrible fight who knows I may come to you tonight though I wasn't friendly with you before, I wonder God if you'd wait at your door. Look, I am crying..me, Shedding tears!. I wish I had known you all these years. Strange, since I met YOU I am not afraid to die