

REMEMBERING TECHNICAL SERGEANT ALBERT R. LOWE KIA WWII
by Waukesha Lowe Sammons



TECHNICAL SERGEANT ALBERT R. LOWE (1917 – 1944) KIA WWII
Company G, 359th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, United States Army.
1942, Private, Co D, 9th Training Battalion, Branch Infantry Replacement Training Center
(B.I.R.T.C.), Fort McClellan, Aniston, Alabama.
1943, Sergeant, Co A, 5th Replacement Battalion, 3rd Platoon, 2nd Replacement Regiment
Infantry, American Ground Forces Replacement Depot # 1, (A.G.F.R.D. #1),
Fort George G. Meade Military Base, Maryland.
January 1944, Sergeant, 310th CO, 41st Replacement Battalion, APO 15103, England.
June 1944, Sergeant, Company G, Squad Leader of 1st Rifle Platoon, 359th Infantry Regiment,
90th Infantry Division, France.
The Fourth of July 1944, Ste. Suzanne, France, Sergeant, Co G, 359th, 90th Infantry Division,
For Gallantry In Action Taken On July 4, 1944: The Award Of The Silver Star Medal.
July 20, 1944, Staff Sergeant, Company G, 359th Inf Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, France.
July 25th – September 16, 1944, France. Technical Sergeant,
Platoon Sergeant (MOS 651) of the 1st Rifle Platoon, Company G (Heavy Weapons),
2nd Battalion, 359th Infantry Regt (Assault Regiment), 90th Infantry ‘Tough Ombres’ Division.
June - July 1944, General Omar Nelson Bradley’s First Army, VIII Corps.
August - September 1944, Lt. General George Smith Patton’s Third Army, XV Corps.
September 16, 1944, Mance Ravine, Gravelotte-Metz Highway, France, Killed In Action.
Combat Infantry Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Silver Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal,
French Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star.

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By
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*Like a weaver at a loom,
I used golden threads of memories and silver threads of sacrifice
to reconstruct the fabric of my father's life.*

Circumstances left me with no memory of my father, Albert Roy Lowe, who had an abundance of nicknames: Jake by his family, baseball fans and community, Ab by my mother, Lefty by sports writers and Al by his Lieutenant in the 90th Infantry Division. Because he was seldom mentioned in conversations, I knew little of relevance pertaining to major portions of his life. After nearly fifty years of curiosity and uncertainty, I began a relentless search into his past and discovered a man worth knowing.

Initially I was a bystander, collecting stories and data on a brown-eyed stranger, who stared back at me from old photographs. As I documented him as a son, husband, father, athlete and soldier, I tried to ascertain his true character. I wished to know the person, who had been taken from me. My primary sources were recollections by others, military history and World War II letters.

Albert's father was James Franklin 'Jim' Lowe (1888-1974), born in Olive Hill in Carter County, Kentucky to James Floyd Lowe (1848-1923) and his 2nd wife, Margaret A. Rose (1854-1919).

Albert's mother was Marryle Levisa Littleton (1895-1977), born in Grayson in Carter County, Kentucky to George Washington Littleton, Jr. (1864-1936) and his first wife, Roseanna Caudill (1870-circa 1901).

The Caudill line descended from Mary Boone (1699-1774), who was the daughter of Mary Milton Maugridge (1668-1740) and George Boone III (1666-1744), the wife of John Webb II (1695-1774) and the aunt of frontiersman, Daniel Boone (1734-1820).

Roseanna was the 2nd great-granddaughter of Jenny Sellards Wiley (1760-1831), a Kentucky Pioneer, who was captured by Native American Indians, witnessed the killing of one brother and five children, escaped captivity, returned to her husband and had five more children. In the 20th century, Jenny had a Kentucky State Park named in her honor.

Albert's parents accepted an unsettled life of moving again and again, because hard times required heavy sacrifices. Whenever a job ended with little notice, they quickly left the place they had rented and began another journey filled with the hope of finding work.

I traced the path of my Lowe grandparents through the birth locations of their 13 children: Richard Irvin and James Willis (Morehead, KY), Albert Roy (Nebraska), Sadie Rosella (West Virginia), Milford, Wayne, Wilson, Arthur Floyd and Ellen (Kenmont Coal Camp, Jeff, KY), George (Indiana), Merida (Yellow Creek Coal Camp, Kentucky), Judy Maxine and William McCoy (Meems-Haskins Coal Camp, Kodak, Kentucky). Only eight children survived infancy.

Although his roots plunged deep down into the Kentucky earth, Albert was born 7 July 1917 in Riverton, Franklin County, Nebraska, because his father had a temporary job as a section hand working for the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company.

In 1931 Jim became employed as a coal miner by the Meems-Haskins Coal Corporation, and he moved his family to Kodak on Montgomery Creek in Perry County, Kentucky. They rented a coal camp house next to the Kodak Grade School, which gave my father and mother the opportunity to meet when they were young.

My mother, Daskum Combs (1917-2005) was the daughter of Ulysses Grant Combs, Sr. (1894-1976) and Juda 'Judy' Brashear (1897-1978), who moved their family from Kodak to Vicco and over time established seven family businesses: a restaurant with living quarters, a beauty shop, a bath house for coal miners, a boarding house, a liquor store, a farm and rental properties. Daskum's siblings were: Dixie Belle (1919-2007), Vernon 'Jack', Ulysses Grant Jr. (1924-1957), Dalton Gertrude and Dacker. My mother became certified as a beautician and opened Daskum's Beauty Shop in Vicco, where she served her customers from 1935 until her death.

My father became a coal miner and baseball player at a time when local companies sponsored amateur teams for their employees. From 1935 to 1942 Jake played on coal company teams in the Kentucky River League: Meems-Haskins, Blue Diamond, Hardburly, Defiance, Kenmont, Tribby and Carrs Fork. The best athletes had the opportunity to leave the mountains and play on major league baseball teams. My kinsman, Earl Bryan Combs (1899-1976) played for the New York Yankees with Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

Seeking more personal information, I asked my elders to share their memories and opinions of my father with me. Through interviews and conversations, his personality and character began to immerge as they referred to him as Jake Lowe.

Nando Roark, Jr. who served in the Navy in the Pacific Theater in World War II, told me, "Jake was a breakman, who ran the motor to couple the coal cars. He helped support his younger brothers and sisters. Although they were living in a rough mining camp, he and his mom had class. Even a crude person was treated with dignity by them."

Carl 'Coffee Jaw' Causey (1914-2009), a 1935 Meems-Haskins third baseman and catcher, said, "Normally, the various coal camps did not socialize. I worked at the Green Ridge Coal Mine, but I was allowed to play for Meems-Haskins. Each player paid for his own uniform and equipment. Jake was known for his curve ball and for pitching a winning double-header at Mill Stone in Letcher County. Our black teammates were Bruce 'Buster/Bus' Kimbrough, who pitched for the team, and Elijah Baker, who was Buster's catcher. Jake stood up for Kimbrough and Baker, especially if an opposing team refused to play us when they were in the line-up."

Stanley Ogrosky (1920-2004), shortstop on the Kenmont Baseball Team, remembered, "Jake Lowe was a Lefty with a wicked fast ball. He was an honest, trustworthy gentleman. You were safe on the field when Jake was throwing a ball at you, because he was never mean or spiteful."

Ryder Strong, Tribby teammate and second baseman, declared, "In 1938, 1939 and 1940 Jake pitched for the Tribby Mining Company baseball team, and his catcher was Tom White. His kinsman, Arnold Thomas was the right-hand pitcher. Jake was named 'The Strike Out King,'

because it was so difficult to hit one of his pitches. Jake pitched both games of a doubleheader with a no-hitter result at Happy in Perry County, which made a big impression on his fans.”

Ralph Miller stated, “When Jake’s brother, Willis, was his catcher, he would have sore, bruised hands from catching Jake’s powerful fast ball pitches. Most men played for a coal mine company as employees without compensation. Jake was paid to play, because his skills on the baseball mound were in demand. He was one of the best players I have ever seen. The Chicago White Sox and the Cincinnati Reds wanted to draft him.”

Dr. Claude Vernon Cooper, Jr. (1923-2007), who served in the Pacific Theater in World War II in The Black Sheep Squadron, informed me, “When I was young, Jake Lowe was my hero. Once I was allowed to sit in the dugout with him in Hazard. He showed me how to hold the ball to obtain different pitches. When he threw a ball, it traveled with lightning speed.”

From newspaper clippings shared by Edith Deaton Skjoldager (1914-2008), I gleaned data on the Kentucky Amateur All-State Baseball Tournament Games. In 1941 Edith’s father, Ambrose Deaton was the catcher and coach of the Carrs Fork Team and Jake Lowe was the pitcher.

Although Carrs Fork was not rated the best team in the Kentucky River League in 1941, Jake Lowe had pitched in five consecutive games and struck out 97 opposing batters. On August 25, 1941 he struck out 31 batters in a doubleheader. Carrs Fork won the District Tournament Championship and advanced to the Eastern Kentucky Championship Games. Results of the winning team were unknown, as were details of Jake’s journey north to play on an unspecified team in the national games.

Because the old records of the American Baseball Congress games were destroyed in a fire, I reached a dead end in my search for statistics on his participation in the tournament. According to a post card received by Daskum, Jake’s team played their first game against Texas on September 20th. In the final game, Fort Custer, Michigan defeated Charlotte, North Carolina, 3 to 2. In honor of his pitching expertise, Jake Lowe was awarded a 1941 American Baseball Congress Medal from the National Amateur Championship Games.

Jake returned home and married Daskum on September 27, 1941. Ten weeks later world events altered history. On Sunday afternoon, December 7, 1941, from 12:53 PM to 2:55 PM EST in Kentucky, the Japanese attacked the Pearl Harbor Naval Base of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Oahu, Hawaii. Like most of America, Jake and Daskum were home enjoying a day of leisure with the radio playing in the background. A news bulletin startled the nation with details of mass destruction of our Navy and lives lost.

Fear gripped the country. National leaders responded with an urgent call to unite by serving on the home front or enlisting in the military. Changing from a normal existence to the trauma of war, Americans undertook the harsh tasks of saving the nation.

Jake altered his current plans. Giving up his dream, he left a baseball contract unsigned. He did not seek an entitled exemption from the draft as a coal miner, a job designated as an essential position on the home front. As a patriot he believed he must serve in the military to defend our country. He found the strength to endure the anguish of separation from his wife and family.

On June 27, 1942 Jake bid goodbye to his pregnant wife in Hazard. He boarded a bus, which transported him to a large induction center for a physical examination in Cincinnati, Ohio. His next stop was Fort Thomas, Kentucky, where Jake quickly became Private Albert Lowe.

After days of confusion awaiting his assignment, Albert was placed on a troop train heading south. On the Fourth of July he arrived at Fort McClellan in Anniston, Alabama for basic training. He became part of Company D, The Third Regiment, 9th Training Battalion, Branch Immaterial Replacement Training Center (B.I.R.T.C.). In 1943 the center was reorganized into the 9th Infantry Replacement Training Center (I.R.T.C). When questioned about his military job description, Albert replied in a letter, "We are to replace the men that have been killed."

Without replacements the military structure would have crumbled. In a permanent outfit friends stayed together from the beginning of service until the end. In a transitional unit, the majority of newly bonded soldiers were separated and shipped out to different places, time and again. Never knowing who to trust, they dealt with loneliness and uncertainty. They longed to be given a permanent assignment, where they could form close bonds of support within their ranks.

Because of Albert's hard work ethic, mountaineer skills and leadership abilities, he was retained as a training instructor of new recruits. With plans oriented toward serving in the Pacific Theater, the base organized a course of training to develop skills needed. Albert took his responsibilities very seriously.

The recruits learned how to: obey orders, drill, dig a fox hole, construct a slit trench, care for weapons, shoot, bayonet charge and crawl under barbed wire through machine gun fire. Instructions were given in: health care, scouting, sanitizing wastes in the field, camouflage, infiltration, survival instincts, tactics, weaponry and fighting in a squad level group.

They suffered through: inspections, sentry duty, latrine duty, obstacle courses, torrential rain, horrid heat, cold nights, Bama chiggers, mosquitoes, snakes, scorpions, skunks, hunger, food poisoning, injured feet, painful vaccinations, diseases, thieves, lack of proper clothing, canceled furloughs, poor mail service and homesickness.

They trained out in the field on the Pelham Range and on maneuvers in the Choccolocco foothills of the Appalachian Mountain chain. With full field packs, rifles and extra gear weighing 75 pounds, they struggled on 21-mile hikes. If they failed in compass reading, they faltered while camping in the mountains and became lost during night exercises in a swamp. While being geared toward combat, they listened to lectures on what to expect from the enemy, how to hate the enemy and how to kill.

On August 2, 1942, Pvt. Lowe wrote a letter to his wife. "Dear Daskum, I was called over to the Company Commander's office yesterday. He asked me again, if I had changed my mind about staying. I told him that I still wanted to leave with the rest of the boys for the Pacific. They have to keep some of us, and he wanted me to stay. I explained that in 10 years my [expected] child would ask me what I had done in the war. If I stayed here, I'd have to say, that I had set on my tail at Fort McClellan and missed everything. But I think they will keep me here anyway. This war can't last forever. When it's over, I'll be back to you. I love you more than life itself. Some of the guys think they're not coming back, but I have you to come back to. Yours forever, Ab."

September 19, 1942, Fort McClellan. “Sugah, we have old, grey-headed men in here. Some were in the other war. They have to do things that the young men do. Every time I have to give them some kind of drill, I feel so bad. I’m not hard on them, cause I have a dad about the same age. If that’s what it takes to get stripes, I don’t want them. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

October 10, 1942, Fort McClellan. “Sugah, this morning we went on a 10-mile hike. When we got back, I inspected the men’s feet to see if they had blisters. Looking after them is my job. But it’s just like looking after a bunch of kids. I should make a good daddy, when I get out of here, cause I’m getting plenty of practice. This afternoon my Company D played our final baseball game. I hit a home run. In the last inning, I walked 3 men. Then I struck out the next man. We won the Battalion Championship, 3 to 0. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

In a newspaper article, The Fort McClellan Leader covered the Championship game and declared Albert “Lefty” Lowe the winning pitcher. “The baseball teams from Company B and Company D tangled on the diamond for the Battalion Championship, and Company D easily emerged the victor by a score of 3-0 behind the masterful pitching of Pvt. ‘Lefty’ Lowe. In his sparkling performance, Lowe struck out fifteen batters and allowed but two hits, both of these coming in the last inning. Company D was never in trouble until the last inning when the first two batters of Company B slammed out singles, and then Lowe, becoming a little nervous, hit the batter, but he lost no time in settling down and easily struck out the next three men in order.”

In November my father received an emergency leave from the army and arrived home a few hours before my home-birth in my Aunt Dixie’s apartment in the Combs Boarding House in Vicco. Dixie had first-hand experience with delivering babies. A non-local physician, Doctor Achilles A. Weddle (1879-1960), who was employed by coal mining companies, had been given a room in the boarding house for the night and assisted in my delivery. My father’s wish for me to have my mother’s blue eyes came true.

Years later, when I read his letters, I came upon an unexpected discovery. My mother held the common belief that sons were to be placed above daughters in the order of importance. My father believed that sons and daughters were to be equally valued. Upon his return to Fort McClellan, Corporal Lowe wrote to his wife on November 18, 1942.

“Honey, it’s nice to have a little girl. I only hope I’m the kind of daddy she wants. I study a lot about that. I wonder what she will think of me. If she doesn’t see me for a long time, reckon she will like me? Do you think she will know me, when I come home again? At least I had the chance to put a few diapers on her and hold her. When she gets big enough, you tell her about me, if I don’t get to be home for awhile, so she will know me when I get back. I would feel awful, if she didn’t remember me. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

November 29, 1942, Fort McClellan. “Sugah, Yesterday I had a guy crying, because he was homesick. I explained that we were all homesick. We just had to work hard to get things off our minds. Today I found out that he could hardly write. He had written his parents only 2 letters since he arrived. I told him to write them a little every night, and before long he would be able to write better. I’m gonna see that he does it, cause that is the very thing he needs. I like to help my men. I play tough, so they won’t think I’m molly coddling them. But I’m not mean to them, cause I don’t believe in it. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

December 6, 1942, Fort McClellan. “Dear Daskum, I am in a jam with a lieutenant. We were running a problem yesterday afternoon. The men had to wear Gas Masks, run up through a field on the Firing Line & shoot at moving targets. One guy must have been burned, cause he has a bad scar on his neck. The gas mask began choking him. He fell down and couldn’t get his mask off. An OCS man didn’t think there was anything wrong with him and was holding him down with his foot. But when I saw him kicking, I knew what was happening. He almost died before I could get to him. If I hadn’t taken his mask off, he would have been dead in 30 seconds. He’s in the hospital now. I cussed out the OCS guy for what he had done. A lieutenant came up and started shooting off his big mouth. I just couldn’t hold it in any longer. I said stuff that I shouldn’t have. I thought I would be busted, but they changed their minds. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

Christmas 1942, Fort McClellan. “Dearest Sugah, It just doesn’t seem like Christmas to me. I’m lonesome today. All of the men wanted to go home. When they couldn’t, some of them got drunk. Even the cook got pickled and was having a good time. I had to dance with him, before I could get him to go sleep it off. Remember, if I’m away a million Christmases, I’ll still love you. Love & Kisses & Christmases, Ab.”

On a previous furlough, an incident occurred. Albert’s comment, about never wanting to go down into a coal mine again, had been overheard by a mine boss and taken as an insult. Other miners felt the same, but left it unspoken for fear of losing their jobs. In January 1943 Albert made a written request of his father in hope of easing the tension for everyone. “Pop, I want you to do me a favor. I should have done it myself the last time I was home. A. K. Whittaker and I had a little misunderstanding. I guess it was my fault. I want to apologize. When I come home to stay, I want to feel that I can walk up to everybody, shake hands and say hello. Pop, let him read this. I hope he feels the same way I do. Always, Ab.”

February 28, 1943, Fort McClellan. When a platoon, that Corporal Lowe had been training, received orders for immediate departure, they were unable to find him. The respect for him was evident in a hand written letter signed by forty-six men. “Dear Corporal Lowe: All of us of the Third Platoon were extremely sorry we didn’t have an opportunity to say good-bye to you the other day, so a letter will have to suffice. At any rate, the men want you to know, that we consider it a privilege to have served with you and only hope that during the remainder of our army service, we have the good fortune to meet leaders with the same ability and fairness. The Damn Yanks and Rebels of the Third Platoon wish you the very best luck.”

March 30, 1943, Fort McClellan. “Sugah, I’m listening to Fibber McGee & Mollie. Out in the firing line today, I was coaching a boy, who was scared of the rifle. Every time he fired, he would shut both eyes, and he couldn’t hit the target. Mean words from a lieutenant started him crying. I kept talking to him and coaching him. Before he went off the firing line, he was getting bulls eyes almost every shot. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

May 24, 1943, Fort McClellan. “Sugah, I woke up about 3 a.m. with my cold feet sticking out of my pup tent in the rain. When the people at home complain about the food they get because of rationing, they should see what we are eating. We didn’t even have a piece of bread this morning. But I guess we’ll appreciate a good meal, when we do get one. I made the hike back in better shape than anybody else. This afternoon we went swimming in muddy, ice cold water. We leave out in the morning, go all day, all night and part of the next day. I can take this better than most. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

On August 6, 1943 Sergeant Lowe arrived at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland. He was assigned to Company A, 5th Replacement Battalion, 3rd Platoon, 2nd Replacement Regiment Infantry, American Ground Forces Replacement Depot # 1 (A.G.F.R.D. #1).

Fort Meade was being prepared to become a disembarkation station for the coming assault on Europe. Lowe was required to become carpenter, painter, mason and odd job handy man. When troops arrived for overseas preparation, Lowe worked 20-hour-days. After drilling men during the day, he clerked at night by taking inventory of their clothes and equipment before issuing new ones.

December 21, 1943, Fort Meade, Maryland. “Sugah, This morning I was again placed On Orders for being shipped out and given the rest of my clothes. This will be our 2nd Christmas apart. I’ve been doing a lot of thinking. I want you and our daughter to have the best of everything. The [heart-shield, metal cover, pocket] Bible, that you gave me for Christmas for protection in combat, was the nicest present ever. You may think I’m soft-hearted, but I’m gonna ask you to do something for both of us. I hardly know how to say it. I think our baby should be taught to say her prayers every night. She should be started while she’s young. I remember one I used to say. ‘When I lay me down to sleep.’ Love & Kisses & Christmases, Ab.”

Christmas Eve, 1943, Perry County, Kentucky. My uncles, Junior and Jack came home on leave from the Navy, before being shipped out to the war in the Pacific. Ulysses Grant Combs, Jr. served on the U.S.S. Samuel S. Miles, Destroyer Escort, DE-183. Vernon ‘Jack’ Combs served on the U.S.S. Oahu, Amphibious Ready Group, ARG-5, Division 6. Both survived the war.

Christmas Eve, 1943, Fort Meade, Maryland. “Dear Sug, Gee, I would like to be home tonight. Love & Kisses & Christmases, Ab.”

No letter survived to document how my father observed Christmas Day 1943.

December 27, 1943, Fort Meade. “Sugah, all my things are packed. Don’t worry about me, cause I’m gonna be ok. I won’t be able to tell you where I’m at. I think only about the day that I can come home to stay. I wonder if the baby will remember me? Love & Kisses, Ab.”

January 28, 1944, England. No longer under Silent Orders, Albert resumed his letters home, as he moved from Replacement Depot APO 15103 to 310th Company, 41st Replacement Battalion, APO 873 back to Company L, Infantry, APO 15103.

“Dear Sug, I’m in England, and it’s a nice place. I have been given a checker board, but I haven’t won a game on the dog gone thing yet. Is the baby talking more? Is she growing bigger? I would like to see her. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

February 1944, England. “Sug, I volunteered for The Rangers, and I have passed my exam. I see in the letters that the baby is trying to write. She can write better than me already. What’s No. 1 on the Hit Parade now? Love & Kisses, Ab.”

Even though my family thought Albert had been part of The Rangers, who scaled the 100 foot cliffs at Pointe du Hoc on D-Day, I could not confirm this. Nor could I prove that he had ever been transferred to The Rangers, because of the unavailability of military records.

April 24, 1944, England. “Sug, We go for doughnuts and coffee at the Red Cross Dugout. Instead of giving me a gift for my birthday, give to the Red Cross. They are doing more for us over here than anybody I know. When I first came to England, I had to borrow money from them to buy my rations. A lot of people at home don’t go for them in a big way. If they were in our shoes for a while, they would change their minds. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

April 24, 1944, England. “Dear Dixie and Eb, From what you tell me about Waukesha, I know she’s doing all right. I would give most anything to see her. I know I should be with her now. For I sometimes wonder if she will know me as other kids know their dads. But otherwise, I have no worries about her. If I were to fall and break my leg or something [worse], I know there’s Dixie, Eb, Grant and Judy to look after her and Daskum. You don’t know just how much that means to me. Hoping to hear from you soon, Ab.”

May 2, 1944, England. “Dear Dixie, I don’t hear from home very often, but when I do, I receive bunches of letters. They do give me a lift. I read them over and over. Tell Waukesha that I said, Hello. I sure would like to see her now. I guess she will be a big girl by the time I see her again. So please don’t let her forget me. Ab.”

May 3, 1944, England. “Sug, I keep hoping that we will make up for everything, when this war is over. The baby must take after me, cause we both like to go places. Tell her that I’ll take her everywhere, when I get back. You don’t have to send me packages. Just keep writing me every day. That is all I ask. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

June 1944, European Theater of Operations, Normandy Campaign. Sergeant Albert Lowe’s arrival in France was estimated to be from D-Day+4, June 10, 1944, the day that the first replacements joined the Tough Ombres, through June 18th, the day he wrote his first letter from France. He served in the 1st Rifle Platoon, Company G (Heavy Weapons), 2nd Battalion, 359th Infantry Regiment (Assault Regiment), 90th Infantry ‘Tough Ombres’ Division. He obtained the rank of Staff Sergeant, then Technical Sergeant and became Platoon Sergeant (MOS 651) of the 1st Platoon.

The 90th Infantry Division was attached to VIII Corps of the American First Army, commanded by General Omar Nelson Bradley. The enemy consisted of the German Wehrmacht 7th Army, 5th Panzer Army, 84th Infantry Corps and the 15th Regiment of the 5th Parachute Division.

Sergeant Lowe first engaged in combat on the beaches and along the hedgerows of Normandy. Because the Germans observed all actions by the 90th from Foret De Mont Castre, Hill 122, forward movement was excruciatingly slow. Daily advancement was measured in yards.

June 18, 1944, France. Sergeant Albert Lowe wrote his first V-mail letter from France, which Daskum received a month after D-Day. “Dear Sug, I’m sorry that I haven’t written you before now. But I’ve been kinda busy. I’m in France. I’m doing fine. How’s everyone at home? Tell Mom not to worry. I sure would like to see you and the baby. I miss you. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

June 23, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “The 358th and 359th Infantries relieved the 507th Parachute Regiment in the area south of the DOUVE River.”

June 30, 1944, France. “Dear Sug, As yet I have heard from No One, but I’m hoping to get mail any day now. I guess you are enjoying good summer weather. About this time last year, I was

home. We went to a carnival in Lothair. Oh, boy, those were the days. I'm sure looking forward to coming back. How much does the baby weigh now? I want to keep up with her size, so I can imagine just how she looks. Don't worry. Just as soon as this is over, I'll be home to stay. Love & Kisses, Ab."

June 1944, France. Report of Operations in Northwest France. "Bread, fresh beef and laundry soap were not available for issue during the month...Ordinance Maintenance: As a result of the high mortality of BARs and lack of replacement for these weapons, it became necessary to substitute light machine guns to keep up the volume of automatic fire necessary for the successful assault satisfactory for hedgerow fighting due to the tripod standing too high and being extremely hard to set up in hedgerows when the weapon was emplaced. When the weapon was used for marching fire, the barrel became hot and the ammo belt was cumbersome to feed."

July 3, 1944, France. Rain fell on the 90th Division during the First Day of Battle of the Foret De Mont Castre (Hill 122), which had been a battleground in the Gallic Wars. Julius Caesar's Roman Legions had defeated the Gauls by holding the hill in the 1st Century B. C.

July 3, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf 2nd BN, attacking on the left of the 1st, initially made better progress until it forced a crossing of the highway S from PRETOT. Thereafter, under the direct observation of the guns of N slope of the FORET and faced by a determined force entrenched at STE SUZANNE, the progress of the 2nd BN was slow and costly. But by 2100 STE SUZANNE had been secured and contact established with 1st BN, 358th Inf W of ST JORES."

July 4, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "The Boche gave no respite – aided by his excellent observation which pinpointed our dispositions as of dusk, he continued a hail of artillery, mortar and harassing machine gun fire which increased the problem of resupply and readjustment of local supports and reserves."

"359th Inf, 2nd BN drove forward from STE SUZANNE towards its objective on the East Nose of the FORET and reached ST JORES – LA HAYE DUPUTTS Road. Counterattacked there both frontally and on the right flank by a combined infantry – tank force, it fell back on STE SUZANNE to defend from its night perimeter positions. The Boche furiously attempted to retake the area but was consistently repulsed, the last assault coming late in the afternoon...by dark [2nd BN] controlled the road."

The Fourth of July was filled with fireworks of non-stop barrages, attacks, counterattacks and death. Sergeant Albert Lowe, squad leader of the 1st Rifle Platoon, took part in the attack and seizure of the village of Sainte-Suzanne. He would be awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action during the events of the day.

Brigadier General Raymond S. McLain would later pin the Silver Star in place on Albert's chest. The Silver Star Award Citation stated... "On 4 July 1944 in the vicinity of Suzanne, France, Sgt. Lowe, advancing with other members of his company, encountered a defended enemy Command Post. He, with two other members of his company, moving out in advance of their platoon, rapidly charged through the enemy position, killing one officer and six other members of the garrison; capturing one officer and twenty-three others, seven machine guns, three machine pistols, eight rifles and five pistols; rioting the garrison and rapidly taking the position."

July 5, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “359th Inf initiated its attack with the 2nd BN on the left and 3rd BN on the right to seize and hold the high ground in the FORET...2nd BN, attacking to secure the NE nose of the FORET, encountered heavy resistance throughout the day. It was finally held short of its objective...At the end of the day’s fighting the Division had advanced its lines approximately 2000 yards. While the fighting had been severe and the casualties heavy the Division had secured a foothold on the FORET DE MONT CASTRE – a foothold which we were never to relinquish and which provided the initial key to the success of the Divisions operations.”

July 7, 1944, France. Albert marked his 27th birthday on the fifth day of combat at Hill 122. In Kentucky his mother hoped that good fortune protected him, because he had been born the 7th hour of the day, the 7th day of the week, the 7th day of the month and the 7th month of the year.

July 12, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “During the early morning hours the Boche withdrew...The battle of the FORET DE MONT CASTRE had been won. Blood, guts and superior equipment had finally broken the MAHLMAN LINE...For 9 continuous days and nights it had fought without respite against seasoned and entrenched enemy, and its wounds notwithstanding, emerged from the fight victorious and high spirited...2nd BN 359th Inf, Division Reserve, was ordered forward at 1400 and marched to assembly area at the crossroads at LABAGOTTERIE.”

July 14, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “359th 2nd BN...seized LA COMMUNE and continued to the RIVER to establish contact with the 1st BN and the 121st Infantry.”

July 16, 17, 18, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “During this period 357th and 359th Infs maintained their positions overlooking the SEVES RIVER, harassing the enemy on the ISLAND with fire of all types. Because of the open nature of the ground to the immediate front, patrol activity was limited to night work...The immediate stumbling block within the 90th Division zone was the passage across the ISLAND, the approaches to which were devoid of cover and swept by enemy fire.”

July 21, 1944, France. Staff Sergeant Albert Lowe received his first letter from home. He had prevailed through more than a month of vicious, front line combat without mail to sustain him.

July 22, 1944, France. “Dear Sug, I received my first letter from you yesterday, and it sure was welcomed. Remember, I love you and the baby and will be home with you soon. So until that day comes, I’ll keep praying. Love & Kisses, Ab.”

July 22 – 27, 1944, France. The Battle of St. Germain, aka The Battle of St. Germain-sur-Seves, aka The Battle of Seves Island was hindered by the river flooding during the six day duration.

July 22, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “359th Inf holding in place, supported the attack by fire and drew in turn considerable enemy reaction. Added to all other difficulties, a dense fog overhung the Division area rendering the much depended upon liaison planes useless.”

July 23, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “During the early morning hours the SEVES RIVER overflowed its banks and became unfordable in most spots...Although Regt entered the battle at full strength, well over 50% of its BN strengths were replacements for whom this was their first fight.”

July 23, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, I sit here in My Old Kentucky Home, that's what I call my foxhole. My 90th Division is the best outfit! We talk a lot about the things we are gonna do when we get home. As for me, I want to walk down the aisle of the white, Presbyterian Church on the hill in Kodak and help sing a hymn. I guess I've changed quite a bit for the better and look at things different than I used to."

"Let me know how much the baby has grown and how much she weighs. I want to keep up with her, so I'll know just what to expect, when I see her again. Say hello to the family for me. Tell them that I hope to see them soon. Did the car ever get fixed? I'll not care a thing about walking, when I come home. Remember, I'm doing fine. Love & Kisses, Ab."

July 24, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf's effort remained unchanged, their attack being directed S toward PERIERS along the Division's right boundary."

July 24, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, I received thirty-four letters yesterday. Did my morale go up! I also got a box of Hershey Almond Bars. Thanks a million. It seemed almost like Christmas. All I want to do is get this over with and come home. Love & Kisses, Ab."

July 25, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, There's nothing I need, cause there's nothing I can use here. I know you would try and get me anything I asked for. The baby's handwriting is improving. I made Tech Sgt today. Love & Kisses, Ab."

The Battle of St. Germain/Seves Island, France. In the book, War From The Ground Up by John Colby on page 140 was written the following: "The battle was covered by several magazine and newspaper correspondents who were on the scene...There were stories and pictures in many newspapers in the U.S. concerning these actions."

The events of the Battle of St. Germain/Seves Island would not be known by the anxious families in Perry County until after Thanksgiving. My Grandmother Lowe saved a tattered piece of page 2 from The Hazard Herald, Courier Of The Kentucky Coal Fields, dated Tuesday, November 28, 1944.

"GERMANS PAY DEARLY FOR YANK WOUNDED - WITH U.S. FORCES IN FRANCE. When the Germans at St. Germain wounded two infantrymen in a platoon led by Lt. Raymond H. Pauley, Lake Charles, Louisiana, they paid through the nose."

"It cost them six German dead, 23 taken prisoners and a batch of equipment, which included seven machine guns, eight pistols, three machine pistols and eight rifles."

"The men who helped him make the cleanup were Staff Sergeant Abraham Jamail, Houston, Texas, chief of the machine gun section; Staff-Sergeant Albert Lowe, Vicco, Kentucky, a squad leader; and T-Sgt Leonard B. Gainer, Littlefield, Texas, platoon sergeant."

"The two American soldiers were dropped by a German machine gun which opened fire when the Lieutenant's platoon was moving to cover the flank of another company."

"Lt. Pauley, S/Sgt. Jamail and S/Sgt. Lowe stalked along a hedgerow towards the machine gun nest, firing carbine and rifles rapidly from the hip. They killed one Nazi and the other lifted a white handkerchief."

“As they herded their prisoner along, they poured lead into everything that looked German. They roasted one position until it yielded a Wehrmacht captain, a Lieutenant and a private, who joined the man earlier captured in an attempt to flee. S/Sgt. Jamail drilled the captain first shot, one private got away and the other two Germans surrendered.”

“By this time S/Sgt. Jamail had four rounds of ammunition left and the rest had none. So they rearmed with German weapons, and joined by T/Sgt. Gainer, systematically scoured the area to complete their bag for the day.”

July 26, 1944, France. After Action Reports of the 359th Infantry, 2nd Battalion. “Company G crossed the River without difficulty and overran the first German entrenchment. 200 yards beyond however, they were stopped by heavy fire. F Co followed and was committed on G Co’s left. At 0900 an enemy counterattack supported by tanks and artillery struck between the 2 Cos and forced them back into the first German entrenchments from which point they successfully repulsed the Boche. Heavy enemy fire, both artillery and flat trajectory, continued to rain upon the only vehicular approach route and thwarted all efforts of engineers to construct a ford for the passage of tanks.”

“Enemy tanks from well defiladed positions on the flanks of the 2nd BN, harassed the infantry and prevented their advance. By 1300 two additional counterattacks by the enemy had been launched and repulsed. At 1430 Co E was committed to fill the gap which had developed between the two assault Cos after the first counterattack; it came into the line in time to meet squarely another counterattack, which developed into a hand grenade fight. Bazooka teams tried valiantly to dislodge the enemy tanks, but one by one fell to enemy fire. By 2000 2nd BN, fighting heroically to maintain its position, had repulsed three additional tank and infantry attacks. All in all five Boche tanks had been put out of action – 3 by bazookas and 2 by artillery. But more were available and caused particular havoc by enfilading our line at ranges sometimes as small as 100 yards.”

July 27, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “359th Inf 2nd BN moved from its original position at 1600 and completed mop up of PERIERS, occupying that town for the night.”

August 1, 1944, France. Although he was kept out of the fray during the Allied invasion of Normandy, Lt. General George Smith Patton was given command of The Third Army on the 1st of August and Operation Cobra began. The Tough Ombres were transferred from Bradley’s First Army to Patton’s Third Army, XV Corps. Technical Sergeant Lowe participated in the electrifying movement of an Army, geared to excessive speed, fighting its way across France.

August 5, 1944, France. After Action Reports. “...359th Infantry Regiment had started marching on foot...having closed on LANDIVY the preceeding day, after a foot march of 22 miles, marched on ERNEE, went into bivouac in the afternoon just south of the town and was moved early in the evening farther south to the vicinity of ANDOUVILLE, where it bivouacked for the night. They moved early the following morning, by truck, over a bridge North of LAVAL, which had been constructed by the 106th Cavalry. They marched on to LE MANS.”

August 12-20th, 1944, The Battle of the Falaise Gap, Normandy, France. Technical/Sergeant Albert Lowe fought against the German 5th and 7th Panzer Armies at Chambois and Falaise, birthplace of William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, King of England.

August 17, 1944, France, After Action Reports. "...by midnight the 359th Infantry had accomplished its mission and was in complete control of LE BOURG ST LEONARD...the 2nd Battalion moved Northwest from LEBOURGE to annihilate the Boche force at FOUGY."

August 19, 1944, France, After Action Reports. "The 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry, after occupying FOUGY without resistance, was redirected on CHAMBOIS. Crossing behind the 3rd Battalion, it fought its way North to control the southern half of the town. Again friendly artillery fire from our Allies prevented complete occupation. This Battalion also created widespread damage and destruction to German personnel, vehicles and tanks..."

"At the close of the day's operations, the Division had substantially occupied all portions of its assigned objectives. It had captured nearly 5000 prisoners and killed a considerable but undetermined number. It had captured or destroyed hundreds of German Tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces. It had made junction with the Polish Reconnaissance elements in vicinity of CHAMBOIS. The Artillery, reinforced by five (5) Corps Battalions, had plastered the escape area from dawn to dark and aided by magnificent observation, had effected wholesale destruction."

August 20, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "The 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry completed the conquest of CHAMBOIS against heavy but sporadic resistance...On this day the Polish in contact with the 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry and 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry linked up with their Division to the North of CHAMBOIS and the gap was closed."

When The Battle of the Falaise Gap ended, The Seventh German Army had experienced a horrendous defeat. The odor of death was so overpowering, it filtered into the airplanes flying over the site of an indescribable aftermath covering the battleground.

August 27, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, I sent you all my back pay, two hundred and fifty dollars, and I signed for one hundred and fifteen dollars to be sent to you each month. One thing I don't need now is money. I'm keeping about two or three dollars for myself. Gee, I miss you and the baby. I just keep hoping. Love & Kisses, Ab."

August 30, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "At 2100, 90th Division took control of REIMS and made plans for re-disposition the following day for the occupation of the completed bridgehead line."

September 1, 1944, Kentucky. "Dearest Ab, Waukesha is sitting in the floor playing with my rouge. She's trying to put it on her face. I keep hoping it won't be long til you can come home to see all the cute things she does. Gee, I wish I could see you. All I can do is see you in my dreams, and I do quite often. Love, Daskum."

September 1, 1944, France. The Lorraine Campaign began. It would include assaults across the Moselle and Sauer Rivers, the Battle of Nancy and the Battle of Metz, which would last until mid-December. Patton's Third Army ran out of gas and came to a halt near the Moselle River, just outside of Metz, Lorraine Province, France. In addition to excessive rain, shortages of soldiers, gasoline, ammunition and supplies bogged down the Third Army. Swift advancement could not be resumed. Lack of men reduced the conflict down to quick offensive operations.

September 1, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf extended from the left of the 358th Inf N and NW to NEUFCHATEL."

September 2, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "The entire Third Army was immobilized as the increasing gasoline shortage assumed critical proportions."

September 2, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, I wish I could get your letters every day. But as long as I know you and Waukesha are alright, I'll just be as satisfied as anyone can be away from home. I'm writing this from a hay loft. It sure beats fox holes all to pieces. But I'm looking forward to the day that I can live like a human again. Wayne [Albert's brother] wrote that he helped break the Hitler Line in Italy. We just knocked over a million hedgerows. Wishing I could see you. Love & Kisses, Ab."

September 2, 1944, France. "Dear Mom, Pop & Family, I'm writing this from a hay loft. I lived in fox holes so long, that I felt like a ground hog and looked as dirty and hairy. There's a creek close by. I washed a bit yesterday. It does feel good to get a little dirt off. Always, Ab."

September 4, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, As the days pass, it is just another day closer to coming home to you and the baby. I love you forever. Love & Kisses, Ab."

September 6, 1944, France. After Action Reports. The 90th Divisions mission was "to capture THIONVILLE and establish bridgehead over the MOSELLE RIVER."

September 8, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf 2nd BN marched S through LANDRES...It launched its attack at noon and by midafternoon had reached BONVILLERS."

September 9, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf 2nd BN cleared the woods E and NE of BONVILLERS and captured AUDUN..."

September 10, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf 2nd BN and 3re BN advanced...and secured AUMETZ and the high ground to the N and W thereof. The MAGINOT defenses in this area were unmanned."

September 11, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf displaced East from AUMETZ to occupy a new reserve position NE of ANGEVILLERS and in conjunction with the 90th RECON TRP pushed reconnaissance eastward to GAVISSE."

September 12, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf displaced again to the vicinity of HETTANGE GRANDE prepared for rapid movement to the E to seize that key terrain feature, BASSE KONTZ, which dominated the area for miles around."

September 12, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, I just have time for a few words. I received the [Silver Star] Citation today, and I'm mailing it to you. I got paid today, and I'm sending you one hundred and fifteen dollars. I received your letter today with the nice pictures. You look great. I wish I was home. Love & Kisses, Ab."

September 13, 1944, France. "Dear Sug, You'll never know just how much I've missed you since I've been away. The pictures you sent made it seem like I was so much nearer to you. Maybe it won't be long until we will be together again. France is the most beautiful place I ever

saw, besides Kentucky. That was a nice picture of Waukesha standing in the new road. I'm hoping to get a letter from you today. Love & Kisses, Ab."

September 13, 1944, France. "Dear Mom & Pop & Family, I'm doing fine, getting plenty to eat. I received some pictures from Daskum yesterday, and it made me homesick. Waukesha is quite a little girl. Answer soon and tell me all the news. Always, Ab."

September 14, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "After being appraised of the situation in front of METZ the following plan was formulated and immediately executed...359th Inf to relieve...in the sector from the AMANVILLERS – HABONVILLE roads S to GRAVELOTTE."

September 15, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf attacked on the right of its zones with the 2nd BN, which had for its mission the capture of JEANNE D'ARC. Vicious fighting developed in the draw NE of GRAVELOTTE and progress was extremely slow..."

"As a result of the day's activities, The Division was now fully aware of the immensity of its task. It was obvious that we could contain the 3500 troops estimated to be opposing us in FORTRESS METZ but equally obvious that an unsupported assault was out of the question. The Division plan, therefore, was to nibble by making a series of limited objective attacks, to harass the enemy by fire and to keep him off balance by aggressive patrols."

September 16, 1944, France. It was the sixteenth day of the Lorraine Campaign and the second day of the Rhineland Campaign, whose main objective was the capture of the Fortresses of Metz.

September 16, 1944, France. After Action Reports. "359th Inf 2nd BN continued its attack to clean out the draw E of GRAVELOTTE. The Boche were exceedingly well dug-in and progress was slow and costly. By nightfall the enemy had been liquidated as far S as the road E from GRAVELOTTE, but the price had been high, as a continual hail of mortar and artillery fire fell on this Battalion."

Critical information pertaining to my father was on pages 181 and 182 in The Lorraine Campaign by Hugh M. Cole. He wrote, "The morning of 16 September opened with a heavy fog which clung to the ground through the forenoon...In the 359th area the 2nd Battalion resumed the effort to shake the Germans loose from the Mance ravine east of Gravelotte. This time the battalion turned its attack south, down into the draw. The enemy reacted at once with furious fire from mortars and automatic weapons concealed on the wooded banks and scattered the length of the ravine. By nightfall the battalion had advanced about two hundred yards and reached the Gravelotte-Metz highway, which here crossed the draw. This slight gain was made at the cost of severe casualties: 117 men and 15 officers (nearly half the officer complement of the battalion)."

Later the Company Morning Report on September 16th for Company G, 359th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division was completed. It stated: the weather was cool, moral was fair, casualties were very heavy and Tech/Sgt Albert Lowe, Platoon Sergeant, was killed in action at Gravelotte, France.

P.F.C. Fred Gross, Medical Detachment, from Buckhorn, Perry County, Kentucky, was one of Albert's baseball fans. They had not met until Fred was attached as a medic to Albert's platoon in France soon after the Invasion. Concerning Albert's death, Fred Gross wrote to my family

and declared, “He was killed suddenly and didn’t suffer. I ran to him as soon as he was wounded in the neck, but he was dead when I got there.”

US Army, Technician Grade 5 Ralph Miller, husband of my Aunt Dalton, served in Company B, 58th Infantry, 8th Armored Division in the European Theater of Operations. Despite being badly wounded in battle on March 28, 1945, he survived the war. He shared his experience of a World War II burial detail with me.

“Once in Holland I was given a three day rest from the fighting. I knew that any day, I could be among the dead. I went to a cemetery, where they were burying our American boys to pay my respect to the soldiers, who had died for our country.”

“A truck, loaded with dead bodies, arrived at the cemetery. Soldiers lifted a body out, laid it on a big plank, cut off one dog tag and slit open the shirt and pants pockets. Anything that fell out of the pockets would be sent back home to the soldier’s family, along with his dog tag.”

“One soldier only had two little pieces of hard candy in his pockets. He had no money, no pictures and no letters. That was so sad. Somewhere in America his family would receive a dog tag and two pieces of candy. Maybe he had no family to contact. Maybe there was no one to mourn this poor soul. I stood in the cemetery and cried.”

Notification of a soldier’s death was slow to arrive at his family’s home. Unaware of their tragedy, Daskum continue to write to Albert. Eleven days after his death, she marked their third anniversary, not knowing that she was a widow. Nor was I aware, that I had lost my father seven weeks before my second birthday.

September 23, 1944, Kentucky. “Dearest Ab, I got ready for bed and Waukesha grabbed me by the pajama leg and hollered, write letters! I have a fire in the grate in the living room. I’m sitting on the davenport with Waukesha’s feet in my lap. She’s almost asleep. The Hit Parade has just now started. The program is going to be cut short tonight so Roosevelt can make his first campaign speech. Hon, I’m so proud of you. I love you more each day. I miss you. Gee, if you and all the boys could come home. I would be so happy. Hon, be careful. Love Daskum. P.S. No. 1 on the Hit Parade is, I’ll Walk Alone.”

On October 3, 1944 the dreaded telegram arrived at the Vicco Depot. When it was delivered to Daskum, cries of denial bounded from the beauty shop into the restaurant and filtered out into the street, alerting the village that one of their own would not return.

In shock and disbelief, Daskum found the courage to break the news to Albert’s father, who was at work. She endured the long wait, while Jim, totally encrusted in coal dust, was brought up out of the coal mine. The moment he saw her, he knew. Jim reached out to keep her from falling to the ground and to comfort her. As tears ran down her face, she was unconcerned when her clothes became covered with filthy, black dust. Her fear of Albert dying in battle had become a tragic reality.

Jim made a decision to keep the devastating news a secret from his wife, who was preparing to leave the next day for a long awaited operation in Cincinnati, Ohio. Not until Levisa was recovering from surgery in the hospital, would the news of Albert’s death be revealed to his mother.

On her way home, Daskum passed by the Lowe camp house, which had four blue stars proudly displayed in their windows, proclaiming that four sons were serving in the military. Now there were three: Willis, Wayne and Arthur.

PFC James Willis Lowe served in the ETO with HQ BTRY 752nd FA BN. PFC Wayne Lowe, Medical Aidman, served in the ETO in Company B, 339th Infantry, 85th Division and in Company A, 109th Medical Battalion, 34th Infantry Division. PFC Arthur Floyd Lowe served in the ETO with Company G, 414th Infantry Regiment, 104th Division. They survived the war.

Daskum returned to her apartment and collapsed. Despite the attempt to care for her by family and friends, she was inconsolable. She agonized over Albert's failure to keep his promise to return home to her. She was ashamed of her anger at him for breaking his word by dying.

Across America people observed the ever increasing number of gold star banners hanging in the windows of their neighborhoods. For paying the ultimate sacrifice, a service man posthumously received a Purple Heart from a grateful nation. For being deprived of a son, a mother obtained a fabric gold star to display in her window as her symbolic medal for her sacrifice.

After being released from the hospital, Levisa returned home with the distinction of being a Gold Star Mother. As Albert's blue star was replaced by a gold one, her sorrow could not be born in silence. Her screams of agony echoed through the narrow valley, beat hard against the hills and evolved into a primitive wail of protest at our loss.

Pretending to have recovered, Daskum returned to her shop and thought her pain was invisible. But she could not reconcile her emotions. Albert had vanished from her life. My shattered mother forced her memories of my father deep into seclusion when the war ended.

Little evidence was on display in our home to prove my father had ever existed. There were no photographs, no medals, no baseball glove, no military trunk and worst of all, no stories told about him. Whenever I asked my mother about my father, she firmly diverted the conversation to another subject. Her engagement ring and wedding band were in a safety deposit box. His military papers, pictures and World War II letters were locked in a cedar chest. My father's gift to me, a tiny, porcelain rabbit, that he had found while crawling through the mud in France, was hidden away.

My Grandmother Combs realized my father's military medals were in harm's way from persons, who were residing in my mother's household. She claimed custody of the medals and locked them in her floor safe. When I was older and knew my father's letters were in danger of being destroyed, I rescued them. But I left them unread for two decades. I was reluctant to be a witness to the private conversations between my parents. During a day of clarity, I untied the green ribbons that bound his letters and allowed my father's written words to be revealed.

Albert's mother spent years clinging to a thread of hope that Albert was alive, had amnesia and needed to be found. She had not seen his lifeless body and could not accept his death. Levisa wrote numerous letters to the military. She believed they had mistakenly buried someone else's son in the United States Military Cemetery in Andilly, France. Even after the war ended, she still prayed for him to come home. She wanted her son back. She refused to accept the truth of his death until the winter of 1948.

When my Grandmother Lowe completely gave up hope of seeing her son again, I was a six-year-old first-grader. My thoughts were filled with excitement over Christmas nativity plays and the upcoming visit from Santa Claus. The normal festivities of the holiday changed into a time of sadness as adults whispered about preparations for the wake, funeral and second burial of my father, who was returned home to his beloved Kentucky mountains at the request of his parents.

December 22, 1948, Perry County, Kentucky. Three days before Christmas, my father's funeral was held in the white, Presbyterian Community Church on the hill in Kodak with Reverend Thomas Pritchard officiating. The casket was draped in a 48-star American flag with his military photographs and a Bible resting on top. My father's wish to return to this church had been granted. But others sang the hymns.

Later in the day a military service was performed at the gravesite in the Englewood Cemetery at Christopher. The firing of a military gun salute, burned into my memory as I recoiled from the sound and shook with fright.

From that day forward, whenever I heard a rifle salute or the playing of "Taps," I flashed back to the image of my Grandmother Lowe, weeping and clinging to the folded American flag that had been placed in her hands by an honor guard.

Twenty years passed. During one of my visits, my Grandmother Lowe wished to relinquish Albert's funeral flag and place it into my care. When the moment for the exchange arrived, she was visibly shaken, because the flag was one of the few things left that was connected to her son. As she laid the flag into my outstretched arms, she quietly said, "Albert was my pride and joy, and you were his pride and joy. Honor and cherish his flag."

Throughout my search into my father's past, his request to not be forgotten had set my course. He epitomized the strong mountaineer, who upheld his belief in the protection of others and accepted the burden of duty thrust upon him in a world at war. Had he been present in my life, I would be a different person.

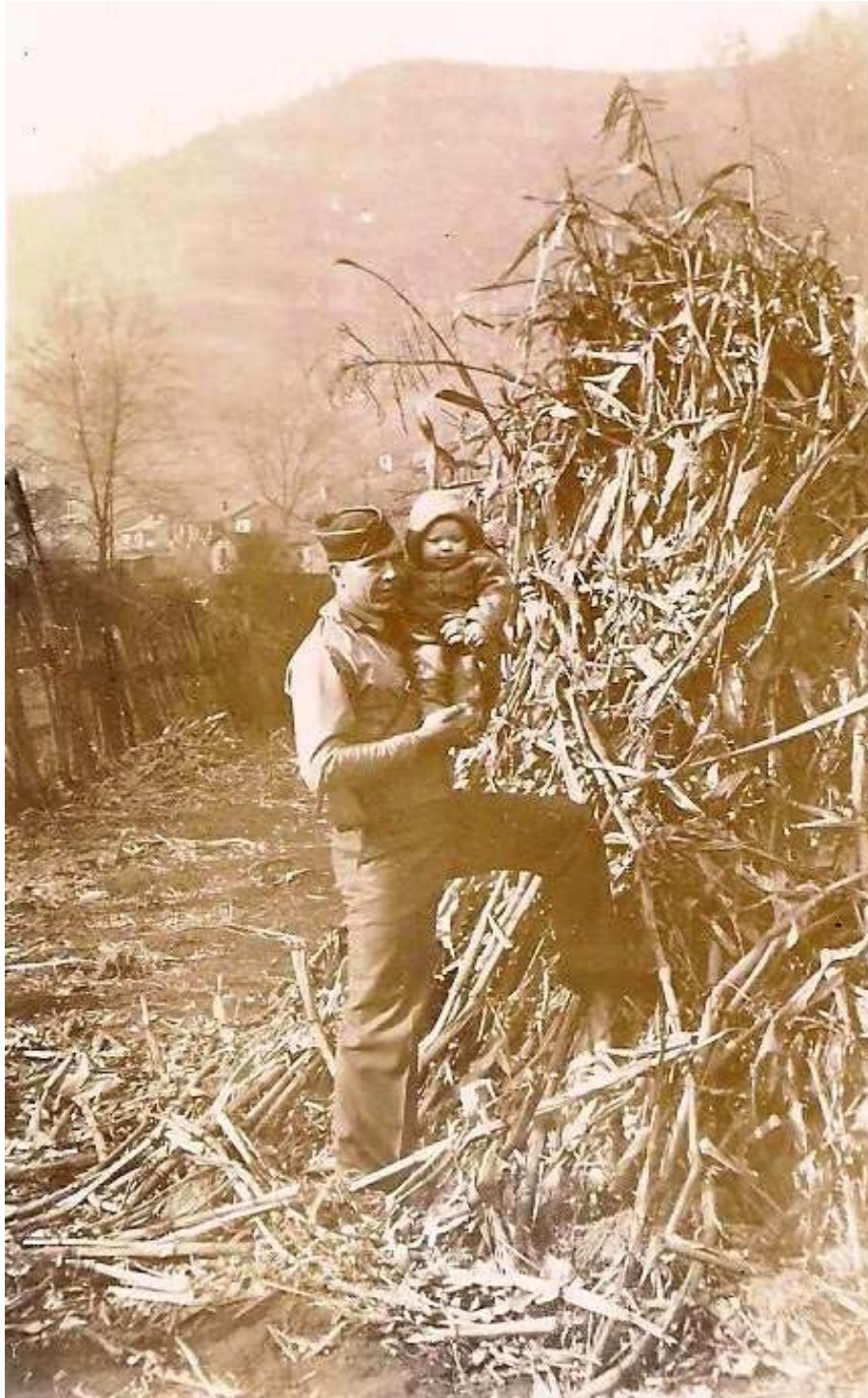
At the end of my retrospection, I accepted the unknown role of being Jake Lowe's daughter. His legacy was a gift of hope wrapped in his sacrificial American flag of freedom. Heeding his words, that had echoed across passing time, I honor my father with a gift of remembrance.

Post Script

NOTE: I have the 29 November 1944 Citation for the French Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star, but I do not know if the French medal was ever received by my family. On 14 February 1946 the War Department wrote to my mother concerning the French Medal. "I have the honor to forward herewith an official citation relating to the Croix de Guerre with Bronze Star awarded to your husband, the late Technical Sergeant Albert Lowe by the French Government. The decoration has not as yet been received in this office for delivery to you."

NOTE: In 1986 Albert was named on the 'Place of the Patriots' War Memorial at Hazard in Perry County, Kentucky.

NOTE: I wish to discover where my father was on D-Day, when he first stepped onto French soil and when he was assigned to the 90th Infantry Division. Should I gain access to the Company Morning Reports, I hope to learn more concerning his military service.



Sergeant Albert Lowe and daughter, Waukesha Lowe

Albert was on furlough from the Army, not knowing this was to be his last visit home.
At the farm of Mary Jane and William C. Brashear, Waukesha's great-grandparents.

Big Branch, Perry County, Kentucky, November 1943.

Photographer: Daskum Combs Lowe.

In Honor Of My Lowe-Littleton Family Patriots

Daniel Boone (1734-1820), French & Indian War, American Revolutionary War.
Hezekiah Whitt (1760-1849), Soldier, Virginia Militia, American Revolutionary War.

John Littleton III (1791-1877), Private, Captain George Matthew's Co,
4th Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Militia, War of 1812.
Jacob Rose (1778-1814), Father Of James W. Rose, Private, Rifleman, War of 1812.

Abel Caudill (1818-1896), Union Army, Private, Co D, 45th Inf Regiment Kentucky, Civil War.
Pleasant Caudill (1846-by 1880), Son Of Abel Caudill, Union Army Private, Company G,
Three Forks Battalion Regiment Kentucky, American Civil War.
James W. Rose (1810-1862), Father Of John J. Rose, Union Army, Co B, 14th Kentucky Infantry
Volunteers, Died Of Wounds Received At Battle of Middle Creek In Kentucky, Civil War.
John J. Rose, Union Army, Private, Company B, 14th Kentucky Infantry Volunteers, Civil War.
Andrew Jackson Wiley (1831-after 1891) Union Army, Co G, 39th Inf Regt Kentucky, Civil War

The Five Sons Of John Littleton III, War Of 1812 Soldier:

Andrew Jackson Littleton V (1840-1902), Union Army, Private, Company E, 22nd Regiment,
Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, Civil War.

George Washington Littleton, Sr. (1830-1864), Union Army, Private, Company E, 22nd
Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, Died In Service In The American Civil War.
George Was The Great-grandfather Of The Four Lowe Brothers, Who Served In World War II.

James Monroe Littleton (1846-1918), Union Army, Private, Company E, 22nd Regiment,
Kentucky Volunteer Infantry, Civil War.

John Littleton IV (1834-1863), Union Army, Private, Co E, 22nd Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer
Infantry, Died On Board The D. A. JANUARY, A Union Army Hospital Steamship, Civil War.

William L. Littleton (1843-1862), Union Army, Private, Company E, 22nd Regiment, Kentucky
Volunteer Infantry, Died In Service In The American Civil War.

The Four Lowe Brothers:

Albert Roy 'Jake' Lowe (1917-1944) Technical Sergeant, Co G, 2nd Battalion, 359th Infantry
Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, Killed In Action In France, World War II.

Arthur Floyd Lowe, PFC, Company G, 414th Infantry Regiment, 104th Division, World War II.

James Willis Lowe (1916-1978), PFC, HQ BTRY 752nd FA BN, World War II.

Wayne Lowe (1922-2002), PFC, Medical Aidman, Co B, 339th Infantry, 85th Division;
Co A, 109th Medical Battalion, 34th Infantry Division, World War II.

In Honor Of My Combs-Brashear Family Patriots

William Asher (1742-1792), Battle of Kings Mountain, American Revolutionary War.
 Jessie Boling (1758-1841), 2nd Virginia Reg, Valley Forge, American Revolutionary War.

Sampson Brashear (1763-1829), Captain, American Revolutionary War.

John 'Father Of The Eight' Combs, Sr. (1733-1820), American Revolutionary War.

John 'Soldier' Combs, Jr. (1761-1848), 12th VA Reg, Valley Forge, Revolutionary War.

Josiah Combs (1738-), French & Indian War, American Revolutionary War.

Mason Combs, Jr. (1747-1802), American Revolutionary War.

William Cornett (1761-1836), American Revolutionary War.

Moses Dorton (1762-1828), Battle Of Kings Mountain, American Revolutionary War.

John Kelley, Sr. (1755-1832), American Revolutionary War.

John Mullins (1761-1849), Battle Of Kings Mountain, American Revolutionary War.

Sampson Brashear (1788-1878), 5th Regiment, Tennessee Militia, War of 1812.

Reuben Woods, (1790-1859), 13th Kentucky Regiment, War of 1812.

Sampson Brashear (1838-1898), 13th KY Cavalry, Confederate, Prisoner Of War, Civil War.

Samuel Ray Brashear (1841-1870), CSA, Captain, 13th Cav KY, Prisoner Of War, Civil War.

James N. Brashear, Jr. (1835-1920), 13th KY Cavalry, Confederate Army, Civil War.

John Wesley Combs (1839-1865), CSA Private, Co C, 13th Cav Reg KY, Prisoner Of War at Camp Chase, Ohio, Camp Douglas, Chicago, Illinois and Point Lookout, Maryland, Civil War. After Barely Surviving The War and The Dangerous Journey Home, He Died Shortly Thereafter.

Wesley Combs (1820-by 1900), Union Army Private, Co A, 6th Cavalry Regiment Kentucky, Prisoner Of War At Confederate Prison Camp In Andersonville, Georgia, American Civil War.

James Woods (1841-1863), Union Army, 10th Infantry, Regiment Kentucky, KIA, Civil War

Theophilus Asher Woods (1844-1919), Brother Of James, Private, Union Army, Co M,
 14th Kentucky Cavalry, Civil War.

Logan Evans (1882-1970), Spanish American War.

Ulysses Grant Combs, Sr. (1894-1976), U.S. Army, Company D, 7th Cavalry,
 Right Front Guard For General John J. 'Black Jack' Pershing, Philippine Native Insurrection.

Sampson B. Brashear (1878-1918), 2nd Lieutenant, Co A, 358th Infantry Regiment,
 90th Infantry Division, Killed In Action In France, World War I.

William Riley Cornett (1887-1952), U.S. Army, Co D, 7th Cav, Philippine Native Insurrection,
 Mexican Punitive Expedition Pursued Pancho Villa, 1st Sgt, Co D, 6th Infantry, World War I.

Ulysses Grant Combs, Jr. (1924-1957), Gunner's Mate 3rd Class, U.S. Navy,
 U.S.S. Samuel S. Miles, Destroyer Escort, DE-183, World War II.

Vernon 'Jack' Combs, 1st Service 1938-1941, U.S.S. Wyoming, U.S.S. Helena, U.S.S. Polaris;
 2nd Service 1941-1946, Machinist Mate 2nd Class, U.S. Navy, U.S.S. PC 462, U.S.S. SC 1065,
 U.S.S. SC 1283, U.S.S. Oahu, Amphibious Ready Group, ARG-5, Division 6, WW II.

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