



**World War II Memories of  
Wayne Bayles, U.S. Army, Ret.  
CO of Co. "L" 359th**

*A note from Wayne Bayles,*

*"I am one that never discussed the military service with my family. Recently some have begun to ask questions so I began to have a little tape recorder beside me in the car and when a thought crossed my mind I would talk to myself ..out loud. The tapes were of poor quality but a friend of mine took an interest and put the crap into his computer. I have a partial printing of those sessions ...."*

I can assure you it wasn't very funny at the time, but around the 18th of December 1944, I was designated to lead a patrol. Myself and three men were supposed to take a rubber boat, climb down the side of a mountain, cross the Sarre River, try to get across without drowning, and then go in two or three miles with a radio and just observe traffic. That was my whole mission - just to observe movement. They called this the Siegfried Line. It was the thickest part of the Siegfried Line. We hadn't penetrated it yet. I was supposed to go back in there, report on movements, stay hidden of course and try to get back sometime. But fortunately the night before we were supposed to make the patrol they made a river crossing. A town named Dillingen was our objective. I never will forget we walked down to the river that night, I was the Executive Officer of K Company 359th Infantry and my job was to bring up the tail end of the column and make sure all the stragglers and everything would get there. So I was doing that and it was awfully dark, it wasn't raining but everything was really muddy and nasty with some snow on the ground. We got down to the river, they had been crossing all night, other elements of it, and of course the Germans were shelling. Some of it was pretty heavy; we had taken a lot of casualties, especially amongst the engineers who were directing the river crossing. It was by assault boats, there were no bridges or anything, they were trying to get in a bridge but at this time the only thing they had were assault boats and we weren't the first wave. We were the fourth or fifth wave but when they got down to the river the engineers were taking them across the swollen river, it was very high, and there was quite a bit of shelling as I said before. An assault boat crew usually consisted of two engineers who were trained to steer and row the thing and about six infantry guys who were only horsepower but it was really good if they had some experience in river crossing. Since I was bringing up the tail end of the company, I had ended up with about four or five raw recruits who had just arrived in the theater and none of them had ever



made a river crossing before. We got down to the boat we were supposed to take and they only had one engineer, a raw kid, he could not have been over 18 or 19 years old. They only had a crew of one because they had had so many casualties. He was hurrying us up to get us into the boat and saying they had to go and come back and get one more load so we got into the boat and started rowing. We hadn't gone very far of course in the rough water before we started going round. These guys that were rowing didn't know how to row and the engineer was doing his best to keep the boat right but we started going round and round. I wasn't sure if we were going to spill over into the river but thank goodness it wasn't too long before we hit some land and as soon as we hit the land he ordered "Out, out I have to get back and get another load". So the six of us hopped out, hit the land, and he headed back to the other side. We hadn't gone more than fifteen yards until we realized we were on an island - we ran into more water. The sad part about it too was the fact that it was just beginning to get daylight and here we were sticking right out in the middle of the river. The Germans could see us easily. I hadn't heard any small arms fire coming down but the artillery was still coming and I was sure they weren't going to let us stand out on that island by ourselves. There was nothing we could do, we couldn't communicate with anybody, we didn't have any radios or anything. I knew we had to get off the island. So I told the guys "look I'll go first but everybody grab each other by the belt, hold on real tight, hold your rifles above your head to try to keep them dry but don't let go of the man in front of you and hang on". Started walking and sure enough I thought every step I took was going to be the last one. The water was fairly swift and kept bumping up. It got up to my chest and finally got up to my chin and I knew we were going to drown. Then it started getting a little shallower and we walked out. Of course we were ringing wet all the way up to our necks and it was below freezing. We had about eight or nine hundred yards to go before we could get into any kind of shelter at all. Fortunately we didn't get shot at at all. By the time we got to where we were going our clothes had frozen and we could hardly move. But we got inside, some of the people had gotten there before us and had already built a fire and we finally got to where we could take our clothes off, dry ourselves off with some towels we sat in the house and we dried our clothes out. About the middle of the afternoon we were back in pretty good shape. It was a strange area because we were in these row houses, they call them townhouses now I guess, we would be in one and the Germans would be in another. We finally got to where we would go up into the attic, knock a hole in the firewall, and drop a hand grenade down and run them out the other



side hoping it wouldn't come back and hit us. We kept working there until we finally got into the main town of Dillingen and it was a matter of pillbox after pillbox. It was quite a mess. When we got over there we took the town of Dillingen, had a lot of casualties, we were ready to hang on to it. We were about half way through the Siegfried Line at that point and then the Battle of the Bulge started and Patton was afraid that the Germans would come down between the Sarre and Mozell Rivers and cut us off over there so he pulled us back across the river. I remember it must have been on the 23rd of December because on the 25th I remember very well we had a halfway decent Christmas dinner. But that night we loaded up in the trucks and took off for Belgium and that is when we got right in and help close up the gap in the Battle of the Bulge.

Another little incident that happened I recall, it wasn't funny at the time but it is funny now, I was a Corporal in M Company 117th Infantry. I would have had a squad, Corporals were normally squad leaders. But each platoon was authorized one Corporal that was called an Instrument Corporal and I took care of all of the range finders, aiming circles, and all that stuff and computed indirect fire problems for the machine guns in the section plus taking care of all the maps and that kind of stuff. When we would go out on a field problem they would usually just hook me onto a squad that was available. I didn't take the instruments out usually on those small problems like that, so they would just hook me with whoever came along. I remember this one night we were supposed to make a dawn attack. We moved into position about midnight I guess and we were supposed to just sit there and wait until we got the word to move on. It was supposed to come at sometime before daylight the next morning. Well I can't blame the people in the squad for what happened because I wasn't a part of them; I was just tagging along the tail end. But I sat there and went to sleep. And when they moved out they (laughs) didn't think about me, they just went on. But what woke me up was the sun shining in my eyes about 9:30 the next morning. I was way out in the middle of Fort Jackson reservation, all alone, not a soul there but me. I didn't really know where I was. I did remember though that we had been traveling east and so I had to go back west. I didn't know where or how far, but I knew I had to go west. When the sun was up I knew that that was east so I walked with the sun to my back. I must have walked a couple of miles until I came to a fairly decent paved road. I stopped and said, "well this road has to go somewhere, I



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

don't know where, but it goes somewhere". Just about that time there was a medium size truck barreling down the road that had a lot of 55 gallon drums on it that really smelled bad because it was the garbage truck. He stopped and asked where I was going and I said "Fort Jackson". He said "that's where I'm going too, I'm going after a load of slop from the mess halls down there. If you want a ride get in". So I got in the truck and (laughs) it just so happened that when we pulled into the post and pulled in the main gate that that was right in my company area. Boy I knew I was in for some trouble, because that 1st Sergeant McKenzie was going to tear me up. When we drove up though it just so happened that my company was unloading off of the trucks that had brought them in from the problem. So I just got out of the truck, walked over, fell in and mingled in and no one had ever missed me. They didn't know for months that I wasn't there. I never told anybody until I went to O.C.S. in July 1942. I finally got around to telling somebody what had happened.

I don't know if you've ever been afraid or not, but I mean scared. And if you're really scared, that's not funny. I remember, it must have been in September 1944, when I was picked to go on my first patrol after I had been assigned to Company K 359th Infantry. We had been in a position around a little town called Gravelotte in France, which is outside Metz, and one of the old historic forts around Metz called Jeanne d'Arc or Joan of Arc. We had been in position there about two weeks or so and the Battalion Commander was interested in what was out in front of him and he said he wanted an officer-led patrol to go out that night. I was the junior one I had never been on a patrol and he thought that would be a good time to break me in. I got the three men that were going with me, we sat down and talked it all over, worked out our signals about what we were going to do and so forth. There was a quadrangle area that we were supposed to reconnoiter and find out what was out there. We had our plans laid out pretty well what we were going to do, the signals that we were going to do to each other and so forth. It was a diamond formation with me in the middle. We headed out and they knew if I wanted them to go right or left or stop, they knew exactly what to do. We hadn't gone more than five or six hundred yards out to the front, not nearly as far as we were supposed to go, and it clouded over. It got so dark you just couldn't tell where you were, which was good in a way because they couldn't see you, but you couldn't tell where you were or where you were going. It would lighten up a little every once in a while. We kept



finagling along and all of a sudden the point man, or the one at the top of the diamond formation signaled for me to stop and signaled for me to come to where he was. I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "I think there is a German guard up here". I looked and sure enough there was a German soldier standing there. We had to go, we couldn't stop just because there was a German soldier there. We still had to do our jobs, but I wanted to go up real slow and easy. we crept up a little at a time, trying not to give ourselves away. We got a little closer, a little closer, and he actually moved about three or four feet in one direction and then three or four feet in the other direction. I must have spent about 30 minutes working on this little deal. When I finally got up as close as I could, guess what? It was a fence post! He wasn't moving at all, what was moving was my brain in my head. Of course the other guys thought he was a guard too. We got a big kick out of it later, it wasn't funny at the time, but we decided later that that was pretty neat. But it got so dark, that we couldn't find the spot that we were supposed to go to at all. We headed in that general direction and finally I gave up. I said if there was anything out there we would never be able to see it, so we'll go back. What you worry about when you go on patrol is, when you come back in, that you don't get shot by your own people. They are supposed to pass the word along to everybody that there is a patrol out in front of them and they should be very careful, but the word sometimes does not get to everybody. On the way back we were about 100 yards within our line when somebody got itchy and fired a flare. That thing hung up there in the air. We hit the ground of course like we were supposed to and tried to be real still, because movement is what gives you away more than anything else. It's better just to freeze and not move at all. We made it back and went and reported to the Battalion Commander exactly what had happened and he said "Well son I accept that, I didn't really think there was anything out there anyway".

In my opinion, one of the most important positions on an infantry battalion staff was the Battalion S2 or the Intelligence Officer. We was supposed to keep you up to date on what is going on, especially friendly troops and, more importantly, the enemy. Where he is and what is he doing. If he is a good one he is worth his weight in gold. We had one, his name was Arthur Drake. He had been born in Germany and stayed in Germany until he was 16. But because of the fact that he was Jewish he left Germany when he was 16. He spoke the language fluently but not only that, the most important thing was he thought like they did and that helped us out so many times. He was one of my favorite people in the whole battalion. He was funny and comical. This incident I'm



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

thinking about happened around the first part of April 1945. I saw that fellow again in the Pentagon in 1972. He was a full Colonel. I was a civilian at that time, I had gone with my boss up to the Chief of Signal Office for a meeting and this Colonel looked over at me, threw up his hand, and told everybody in the crowd “that man saved my life”. I didn’t believe that but I’ll tell you what happened. Patton had us going day and night, you’ve heard how he was and seen the movie. That was true. We had been going day and night and we were really tired. At that time I was commanding Company L 359th Infantry. We had finally moved into a little town and gotten it all cleared out, posted our guards around the building, and the rest of us were going to try to get some sleep. I had just fallen asleep when the radio operator woke me up. He said “Lieutenant, they want you on the radio”. So I got on the radio and it was Drake. He *had* started up to join the battalion with his staff of three or four people. They had run into a German patrol and over the radio he said he was completely surrounded. He was begging people to come and get him. He was calling Captain Evans who kept saying “I can’t hear you Drake, I can’t hear”. Well I heard perfectly clear, I knew what he wanted. It wasn’t really my place to go but finally I saw that no one else was going to go so I said “O.K. Drake I know about where you are, I’ll come and get you myself”. Well my people were so tired; I didn’t feel that I could ask anybody to do it. So I put the 300 radio on my own back and a couple of guys to go with me. We were going to sneak down there and see what we could find out. It was about half a mile, I guess, to the checkpoint that he had given me so I knew about where to find him. I expected to run into Germans all along the road.

We kept going very slowly, feeling our way along, sticking in the ditch as much as we could. Finally I heard somebody talking and they were speaking in English. I listened real carefully and I recognized Drake’s accent. He was talking to somebody else on the radio. We had found him. Somehow or another, the Germans around him had left without seeing him. They weren’t in our way, so I got him out of that one and got him back to our battalion. He was really happy and he remembered that in 1972 when I ran into him again. He still appreciated it. I was sure one more tired man, but I couldn’t ask anybody else to do it. I did it myself.

The Germans really had us out armored; I guess you should say, with weapons in the field. Not for field artillery, we had them on field artillery, but for ordinary close in support



their weapons were better than ours. Our tanks had a 75 millimeter gun on them which didn't come close to the ones their tanks had. About the best weapon we did have against tanks was an M10 tank destroyer. It had a 76-millimeter gun on it with high velocity and it did pretty well against all the tanks except the Tiger, it wasn't too good against them. The M10 had a tank chassis but an open air turret about 5 or 6 feet in diameter, I think a crew of three in the turret besides the driver. But I remember one day right at the close of the Battle of the Bulge I was in an infantry company and we had two or three of those things sitting along there with us. We were observing a little village and we saw some tanks coming around a mountain. The tank destroyers got busy real quick firing and knocked out the first one. The others couldn't go around it so they tried to hide behind some buildings. Those guys with the tank destroyers knocked the buildings down and then knocked the tanks out. We were sitting there kind of glorying about it expecting artillery to come in at any time from the Germans. There was a cemetery about 700 or 800 yards across the road and there was snow on the ground. The cemetery had a brick wall around it and I was just looking at the cemetery. All of a sudden the shape of the corner began to change. I wiped my eyes, I couldn't figure out what was going on. I looked real close and saw that it was a tank that had been painted white and had crawled up beside that brick fence that caused the shape of it to change. I ran over to the tank destroyer guy and told him "hey, there is a tank do you see it?" I tried to tell him where it was but he still couldn't see it. Well I didn't want the tank to start shooting at us so I got up into the tank turret and aimed the thing, it had big hand cranks on it to do the steering and the elevating and traversing and so forth. I lined up the cross hairs and I said, "now do you see him?" He said yeah and I said, "O.K., I'm out of here" (laughs). I jumped out; I wouldn't stay in there while it shot. They shot and knocked the tank out. You could see it caught on fire sitting right there beside that wall. But I didn't want to be around those things when they went off because they drew too much fire, I got out of there.

I went up to Omaha Beach in July 1944, that was a month after D-Day. I had to climb up the same old hill and the situation was not good at all. They were about three miles inland when I got there. My first day of what I would call real combat was in September. I was assigned to 3rd Battalion 359th Infantry. I remember going down and meeting the Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Smith. It was noisy and smoky in the little room and he said "lets go out into the barn so we can do some talking". So we went out



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

into the barn and I saw my first dead soldier. He was laying in the hay, I thought he was asleep. But actually he was dead. The Battalion Commander talked to me for awhile and he decided to assign me to K Company of the 359th. Captain Puly Evans was the Company Commander. One of the guides there took me down and introduced me to the Captain and we talked for a few minutes. He said "Bayles I'm going to assign you to the 3rd Platoon. If you'll look over on the side of that hill you'll see them. Do you see them?" and I said "well, I see one squad of them" and he said "that's it, that's the whole platoon". They had had a lot of casualties the day before and there was evidence to that too because the dead were stacked up beside the road two or three deep. It was sad. Anyway, I went over and met my Platoon Sergeant and he talked to me for awhile. He was from Pennsylvania, a coal miner he told me later. He had been offered a commission to take the platoon but he turned them down, he didn't want any part of it. But he was a Platoon Sergeant. He explained to me where the platoon was scattered out and I told him "Sarge, as soon as it gets dark I want to go out and check the positions". He looked at me and kind of grinned and said "Lieutenant, if you want to check those positions you had better do it before dark. If you go out there after dark you will get your butt shot off". So I learned a lot in just a few minutes from him. They shelled that place every night. The German army had an Officer Candidate School for the field Artillery located not too far from there and they had every one of those positions zeroed in. They could drop a shell just about anywhere they wanted. I had to get a hole in the ground before it got dark and I started digging and man, they call the town Gravelote because that is what it was, a lot of gravel. I couldn't dig and I saw I wasn't going to dig a hole before dark so I decided I was going to spend some time in this ditch. I was going to build what we call a slit trench in this ditch beside the road. I saw this big pile of rocks down a hundred yards or so and I was going to put a wall of rocks across that ditch, as tall as I was and build another wall of rocks on the other side to make a trench out of that. I started hauling these rocks and (laughs) I needed one more rock. I went back and there was a pretty good size one laying there. I got a hold of it and picked it up and when I did it made a sound. What had happened was I had pulled it right out of the stomach of a German soldier. They had buried him with rocks! It must have been several days before because he smelled. I hadn't noticed any odor until I pulled that rock out and man it was terrible. I didn't sleep much that night. I keep saying it wasn't very funny at the time and I can laugh about it now, but it sure wasn't funny then.



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

I believe I may have mentioned it, I arrived in France in July and didn't join my combat unit until September. In that time interval I have a couple of little jobs, one of them was training cooks and truck drivers, things like that, to be infantry soldiers because they were having a lot of casualties with the riflemen and they weren't having many casualties with the cooks. We had too many cooks and truck drivers and not enough riflemen. We had set up a little training program close to the beach. Actually we even built a range so we could qualify them on the rifles, if they had never been qualified before, and teach them how to shoot them. We did that for about two or three weeks and I had one man, a real meek sort of guy, that came to me one day and he said "Lieutenant, I'm a truck driver. I don't think I should go up to the front as a rifleman". I said "hey man, I'm with you, I agree with that, I don't want to go either but we have to go. We have to do what we have to do". But he said "I can't load a rifle". I said "that's no problem, I can teach you how to load a rifle in a couple of minutes". We used the M1 rifle with an 8 round clip. I said "go get your rifle, I'll show you how to do it". He said "I can't do it". I said "go get your rifle, bring it over here and I'll show you how to do it. It won't take us but a minute". So he went and got his rifle and brought it back and he showed me he couldn't. Because with the M1 rifle, you had to push the clip down into the rifle with the thumb of your right hand while you were holding the slide back with the butt of your right hand. He would go to push it down and he was double jointed, every finger including his thumbs on both hands would bend all the way back. He couldn't get any force at all to push the clip down into the rifle. He was right, he could not load a rifle. As far as I know he finished out the rest of the war as a truck driver.

This little tale is real sweet. When the war ended I was in the hospital in Cherbourg, France. My company was in Czechoslovakia. When the war ended they pulled back their position I guess to give Czechoslovakia to the Russians. We pulled back to a place called Graffenwahr, a little town that was an army training center and still is. That is where the company was when I got out of the hospital and they gave me my command back. I had a mess sergeant that was really something, he could really cook a meal. He came to me one day and said "Lieutenant I'm out of sugar. I'd like to make some ice cream. We found a place that can make some ice cream. I'd like to have some cake and ice cream for Sunday, but I'm out of sugar". I said "go over to K Company and I Company and see if you can borrow some". He said "I've already asked, they don't



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

have any". And I said "talk to the Battalion S 4 and see if they have any". He said "they don't have any either". I didn't suspect what he was up to but anyway he finally said "Lieutenant one of our platoons is guarding a German warehouse over in the next little town that is full of sugar. I don't think it is right for us not to have any sugar and all that German sugar over there stacked up for them, so what I would like to do is get a little of that sugar but I want to get your permission". I thought about that for a little while and I said "well we don't want to get into any trouble but O.K. go get enough sugar to fix us up here". A few days later my acting Battalion Commander, Major Scanlon called me. He said "come up here". So when I got there, he introduced me to a friend of his, a major, who was with the military government. He was the military governor of that district that we were in. He said "Wayne, some Germans reported to my friend here that your jeep had stolen about one thousand pounds of sugar out of the warehouse." I said "oh come on, no way". "O.K., I'll admit I did tell them they could get enough sugar to make some ice cream out of". The major said "well I thought the Germans were just stretching it a little bit, or lying about it. Just don't let it happen any more". I said "It won't, I assure you of that". I went straight to the mess hall and said to the mess sergeant "let me see that sugar you got the other day". He said "O.K. come on". He had it hidden up in the attic. I went up and there was eight, one hundred and fifty pound bags of sugary He really had taken it, but I didn't go back and tell them that we did because I had already told them we didn't. We had a sweet story around there for a long time after that.

This thing is really sad, there is absolutely nothing funny, then or now, about it. When I was first assigned to K Company it was as a Rifle Platoon Leader, but then I got promoted to 1st Lieutenant. And in a rifle company, in those days you had three rifle platoons and one weapons platoon. The weapons platoon consisted of two 30 caliber machine guns and three 60 millimeter mortars. We were still in the vicinity of Metz and we had moved in to relieve another company that had been there for some time. We put the mortars in my platoon in exactly the same spots as the mortars in the previous platoon that we were relieving. They had been shelling the Germans at night, they would use them to kind of chase the Germans around in the trenches. At night they would go outside the posts, or their fort, in the outdoor trenches and the Battalion Commanders would like to run them around out there with these little mortars just to keep them awake all night. So when my platoon went in we sat the guns in exactly the



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

same position. The Battalion Commander told me to shell, to shoot at them. I computed the problem, measured the distance on the map, added 150 yards for safety, measured the azimuth, and asked the machine gun position which was up on *the* front, we were back a little ways but the machine guns were up on the front, to observe the fire. I fired one round and they started screaming “don’t fire anymore, halt, cease fire”. What had happened was that that one round that we had fired with all the safety features figured in had landed right exactly in the center of one of my machine gun positions and killed two of my best men. I about flipped. I assumed all the responsibility for it myself, it could have been a mistake on my part in computing the problem, it could have been a mistake on the gunners part who set the data on the gun sight, it could have been a defective round, we’ll never really know what happened. But the end result was the shell that I gave the order to fire landed right in the machine gun position of my own men and killed two of them. The Battalion Commander was trying to console me and said “hey man you’re not the first person that that has happened to, that has happened frequently. This is war, we still have a long way to go, don’t let that get you down”. I tried to keep it out of the back of my mind but even to this day I never did get over it. I’m sorry. That machine gun position was four feet by four feet. If I had been shooting at it trying to hit it, I would have probably never, never hit it.

This little incident happened about mid January after the Bulge had slowed down and we had headed back toward the Siegfried Line area, I remember that, to a little town called Habscheid. I’m not sure if it is Belgium or Germany but it was right on the border. I remember seeing the dragon teeth on the tank that was part of the Siegfried Line. I was executive officer of K Company and we had moved into this little town and cleaned out everybody, we didn’t have to fight to get in because there was hardly anybody there, just a few civilians left. During the night some boys in one of the platoons called me up and said “Lieutenant, there is a pregnant lady in this house down in the basement and she is screaming and hollering and about to drive us crazy. She is going to have a baby and we don’t know what to do and it scares us, we don’t like it. So you have to do something about it”. (Laughs) I said “O.K. I’ll call the doctor”. I called the battalion aide station, we had a Jewish doctor there, he was a nice fellow but he didn’t care much for the Germans. I understand that now. I told him we had this situation of the German woman up there and we didn’t know what to do. He said he would come up. He got in



the jeep, you would have to see the roads to understand the situation, the roads were awful, about knee deep in mud. It was a bad situation because of the route he had to take to get up there. It was about four or five miles that he had to come up in the jeep, at night in the mud. It was really bad, it took him a long time to get there. But he came up and we showed him the house, he went down into the basement, checked the lady and said it was going to be four or five days yet, no problem. He got back in his jeep and goes back to the aide station. The next day, the boys called me up again and said "Lieutenant, you have to do something. That woman is screaming and hollering and about to drive us crazy. You have to do something". Well I had a new uniform change and a clean shave; I had a watch with a sweep second hand on it and didn't have anything else to do. I remembered the doctor said it was going to be four or five days, so I jokingly told the fellows "I'll come up there and do that job myself". I went up and went to the basement and sure enough she was carrying on something fierce. Her husband was standing there beside the bed with her. I took her arm and checked her pulse, looking at my new watch with the sweep second hand on it and I realized something was going on, I realized this women needed some help. We looked and she was having the baby, the baby's head had already started out. I knew it had taken the Battalion Surgeon about three or four hours to get up there the last time and he wouldn't want to come back. I knew right away that someone needed to help this woman. Only one Sergeant stayed with me when they saw what was going on, and the others ran. I mean they got out of that building and left. This one Sergeant said "well Lieutenant we're the only ones left, I'll help you with whatever we need to do". So I started to work, I said "go call that doctor, get him back up here as soon as you can, I know it will be awhile but get him back up here". I rolled up my sleeves, and the baby was ready to come out, I could tell that. I didn't know what I was doing, I knew a little bit, but as the baby came out, I could see that the umbilical cord was wrapped around his neck and I knew that that wasn't good, I knew it wasn't supposed to be that way. I started pulling on it trying to turn the little fellows head just a little bit trying to keep the pressure off the throat. I kept pulling on the cord, finally he came out. We got him out and I untwisted the cord from around his neck and I knew it had to be cut. But the problem was I didn't know where, I knew they usually left a little of it on there, but I didn't know much about that. I was afraid if I cut it the baby would bleed to death or the lady would bleed to death. I didn't know what to do, but I took some sewing thread and tied real tight in two places. Then I took a pair of scissors and cut it in between. She calmed down a little bit



and maybe an hour later the doctor finally got up there. The travel was a little better in the daytime and a little faster. He checked the baby over and said its O.K. and put some kind of drops in its eyes and he took care of the lady. He got the afterbirth out of her, the husband took it out, and told us to give her a good bath and take care of the baby. He got back in his jeep and went on back. Things had quieted down a little bit but there I was with number one on my weapon. That's the last one I hope I ever have to have anything to do with. It turned out all right. We left the next day and three or four days later I had to back to the division rear to pick up the payroll and I stopped back in to see if things were alright. The old lady was up cleaning house and the little baby was over in his crib crying so apparently he did alright. They told me they named him Peter Wayne. Stars and Stripes wrote it up, there was a piece in the paper about it. I didn't have sense enough then to know to cut it out and bring it home, I just let it go. But it was in the Stars and Stripes.

There was a kid from Crockett County, his name was Earnest Neal Lloyd. We were on maneuvers up in Tennessee in what they call the Tennessee Maneuver Area around Murfreesboro, Bell Buckle, south of Nashville, all down in there in the summer of 1941. We were on a two-week maneuver but on one weekend they told us they were going to be in that one spot until Monday and if we wanted to go home, we could go home. So Earnest Neal and I caught a ride on an Army truck into Nashville and got out on Highway 70 and started hitchhiking. I don't recommend it. We weren't out there too long until a guy came along in a 1938 Ford, I'll always remember that car. He stopped and we told him we were going to Jackson. He said "well, get in. I don't have anything to do, I might as well just drive on down to Memphis. We'll drive through Jackson, I'll take ya'll all the way home". That sounded pretty good until we were in the car a few minutes when we found out he was drunker than a skunk. If you don't know Highway 70, southwest out of Nashville, is full of curves. It was built back in the old days when they went around the curves instead of fill in the holes. It was really scary. I kept trying to get him to let us out, thinking up all kinds of excuses. One time I even told him "I have an aunt that lives down here in Dickson, I think I'll just get out and spend the night with her". He said "no, I'm going to take you guys all the way home, I feel sorry for you soldier boys and I'm going to take you all the way to Jackson". Well we didn't want to go all the way to Jackson with him, but nevertheless, he wouldn't let us talk him out of it.



We got a little bit west of Dickson, I can't remember just exactly where it was, but it wasn't too far past Dickson, and I had a thought. I said "hey, let's stop and get a beer". Well he bought that. I didn't drink beer but I thought he must have been drinking some so we found a little honky tonk along side the road and we pulled over and the three of us went inside. It was crowded of course. We stood at the bar, I bought him a beer and as soon as he started drinking that beer, Earnest Neal and I took off, slipped out (laughs). We ran down the road a few hundred yards so he couldn't look out the door and see us and started hitchhiking again. We caught a ride with a telephone truck. I remember we got into the back of this truck with a whole lot of digging equipment and so forth and there were already two other soldiers in there beside us. We made it back home, back into this area but we had to get back up there. It doesn't pay to hitchhike, but if you do, before you get into the car make sure the guy is not drunk. It's scary.

Two military operations that I was always afraid of as a young fellow were an attack on a fortified position and river crossings. To me those were the most dangerous of all of them. I really sweated them out. We had some of all of it, mostly river crossings. One that we always sweated out the most was someday we had to cross the Rhine. I thought about that even when we were in *OCS* (Officer Candidate School). The Rhine River really could be a booger, but, with the way things happened I walked across the Rhine River on a footbridge. I didn't have to row a boat and didn't have to fire a shot. What this little tale is all about though, the main thing I wanted to remember, was the fact that after we crossed the bridge, on foot, single column, the whole infantry company, we made a left hand turn when we hit the land and were marching up sort of parallel with the river and going to this little town which had already been cleared out, I believe by the 4th Armored Division. But anyway, we were headed up that way and an ME-109 fighter plane came buzzing over the top of us and I thought he was going to shoot. He didn't but there was a long straight stretch of land in front of us, no trees or anything, and this guy made a perfect belly landing out in front of us. We watched him, as soon as the plane stopped he jumped out and ran into the edge of the nearest little town which was only two or three hundred yards. He didn't bother to take his parachute off, he was running with that thing banging on the back of his legs. I went on up, I wanted to see the plane. I looked and boy it was a beautiful thing. It hardly had a scratch on it. He didn't even tear it up when he landed it on it's belly, it was a wheels up landing. I was also interested in what happened to him when he ran into the edge of



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

town. He dropped his parachute, and lumped on a bicycle and took off, so I don't know what ever happened to him. But I was interested in that parachute. When I got up there, I picked it up and man it was a honey. It just fit me to a tee, the right size. I really wanted that parachute, it was the quick release kind, the kind you just hit a button in front of you and the straps flew out. It was a good over-water release. I picked that thing up and man I lugged it and finally got a chance to put it on my jeep. I kept it on the jeep until I had a chance to pack it and L mailed it home. It got home all right, my wife told me that she had received it. She had it laying in the living room and this little turkey, Morgan McDonald, he ended up being a drummer in Peewee King's band, a good friend of Wilma and Annie Jo. He was over, he was a little bit too young to be in the Army, and Wilma was showing him the parachute and some other stuff I had sent and he said "here's how you do that" and he grabbed hold of the rip cord, the dummy, and dumped it right in the middle of the floor. It was just scattered all over the floor Wilma told me. She scooped it all up and put it in a box and somehow it ended up at my aunt's house, in the attic. I understand that a couple of years later she made doll clothes out of that silk and that really screwed That parachute up for a fare thee well. I wanted that thing really bad. Of course it would be too little for me now but at the time it was a perfect fit.

I remember one time when I was serving with an advisory team to the Chinese in Formosa and I had a monkey for a pet. I had gotten it to have so when the kids came over I would have a monkey for them. It had gotten loose from me a couple of times, he would break his chain and go to a tree. 1 the way you catch a monkey when they get away from you is to go get a dog. They love dogs and they will come down to where they are to play with the dog and you can just nick them up. It did that two or three times until the chain got so short that I had to have a new chain. I had a jeep driver, his name was Ling. He and I got along pretty good, we could go some places together without an interpreter. Not a lot, we couldn't do any business, but he and I got along pretty good. I said to him one day "Ling, you know monkey?" He said "Huh, Huh, yeah monkey, monkey. Yeah capitan that". I said "O.K., I want to go get a chain, the monkey has broken his chain and I need to go downtown. Do you know where I can get a chain?" I used my hands and put them around my neck. He put his hands up to his neck and said "yeah, O.K., monkey, yeah. Go get jeepo." So we went and got the jeep, went downtown and he pulled up in front of a dry goods store. I said "wait Ling, I want a chain for monkey". He said O.K. and I thought he knew this town better than I do. I thought we



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

would probably go through the store and there would be a junkyard out in back. They had these little lean—to places where guys would sell strange things. But I thought he knew what he was doing. So he led me into the store, but instead of going on through, he led me over to a counter that was full of neckties. He thought I had wanted to buy a necktie for myself. You can never tell what people are thinking when you are talking to them, you have to be real careful.

Shortly after we had first went to Fort Jackson, all of us *were* very green, we had had some National Guard drill and lectures, but that was all. We were all green as grass when it comes to soldiering. But I remember the first time I was on guard duty. I had learned my General Orders, or at least I thought, as well as anyone else. I went on guard duty. My post ran up and down a line that ran between the tents that we were sleeping in and the row of latrines. Every company had a latrine assigned to them. That is where my post was and as far as I was concerned, when taps blew, everybody was supposed to go to bed. So I was walking my post and here came old Newman. (laughs) There were two brothers in our company by the name of Newman. It was the oldest one, he came charging across, he ran out of his tent, and started crossing my post and I challenged him. I made him stop and said “where in the world do you think you are going?” And he said “I’ve got to go to the bathroom”. I said “oh no you don’t, you get back in that tent.” He got back in his tent and I kept walking. A little bit later on I saw him way on down the other end of the battalion area, sneaking across over to the latrine. Well I’ve learned now, since then, that the General Orders say “take charge of this post and all government property in view, walk my post in a military manner keeping always on the alert and observing everything that takes place within sight or hearing, and allow no one to pass without proper authority”. What I thought it said was allow no one to pass. I’ve grown up, I was only 18 then, and I’ve learned that he had the authority to go to the bathroom.

Those old forts around the city of Metz were part of the Maginot line and had been there for a long time - two or three wars. We were outside this one called Jeanne d’Arc or Joan of Arc, which was supposedly one of the toughest one of the five that were located there. And they tried every way to penetrate those things. I remember one day two P-47 fighter planes flew over with a five hundred pound bomb under each wing. They were



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

making diving runs at that fort. I saw this one P—47 that made a dive and one of its bombs released and headed for the target. The other one released but it only released on one end. When the plane started to pull up out of the dive the bomb was still hanging there on one end. Eventually it turned loose and it headed right straight back toward us. It landed about fifty yards from one of my outposts and it put a hole in the ground, it had a delayed fuse on it, that you could have buried a two and one-half ton truck in easily. It threw dirt all over everybody but fortunately no one was hurt.

When you're scared you forget about being hungry. Food was kind of hard to come by and hard to keep to us. We spent a lot of time eating what was called back in those days K rations. Which was a meal in a box, preserved, with a little variety. Not very much, but it was cheese everyday for dinner, I remember that. But they were nutritious and easy to carry. When things got kind of quiet, more or less, the guys would start to get hungry and you never have seen the ingenuity of American soldiers, they can come up with more things than you can shake a stick at. I know during the fall we had a lot of trench fries because just about every German house that we went into had a basement full of potatoes. The only problem we had was grease. That is where the ingenuity of the G.I.'s would come in. You would see sometimes they would have something in their pack and you would wonder what in the world it was. You would look and it would be a quart of grease that they had managed to come up with somewhere. We always had the potatoes but the grease was hard to come by but they would manage. The army had substitute butter back in those days. It wasn't margarine because margarine would melt. This stuff would not melt. We tried to make french fries in it but there was no way, we even put a blow torch to a pan and put it in there but it would just slide around in there, it never would melt. But the guys would always come up with some grease somehow or another. I remember one day looking out the window of this building that we were in and I see two of my guys leading a cow down the Street. I said "what in the world is going on, they're leading a cow down the street?" Well I didn't pay too much attention to it I thought she had gotten in their way or something. About a couple of hours later, here came a guy with one of the nicest steaks you have ever seen in your life, he brought me a steak. It turns out this fellow had been a butcher and when he saw that cow, he also found a butcher shop in this little town that we were in. (laughs) They butchered that cow and boy we had steak around there for a couple of days.



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

On April 7, 1945 I had a shrapnel wound in my right arm and was hospitalized until about the middle of July. When I went back to my outfit, of course the war had ended, and they were located in Graffenwahr, Germany. The 90th Division headquarters was located in Weiden, the 359th Infantry regimental headquarters was located in Amburg, and my 3rd Battalion was stationed in Graffenwahr. Graffenwahr was, and still is, a training center. The Germans used it for training artillery people because they had a lot of range area. It was a small town, as far as population of the town was concerned, but a real fine training area. The British had bombed it pretty heavy but my outfit, while I was still in the hospital, had gone in and occupied the barracks. Some of the roofs had been blown off. They would take the roof off of one that didn't get hit and put it on the other one. Then they patched it all up and we had a real nice area to live in. The Battalions in the Division were scattered out all over that part of Germany. The Division Commander had expressed a desire to be able to fly around to all the Battalions and visit them by using one of his little artillery observation airplanes. So he put out a directive that everybody would have some kind of an airfield. Most of those planes were J3's, piper cubs, and could land on not too long of a runway. But the Division Commander wanted to be able to fly around to all of these different spots. The Battalion Commander called me and said "Wayne, you used to do some flying. Do you know anything about building airports?" (laughs) I said, "no, I have never tried to build one, but I know what you need". And he said "O.K., it's yours. I want you to make an airport available to the Division Commander so he can fly in and see us every once in a while." So I started looking, I got in the jeep and drove all over that reservation. Of course an infantry battalion, like us, didn't have any construction equipment. We had a few shovels but that was about it. I had to find a place that wouldn't require any extensive work because we didn't have the equipment to do it with. And that reservation was full of holes, tank traps, artillery holes, and every kind of obstacle you could think of. I could not, on that reservation, find a place big enough to land a J-3. But I kept looking and I found, just outside the post, (right adjacent to the military post), a big field of wheat. But it wasn't quite ripe yet. This was at the end of the war and we pretty much had our say of what we did. So I said O.K., that is where I'm going to put the airfield and I couldn't wait for that wheat to get ripe. But how in the world am I going to cut 5 acres, I guess, of wheat with just sickles? I thought we may be able to scratch up a few sickles. I was talking about this one day and one of my guys was a farmer and he said "well Lieutenant I know where there is a horse drawn mower downtown. I saw it one day



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

sitting in one of the garages down there. We could take that thing up there and use the jeep instead of a horse. We, could cut that wheat for you.” So we did, he went downtown with the jeep, pulled that lawn mower, a two horse mower with a long blade, and they began to cut the wheat using the jeep. Well, of course, when the wheat started to fall, right away the civilians raised cain because they knew that was their food. So they came up and asked if they could gather up the wheat. I was glad of that because they raked up the straw for me and they were gleaning the heads off of that wheat. It was almost ripe, I guess they had some way that they salvaged part of it, but anyway the main point is that we used a mower to cut the wheat down. That was great, we had plenty of room, a good nice smooth area for the planes to come in and land. I found a paint place downtown and they made me up some black and orange paint and I made some markers to go along the edge of the field so that they could be seen from the air pretty well. I thought “well, we need a telephone line out there”, because when somebody comes in, they need to call and tell us to send a jeep out to pick them up. So the battalion communications section ran a EE8 telephone line out there and that worked fine. I said, “Well, we need an operations shed, where are we going to get an operations shed to put that telephone in?” (laughs) If you have ever been to Germany or Europe, you’ll know that every railroad crossing has a barrier that went across the railroad, I imagine now they are electrical, but back in those days you let them down by hand, and they always had a little shed there that the man stayed in. When the train was coming he would go out and roll the barrier down. There was one right in Graffenwahr. We didn’t have a truck, or anything, to lift that thing up but we were going to take it. We tied a steel cable around it and drug it right down the highway from the railroad crossing, probably half a mile, to the little airstrip we were building. Fine, it didn’t tear it up, damaged the road a little bit where some of the spikes were dragging in the asphalt but we got the shed out and put the telephone line in it, had a battery operated light that we left out there so that if we needed anything in the nighttime it would be there. Nobody bothered it, nobody bothered the telephone and we were in business. There was a plane circling around and I could tell he was looking our airport over. Then he came in and landed, it was an L—5. I went running over to talk to the pilot. I said “could you see our field up there?” He said “oh yeah, you can see it a long way, it is laid out right, the right direction for the prevailing winds, but I don’t like the signs that you put along the edge to mark the runway but we’ll take care of that.” I said “what do you mean you’ll take care of that?” He said they were from a corps artillery outfit and they were



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

moving in to take charge of that post. (laughs) So that meant he took over my airfield too. The main point is the Division Commander did fly in one time and used it. But the airport then was being used by a corps artillery outfit, who had alot more airplanes than we had and it worked real good, but they took charge of it. That airport is still in operation today. They extended the runways, paved it, built a big operations office, but 50 years later that airport is still being used today.

I've been asked alot of times, especially by kids, "Mr. Wayne, did you ever kill anybody?" Well that is a hard question to answer because I'm against killing and I was in the Army and they were going to try to kill me if I didn't kill them. I did shoot several times at people individually but that wasn't my job. I was a platoon leader and a company commander and my troops killed alot of them. But I personally can't say that I know for sure that I ever killed one. I fired artillery alot of times that killed them, but for me just to pull a gun out and shoot one, I can't say that I ever did. One little incident that I recall that I am kind of proud of is the fact that I think I saved a German man's life. You'll remember that during the Battle of the Bulge how cloudy and overcast it stayed for several days. I remember the first morning that the clouds lifted. We had had a real rough 2 or 3 days and it was extremely cold. Several of my men had frozen parts, especially their feet. I remember that last night it was so extremely cold and I had been up most of the night. I had finally got to sleep for a little bit and sometime, about 9:30 or 10:00 in the morning, I guess, we were sitting still and one of The fellas woke me up and said "Lieutenant, I think you should come up here and look at this." So I got up and went up to the position that he was talking about and he said there was a German soldier laying out there in the field. There was a little undergrowth, not much, it was mostly open, but he said "we've been watching him for about half an hour and we don't know if he is dead or not." I took my field glasses and looked and sure enough about 250 or 300 yards there was a German soldier laying out there. I took my field glasses and I could see by looking through them that there was just a little bit of movement. I saw him move his hand a little bit, so I knew he was alive but I didn't know if he was playing opossum or what. I thought we would watch him for a little while. We watched him for about 15 or 20 minutes and he didn't make any movement to do anything so I thought if this fella is hurt we should try to help him. I got one of the other fellas there, we picked up a litter, left our weapons, and took the first aid man's helmet that had a



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

Red Cross painted on the side of it and he and I went out to check this guy over. I had gotten 4 or 5 riflemen lined up in good spots there though to cover us in case we ran into any trouble. They could start shooting and doing whatever they could to help us get back. We went out with no problem and got to him and I could see that he was still alive. I tell you he was frozen, there is no doubt in my mind, and he was stiff as a board. We could tell that he had been wounded so we picked him up and laid him on the stretcher and started back in. He was heavy, I wasn't very big in those days, and we struggled along. We had to take one break or so and we were afraid we were going to get shot at, but we thought it was worth a chance. We got him back in, we got behind the line, and made him a cup of coffee. Of course he was in such bad shape that we almost had to force him to drink the coffee. We did thaw him out enough to get him to where he could talk a little bit. A couple of the fellas there could speak some pretty decent German so they were talking to him and we were kind of chiding him along and we finally got him to condemn Hitler. There was a tank there that had to head back to their line to get some maintenance done on it so we loaded the stretcher, with him on it, on top of the tank, and strapped it down so he wouldn't fall off. The last I saw, they were headed back toward the rear with him hanging up there. I've always wondered if he made it, I sure hope he did.

I was in the 3rd Army for the whole time that I was over in Europe during the war. Of course, General George Patton was the CG. I saw him several times, always near the front, but I guess one time I saw him after the war in a parade at Amburg. He was standing on the reviewing platform, but the closest that I ever came to him was when I was a patient in the 1st General Hospital in Paris. It had been real crowded, they had had a lot of casualties, so myself and two other Lieutenants were bedded down in the hallway. Of course, the hallway was nicer than most of the hospitals anyway, but, they had three of us stashed up in the hallway because the officer's ward was full. Patton's son—in—law, a Lieutenant Colonel, was in the room right around the corner from where we were and two or three times he came up to visit him while I was there in the hospital. But I remember this one day, it was time for our beds to be made up and we were just standing around there and this little French nurse's aid was making up our beds, flitting around and you know how they fold the corner under. Here comes General Patton down the hallway, staunched and in a hurry to see his son-in-law, and just about the time he started to pass my bed she swung her little behind out in front of him and he ran into her



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

and knocked her down on the floor. (laughs) He was a gentleman, he stopped, took a step back, smiled and said “sorry”. She got up and he proceeded around the corner to see his son—in-law.

The first part of April 1945 the war was almost over but I learned one thing, as long as there is one man out there shooting at you with a rifle or with artillery then the war is not over as far as your concerned. We were in this little town of Oberhauf, Germany and we had been given the next town as an objective, it was about three miles. It was the first time I had ever been sent out with a company size. The Battalion Commander had three little towns to take so he gave each one of us a town and told us to take it. We started out, no problem, except we had a tank or two with us and the Germans in retreating had cut down trees across the road so we had to stop once, in a while to clean out the trees. The problem with that, it made it slow, because they usually put a mine someplace in that tree and you had to be really careful, so that slowed us down. Just before dark we were still quite a ways from the town we were supposed to take and I got hit. We thought it was a rifle at first but later on it turned out to be a piece of shrapnel. I was hit in the right forearm and it knocked me down. I remember though the aid man came running over to take care of me and I had chewed him out so many times because I had caught him drinking alot. I was worried that some day we would need him and he would be too drunk to do anybody any good, so I chastised him quite a bit. But I hadn't been on the ground half a minute till he was there. I had a brand new tankers jacket that I was really proud of because they were hard to get and he took a pair of scissors and cut the sleeve right off of that thing. During WWII we used a lot of sulfa drugs, each first aid pack had eight big tablets about the size of your thumb and if you got hit you were supposed to take all eight of those and drink a quart of water. He saw that I did that and then they managed to get me on a jeep. We crawled back a little ways, the jeep picked me up and took me into this little town of Oberhauf, where we had our first aid station. I never will forget because it was on the second floor. There was a very small, narrow staircase going up to the second floor. Now why they wanted to put an aid station up there, I'll never know but anyway that is where it was. I got up and they looked at my wound again and they still thought it was a rifle slug that was in my arm but they couldn't be sure. They had no x-rays there but just to be on the safe side they made me take eight more of those sulfa tablets and drink another quart of water. Man I'm telling you I was really full. When they finally got an ambulance to evacuate me back to



the clearing company a couple of guys were helping me down the steps and I urped all over everybody and everything. Pills and water and everything else came flying out of me going down those stairs and got all over those guys but they didn't seem to mind. I don't remember too much about this clearing company but we got back there and the place was full, I mean there were guys in all kinds of shape laying all around all over the place. You could hear some of them crying and some of them were hollering, they were hurting so bad. Some of us were just laying there, I was scared because I thought for sure the artillery was going to blast in on us, I just had a fear of that for some reason. But everything worked out all right, but I can remember only one thing. A doctor was up walking around looking at all the guys and doing what he could, deciding which ones should go first and so forth. He stopped at me and there was an aid man with him and he told him "I'm worried about this guy going into shock." So he made him lift my feet and lower head and he said "kind of watch him real close." That's all I remember until the next day we were on an ambulance going back to the field evacuation hospital, the 106 Evacuation Hospital, I remember that number. There were four of us in this ambulance that I was in, one on each side and one tied in a litter above you. We had been going quite a ways and I could hear this guy up above me moaning, he was unconscious but you could tell he was moaning in pain. Then I heard a rattle like I'd never heard before and I said that man, I believe, is dying. So I banged on the cab, the driver finally stopped, got out, came around, and said "what's the matter?" I said "you better take a look at this fella above me because I think he has a real serious problem." He said "Lieutenant I'm just a driver, I don't know the first thing about first aid, I can't do anything. I'll just drive a little faster and see if I can hurry up and get there." Sure enough, when they unloaded us of f the ambulance, they took the fella above me out first and he was dead. I had heard him die.

That place I had spoke about unloading the ambulance was the 106 Evacuation Hospital. They ran me in there, made some x-rays of my arms and found it wasn't a bullet, it was a piece of shrapnel. But it had embedded itself in the muscles in my forearm and they said "well, we don't think we better try to take it out here." So they just trimmed off the old dead flesh around the entrance wound, sewed it up, put my arm in a sling, and evacuated me to the 1st General Hospital in Paris. While I was there the main thing they did was to give me physical therapy every day on my arm. I had to squeeze a



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

rubber ball, put it in water, rubbed it in oil, and everything else. They were too busy there even to operate, they had quite a few casualties. One day they came in and called out us three Lieutenants. One of these fellas had been shot through the neck, the bullet went in one side of his neck and went out the other. The other had had a jeep accident, it turned over and broke his collarbone. So we were just in their way, most of the time, and since we weren't too bad they would give us passes during the day and let us go off. We would come in 8:00, 9:00, 10:00 o'clock at night, get a good nights sleep, go do our p.t. that we had to do the next day, and they would give us another pass. That went on for a few days and then they came in and said "well, we have to evacuate you to the United Kingdom." None of us wanted to go to England, we would be leaving any chance at all of getting back to our outfit. We didn't want to go to England and we complained, so they said "o.k., we'll see what we can do about it." The next day, here came three litters with two guys on each litter. The three of us looked at somebody and said "boy there must be somebody here that is real sick." Then they called off our names and we said "what is this?" They said "you're being evacuated to a field hospital in Cherbourg, France and it is a litter patient only train that is leaving and you are going to be on a litter." Well, we could walk, we had been going to Paris every day but because of the fact that the train was supposed to be restricted to litter patients they made us get on those litters. They hauled us out and put us on the train, we had to ride all the way to Cherbourg laying on that litter. I was in the hospital there in Cherbourg, had been there a couple days when they ran me into the operating room. It was in the summer time, it was hot. It was a tent hospital, no air conditioning. I never will forget this young doctor, a Captain, was operating on my arm with just a local anesthetic and he was having trouble finding that piece of shrapnel because it would move around every time my arm would twitch a little bit. He was sweating and had a Sergeant that would wipe his head off every once in a while to keep it from dripping down in me. He had my arm opened up with the expanders and he was down in there feeling around. His boss, a Major, came along and said "what's the matter?" He said "well, I'm tearing this boy's arm all to pieces trying to find that piece of shrapnel, I can't get it." This Major was the chief of surgery and said "just mark his ZI". What that meant was that I could go home, they would put me on a ship and ship me back home. That sounded pretty good except I really wanted to go back to my outfit. The doctor said "won't we try one more thing." He sent the Sergeant over to the dental clinic. The dentist had a little portable X-ray that they used. He stuck several needles in my arm, cross ways and made them cross each other, and



then made a picture of it to see where the shrapnel was in relationship to where those needles crossed. He then just reached down in there and pulled it out. He sewed it back up and a few days later I was headed back for my outfit by train. They put me in charge of the troop train from Cherbourg to Paris. Then we were further to go from Paris on up to Nuremberg, Germany by cattle car. They crammed so much of us in those boxcars that you would have thought we were Jewish prisoners. But that was alright, we were headed home. It took us three days, we would go awhile and have to stop, but anyway we got there.

Of about 200 men that were leaving that hospital to go to Nuremberg, I lost one in Paris. We got ready to check out and there was only one man that didn't show up. I never did know what happened to him. It was really sad because driving along on the railroads you would look out and just see fields of people sitting by the railroad. Part of them were Jewish people that had been freed from the refugee camps, some of them were Russian soldiers that had been captured and freed, and alot of them were of course Germans trying to get back home. It was a mess, war is really bad. You can just see all these things, I'm sure its hard to imagine but it was bad.

We got to Nuremberg o.k. and from there we went by truck. I think we went first from Nuremberg to Weiden, then since my outfit was in Graffenwahr they sent me there and I rejoined and they gave me my company back that I had when I got wounded. So it was back home again.

I've tried to remember his name but it never comes back to me, but while I was a patient in that field hospital in Cherbourg I was recovering o.k., no problems, but there was a young soldier, an enlisted man, that had been admitted and was being treated for shell shock. I know it is real, that phenomena is real, he was really almost out of it at times. For some reason he took up with me and he'd come in my ward and sit on the bunk and talk to me for a while and he'd get up and wander off. Every day, two or three times a day, he would come in and just want to talk. But I remember he had a problem sleeping that was one of his symptoms. The Army had a sedative, we called it Blue 88, I don't really know what it was but if you take one, you are out. He had been on those for a while and the doctor finally said he had as many as he could take. He told the nurse not to give him anymore. I remember one night he came in and he was really upset. He was



demanding that he have a pill, he couldn't go to sleep and he thought the nurse should give him a pill regardless of what the doctor said. This nurse that was on duty told him she would go get him one. What she did was she took a capsule, they were in a blue plastic capsule, and she was accountable for those things and every time they would change a shift or nurse they would inventory those pills and have the doctor's orders there for one to be disbursed, but she took one and emptied the powder out and filled it full of powdered sugar. The guy took it and bang he was out just as fast as he would have been if she had given him the real one. It was pitiful though because they were blowing up a lot of pillboxes around some of those fortresses around the harbor there at Cherbourg and each time they would dynamite one of those things this guy would come and jump onto my bed.

I had a "hardship" tour in Turkey (without my family). It was 1959/1960. I was stationed in the town of Kaisery, which is in the central—eastern part of Turkey. It was very lonely out there, kind of out by itself, almost desert. I was out there on a two man team, myself and one enlisted man, an E—4 that spent most of his time on TDY. So (laughs) I was actually about the only American in that town. But I made friends pretty good with them, I couldn't speak their language but we managed to get along. A couple of incidents that I remember about the depot because Turkish discipline in the army is somewhat different from what it is in our Army. They believe in corporal punishment. Several times I have seen the depot commander have a soldier stand at attention in front of him and he would just slap him over and over. They also believe every Officer should have an orderly. I told them that I didn't want an orderly. They said "oh yeah, you must insist on having an orderly. They shine your shoes and make your bed." Well I didn't want anybody to do that, I wanted to do it myself. Anyway they assigned me this young boy from Istanbul who wanted to speak English and he thought if he worked for me it would be the best way for him to practice his English on me. He was always trying that. We were doing all right but I came home one day, I got sick at work, and here this rascal was sitting up at my table eating my cookies, drinking my milk, which was hard to get, his feet up on the back of the chair, listening to my new hi-fi records that I had bought and I had told him specifically not to do that. He did it so it kind of ticked me off and I didn't really want an orderly in the first place. So I told my driver "take him back to the depot, I don't need an orderly anymore." The next day I was out there and the detachment commander, a Major, came up to me and wanted to know what did this



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

man do. I said “nothing, he didn’t really do anything. I just don’t need an orderly.” He said “oh yes, your interpreter told me about it and he needs to be punished.” I said “oh no, don’t punish him. He didn’t do anything that he needs to be punished.” They next day I saw my interpreter and I said “what happened to Oscar?” He said he got “six and six”. I said “what do you mean six and six?” He said he was slapped six times and he had to spend six days in the latrine. Now, that is cruel and unusual punishment. To even have to use one of their latrines is bad. I couldn’t go, I would wait until I could go home before I would go to the bathroom because those Turkish latrines were so bad, especially in the summer time and this was.

The Turkish army furnished me this little apartment for this Spec 4 and myself to use while we were there. Two bedrooms, a little sitting room and sort of a kitchen. We used a Coleman camp stove to cook on. We did have a small refrigerator that the U. S. Army had gotten for me somewhere, I don’t know where. They also gave us a kerosene space heater, which was a mistake. Anyway, the water heater in the bathroom, we had a shower but no tub, was made out of copper. You could take a small wooden crate, stomp it into pieces, and throw the pieces in there and the water would get really hot. It didn’t hardly take any time at all, but wood was hard to come by and sometimes we didn’t have the wood when we wanted to make a tub of hot water. I came up with this thing that I had seen our guys had made to heat water to wash mess kits in by using gasoline, it was kind of a blow torch type thing. So I built one out at the shop, brought it in, and put it in that thing. The water wouldn’t get hot, would not get hot! I kept turning it up and one day (laughs) all the joints in that water heater melted, it had been soldered together, and that tank was leaking all over everywhere. And you know the water was still not hot! I still haven’t been able to find anyone that could explain it to me. But that space heater we had worked fine at first and then it got so it wouldn’t stay lit. I couldn’t figure that out so I opened the door, looked in the stove, and it was full of soot. We thought, well we need to clean the stove out. The stove didn’t have too much in it so I thought we had better clean the chimney out, it is probably full. Hamilton went up on top and took a brick with a string tied to it. He was dropping it down through the chimney. I was standing down on the ground telling him what to do. He was juggling it up and down and I went back inside and I have never seen such a mess in my life. This oily soot was knee deep, all over all of our rooms. (laughs) It took us a week to gather all



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

that stuff up. We never did really get it all up because you would try to clean it with a wet rag and that just smeared it. So it was a mess!

I was there at Christmas time in 1959. I wanted a Christmas tree in my place so I started looking around and asked the depot commander “where can I cut me a little Christmas tree?” He said “no, you don’t do that in Turkey. You have to see the Forest Meister.” So I went to see the Forest Meister and told him I wanted to get a tree, a little cedar tree. And what they ended up doing, they wanted to accommodate me but they still couldn’t spare a tree and I understand that now, but they did transplant one in a barrel, a 55 gallon steel drum. They brought that into my apartment, the idea was that I could use it during Christmas but after it was finished it would have to be replanted which makes sense. They thought I was crazy, putting a tree in my house, they just didn’t do that sort of thing. But I remember too making a wreath to hang on the door of my apartment. It was made out of cedar limbs and I would put these little Christmas tree ornaments, little balls about an inch and a half in diameter, silver, red, blue, green, and so forth, I tied them on that and hung it on my door. About two days later, after it had been out, I could hear these little foot steps out in the hallway. I would listen and there would be five or six of them and all of a sudden they would run. I would go out and look and there would be one of those balls missing. An hour or two later they would come back and same thing, there would be another ball missing. They were taking the balls off my ornament one at a time. (laughs) I don’t know why they liked them so much but I kept replacing them until I ran out of them. Then I said doggone, I’ll give them something worth stealing. So I put double bubble chewing gum in their place and they never took one of them. They had no desire for that chewing gum at all. All they wanted was those little ornaments off there.

On January 2, 1940 I enlisted in the Tennessee National Guard. I was only seventeen, I lied about my age, I told them I was eighteen. There were others in there the same way but I got in. I was still a senior in high school, I didn’t graduate from high school until April. I wouldn’t be eighteen until September 4. But toward the latter part of July and the first part of August, we were on a three week maneuver down in Mississippi and Louisiana with the Guard. I would crawl around all those stumps and everything down there in Louisiana with all those snakes and I said “man this Army ain’t no place for me.” So when we got back home, on my birthday September 4, I went down to the Post



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

Office, which is now the United States Court House on Highland Street (Jackson), and was sitting on the steps waiting for the Navy recruiter to come. He came walking by and said “are you waiting for me?” And I said yeah. He said “what do you want?” I said “I want to join the Navy.” He said “you have to be eighteen.” I said “I am.” He said “when were you eighteen?” I said today. He said “come on in!” So I went in and filled out the forms and got to the very last question which read “Have you ever had any prior service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or National Guard?” While we were gone on that three week maneuver they told us that on September 16 the Tennessee National Guard was going to be federalized for one year. I said “not this boy, I don’t want to be crawling around with those snakes anymore, I want to join the Navy.” But I read that question and said “Chief, I’m in the Guards now.” He took my application and tore it up. Prior to that time, if you wanted to join a regular service and you were in the Guard the State would mail you a discharge, no problem. But apparently they had told them not to accept anymore of our people because when we want to go on active duty we want to take as many people that already know how to do right face and left face as we’ve got. And that’s about all we knew, anyway, they wouldn’t let me in the Navy. So on September 16 an order came down to be federalized. We all came down to the Armory, they issued us our uniforms (laughs) that was really something. Part of us had the old army britches laced up the leg like the cavalry wore, with leggings. Prior to that we had had wrap leggings, wool leggings that you wrap around that you saw in WWI. Then they issued us canvas leggings that were used all through WWII, but the ones we got were cavalry leggings and the inside was lined with leather. They were the funniest looking things that you’ve ever seen. Anyway, on the 16th we were federalized and the people that lived in town could go home at night but the ones out of town slept in pup tents around the Armory. The old Armory building used to be where right now the fire training station is. We had been doing that a couple of days, we had been doing close order drill and stuff, and having a few lectures by the company commander, and they needed somebody that knew how to type. I was one of only two guys in the company that knew how to type so they put me in the office filling out forms and all this kind of stuff, which I didn’t want to do but it got me a promotion to PFC before we ever left. We were in home station about a week then we were ordered to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. You should have seen that trip, that unit marching to the railroad station on South Royal to get on the train. (laughs) That was one more sightly mess. We wore the old state trooper type campaign hats, some of us had on wool shirts and khaki pants and it was one big mess.



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

Everybody was carrying their own baggage, a duffel bag full of stuff that we had to carry with us, and we were trying to march because the civilians turned out real good to see their boys leave. The streets were crowded with spectators but it was not a first class parade I can tell you that. We finally got on the train and rode to Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Back in those days though it was called Camp Jackson. The train rolled right on in to the camp area. We unloaded and marched up fairly close, a quarter of a mile I guess, to an area that had been designated for us. There we took bayonets and hand axes, cleaned out the briars and brush and so forth, and pitched pup tents. We were in those pup tents for about a week to ten days I guess and then we were issued what we call pramble tents or squad tents, they were good for about six people. That was a big improvement for us over those pup tents. Those tents were lined up in what we called a company street, about eight tents on each side facing each other. I know I was given a task of putting a drop light, one light bulb, in each tent. I wasn't an electrician but I knew a little bit about wiring so I ran the main lines down on top of the tents and then dropped a cord into each tent with one sixty-watt bulb on it. We thought we were really living when we had lights and didn't have to use candles or flashlights. Each company had their own latrine, which was a shower and toilet facility. Across a short way we had a mess hall, a kitchen and dining hall, but we didn't have any tables in the dining hall when we first got there. I can remember they were made out of green pine just covered with one layer of roofing paper, but we thought that was really living. We would sit on the floor and eat. Eventually they did get tables in there to sit down on and benches. I remember very well Thanksgiving of 1940. The mess sergeant, he was a good one, we called him Frog Parish, he could really fix up a good meal. He had been a mess manager for a circus at one time so he knew how to feed alot of people and did it real well. Since we didn't have very many facilities, when we went through the line he gave each one of us a paper bag. In that paper bag there was two apples, two oranges, two cigars, and two packs of cigarettes. Well, that doesn't mean too much to anyone now but back in those days we were making twenty one dollars a month, privates were, I was making a little bit more because I was promoted to PFC. I made thirty nine dollars a month, I was really living. But packs of cigarettes free for those who smoked was a big help. Well right away, people who knew that I didn't smoke so they started hitting me up for my tobacco and I gave the two cigars away and I gave one pack of the cigarettes away but I kept one and I said "no, I'm going to smoke these myself." That was one of the biggest mistakes that I ever made because I began to smoke. That was in 1940 and



I smoked until January 1962. I know for a fact, that if any of my kids would hear this, that smoking is bad for you. Stop it while you can.

About four months later they built, I don't know what you would call them but these pramble tents that held six people, they built a wooden frame with a wooden floor and about three feet of screen all the way around so that you could roll the sides of the tents up and have the air circulating. They were really nice, you could stand up in them a little better because they were a little taller than a regular tent. In the center of that they gave us a Sibley stove, I think that is the right word for it, it looked like a big funri-H turned upside down. It had a little door on it, a grate, and a pipe that went out through the top of the tent. It got cold in South Carolina, especially at night, and the fuel that we used was fresh cut pine. (laughs) These little pine logs we would cut, bring in, and until everybody went to bed we kept the fire going. But invariably, you know pine sparks alot when it is burning, somebody would have to get out of bed and go up and put the tent out . Because of these sparks flying all over the company area, somebody's tent almost every night would catch on fire. It was a mess.

In December of 1943 I went. into pilot training in the Army Air Corps as a student officer, a 2nd Lieutenant. We had ground school at Montgomery, Alabama. You learn the basic things: aircraft identification, some weather training, I believe we started our international Morse code training there, and just the administrative things, no flying at all. In the middle of January they wouldn't let me go home when my son was born in Jackson, Tennessee on January 11. They wouldn't let me go home because they were expecting orders on me, and they did. They came out that day and I was transferred to Lakeland, Florida to the Lodwig School of Aeronautics for primary pilot training. My wife and son came down to see me when he was six weeks old, so he was that old before I got to see him. We lived with a very nice family there in Lakeland and I would get to go in about two nights a week. The rest of the time I was confined to the post. We were flying PT 17's which was a Steerman. Everybody knows that good old airplane, they made a lot of crop dusters out of them and stunt flying after the war was over. I learned how to fly them there but the thing that I remember the most was we would take off from the main field, fly out to some auxiliary fields. Then the instructors would let us fly solo out trom that field for a while until we got a little proficient. On my second solo I was coming in for a landing and there was a little crosswind. Of course I had to crab into the



wind but what you're supposed to do is, just before your wheels touch the ground, you straighten the plane up so the plane is going straight instead of crabbing. I didn't and I did what we called a ground loop. The plane went round and round, one wing fell down and dragged on the ground as we went around. The instructor came over and we checked it over. He felt it was still safe enough for us to fly back so he flew back to the main field. I had to meet the accident board and they asked me if I knew what had happened and if I thought I could correct it the next time. I told them I thought I could so it never happened again. I became fairly proficient with the PT 17. Then in March I was transferred to Courtland, Alabama where we had a basic flying school. There we learned to fly BT 13's, which was a pretty good low wing plane. What I really liked about that one was the distance between the wheels was so far that you couldn't ground loop them. It would be impossible to ground loop a BT 13. One little incident while I was flying those that stands out was we were night flying, just a pattern. First my instructor had gone up with me and we flew around for awhile and then came down and landed. I was flying but he was with me just for safety I guess. After he got out I was supposed to make three more landings. Just stay in the pattern, go around again, and shoot another landing. The first one was o.k. and the second one we came in and I don't know why but I must have landed about thirty feet up in the air. Of course I dropped down and when I did, I hit pretty hard. I talked to the tower on the radio and they said "pull it around to the line and check to see if you drug a wing." So I pulled her over, undid my parachute harness and seat belt, had one leg out on the wing getting ready to get out and the Sergeant came running out and said "I'll check it Lieutenant." He had a flashlight with him; he had heard the radio conversation. He shined the light under there and said "nah, you didn't touch anything." So I sat back down and called the tower on the radio and said "do you want me to go back and do those other landings?" They said "go ahead and do two more." I pulled out, did my two landings, they were fairly good, I pulled in and started to get out of the plane and guessed what? (laughs) I had never refastened my seat belt. I'm sure glad those landings were o.k. otherwise I might have gone out through the roof of that airplane.

I didn't quite finish that training there that I was supposed to. I was transferred to Fort Rucker, Alabama to the 66th Infantry Division. I had been there just long enough to get my heels dug in when the invasion happened. They pulled me out and sent me over as a replacement. I went to Fort Meade, Maryland, there we processed, got all our extra



shoe strings and all that kind of stuff. Then we took a train to, I thought we were going to New York, but we ended up in Boston. The train just pulled right up beside the ship at the dock in Boston. We marched off of the train and onto the ship. We sat there three days after we got on the ship but when we finally pulled out we did not go in a convoy. We went alone, this ship was a fairly fast one so they let us go across by ourselves. I believe it was four days it took us until we landed at, I believe it was Liverpool. We got on a train there and went to a little place called Aderly Hall. We were there about a week. Most of the time I was there I censored mail, I did go to the range. We took a packet of people and we took them out to the range, and made sure they could shoot before we got back on the train. We went to Southampton and there we got on a little private, what before the war, had been a tourist boat crossing the English Channel taking people from England to France and so forth. But it served it's purpose real well, it was part of the invasion fleet. It carried us over to Omaha Beech, where we unloaded onto Navy landing crafts. We got on in to the beach, of course, the fighting was about three miles in by then so there was nobody shooting at us. There was a lot of planes flying over but nobody shooting at us. But it was a hard walk up that hill even, carrying all that junk we had to take with us. We went on in and settled down.

It's strange how, for no apparent reason, sometimes little incidents will just pop into your mind. It's been fifty years and still, things pop into my mind. I was thinking just a second ago about one day toward the end of the Battle of the Bulge, not right at the end but it was after the weather had cleared up, I was the executive officer of K company and we had been in a position overnight. We had to go into the position during darkness so the next morning the company commander told me to go out and make a tour to see if everybody was all right, kind of check the positions and find out where everybody was. I remember going by this one foxhole that had two Sergeants together. We usually tried to keep two men in the same hole if we could. These two guys were together, one of them was an old timer and the other was a staff sergeant that had just been transferred in from the field artillery. He had been a mess sergeant in the field artillery but because of the fact that the infantry had had so many casualties they rounded up everybody they could find and he was one of the ones that had become an infantryman over night. He didn't complain, he wasn't a complainer at all. When I went up to the foxhole to talk to him, I noticed the scarf that he had worn around his neck, just an ODGI scarf, he had a knot tied in it around his neck and both of the ends of it had been cut off. It looked like



## 90<sup>th</sup> Division Association Personal Submissions

---

somebody had taken a pair of scissors and cut it off. I said “Sarge, what happened to your scarf?” He said “Lieutenant, I’m the luckiest man in the world. Do you remember awhile ago a shell came in?” I said “yeah I remember when they were shelling.” He said “a piece of shrapnel clipped that, that’s how close it had come to my throat. It just cut the scarf right off my neck.” I agreed with him, I said “man, you are the luckiest man I have ever met in this whole war.” I stood there with them for minute or so and I walked on away, I hadn’t gone thirty yards, until another a shell came in. It landed in that hole where those two guys were and just blew them all to pieces. It really tore them up, there was hardly anything left of them. He had just made the remark about how lucky he was. Just a few minutes later I went down the hill toward another position that was there. These two men had occupied a hole that had been dug by the Germans. It was a pretty good size foxhole, big enough for them to lay down in at night and sleep. When I got down there, there was a German soldier dressed in a white snowsuit laying on the ground beside the foxhole. He was dead and he had parts of a parachute with him, apparently during the night he had parachuted down into that area. I talked to the soldiers that were in the foxhole and I asked them what happened and one said “Lieutenant, late last night we were laying there in the hole, my buddy was asleep and I almost was. I always lay on my back and keep my rifle on top of me. I was just looking up at the sky when this figure appeared as if he was looking into our foxhole. I just instinctively raised my rifle and fired. I was lucky and had a good shot and that Kraut fell in the hole on top of us, he was dead.”

Wayne Warren Bayles, Sr.