

EVERETT KNUEPPEL'S STORY
AT MADISON, 3-8-97

I am Everett Knueppel. I am a charter member of the Badger Chapter, 82nd. AIRBORNE Division Assn., also a charter member of the 82nd. (same, joined in 1945 on discharge..strictly an 82nd. man. I received my draft notice Nov. 4. to report Dec. 14th to take a physical exam for induction. On Dec. 22nd I was to report to Ft. Sheridan, Illinois.

We were picked up by a bus in Milwaukee and transported to Ft. Sheridan Induction Center where we had 3 days where they give you all the basics on how to make your bed and take your shots. During those 3 days we were asked if we wanted to be "Airborne" or Air Force! I picked the Airborne and for some reason which to this day I don't understand why, on the 26th of Dec. we were put on a train to head east--found we were headed for Fort Brag, 82nd Airborne division.

We were on the train 3 days; it was slow and made many stops for no reasons we could ever see. It was dull, slow and boring and we were full of talk about where we might be going. It was quite a slow ride. When we got to Ft. Brag, the band met the train with all the historical marches, etc. and the General gave us a big speech in which he told us we were "going into the greatest division of all". It turned out to be the unvarnished truth" (And it still is.)

We had 10 weeks of basic in which the officers were from the 376th and part from the 319th field artillery. After this, we got a little Basic "Airborne training" The Non Coms" were also from a little of each of those two units so it was a good mix. They were all Field Artillery men to begin with so our future was pretty well determined ahead. (As I was to find out to some occasional regret before too many months.) We got a little more Airborne training, and when that 10 weeks was done we were told that those who wished to could volunteer for the parachute troops at Ft. Benning.

At Ft. Benning we would get our training to become actual paratroopers. That training never came to be because we were shipped overseas too fast. Once we got in we never got leave or anything like furlough which was the usual method after initial basic training. We didn't ever get that, nor did we get to the Jump School at Benning. We were put on a train headed east and then on a boat and soon would disembark in Casablanca, North Africa. Well were we surprised, but there we were. Perhaps now we would get into Jump School.

We landed on May 10, 1943. On May 11th, 1943 the Africa Corps of Germans surrendered to a man. They must have heard we had landed. It made us feel pretty potent, even though it was so far from the truth, it was a happy coincidence. One frequently finds in the service at wartime that coincidences are many and frequently interesting, if fatal, however. Some PFC clerk somewhere in the "rear" hits the wrong key on a typewriter or reads the wrong list on the wrong page and a few hundred men end up where they had no reason or cause to be-- and often many die, all due to fate and coincidence.

The Krauts gave up. A happy day! At least in North Africa. This was another fate deal where it made a British Commander very famous, gave him a reputation as a great General and set up the next several major coincidences that were to cost us dearly in Sicily, Italy, Normandy, Holland and led to the Battle of the Bulge. Of which more later. This was General Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery. Oddly enough General Gavin is said to have respected the guy. Just doesn't sound right, but that is the story.

We spent our first nights in Casablanca. It was a small patch of barren land with a big pea patch right in the middle and, of course, the Army figured that this was the right place for the tents. So we lived on top of the peas and beans instead of on the empty stuff adjacent. Typical Army!

From there we went to Oujda, Africa, which was nearer the coastline. We kept pushing to get the jump school started. This went on for a month or so and we then got moved to "Kairouan", North Africa, and the Sicilian invasion came up. We never did get to jump school in Africa either. During the invasion of Sicily, we were scheduled to go in gliders on the second airlift wave, but the U.S. Navy got trigger happy. They had been bombed severely by the Nazi planes in the couple days before the Airborne invasion was lifted off so they were jumpy enough. Due to the high number of C-47 transport planes loaded with troopers that were shot out of the sky that night, we did not have enough planes left to make the glider airlift. Many were lost, I think 31, but many more were shot up and could not be used till repairs were effected. These were the planes of the 504th Rgt 82nd Div. We were set up to be used as boat lifted reserve troops, so Sicily was an easy time for us.

On Labor Day, the invasion of Salerno came up and the troops there in the initial invasion were being shoved right back into the sea. (Ed note; Here is another of these 'coincidences'. Marty Selak of our Airborne fame at a later date was at this time a civilian in Eastern Europe). Marty had been taken with many Albanians, etc. by the Germans and given over to the Italians as prisoners. His story is in another place in this book, but suffice it to say, he and his group escaped from the concentration camp in mid Italy when the guards heard that the 82nd had hit Sicily. They dropped their arms and fled as the Nazis were coming to take them and their prisoners over.

He mentions how it was in his story, but that was the start of his lifetime love affair with the Airborne and the America which became his home. It also testifies to the reputation the 82nd already had across Europe. Anyway, I and our group of fledgling Airborne troopers were called to go in to aid them. Already the 505 had jumped in amongst our own invasion troops shore positions to reinforce them, so my artillery unit was attached to the Battalion of rangers that was there in reserve. We were to give them defensive artillery support while they kept the Krauts off the ridge we all went up on.

With a bunch of British Navy officers who were artillery spotters--forward observers. Our job was not harassment fire, that was the job of the battle wagons out in the ocean. We were doing direct aimed fire to keep the Germans from pushing us off the ridge on the mountains. The Brits and their Navy just blasted the hell out of the German supply lines going to counterattack the beach invaders. This actually led to the beachhead holding and was a major part of our victory in

that battle. We on our part had been set up with this task force and had gone up the coast to a point well behind the German lines, with our British officers and the rangers. We landed at night and found no resistance. We had effected complete surprise, a typical Airborne operation.

It was going remarkably well until I happened to get wounded. It was not a real serious wound, but enough to take me out of the battle for some time. I was laid up for awhile. After that beach invasion was secured and a smashing success, we started to fight our way up the Italian peninsula. We, the 82nd, were on our way to Naples, which the 82nd entered in good time, to find the Krauts had blown up everything. All the water mains, all the food distribution, sewers, etc. And the ultimate atrocity, the massive time bomb in the central Post Office. This blew after we all had settled in a few weeks and many were killed, civilians as well as 82nd men. A truly useless and dastardly act, as usual with these fanatics.

It had been a matter of stop and go fighting and a long hard way, but we entered Naples on Oct. 1st. We were the first troops to enter Naples. We were put in charge of doing all to reestablish the utilities, feed the people and get the city going again. This was cushy duty, just great. We were billeted on a real posh street, the Rio..., where had been the ritziest homes. We were really living good after all the mud and sweat and blood of the long battle from May 'til October.

We had a dream deal. This did not last too very long before we were pulled out and sent up north to fight along the Volturno River. If you read the history of the battle for Italy, you will understand the horrors behind these few simple words. It was deprivation, mud--a cold winter coming on, death on all sides and little progress that wasn't made without great sacrifice per inch. Well, after we finally crossed the Volturno River, we were pulled out and back to Naples. Here we were packed up and put on boats and set out to sea. We didn't know where we were going, but that boat headed west, through the Mediterranean, and we figured we were going back someplace like home to train troops. But all of a sudden, the ship looped north after clearing the Straits of Gibraltar and we got into a huge convoy, turned back east and ended up in Ireland.

There everything was concentrating on the D-Day invasion of Normandy. We were in Ireland a month, then sent down to southeast England where we went to the Leicester, England area and stationed just out of Market Harborough. Well, at long last, here comes our "Jump School", the thing we had been anticipating for a year and a half. I was lucky to be in the first jump school set up by the 82nd. I don't recall the name of the airport. I am getting old and forgetful now. Names are fading away. We had almost all officers in our class. The rest were all enlisted men. We didn't have all the equipment of Fort Benning, no towers, and all that, but boy, the training Non-Coms were tough. I think because we had all officers and were taking it out on them. We guys just sort of went along. We were used to hard living and tough work. We made the required 5 jumps and then General Ridgeway was with us at every one of the 5 jumps. He always managed to bring a few of the nurses along with him and we, of course, had to impress the gals with our landings, etc.

Few if any of the landings worked out like we would have liked. I don't think any of us impressed the gals, at least not to the extent to which we had hopes. (Damn) (Ed Note: You and a lot of other guys Everett.) Anyway, we got our jumps and our WINGS and General Ridgeway even personally signed our jump diplomas as well as pinned our wings on us. I had to admit, I am more than a little proud of those wings and that document.

There was also some obscure infantry colonel also signed. I have forgotten what his name was. After that, we had to be signed up with the 505 Rgt. Combat Team. We had all thought we were going to be reg. infantry now, but it didn't work out like that. The 456 Parachute Artillery Bn. was organized and we landed right there, back in the artillery. The most of these guys did not have jump training. Some were already glidermen, but since they were not jumpers, we jumpers were sectioned out to be forward artillery observers and were slated to jump into Normandy with the 505th.

The rest of the outfit and our guns were to come in by boat, hook up with us and start firing upon our already determined targets. We, as observers, had already plenty of plotted targets for them. We were already way behind the German lines with the first drops and gliders and hard at work-- I was not doing observing and plotting at this operation. I was a "handy man", driver and general, "Dog-Robber" for the artillery officers. I drove a jeep when we had one and I ran errands. I fetched food for the men, etc.

We were right away supporting the 505 Regt. and this was the basics of the "combat team". Our guns were firing immediately after they hit the beaches and came inland a tad and set up. We spent 33 days in Normandy and I was real lucky. I escaped the period unhurt. We all had our "close" ones.

We did not lose any guns because they came in by boat and after that we never lost any guns in our unit. We were often set to fire from in front of the infantry motar sections. This was for "direct fire" that is directly aimed at specific targets. It was close in fighting. (Ed. Note: As one of my illustrious civil war relatives has written in a letter home from the March To The Sea With Sherman.. "We gave them what for all day". I think they were glad when we quit. As many as were left to be glad. That was one George Andrews Stolp who made it home. A lucky artillery man, and my Great Grandfather.

Ev, continues: Anyway, nowadays these 75's are fired in recoilless rifles from a man's shoulder, like a shotgun, very useful if you don't have to carry it yourself, but they raised hell with the close in troops in '44. So they then after the 33 days on line took us back to England. The non-jumpers then took Jump school. Those who qualified made it and the outfit was fully "jumping airborne" Artillery. I was still on the Forward Observer team and we were supporting the 505. In fact, I remember we must have been supporting his outfit because in Holland I remember Reithorst Hill and Mook and Groesbeek and so on.

One particular thing we both talk about is the night Mook burned. I was on Reithorse Hill with one platoon of B-Co. 505 and calling fire from our 75 back toward Groesbeek someplace and Doc Stolp was down in the center of Mook and taking the town for about the 3rd time. As he

says, "Had I known how many Krauts they had pushed in on us with, I think I would have gone home. There was a reinforced battalion of S.S. Parachute troops of some training regiment and several other units and pieces of units and all this against a single platoon from B-Co. down in the town. It was one hell of a several days, but a really awful night. It happens that it was also the period where all the Glider Pilots were strung out on the MLR (main line of resistance) for a mile of it. No troopers at all. The only time in history of battle where only officers manned a frontal combat line. (They were relieved as soon as more men could be rounded up to relieve them.) But an Historical first to say the least. In the meantime, Doc was catching pure hell in the burning town. (He gets strange sometimes when he tells about it.) Like he says, I hear that when you get old and odd and debilitated and "out of it", one tends to relive awfulness periods from your life, and I sure hope I don't have to relive that one."

Well enough of that; then I got wounded again. I got hit right in the heavy jump boot sole/heel. Shrapnel got my foot and more slotted up the left side of my face from lower jaw bone to squirt off and up and drove a big hole in my helmet from "underneath" as it were, I no longer see a scar, but just that much thickness of skin was how close it came to blowing the top off my head right into my hat. (Another unbelievable "coincidence".) Another close one.

After two months in a "holding position", I went back to Camps Sueiepps, France for R and R and "refitting" and, of course, that is where we were when the VonRuns tedt "Bulge" battle started. We were shipped right off to that front with the "505". You know what that was like, a lot of death, cold, freezing (the coldest winter in recent history of Europe, you might know. The only "good" part was that the Krauts had to fight in it too.

We could hardly know if the troops we encountered were them or us. They were often dressed in G.I. gear and uniforms and many risky things happened because of it. We went into guarded positions at night and other times with one man on guard to "brace" the newcomers, etc. and several others hidden near in the woods or bushes to back him up if he got unlucky and it was "They" and not "Us".

We actually got lucky and never did hit the wrong group, but a lot of guys got ulcers and set up for "Post Traumatic Shock" being the sitting duck. (This was known better as "Combat Fatigue".)

We did see where the Malmedy (Belgium) Massacre took place. The bodies had been removed, but the crossroads were right there. Well, we slowly worked our way into Germany then, and got going through the HURTGEN FOREST--this must have been a terror of a battle. They were bringing out streams of dead bodies as the snow melted and they showed up. There were no trees left, just toothpicks sticking up, etc.!

There were so many troops wiped out in there it was awful. From there we finally had our first bath since coming into Belgium at the last week of December or so. Here it was coming on Spring. We were taken to a huge spa, big copper cauldrons, like tubs--lots of hot water. At this time we had not had our clothes off for two months straight and we were terrible. We were all right if we were standing up, but you didn't want to get downwind of any of us. We just tossed

out our old clothes onto a big pile and they were probably burned. We got all new clothes--especially socks, underwear and general uniforms. We felt like millionaires then because we were actually clean clear through. You don't know how that feels if you have never done it.

While we were staying in Belgium, we stayed right in the homes with the people. They were good to us and very glad to have us because our rations and goodies had a way of getting in their stomachs, etc. and they did actually help us and we were all good for each other. Numerous friendships were established and several marriages and other "romances" ensued from this. Every year many men of those days go back and retrace the march of the 82nd across Belgium. They revisit their old friends. Truly, a marvelous and emotional thing.

Then we moved on. Went to the Rhine River. We were in Cologne. We were on one side of the river and the Krauts were on the other. The Cathedral was still standing, just about the only thing left standing in the whole town--high level, precision bombing. A tribute to the ethical sensibilities of the American leaders. They had devastated the town almost entirely, but spared the Cathedral. Almost a phenomenal feat of airmanship. So we got to go there and get showers. It was the day that President Roosevelt died. I went back to camp and asked the guys if they knew the name of the American President and, of course, they hadn't yet heard and said F.D.R. but it was already Harry Truman (the then Vice President, of course.) A pretty good joke at the time.

At this time, the 82nd had been slated to jump on and seize the airfield at Berlin. However, some ruskie generals screwed it up and it was just as well because later studies showed quite clearly that it would have been nearly a suicidal catastrophe. Preliminary intelligence was nowhere near accurate as to German positions and numbers--another coincidence? Damn good one if I say so.

About that time we made a practice jump. I recall that German actress, Marlene Dietrich, was there and at the ambulance when we carried one of our jumpers who broke his leg landing--to the medics. So we got to talk to her some. No big deal, just interesting. Then we got taken by the British "Buffaloes". These were the well known "Ducks" which were Amphibious - 6 x 6 trucks -. A truck in a boat hull really. Like their left over cousins at the Wisconsin Dells thrill rides. So we got ferried over the Elbe River and met the Russians. This led us into "Ludwigslust" where we discovered a hidden "concentration camp".

For any of you "Doubters" that try to say these never existed, I wish you could have been there to get the smell. It was beyond belief and you could not get it out of your nose. It stuck to your mucous membranes of your respiratory system like glue, always there, sometimes less strong and then, there it was, back again. The absolutely worst thing I ever smelled in my life. It was a visit I wish I had never seen or smelled. The odor just overwhelmed one. The most sickening thing ever.

General Gavin made the citizens dig enormous graves in the city park and then carry the dead into them. We then paid our respects at a service, and then passed in a review and looked upon the works of the "wonderful" Third Reich. We then buried the dead. It must have given the people great pause to contemplate in their later years. God help the fools. Every man, woman and child had to take part in all this.

About then we found a big stable of many horses. We were all set to have a big horse race with the Russians, but some Ruski General Ko'd the deal. He didn't like it. We met a lot of the Russian enlisted men and many were very nice, but the officers were totally under the control and mostly were real believers in this "system of communism and they were really tough and not inclined to be involved with the "decadent democracies". Look what that produced.

Then we heard that the Germans had surrendered and that an entire German Army had quit and surrendered to the 82nd. En-Masse! Then the 82nd was slated to ship out to Japan to invade that island. We were to lead that invasion--another obvious good job for the 82nd, but suicidal. Again, as any rational student can realize, (here we once again reiterate our hooray for the bomb). Only those who did not have to go there can be against it. Oh, no doubt the 82nd would have done its usual fantastic service and do the job, but no one would have been left. That is the reality, folks.

So the Army came out with the "point" system for returning combat vets home. The basic points needed were 85. I had 92. I had had enough and was ready to go home, believe me. I, therefore, missed the Berlin occupation which turned out to be a blast and great duty for the guys. In spite of the non-fraternization orders, many happy days and nights ensued. They tell me, but we were on our way only we got attached to the 17th Airborne and we were in a "repple-depple" situation till after we had sat in southern France until the Japs surrendered and the very next day we were on a boat going home. We hit the states at the September first or second. Then, we went to Camp Edwards for a while and then to Fort Sheridan where I was discharged on September 14, 1945, which was when I joined the National 82nd Assn. It wasn't very active then until Sol Mercado set up and organized a Wisconsin Chapter and I joined that as a charter member. I was the Chapter Treasurer for a number of years and I think I helped a lot. A friend of mine from the V.F.W. designed the chapter patch for me so, hopefully, I did a little good for the chapter.

I guess that is about the beginning and the end.

(Note: Just before all this, the 17th crossed the Rhine in the biggest Airborne jump operation ever. They had hideously high casualties, some 60 transport planes went down. Many gliders and many men were lost, but Airborne won the day, as usual.

PS: We were in the town of Bizerty in the Italian invasion, just for the record.

Ed. Note: Everett was one of the few men who went through the entire E.T.O. (European Theater of Operations) and the North African Campaign and lived to tell about it. He won't tell about it, but he is highly decorated and has the purple hearts enough times to prove it. The Editor will be eternally grateful that Ev. was on Reithorst Hill, Netherlands while I was down in Mook trying to keep the Krauts out and still live through it. If not for their canons up there in the hill, I probably would not be writing this book.

Extension of Everett Kneuppel's story:

"In the Italian invasion, we were in the town of Bizerte (north Africa), and it was on the night of Labor Day. It was the first night that I had seen these huge search lights. The German Bombers were way up there and these anti aircraft - Ah! We were, it was better than any 4th of July celebration. We were loading on big...I don't know the names...I guess it was L.S.T's. We were loading on our guns and then we were sent up the coast line. We didn't see the Rangers at that time. We were heading up north along the west coast of Italy. Right next to us was the heavy cruiser "Savannah", and when I say next to us, it was actually so big, but it was a long ways away. When the German dive bomber came down, he got his bomb hit on the ship and we could see those big guns twist out of shape and see the flames and see these guys running around with hoses and we later found out that it was in fact the Heavy Cruiser, "Savannah" that got it by the dive bomber. But there is...we didn't have any trouble at all landing, no resistance at the beach.

We unloaded and we had all these big Italian farm guys that helped move the guns and guide us and help us get the guns into position. That is when we got to meet and know Darby's Rangers. He was the kind of guy, like Gen. Gavin--when they made an attach, a lot of times he was right out front. The fellows were telling us that he was always ahead of the action. He must have been one hell of a commander. I guess they were then wiped out almost to a man at Anzio.

They also (the Rangers) taught us how to wear our leggins. We were not Jumpers yet and had to wear "leg" type leggins. So these Rangers did too. We were still in the gliders and had to wear the long tie leggins. What the Rangers did was cut them off short, like boots, and then flap the pants down over them so they looked like jump boots. That's when we learned how to do it for ourselves. Flirting with statements of charger and punishment for destroying government property.

Ed. Note: This segment is out of order, but it reflects back to the foregoing material where they met. The Rangers and were attached with them in an attack to take a signif. ridge in enemy territory which was the high ground threatening the beach head. As you have already read, they took it and held it...until finally relieved.

This narrative of Pfc. Everett G. Knueppel's experiences as a member of Btry. A 456th PFA Bn. during WWII is transcribed from an audio tape made by him. Knueppel was a vehicle driver and drove a Jeep for two Forward Observers, 1st Lt. Richard A. Ross and 2nd Lt. John S. Osmussen and their crews. Some of the troopers in these parties are mentioned below.

(18th September 1944). I can remember the long line of gliders at Langer Airfield in England to be loaded. I was loaded in a glider with a jeep and sat in the Jeep. Lt. Osmussen's seat was next to the pilot in the nose of the glider. This was a routine experience for me as I had started out in the 319th GFA Bn. in the states and had many glider flights there where the tow ropes were tearing before they got the nylon rope. Then in Africa when we moved from Oujda to Kairouan I rode in a glider for about 900 miles that took over six hours. We made that trip in a storm making the trip quite an experience.

Getting back to Holland, we took off and really had a routine flight more or less. When we got over Holland, we saw a glider on the ground with the men getting out of the glider and running. We thought they were trying to avoid capture by the Germans. They were out of sight in a few moments. We didn't see the C-47 tow-plane that towed it. When we got to the Landing Zone (LZ) the pilot picked out a landing spot on the extreme edge of a field right next to a heavily forested area. It was quite a rough landing in what I guess was a potato field.

There were numerous mortar and artillery shells landing in the center of the field, but not near where I was. When we got out of the glider, we had trouble getting the nose up. There was some machine gun fire over our heads so we kinda hugged the ground, but we finally got the nose up and got the jeep out and proceeded to our gun position area. On our way we were stopped by a trooper from Hqs. He pointed up the hill where the shells were landing where the nose of his glider was up. He said that their trailer loaded with all their communications equipment was in the glider. Lt. Osmussen and the pilot hopped out.

Lt. Osmussen sent me and the Hqs. trooper to get his trailer. When we got to the glider two troopers had already removed the trailer from the glider and we broke all records in coupling up and getting out of that area because shells were coming all around. How none of them never hit that glider, I don't know until this day. After delivering the trailer to Hqs. I returned to pick up Lt. Osmussen. The glider pilot had disappeared. I don't know where he went. Lt. Osmussen and I drove to the Btry. A gun position.

The following day, September 19, we were sent up to an area called Mook at a railroad bridge. We got up there in the afternoon and dug in. That evening the infantry came along and they dug in and said we had to be prepared for they expected a German attack somewhere out in that area so we spent the night taking turns staying awake in order to keep contact with the infantry if something did happen, but nothing happened that night.

The following morning, September 20, Lt. Osmussen had orders from the infantry to proceed west to the high ground, an area I believe was called the Reichswald. I also think it was part of the German Black Forest. We moved to this area and parked the jeep down below and climbed up to the top of this area which was an excellent forward observer position you could see out in front for miles. It was just a super area to have. The infantry came up and dug in. Pvt. Black, the radio operator, discovered that his radio batteries were weak and needed replacing. Lt. Osmussen sent me and Black to get fresh batteries. We got in the jeep and drove to Mook and north to the Btry position. At the Btry, Black got his batteries and I picked up some extra K rations for the FO team.

We started back to the FO position. As we approached Mook we were stopped by two infantrymen and told we could go no further, that the Germans had parachuted troops in. We learned later that they were the 11th Para Corps or something like that. We had to turn back. Black and I decided that maybe we could find some way in the back that we could get up to this forward position. Although we had no maps or anything we saw some dirt roads that we thought might take us there. While we were on the way, we came up to an infantry scout jeep with four troopers and a mounted machine gun.

There was a Lieutenant sitting in the front who said they had lost contact with their infantry up there and didn't know what was going on and they had been sent out to see if they could contact their troops on the high ground we wanted to get to. So he had us drive ahead and covered us with his machine gun behind. That was kind of a scary trip, but we got up to the forward observer area without any trouble. When we got there, Black found the radio, but there was no forward observer team there. The infantry Lieutenant told us that they were probably at the Infantry Command Post (CP) and where it was located. He said the party was probably back there.

We drove to the CP and found them. We picked them up and drove back to our forward observer area. We no sooner got up there with no chance to dig in when this mortar barrage hit us. All we could do was hit the ground, get as low as possible because we couldn't get below the ground. One shell landed behind Cheadle and me. He was a little ahead of me and left of me. We were on a slight slope. Anyway, I had a severe pain in my left foot. It was unbearable. I could see that Cheadle was hurting. He got a piece of shrapnel in the knee cap. I got hold of a medic who took care of Cheadle by putting powder and a bandage on his wound. He then took my boot off and said, "Oh my gosh there is nothing wrong here, no wound, no blood, nothing." It was a surprise to me. Then we looked on the sole of the boot and found a large piece of shrapnel buried deep in the sole of my jump boot.

He said that there was nothing he could do about that. He said I had a severe contusion. He noticed that my face had a big furrow like a big cut or a gash. It must have been a big piece of shrapnel had clipped my cheek and busted it open, went past my ear and hit my helmet. What it did to the helmet is amazing. It took a big chunk out of the side of my helmet. The medic put a little powder on my wound and said when I get back to the Medical Aid Station they would take better care of my wound.

I then took Cheadle down to where the severely wounded infantry men were located. An infantry Lieutenant asked me if I would drive them back to the CP where they could get medical attention. When I got in my jeep I found that shrapnel had flattened my left front tire and my spare tire. The jeep was driveable. We loaded the wounded troopers and one slightly wounded German prisoner. The Lieutenant wanted to get back to the CP for interrogation. The Lieutenant gave us two infantry men to go ahead as scouts in case we ran into a German patrol. This area was very unstable as far as they were concerned. We got to the CP safely. I was able to drive by using my left heel on the clutch pedal. I couldn't put pressure on my left sole and had to walk on my left heel which wasn't too bad compared to what the other wounded had suffered. I couldn't feel too sorry for myself.

When I got back to Btry A's position area, Cpl. Bill Sendtko, motor mechanic, changed the two wheels for me. Joseph Clark, a wire man, was assigned as a replacement for Cheadle. Well, Joe and I went back and there again it was, one of the most scary trips because we didn't know just what we might run into with the rumors of the Germans being around. Again we lucked out and made it back to our forward observer position. The rest of that day was uneventful.

The next night, September 21, we could hear the Germans down below our position. We could hear them shouting orders and what sounded like tanks getting into position. There was no way the tanks could climb the hill so they must have been putting them into position to use as artillery. The following morning they really opened up. I mean they threw everything they had at us. This was when Cpl. Rowley was killed. I was right along side of him. Evidently he didn't get down fast enough. I had previous combat experience. I was flat as a pancake and again didn't get hit, but I could see he wasn't moving so I called an aid man over and he pronounced him dead. I asked the aid man about taking Cpl. Rowley over to the jeep location, but he said there were several infantry men dead and they would have a crew recover the bodies.

I went back to the jeep area and there were quite a few wounded troopers. Lt. Osmussen came up from his forward observer position and he was wounded in the elbow. Black was wounded and I can't remember how serious he was, but the only one not wounded was Joe Clark. I loaded the jeep up with as many as I could carry and drove them to the Infantry's Aid Station where all the infantry wounded got out. Again, the infantry sent two troopers out ahead as our scouts. Lt. Osmussen wanted to be taken to the 456th PFA Bn's. Aid Station. During all this driving I am using my left heel on the clutch pedal, but this trip was easier with all the tires inflated. This is about the end of this event.

There were numerous other exciting times during the two months we were in Holland. I remember the British B-24 bomber that crashed near me. We figured it was piloted by a French crew returning from a bombing mission a short distance inside Germany. It was shot up pretty bad and came down in our area. I remember it so well because I happened to be in the school building using the bathroom when I heard a big explosion outside. When I came out, I saw the plane had crashed into the building across the road and there was splatters of flesh on the building from the bodies in the plane. Nobody survived that crash. I also remember when the German Jets came over and dropped those anti-personnel bombs on our area.

I remember when our guns were in position just outside the Catholic theme park. I have a picture taken inside the park of you and I lined up to take communion from Capt. Reid, 82nd Abn. Div. Arty Chaplain.

I was not assigned to another Forward Observer Party after all I had lost two officers and our whole parties were either killed or evacuated except myself and I was not wounded serious enough to be evacuated. I can thank the good Lord for that.

THIS AND THE PRECEDING 3 PAGES ARE FROM ANOTHER
COLLECTION DONE BY SOME EX-OFFICER OF EV'S GROUP IN COMBAT.

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