

Sergeant
HERMAN JOSEPH ERNSPIKER
April 6, 1921 to December 13, 2002



*17th Armored Infantry Battalion Company C of the 12th Armored Division
Machine Gun Squad* an original HELLCAT

Medals Awarded

EXPERT INFANTRY BADGE
COMBAT INFANTRY BADGE
CARBINE EXPERT
PURPLE HEART X 2
BRONZE STAR

HERMAN JOSEPH ERNSPIKER

Memoirs

I, Herman Joseph was born on APRIL 6, 1921 to **THOMAS AND GERTRUDE ERNSPIKER**.

My young life was spent on a truck and dairy farm. Everything was done manually, horse and mules, milked cows by hand. I stayed on the farm until I graduated from Jeffersontown High School on **May 19, 1941**. I played as a running back on the football team. In 1940 and 1941 we went undefeated, 10 games in a row [each season] and won the NCKC (North Central KY Championship). I made ALL CONFERENCE Running Back and was offered a scholarship at WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY - turned it down. I was tired of going to school on a shoe string; times were very hard, money scarce. The whole family had to work hard just to make a living.

I thank GOD for a very special Father and Mother. They would insist that we went to HOPEWELL BAPTIST CHURCH and accept Christ and live a Christian life and love our neighbor as our self. I never had the desire to drink alcohol or beer. I did like girls and dated several. One in particular, a little red head, she was very pretty and nice. We had good times together, she fell in love with me and I liked her a lot but never loved her.

On **September 6, 1941** I met the girl of my dreams, **HAZEL WOODS**. She was the most beautiful, nicest, gentle and had high morals. We fell in love soon after our first date. I forgot all the other girls and it was the same for Hazel and her other boyfriends. We only thought of each other. Hazel said I was the only boy she let kiss her on the first date.

I have always believed that GOD intended for us to be partners for life and we were. She gave me the most love and joy for the 53 almost 54 years of love for each other. She is the only girl I ever really loved or ever will. I will continue to thank GOD every day as long as I live for giving her to me as my mate. She was the best wife in the world. She will always live in my heart. There will always be a special place in my heart for her, she gave me 4 children and 5 grandchildren plus 5 great-grandchildren which we both love with all our hearts.

Hazel was born into a good family but most of them drink alcohol. She hated drinking. I never took her places where there was a lot of drinking, as I hated it too. I think that caused us to fall in love so soon. Not long after we started dating, riding in the back seat of a car on Frankfort Ave. I asked her if she would marry me. I told her to take a week before she gave me her answer, as she was young and to give it a lot of thought. The next week Hazel said "YES, I love you with all my heart and I want to spend the rest of my life with you".

We both had to have our parents consent to get married. My parents loved her and said yes. Her Dad said yes but with her mother it wasn't easy. Her mother asked a lot of questions and she knew I would have to serve my time in the Army. WORLD WAR II was really getting hot - a lot of boys were losing their lives. I had to agree with her mother, I thought it would be best to wait until I put in my time with the Army and "*IF*" I could make it back then we would get married. I knew we would wait for each other but Hazel insisted that we get married.

Once before, she (Hazel) had said "The way we are now it would be as hard to lose me as it would be if we were husband and wife". I tried to tell her that it would make a difference if I never made it back. She would be a widow with a full life ahead of her. She wanted to take that chance. I wanted to marry her so much because I loved her with all my heart and I knew she was a very special girl. So we agreed to go ahead and get married on the **31st December 1941**.

After a few weeks we rented a 3 room apartment at 1622 Story Ave. We shared the bathroom with two other couples. We paid \$16.00 a month rent.

I worked at the LOGAN COMPANY - second shift for \$24.00 a week for 50 hour work week.

October 15, 1942. I was sworn into the Army. Left on October 29th for **FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON** in Indiana. I stayed about a week then was sent to **CAMP CAMPBELL** [now FORT CAMPBELL] Kentucky. I was attached to the **12th ARMORED DIVISION** which was being activated from the Horse Cavalry. All the Cavalry men had been in the Horse Cavalry. All the men were good.

N.C.O. (Non Commissioned Officer) Trained. We worked awfully hard in the field. At this time the Armored hadn't proved itself. So we had to train to fight *Mounted* and *Dismounted*.

July 5th, 1943 Barry (first son) was born. I was in the field and got an E Furlough for 7 days to come home to see Hazel and baby.

I had to go back to go on **TENNESSEE MANUVERS** (war training from Sept. 3, 1942 – Nov.12,1943 in the 56th Armored Infantry Regiment prior to consolidation of several Regiments into the 17th Armored Infantry Battalion) until November. Left Watertown, Tennessee for **CAMP BARKLEY** Texas just outside the city of Abilene, TX.

I had been promoted to Sergeant and was making more money so when I got another furlough I rented a large one room cabin, came home and took Hazel and the baby Barry back there to live with me. I never got to spend as much time with them as I would have liked to. I had to spend 10 days and nights in the field each month. Hazel was pregnant with Carol (first daughter). They stayed with me until July 1944. I had to bring her and Barry home (KY) we were shipping out for *Overseas*.

Carol was born three weeks after I got back to Texas. I never got to see even a picture of her until I came home from the war on the 15th October 1945.

Each night as Hazel put the babies to bed she would read the Bible and have a prayer for Daddy and the other soldiers. Then she would have them kiss my picture, so when Carol saw me for the first time she hugged my neck, kissed me and called me Daddy. She was the best mother and wife a man could have. She wrote me a letter about everyday I was Overseas. There were times I had to miss a few days writing her because of fighting the Germans.

On January 16, 1945, one of the coldest winters in Europe, at **4:00 AM** as I was leading my machine gun squad in the WORST battle {**HERRLISHEIM, France**} we fought.

[Battle known as Bloody Herrlisheim or Little Battle of the Bulge against Germany's 10th Panzer Div. and the German 553rd Volksgrenadier Division. The date may have been the 17th or 18th of January. Company C was attached to the 56th A.I.B. during this battle. See battle map]

My company, C Company, was attached to the 56th Infantry Battalion. When my company of 254 men reported to the 56th Btn. there were only 99 men in the whole 56th Btn. left alive. A 2nd Lieutenant was the Battalion commander so our Captain became our Battalion commander.

We were caught in a German F.P.L. (Final Protective Line). They had us out numbered 3 to 1, in an open field, lots of snow and very cold. One section of my MACHINE GUN SQUAD turned the wrong way, the artillery and machine gun fire was very heavy. The Platoon SGT. told me to get down and move with the rest of the squad. As we were crawling forward, all of a sudden a GERMAN MORTAR came in and hit me, knocked my steel helmet off and my carbine (rifle with a short barrel) out of my hands. Shrapnel hit me over the left eyebrow back to my ear and tore 2/3rds of my muscle out of my arm. My eyebrow was hanging down on my cheek. I couldn't see out of my left eye and thought it put my eye out. I found out later it was the blood causing me not to see. My whole front of my clothes was soaked and my boots were full of blood. I fell over the machine gun, I saw a lot of stars and was in A LOT of PAIN. I told the assistant squad leader [Harlan Showers] to take over and I had to find a MEDIC.

We had white sheets covering us so we could blend in with the snow. I got the sheet tangled in a barbed wire fence, it tore it off and I fell over the fence. Part of the fence was stone wall. I fell into the Company CP (Commanding Post) which was behind the stone wall.

A lieutenant took me to the Field Medic. First Aide was applied with bandages and pressure to stop the bleeding, he gave me the sulphur powder. My clothes were soaked with blood and my boots were full of blood.

The Medic said there was no way they could get the wounded out of *theater*. They had tried unsuccessfully to get the wounded out using Tanks (43rd tank btn.) and other armored vehicles but the Germans were blowing them up. They (Medics) said the only way we were getting out alive was to walk out about a mile to the FIRST AID station where the doctors were. A Lieutenant from another outfit said he could walk out he had been hit in the arm by rifle fire. I then told them that I could walk.

We left the building to heavy machine gun gunfire, bullets and artillery shells falling all around us. As we started out of the courtyard heading to the road I lost the use of my legs and fell face down in the snow from shock setting in due to the loss of so much blood, Hazel and the babies flashed through my mind. [According to military records there were 6"- 12" of snow in HERRLISHEIM during this battle] I prayed, "Please Lord, not here". Suddenly the strength came back to my legs. The Lt. reached down and helped me up from the ground. We continued to walk for a long time in pitch black conditions under heavy artillery and machine gun gunfire until we came to a Calvary of our own tanks moving up to the front line.

We asked the first tank commander where the aid station was and he said he didn't know. The Lt. started to get rattled and I told him to calm down that we would make it. The second tank commander, against orders of *not to move*, got down from the tank and took us up an alley to a dark building with the [medic] flag. He knocked on the door and they let us in. The extreme cold weather had stopped the bleeding. The medics gave us a cup of coffee and I smoked a cigarette.

The Doctor [82nd Medical] checked me out and said he couldn't give me anything for the pain because I might have a fractured skull.

Finally an ambulance arrived to take out the most seriously wounded soldiers, I was one of them. The ambulance had to drive without lights through rough country as fast as he could go. It's a wonder we all didn't get killed in a wreck. The further we traveled the sounds of incoming shells started to fade. After a while we came to a pretty good size town, the wounded were unloaded and placed on stretchers.

I was reaching for a cigarette and one of the Medics took a cigarette, lit it and handed it to me. Then he pitched two packs of smokes on my stretcher. Still, nothing for pain, I was sure hurting. A little while later they loaded us up again to move us to a larger town further back from the front lines. We finally got to the hospital around noon. They were serving chow but they told me I couldn't have anything to eat because they had to operate on me right NOW.

The Medic asked if we had any ammunition in our packs which was left in the lobby. Another Medic came up to my bed carrying a hand grenade. The doctor and I told him not to pull the pin. Told him to take it outside to give it to an M.P. or a field soldier but get it away from the Hospital because if detonated it would burn the hospital down very quick.

A nurse came in to give me a shot. “*OUCH*”, my feet tingled and my stomach burned. Then they rolled me into the operating room and gave me the “*BIG*” needle I was out cold at the count of three. I didn’t come to until around 8:00 PM. When I woke up I wasn’t hurting but I was starving. I had a cast on from my head to my shoulders.

I asked the Medic for something to eat and was told that chow was over. After I told him I haven’t had anything to eat for over 24 hrs he went to the mess hall and got me a big *Spam Sandwich* and a cup of coffee. I gulped it down and asked him to give me a piece V Mail (the V stands for Victory). I wrote my sweet wife hoping I could beat the War Department Telegram.

I told her that I had been wounded but I would be okay and for her not to worry as long as my letters were coming from the hospital. Then I passed out again slept until the next morning.

When I awoke I had wounded soldiers all around me. After a few days they transported me to another hospital where they talked about putting me on a plane and flying me to a hospital in Italy. Instead they chose to put me on a train to the **62nd GENERAL HOSPITAL** in Paris, France. This was a very large hospital real close to the *Eiffel Tower*.

I was put in a ward with 15 other wounded soldiers. After a few days went by the doctor came in to remove the cast. Then the doctor asked me if I thought my arm was going to be okay. I told him I didn’t know but I knew we were getting a bad odor from the cast. He told me they haven’t done anything but cut the shrapnel out of my arm and forehead. They had put stitches in my head and only left them in for a few days since I was bed ridden. He explained that they would take them out so it wouldn’t leave a bad scar. After the Doctor cut the cast off he told me NOT to look at the injury. That it would make me sick. He left the room. When he returned he brought a whole team of doctors back with him. They all discussed the injuries to my arm and a few of the doctors said “Let’s Amputate” the arm. There was one doctor, a big man, said he would like to try to save my arm. I don’t think they really thought that they could save my arm. He was of high rank, specialized cat. So they agreed to let him try.

They took me back to the operating room later in the evening and operated. I don’t remember anything until the next morning at about 9:00AM. The other wounded soldiers in the ward said I screamed in pain all night long. The nurse kept coming in throughout the night to give me a shot to knock me out again. The surgeon came in said “don’t blame me for all the pain. You had a very rough night”. I told him I never knew anything about last night and I wasn’t hurting too much at the time.

The surgeon had told me that he didn't think the surgery had gone very well and didn't think the procedure would hold. He said he went down in my arm all the way up into my shoulder to pull the bicep together with a lot of big stitches but the gash so wide and deep that he didn't think that it would all hold together. He said that if the shrapnel would have broken the bone they wouldn't have even tried to save my arm. Thankfully the shrapnel just grazed the bone. He stated that I have a strong muscle and big arm and my weight was good. I weighed around 175lbs. Had I weighed 140 to 150 lbs I would not have been strong enough to go through this type of surgery. They wouldn't be able to save my arm.

After several weeks in the body cast they cut the cast off and my arm had grown (healed) to my chest. The doctor had to pull on my arm to separate it from my chest and it hurt so bad that I almost passed out from the pain. Once they got my arm where they could see it the Doctor brought the whole team of Doctors in again to look it over. They all said it was a miracle that the muscles held together. They started therapy in the whirlpool and then massage therapy. The therapy was going along pretty well but I had very little strength in the muscle. I couldn't even pick up a pencil with it at the time.

The Doctor that repaired my wound said that at some point in my lifetime the repair would snap. As I write this I am over 74 yrs old and it hasn't snapped yet.

One day, shortly thereafter, the staff of Doctors came in to explain to the sixteen wounded soldiers in the ward that fourteen of them were ready to go back in the field. Another soldier and I weren't physically ready yet. The next morning the staff came in and got the other soldiers and they left the Hospital.

A few minutes later they came in for me and the other guy. We were sent to the supply room to receive *full field equipment* and rifles. They said they knew we were not ready, or well enough to leave but "your outfit is extremely short on men and the unit is going to make a DRIVE across the RHINE RIVER so I have to send you back to the front line, good luck".

[I believe this was around March 12, 1945 according to the time line when the 12th Armored Division spearheaded General Patton's 3rd Army as THE MYSTERY DIVISION. The campaign began on March 17th and they crossed the RHINE on March 21, 1945.]

It took about three days to get back with my outfit on the front. As soon as I got back to the unit I had to check in with the 17th Battalion (12th Armored Div.) Doctors to get their okay for me to return to duty. The Battalion Doctor was a Major and after he read my orders he threw a fit, cursed and stomped his feet he told me I wasn't near well enough to fight but since the officer that sent me back held rank on the Major, there was nothing he could do but send me up to Company C and see if there was something Light Duty I could do. Of course there weren't any Light Duty jobs. So I had to do the best that I could.

MARCH 17 - 21, 1945

The 12th Armored Div. spearheaded **General PATTON'S Drive across the RHINE RIVER.**

- **Armor Blazes Path to the Rhine**

The "Mystery Division" of Gen. Patton's Third Army took the spotlight today by reaching the Upper Rhine, entering the important chemical city of Ludwigshafen and penetrating to within seven miles of the ancient cathedral city of Speyer, the chief community of the Bavarian Palatinate. It was a good day's work...

— N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE, MARCH 1945

We were overwhelming the enemy and capturing a lot of German soldiers. This is when the 12th Armored Div. became known as the Mystery Division.

[HITLER dubbed the 12th as the SUICIDE DIVISION after one of his best fighting forces, the 10th PANZER SS DIV. had previously fought the 12th Armored at the "BLOODY HERRLISHEIM BATTLE"]

On April 12th President Roosevelt died and Truman took over the presidency and became the Commander-in-Chief.

APRIL 25, 1945

On April 25th was a very sad day for me. One of the men in my squad, **RICHARD R. CARROLL** was killed on his 21st birthday.

It was a sunny Spring day and Richard was excited. He said if he could make it through his 21st birthday that he would be good. It looked good for him because we only met light fighting throughout the day.

Along about 1:00PM in the day we pulled into a small town where we were told we would probably be for a day or two. But within a couple of hours things had changed. We were told to "*Mount UP*" that we were going to cross the **DANUBE RIVER**. We moved out in a column for a tree covered road going through the bottom land to the river.

The Commander ordered us to stop and wait for the Engineer Btn. to finish the pontoon bridge across the river. As soon as the engineers got the bridge finished the Germans blew it up. The Germans started firing anti-tank guns at our Tanks and the Halftrack I was in. We were staged by a large tree and we decided to dismount and move to a building about 100 yards away. We went down the bank crossed a barbed wire fence. As we were running towards the building a shell came in and hit the tree. A piece of

shrapnel hit me in the **Left hand** and my **back** spinning me around and knocking me down.

As I was falling down more shrapnel passed within a foot of me and CARROLL. His face got most of the load. His face turned black and he hit the ground. I checked him out and saw that he was dead. I ordered the rest of the squad to move on to the house. They sent in 3 or 4 of our P 51s (planes) to knock the German guns out. {**AWARDED BRONZE STAR** for his actions saving the rest of the squad}

As we were standing in the building the MEDIC was working on the wounded Fulson from the 2nd platoon saw the blood running down my hand onto the floor. I saw tears began to run down his cheeks and he said "Please Herman not you again". I told him I was okay but in a lot of pain. The metal was burning its way through my hand and was burning bad in my lungs area. They removed my jacket, shirt and undershirt. All it did was make a large blister on back and the shrapnel never penetrated into my lungs.

Evacuated in an ambulance we traveled until we came to a field hospital in a large tent. They gave me a shot and operated on my hand to get the shrapnel out and it swelled a lot. This all happened about two weeks before the **Germans Surrendered on MAY 7, 1945 VE-DAY.** [VICTORY in EUROPE DAY]

[Early May "SPEED IS THE PASSWORD"]

MAY 7, 1945

They sent us to a repel depot (tent city) in **WORMS**, GERMANY. We had a parade in Worms and none of us wanted to march but the officers insisted that we march. We just walked a route and stopped.

After a few days I joined my company in Augsburg Germany. Augsburg was a nice town. We guarded a hospital, supply warehouse and displaced persons camp [Concentration Camp survivors]. We played ball games, went to the movies, ate real good and had all the candy & cigarettes we wanted.

They started issuing whiskey to the officers and non-commissioned officers. Sergeants were to get a fifth of whiskey at a cost of .30cents a piece. I never drank so the boys in my squad that did drink would give me .30cents and take my allotment.

[**MAY, JUNE, JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 1945** served throughout Germany in Occupation Duty]

SEPTEMBER 1945

Sometime in early September the military started a point system to discharge some men with the highest points.

I earned 88 points. The point system rewarded points for having a wife and 2 children each month served in the states and each month served overseas. I received points for the two PURPLE HEARTS and BRONZE STAR awarded. So I was in the first group to leave.

OCTOBER 1945

They sent me home with the 7th Armored Div. around the first of October 1945. We left EUROPE on the **E.B. Alexander Troop Ship**. It took eight days on the troop ship to arrive in New York. [September 28th]

When we arrived in the harbor a show boat came out and circled the troop ship, one of the movie stars was singing "Sentimental Journey Home". [October 8, 1945]

When we came down the long plank (disembarking the ship) a large crowd was cheering us on. No words can explain the joy we had. We had finally made it back.

There were sad moments even with our joy. We would see all the young ladies holding a little boy or girl by the hand watching us come down to the pier, then they would start crying and older women would be crying. They were looking for a miracle, thinking the War Department had made a mistake. Thinking their son or husband would be walking down. As I walked by them with tears in my eyes I would say to them, "I am Sorry".

They moved us to Camp Kilmer New Jersey for a couple of days. I called home on Sunday evening [October 7th]. The operator came back on the phone and told me my wife and children were at my mother's house in the country, did I want to speak to my mother in-law? I told her no, I wanted the first person I talked to be my wife Hazel.

I was then sent to **Camp Atterbury** Indiana (near Edinburgh) One Sunday evening I called and got Hazel on the phone. [Oct. 14, 1945] I said, "Hi darling, it's me Herman" she said "Hi" and started sobbing I said, between sobs, "Hazel I love you so much and I can't wait to hold you in my arms and never let you loose." She said "me too" then started crying again. I told her I would be discharged Tuesday Morning [Oct. 16] and would be home Tuesday evening and for her to stay at her mothers. They had to get our uniforms and paperwork ready for discharge.

I went to bed, didn't sleep. Got up, hadn't shaved or taken a shower yet. I never knew anyone there in the barracks. A jeep driver came to the door and asked if there was a Sergeant Ernsperger in the barracks? I said "Yes that's me" he said your wife and family are here to see you. I told him that couldn't be and he said "All I know is there is a young lady with two small children that said she was your wife. I told him I had better go with him to see if they were in the guest area.

Sure enough, there was my beautiful wife, Barry & Carol, Mom & Dad, Roy & Della.

Words will never explain our feelings. I was trembling all over. Hazel and Mom were checking me out to see if I was okay and that I had recovered from my wounds but I was fine.

As I held Barry and Carol, I kissed them. Baby Carol hugged my neck, kissed my cheek and said “DADDY”. That was the first time we had seen each other. Hazel had sent me many pictures of Carol but they (Censorship office?) would take them out. Through the prayers, tucking the babies in at night and kissing my picture caused Carol to know I was Daddy. That proved what I already knew, that she was the best wife and mother in the world.

Every day of the 53 years, 6 months and 10 days we were together we shared our love with each other. I thank God everyday several times a day for the special mate he gave me. Even though I can no longer see her she is with me, she has a special chamber in my heart and she will remain there as long as I live. The night God called her home, (*Hazel M. Ernsperger b. Aug. 4, 1924 d. July 10, 1995*) she knew that everyone loved her and she loved us. Hazel wouldn't want me to mourn my life away. She would want to go on and share my love with my children and grandchildren and all of those around me. I will just have to hang in there, and it won't be easy. I will depend on God to keep me going for whatever time he has left for me. I believe in the words of the scripture that says “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Some day we will meet again.

There were a lot of times I was so mentally and physically hungry, cold, sleepy, and in a lot of pain that I could have just given up and let Death take over but because of my strong faith in God and the deep, deep love for Hazel and family I would fight that feeling and go on.

I was asked the question by a friend in his 50's who had watched the war chronicles of WWII in Germany, he said “tell me how any of you could live through that?” I told him I wondered that many times. The only thing I knew was that it had to be God's Will. I owe all I have and ever will have to Him. He is the Greatest. It is my prayers and request that my entire family and friends surrender their lives to him.

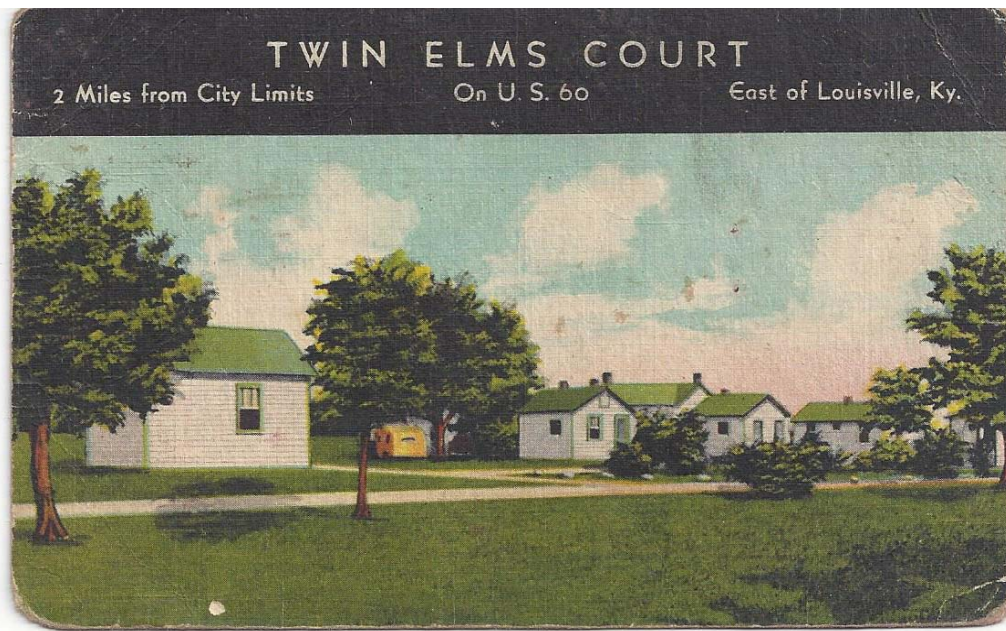
HJE



12th Armored Division Patch



EVIL MUST BE DESTROYED
17th Armored Infantry Crest



Top: Postcard: Grandma and Grandpa stayed there on their wedding night December 31, 1941

Bottom: Picture of Herman at a U.S.O. event



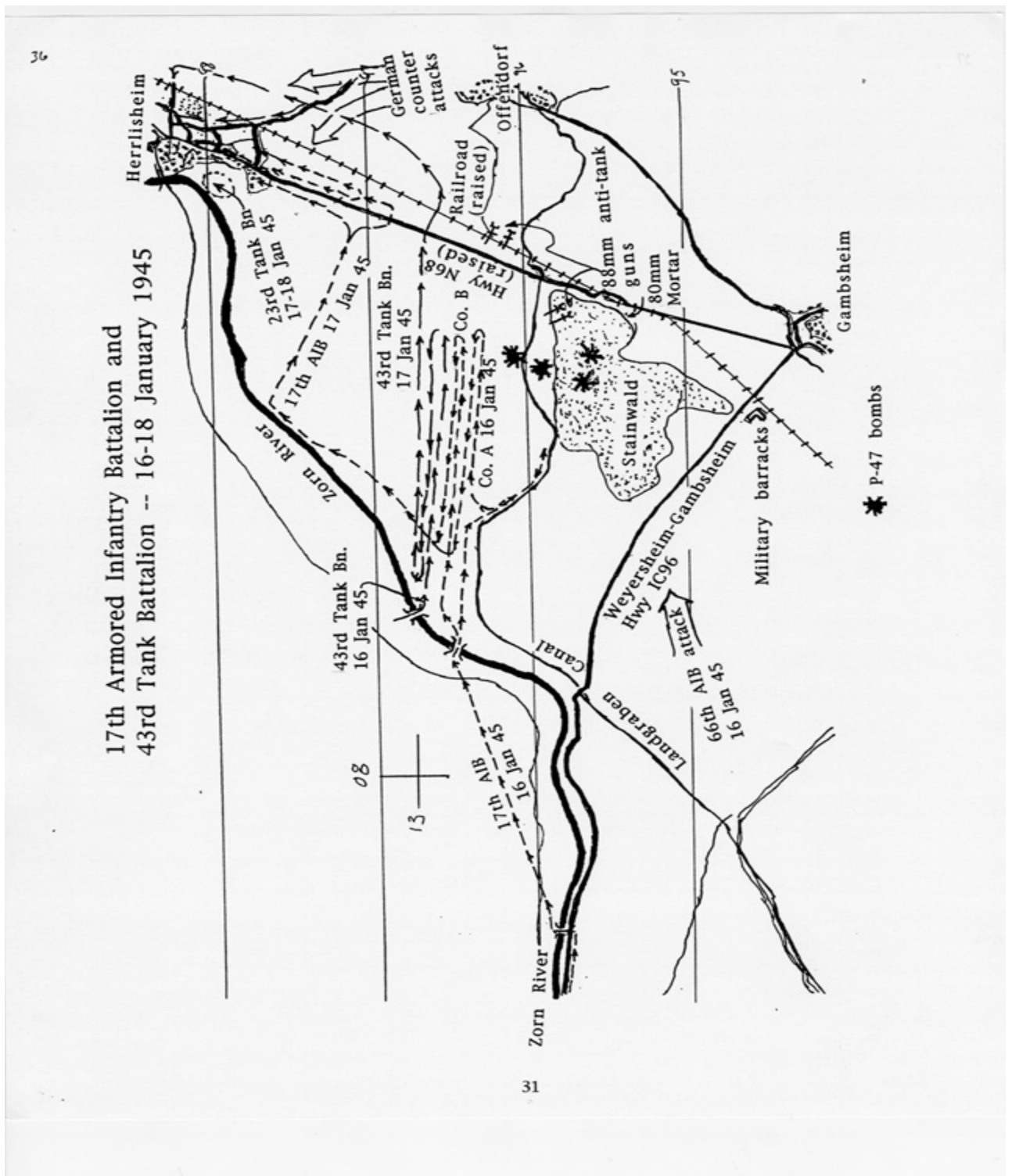
S.S. Empress of Australia was the 12th Armored Divisions method of transportation to Europe. The ship was refitted for troop transport, added 3" barreled guns and painted battleship grey for the numerous voyages across the Atlantic Ocean to transport soldiers to the European Theater of Operation.

Grandpa set sail from the New York Port of Embarkation on September 20, 1944 arrived in Liverpool, England on October 2, 1944.



Half-track armored personnel carrier. Grandpa would have operated the machine gun (50 Caliber) as shown in picture above *Left*, the machine gun could be dismounted to use in the field. Anti – aircraft gun could also be attached to the center mount in the Half-track if needed.

Picture *RIGHT*: A typical Squad (17th AIB Co) assigned to one Half-track consisted of 10 to 12 men.



Battle map of HERRLISHEIM: Movements of 17th C, attached to the 56th, some of their movements were from the North. This battle was the most intense battle for the entire 12th Armored Division. Known as *Bloody Herrlisheim*. Grandpa was nearly killed in this battle. All but two tanks in the 43rd Tank Btn. task force were destroyed. There are numerous books written about this battle on both sides from American and German authors.



Browning(50 CAL.) Machine Gun Un-mounted



Carbine Gun

These were the two powerful guns Grandpa used in battle.



"MYSTERY DIVISION" crossing the RHINE RIVER around March 21, 1945 Spearheading General Patton's 3rd ARMY. This was a pivotal point in WW II allowing the Allied Forces to take shipping ports and chemical factories out of the hands of the Germans.



3rd Platoon, C/17 July 5, '45 Wasseraalfinger, Germany. Pic by Howard Gillard, C/17.

News Items of Interest From A

Wounded Kent

The Bronze Star has been awarded **SGT. HERMAN J. ERNSPIKER**, husband of Mrs. Hazel Ernspiker, Jeffersontown, for assuming command when his squad leader was killed in the vicinity of Gunsberg, Germany, even though he himself was wounded.

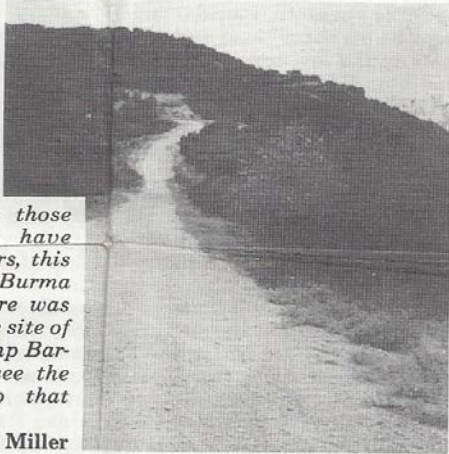
Refusing medical attention, Sergeant Ernspiker led his squad 125 yards to a covered position. His action was responsible for the rest of the squad escaping unhurt. He was cited for his devotion to duty and to his men.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Ernspiker, Jeffersontown High, where he played on the football team.



Herman Ernspiker.
Receives Star.

TOO!
*I lost a
Barrel or two
of sweat.*



In case there are those whose memories have faded over the years, this is the infamous "Burma Road". This picture was taken in 1992 at the site of what was once Camp Barkley. Can't you see the 12th sweating up that grade?

Photo by Marian Miller

Top: Company C 17th Armored Infantry Division. Picture was taken during the Occupational period after the War in Wasseraalfinger Germany.

Bottom Left: Acknowledgement of the Bronze Star in the newspaper.

Bottom Right: This photo was from the HELLCAT NEWS of one of the training hills at Camp Barkley.



Hellcat News



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PAT DANE, M-G-M

The Wolf

By Sansone



"Hey, Blue-eyes! ih' boys tell me you're a howl!"

Infantrymen Like To Have M. G. Protection

Ever hear of the "suicide squads?" That's what machine gun squads were nicknamed in World War I and the name has somehow stuck, even though it's open to controversy.

Suicide or not, machine-gunners give plenty of comfort to the infantryman, who is more than happy to know that light machine guns, with their tremendous fire power, are at his side on the line.

For a bird's-eye glimpse of what a typical machine gun section does, let's follow the squad of S-Sgt. Steve Piwok, C Company, 17th AIB through a recent battalion problem.

At nine o'clock on a Wednesday morning, the battalion moved out on a tactical road march to an assembly area where the leaders gathered together to plan action on the problem.

It was to be a defense position on a long hill. As the companies moved into different sectors, Piwok's squad was sent out on its first important mission to set up a combat outpost about 700 yards in advance of C Company, establishing what would be a delaying action in case of attack. Piwok directed placement of the guns to cover a draw at the bottom of the hill and the squad settled down. Darkness came, chow-time passed and still no change of orders, until 9:30 p. m. when the order came to withdraw, eat supper and prepare to move out.

Later that night, the battalion bivouaced and prepared for the final phase of the problem, an early morning attack on the defense position they had set up the day before.

The light machine guns were manned all through the night, one man at each gun, while the other members of the squad slept.

Next morning, the machine gun section was on the right flank of C company when the attack started. A low hill had to be captured before the assault against the main "enemy" defenses could begin. With one light gun laying down a protective fire for the riflemen, the other was advanced in short rushes and vice versa until the hill was seized. A narrow gully afforded natural cover in the attack on the main hill, still on the right flank of a C Company rifle platoon. The machine guns, one commanded by S-Sgt. Piwok and the other by the second in command, Sgt. Herman Ernspeker, were settled just past the gully when the hill was won and the problem ended.

Then Pfc. Harlam Showers, Pfc.

Service Clubs

Service Club No. 1

Tonight: Western Movie, 12 AD, 8 p.m.

Friday: Abilene High School Dance Band, 8 p.m.

Saturday: Open night.

Sunday: Talent Hour, 8 p.m.

Monday: Bingo, 8 p.m.

Tuesday: Special Music, 8 p.m.

Wednesday: Song Fest, 7:30 p.m.

Service Club No. 2

Tonight: 12th AD, Concert Band, 8 p.m.

Friday: Dance, Blue Bonnets, 355th Army Band, 8:30 to 11 p.m.

Saturday: WAC Dance. 11th Regimental Band, 8:30 to 11 p.m.

Sunday: Symphonic music, 2 p.m.

Monday: Abilene High School A Cappella Choir, 8 p.m.

Tuesday: Dance, 12 AD Orchestra, 8:30 to 11 p.m.

Wednesday: Bingo, 8 p.m.

Planes Will Attack

Troops and Convoys

In order that all Hellcats may become acquainted with the methods and protections against air attack, all columns of vehicles and troops moving on and off the reservation will be subject to surprise bombing and strafing by airplanes from nearby bases, division headquarters announced.

This policy will also apply to all bivouac and assembly areas on the reservation. Requests for specific air attacks on columns or bivouacs must be made through AC of S, G-3 Air.

Sidney, Raynor, Pfc. Luther Maxey, Tec 5 Oscar Sloan and Pvt. M. Maximov, shouldered up their guns and returned to their half track. All this seems tame, and is—just as long as it is simulated.

—Pfc. Robert Kelder

Male Call

By

Milton Caniff,

Creator of Terry and the Pirates



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
The General's
 ★ ★ ★ Message ★ ★ ★

By Maj Gen Carlos Brewer

The Fifth War Loan Drive commenced 1 June 1944. We in the military service have been asked to allot a portion of our pay every month to the purchase of War Bonds. In addition, if possible, we are urged to buy one or more bonds during this campaign. There is no better investment in the world than our government bonds, and we are only showing prudence and good judgment when we save some of our pay and invest it in these bonds.

It is not only a privilege for us to invest in War Bonds but it is also our patriotic duty. Our government is paying us liberally, and a little self-denial will make us better soldiers as well as better citizens. Some will say that as soldiers we are already doing more than our share in this war. That is true, but if the patriots of 1776 had stopped when they thought they had done their share, we would never have won our liberty. We should be proud of our ability and of the opportunity to do more than our share to serve the best country a man ever had on this earth.

I should like to see this division signed up 100 per cent for War Bond allotments. Don't wait until we are on our way to the port, because there will be many other things to do and think about at that time. If you can possibly spare the money from your pay, and I am sure 90 per cent of us can, make application for a regular Class B allotment now for the purchase of War Bonds.

—o—
Division Surgeon Made Lieutenant Colonel

Maj Gen Carlos Brewer has announced the promotion of Major Alf T. Haerem, division surgeon, to lieutenant colonel.

Col Haerem became surgeon of the Hellcat division early in May after a brief period as commanding officer of the 82nd Armored Medical Battalion. He succeeded Lt Col F. H. Van Waggoner.

Before entering the army, Col Haerem was a physician and instructor of medicine at the University of Chicago, where he received his M. D. degree in 1937. He earned his B. A. at Luther College, Decorah, Ia.

His home is in Story City, Ia.

They Command Hellcat Infantry Battalions



Lt Col Louis L. Ingram
56th AI Bn



Lt Col Clayton W. Wells
66th AI Bn



Major James W. Logan
17th AI Bn

Expert Infantrymen

The following men have been presented Expert Infantryman Badges:

17th Armd Inf Bn

Headquarters Company: S-Sgt Leonard Bunch, Pfc Herbert J. Boyle, Pvt Thaddeus J. Zawacki, S-Sgt Sherman H. Sadowsky, Pvt Herman Rolfe, Jr., Sgt Carl M. Johnson, Pfc Robert L. Cooper, Pfc Douglas Bollacker, Cpl Edmund R. Mayland, T-Sgt Charles M. Dickinson, Pvt Anthony B. Sicinski, Sgt Claude C. Curey, Jr., Pvt John E. Keister, T-Sgt Hubert L. Mashburn, Cpl John Kohari, Pfc Goldern R. Crystal, Pfc Terry C. Childers, Sgt Egbert B. Wolfe, Pvt William H. Jones, Pvt Robert L. Snell, Pfc Thomas J. Sheluga, Pvt Marvin W. Rees, Pvt Richard L. Lakin, Pvt Albert A. Wright, Pvt Malcolm T. Greer.

A Company: Pfc Clyde S. Robertson, Sgt Elmer F. Steffy, T-Sgt Albert P. Funk, S-Sgt Carl C. Zimmerman, S-Sgt Woodrow T. Williams, S-Sgt Joseph M. Barber, S-Sgt William C. O'Brien, Sgt William W. Harding, S-Sgt Charles Mastro, Sgt Carl J. Boccalero, Sgt Paul J. Masar, Pfc Walter N. Stacey, Pfc Walter L. Harmon, Pvt Warren E. Maue, Pfc Thomas J. Napolitano, Pfc Henry V. Dirks, Pfc Sidney B. Shortridge, Pvt William L. Newton, Pfc Robert A. Mills, Pvt Jack R. Tuben, Pvt Lem Standridge, Pvt Robert F. Conwell, Pvt Arthur Hanson, Pvt Richard A. Ault, Pvt Kenneth E. Bakken, Pfc John E. Fuchs, Pvt James A. Price.

B Company: Cpl Saverio F. Icona, S-Sgt Joseph M. Mucha, Pvt James H. Cape, 1st-Sgt Ed-

ward E. O'Sullivan, T-Sgt Harless Miller, T-Sgt William A. Stodart, S-Sgt Thomas A. Trittipio, S-Sgt Lawrence E. Smith, S-Sgt James P. Scully, Tec 5 Alvin A. Anderson, S-Sgt Biaso A. Algieri, Sgt Angelo Kraverotis, Sgt John L. Willsey, Pfc Pasquale A. Marcotulli, Pfc Forrest H. Mertz, Pfc Harold S. Wren, Pfc Paul T. Enbrey, Pfc Jerry Prieto, Pfc Truman Tanner, Pfc Charles L. Thomason, Pfc William W. Wims, Pfc John A. Garay, Pfc James J. Dunleavy, Pfc Alfred J. Bartula, Pvt Bruce E. Ballou, Pvt Raymond A. Forst, Pfc Harley W. Hinkle, Pvt Thomas W. Davies, S-Sgt Howard J. Anderson.

C Company: S-Sgt Luke E. Zilles, S-Sgt Charles J. Pieper, S-Sgt Cloren A. Highfill, S-Sgt Arthur A. Fitzpatrick, S-Sgt Robert L. Hahn, S-Sgt Frank E. Chinderle, S-Sgt Virgil A. Rockemann, S-Sgt Millard J. Place, S-Sgt Marshall H. O'Bryant, S-Sgt Martin L. Camnitz.

Sgt William R. Rawson, Sgt Johnnie F. Reardon, Sgt Milton J. Smith, Sgt Herman J. Ernsniker, Sgt Dillard E. Armentrout, Cpl John J. Bowers, Cpl Guilford M. Wiley, Jr., Cpl Ellis M. Rosenthal, Pfc Ersel Spencer, Pfc Luther L. Maxey, Pfc Orland W. Pruitt, Pfc Walter H. Omsberg, Pfc Homer S. Hensel, Pfc Grady L. Graves, Pfc Chester W. Kocher.

Pfc Ishmael C. Moore, Pfc John E. Hagen, Pfc David Merwin, Pfc Elvis W. Bryant, Pvt Sheldon Ostrow, Pvt Elwood C. McKeen, Pvt James R. Hammond, Pvt Charles R. Moore, Pvt Sam A. O'Rourke.

General Commends 2 Sergeants in 56th

Staff Sergeant Joseph Kimpton, A Company, and Tec 4 Anthony Baurer, Service Company, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, have been commended by Major General Carlos Brewer.

The two soldiers were praised for their work at the Fourth Army Anti-Aircraft Firing Center, Camp Donna Ana, New Mexico.

General Brewer's letter read in part: "I desire to commend the men of your command who are listed below for the manner in which they performed their duties while members of the 12th Armored Division Detachment at the Fourth Army Anti-Aircraft Firing Center."

After mentioning the two soldier's names, the letter continues. "The efficiency, loyalty and willingness to perform arduous tasks, as exhibited by these men reflects most creditably upon their organizations and upon the 12th Armored Division."



"BUCKIN"
 —Cpl J. Bonestell

Service Company: Pvt Charles Kapnick, Pfc Adolph J. Sereno.

HELLCAT NEWS: Acknowledging those who earned *EXPERT INFANTRYMAN* (C Company list SGT. Herman J. Ernsniker)

Hate to spoil the mood of the moment, but you need to know about a phone call taken from **Thelma Raynor**, wife of **Sidney [C]**. Our friend, who had been ill for a couple of years, died March 6. Thelma wanted you to know how much he enjoyed the HCN and the contact he had with some C members. She wanted **Herman Ernspeker [C]** to know that his letters were appreciated, and she has promised to send you (through the HCN) a short bio about our friend.

Chapter 2 of "MY FOUR HEROES" by **Bob Stanton**. "**James 'Pappy' Childs** was a bit older than most of us, therefore his nickname. He was one of the real 'characters' in our company and had risen to sergeant and been busted down again for drinking. But, when Lt. Drost took over, he asked for him as his Staff Sergeant to help run the platoon. Earlier he had escaped capture at Herrlisheim by refusing to surrender to German troops outside of the house he was in and got away. When our lead halftrack was hit, most of the other vehicles and troops in the column turned around and headed back up over a hill, but Pappy, who was riding in the halftrack behind us, jumped off and came up and joined Lt. Drost in firing at the enemy. He lived near me in New Jersey and I visited with him several times before he died. I made sure that his grandsons who lived next door, knew all about his exploits. They will always remember what a brave man he was even though their grandfather never told them anything about his experiences."

Before we continue, a whole bunch of THANK YOUSE ALL must be said for all the birthday cards found in the Funke mailbox, all that is except for the one with the 80 on it. Me thinks there must have been some secret work going on for which I am grateful. At one time 75 sounded ancient, but now it sounds like the beginning. Is that true of all you 'young' whippers?

What are we going to do with you, **John Bernhard [B]**? You are too old to be playing, Kick The Can, and breaking an ankle, and if that isn't enough, you let your friend break his ankle too and now you might not make that trip to Canada in June. Let's hear a big 'ah shucks' for buddy John. We are sorry to hear about the mishap, but refuse to listen to the 'TRY' to make it to Vegas stuff, especially



It has not been a good day for C/17 soldier, Ken Warner, June 22, 1945, in Aalen Germany. Photo by Knapik [C/17]

since your son wants to be there too.

One of the highlights each month is hearing from folks who are upbeat and positive (that is one of the traits of the Hellcats), and one of the most positive is **Walter Gaines [D]** who says, "Can you believe it? In about six months it will be reunion time." Now that is real good thinking. He appreciates hearing from such noble warriors as **Wes Ferguson**, **Paul Strate**, **Dr. Controneo**, and from **Idus Cleveland** just before Idus passed.

Some time ago a call went out for any type of proof of Idus Cleveland's [SV] rank, which records show as a corporal, but his family thinks this is not right. If you have a picture or any records that prove otherwise, would you please send such information to I.D. Cleveland, 541 State St., Duplo, IL 62239. The 17th Super Sleuths have always been great at digging out information of this type.

Another strange voice came across the lines recently - not strange in a negative sense, but it had not been heard recently. Good ole Joltin **Joe Bocalero [B]** called to let you know he is still running full steam, selling a lot of Chrysler products (he will make you a good deal) and considering partying with you in Vegas. He was wondering about some of you who were with him in Mooseburg as guests of the 3rd Reich. Good to hear from you, Joe, but we all expect more than just hearing in September.

Edna Maue had told us about sending a lot of material to the museum, things that were in **Warren's** collection, and she recently sent a letter of thanks from Deanna Alexander, the project manager. Those workers are always grateful for any memorabilia and they show it by the letters they return to those who donate. Edna claims that she has nothing to do, but is always busy.

Want to meet a disgustingly (his own words) healthy 80-year-old? That would be **Grover Cunningham [SV]**. Grover would like to know something about **Bob Beeman [B]** or **Carson Neidlinger** and **Jack Cotton**, and even though he recalls people like **Cliff Shultz [C]**, **Bob Stanton [A]**, and **Sal Ignatti [SV]**, he wonders if they remember him. Well, above named men, why not prove you do remember.

A letter from **Sal Jaramillo [HQ]** contained another article about Sgt. Carter who's name was in the forefront the past number of months. The article was in reference to the sergeant's work with the California National Guard. Sal intends to be in Las Vegas and he will be looking for **Ted Zawacki** and **Harry Feyer**, so you two Hellcats had better be there.

Time for a little diversion. It would be wrong to go through an article without a reminder, yea more than a reminder, about the work being done to build our - yes OUR - museum in Abilene. **Marvin Drum [A]** took time to send material about the closing on the building and in the article it stated that Marvin, a retired contractor, is donating his services as the building is being remodeled. HHO. The work should take about a year and should be a very important part of the city and certainly a vital part of our organization.

Carl Helton [A] has spent many, many hours writing to associate members of the association (HHO) and was pleased to do so, but he does hope that the response will improve. We feel that many have a mistaken idea about the donation and its destination. Monies are now being handled by a committee away from the university, and you must know that it is understood that not everyone can contribute vast amounts, but you must also understand that any contribution is a show of good faith and belief in the project and belief in the 12th. No matter what the size in dollars, your help is a vital show of support now and in the future. The amount of work being done by our members on the committees and the staff at ACU, blows one's mind. Yes, there will be something about the project in each HCN article so that you may be reminded of the scope of the work and to be reminded that this is the ONLY armored division (division) museum in the country.

George Hatt [A] was surprised by a letter from Karin Theys of Colmar, a letter she had picked off the web over there. It referred to the time that **George**, **Jim Czarnecki [A/56]**, and **Merle Wood**

address. There is someone in this noble outfit who can shed some light on this missing person. Should you know anything, call John Critzas, toll free: 1-800-537-1418. The prediction is, 'our record of finds' will be intact.

A young lady gave birth to identical twins but had to put them out for adoption. One went to Egypt and was named Ahmahl, and the other went to Mexico and was named Juan. When Juan found his 'birth mother' he sent her his picture. Mom was overcome with joy, but lamented to her husband, "I wish I had a picture of Ahmahl." To which her husband replied, "Forget it - when you've seen Juan, you've seen Ahmahl."

Sooo, you can't be a winner all the time.

Special regards to **Bob Kinney [B/56]** and **Bill Jones [B/56]** for taking time to send word and obituaries about Cpt. **Ray Ebbage [B]**. HHO fellows.

What is this we hear about **Bob Cooper [HQ]** following **Evelyn** to her church women's meetings? And don't try to give us that old line about being a good guy and protecting your woman, Bob. Could it be you like the good lunches, or do all those ladies fuss over you? Maybe the rest of us are just jealous. Evelyn wrote about their great relationship with the Polsinelli group. We know why the gas prices are so high, Coopers. You and your travels have caused a shortage and sent the price up. Well, we are not surprised that you already have your reservations for Abilene, but do you really have your summer and Christmas reservations at Branson? Keep chugging kids, you are an inspiration to us all.

We were wondering about **Bea and Jim Golip [C]** and lo and behold a phone call from Detroit came through to tell us about Bea having both hips replaced, but she is doing very well. Guess this couple were, or are, bowlers with scores in the 200s. We are not going to challenge them.

Jim spends some time watching large print TV machines. Did you know that because of a bad eye he had to shoot left-handed? Boy do you get great knowledge reading the HCN!! Most of Jim's squad was lost to an exploding panzerfaust, and I believe that is when Jim became squad leader.

The Golips flew to the Las Vegas reunion and had a bad experience and never flew again. We miss this couple and hope there is some way we can meet again. Incidentally, **Josephine Gillard [C]** is now living in the Detroit area so maybe they will have a mini reunion.

Ralph Langley [C] sent a copy of a letter he sent to **Louie Karras [C]** and included in the envelope was a roster of C Company that was probably after the war. In reading it there were only a few familiar names. From the 1st platoon - **Tony Prashchak, Clarence Knapik, Robert Basset, John Priestly**. From the 2nd platoon - **John Finley, Phil Narten, Jim Golip, Ralph Langley, Allen Evershed, Elwood Dexheimer, Bud Wiley, Sam Tessler**. From the 3rd platoon - **Clyde Spice, Conrad Trenz, Harland Showers, Sherman Lans, Herman Ernsperker, Howard Gillard**. From the Anti-Tank platoon - **Stan Kosinski, Sheldon Ostrow**. If any of you C type persons would like this list we will try to copy it. It is rather old, but it is possible.

Judging from the number of HHOs we always have, the 12th fits this word of wisdom to a T. "Kindness is a hard thing to give away-it usually comes back to you." How true, how true.

Write, write to your buddies, then maybe they will write to your Rep and let us know about YOU. Remember the museum and make your plans now to join us in Abilene to revel in its existence.

How about that picture of you in your youth that should be sent to **Bob Hoeweler**?

By now you are probably wondering, "Didn't **Walter Gaines [D]** write his Rep this month?" Glad you asked. Yes he did. **Walter and Ellen** have not been feeling too spiffy recently, but Walt adopts Jack Benny's attitude: "That is just the way it goes after you pass 39." Good thinking Walter and keep writing to those buddies.

Ralph Langley's letter was a picture of the S.S. Sea Porpoise,

the ship which brought him back to the states. This ship was built in 1943 and was designed to carry cargo and a few passengers. When he and **Louis Karras** came home on this ship there were 3,108 enlisted men and 147 officers riding along. On D-Day +29 it hit a mine at Utah Beach but was repairable. There are many more very interesting facts about this ship and that crossing in August of 1945, and in the May issue you will, as Paul Harvey says, "know the rest of the story."

Have a great month and finalize your plans for the trip to Abilene, get your picture to **Bob Hoeweler**, and clean out the garage, oops, that is what the **Funkes** are to do.

If there is something to be done, do it. "If you don't do it you'll never know what would have happened if you had done it."

DIVISION HEADQUARTERS UNITS

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Phone (317) 846-8789

No column this month.

23RD TANK BATTALION

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Jack Treaster, 6975 Lindsey Rd, China, MI 48054-2414

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Greetings to all in the 23rd. With a very heavy heart, I regret to inform all of you of the passing of my father-in-law, **Roy L. Peters [SV]**. He underwent emergency surgery on Jan. 15, 2004 to repair a ruptured aorta and then survived a subsequent surgery two weeks later to repair and remove a portion of perforated bowel.

Though both surgeries were successful, Roy never regained complete consciousness due to several medical complications. Roy unexpectedly died on Feb. 29, 2004, in the very early morning hours with his daughter **Barbara** at his side.

Roy retired from Detroit Edison at the age of 62 where he had



Robert Kimball from Minnesota. He was in Lt. Watson's tank when it got hit. Does anyone know if he survived?

Nebr., after working for 13 years as assistant industrial credit man in Chicago, he moved to a farm in Nebr., Jan. 1, 1950. He has about 200 acres 40 miles north of Omaha, raises, corn, oats, hogs, cattle and chickens, has been very lucky so far, has daughter born May 9, 1951. *** ELMER G. WILLIAMS (Fin. Sec.) % Leland Hotel, 1315 Polk St., San Francisco, Calif., is a Certified, Public Accountant. Elmer is still a confirmed bachelor.

LAWRENCE H. MEYER, 109 East North C St., Gas City, Ind., is now principal of Mississinewa Joint High School, family includes 2 girls, no additions since Berkeley. Lawrence is now Bn C. O., 329th Inf., 83rd Inf. Div., USAR. *** JOHN LEEHMAN is recovering from jaundice. Col. Bromley is heading for Tokyo shortly. JAMES K. HUNT, Westphalia, Kas. is farming about 320 acres, specializing in soy beans, wheat, milk and stock cows. Is married, no children, has a new Olds 88, so he should make it to the Reunion. We would like to have him as a member.

17th Armored Infantry Division

GEORGE HATT (A) 708 Ridgelea St., Longview, Texas is presently working on guided missiles, father of two girls, one year old and two years old. *** GEORGE W. ALLEN (B) 46 Brinkerhoff Lane, Manhasset, N.Y. is Adjutant of V.F.W. Manhasset Post 2522. ***** NICOLA COSTABILE (A) 1102 Mace Ave., N.Y.; N.Y. asked for a roster of his company, maybe later we can furnish this, sorry. ***** HENRY B. SADLO (A & C) 332 Atwood St., Louisville 8, Ky., is Prosecuting Attorney for Louisville Domestic Relations Court and practices General Law in the Louisville Trust Building, is going to be married in June. **** GLENN WEIR (C) is farming at Hazelton, Kas. **** OSCAR FRICKE (C) is living at Loyal, Wisc. Henry said "Pop" Highfill should know HERMAN ERNSPIKER lives at Jeffersontown, Ky. and that he is ready to defend Herman if they want to renew their feud. *** THOMAS R. RICHARDS (A) 126 E. High St., Coaldale, Pa. hopes to see a lot of his buddies at Reunion. ***** IDUS CLEVELAND (Sv) 309 Kroger, Dupo, Ill. has a daughter 15 months old. Idus recently saw RALPH DAY, 332 Patterson Ave., Roodhouse, Ill., had a daughter born in '51. **** CHARLES WALLMAN (A) 515 First St., Watertown, Wisc. is now sales manager for the Brandt Automatic Cash Register Co. ***** HUBERT MASHBURN (Hq) is still driving paddy wagon, shooting sick horses and a small bit of midwifery. He's still a bachelor and would like to hear from GLEN CLELAND, CLARENCE SMITH and JOHN BURKHART. BOB REED (Hq) Kanopolis, Kas. departed the bachelors in Oct. 1950. D. R. MCKEE is now married and has a little McKee, operates a grocery store at Wetmore, Kas. ** GROVER CUNNINGHAM (Hq) 3143 13th St. Port Arthur, Texas is now married. AL WEBBER (B) 2890 Van Aken Blvd., Shaker Heights, Ohio is managing an apartment house and really got it made.

STANLEY T. RESH (A), RFD 2, Hanover, Pa., occupation is paper making in Spring Grove, Pa., married and has two small children. During the battle of Herrlisheim he was in the hospital. He has been in touch with ALBERT MOOMJY, 63-60 102nd St., Forest Hills, N. Y. and he would like to hear from some of the fellows. VANDERBILT B. WARD, JR., 111 Fordham Road, Syracuse, N. Y. is married, attended Hamilton College, was captured at Herrlisheim.

WILLIAM R. HOLLY (Sv) 1410 N. W. 89th St., Miami 47, Fla. and his son Wm. D. Holly (Sv) 1210 N. W. 127th St., Miami 47, Fla. write in and say they are enjoying the nice sunshine while we shiver up North here. They know what they are talking about because they used to live in Cincinnati, Ohio. They had a letter from GUS JOPPIE (Sv) 926 N. Homer St., Lansing, Mich., he's working as a mechanic in a Nash garage no kids yet. LEE JETER is about to approach the altar. The Hollys have one boy in the AF in Korea and another married, one 6 years, no

HELLCAT NEWS: Herman ERNSPIKER mention. I'm sure it was a funny story if Grandpa was involved.



Only one is happy: Who are these A/17 dudes in Heidenheim, Germany, August 1945?

Herman Ernspeker, Arthur Ernst, John Finley, Richard Franks, Josephine Gillard, Jim Golip, Albert Goldberg, Lillian Hackworth, Delores Harley, George Hawkins, Peter Helman, William Hill, Milton Jordan, Clarence Knapik, Betty Kuzin, Ralph Langley, Mahlon Lareau, Nick Marro Sr. John Miller, Philip C Narten, Marshall O'Bryant, Leonard Olson, Ken Peters, John Priestley, James Ray, Thelma Raynor, Ellis Rosensteel, John Shirley, Sam Tessler, Conrad Trenz, Bud Wiley, Michael Wiley, and Douglas Wiley. There you have it. Some we have been in contact with, some have never made any contact. We hope for the best.

In the "takes all kinds" category: Two robbers entered a record shop nervously waving revolvers. The first one shouted, "Nobody move!" When his partner moved, the startled first bandit shot him. Yes, there are days like this!

Time to sign off with reminders – booster help for HCN and the museum appreciated and communicate with your rep. If you don't like to write, call: The phone is a handy gadget. And the whole association appreciates your attendance at the reunion. Take care of yourself, laugh a lot, complain little, remember old friends, and make new ones!

23RD TANK BATTALION

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615-382-6959 brdsy@comcast.net

Co-Rep: Jack Treaster, 6975 Lindsey Rd, China, MI 48054-2414
810-765-3117 jack.treaster@fraser.misd.net

Historian: James Francis, 1756 Shuey Ave. #119, Walnut Crk, CA 94596
925-988-0709 jimfrancis18@sbcglobal.net

We have a new member, Glenn E. Clark (564 S. Eagle St., Geneva, OH, 44041-1522), the son of Duane E. Clark [B/23], who contacted past president Ward McGill [B/66]. He had sent along a copy of his father's discharge, showing him as a member of B Company. Here's part of what Duane said in his letter to Ward:

"My research shows Father was a member of the 23rd TB. He was only in Europe three months and one day when he was hurt. He was a rifleman (at least that was his MOS). On the way to "Hitler's Hideout" aboard a single tank trying to catch his outfit, he fell off the tank and broke both legs. I hope you will be able to add my father's name to the roster of the 12th ADA. It would mean so much to both me and my mother."

Any member of B Company who recalls Duane Clark and this incident, please contact Glenn at the above address or contact your unit rep.

Who remembers the old radio show *Fibber McGee and Molly*? We got ourselves a new one – **Gert 'n Ernie**. Here's a sample of a segment of a phone call:

Ernie: Before I say hello I gotta get permission from She Who Speaks. Oh, She Who Speaks, can I talk to—

Gert: Talk? That's all he's been doing since the day I married him. It's a miracle I don't have a serious hearing problem with him howling in my ear.

Ernie: Yeah, she's been having so much trouble, thought I would trade her in for a couple of new models, but I didn't have much luck.

Gert: Luck? No one wanted him. I tried to trade *him* in and they just laughed. And laughed.

Ernie: You can see how persecuted I am. I am not allowed to do anything unless SWS okays it.

Gert: Big deal. So how come I never find out what he's done until after he gets us both in trouble?

Ernie: How can I get in trouble? I'm not allowed to go out alone anymore. Feel like I'm on a short leash.

Gert: Never mind the leash. Tell me how I can get a muzzle on him.

Anybody interested in the next installment, call 508-883-9398. And brace yourself.

From the military mind: Flashlights are tubular metal containers kept in a flight bag for the purpose of storing dead batteries.

43RD TANK BATTALION

Mark Ault, 4803 Brookhaven Drive, Kokomo, IN 46901
765-459-5245 malt4803@aol.com

JUNE BIRTHDAYS: Francis Hogan - 1st, Gerald Bevis - 1st, Ilah Anderson - 2nd, Tom Bettis - 2nd, Wanda Lewis - 4th, McHarley Anderson - 7th, Troy Nelson - 9th, Marylin Johnson - 10th, Frances Yockey - 13th, Ira Bill Nelson - 18th, Clifton Hunter - 20th, Patty Ault - 20th, Gladys Mattheisen - 20th, Clair Porch - 21st, Mary O'Neil - 21st, Mark Ault - 23rd, Jeanette Bolin - 23rd, Susan Muschell - 25th, Mildred Smart - 27th, Helen Rossen - 27th.

JUNE ANNIVERSARIES: Gordon and Dorothy Simons - 1st, 52 years; Carl and Ardis Erickson - 2nd, 30 years; Carl and Jo Moore - 4th, 63 years; Earl and Nellie Kirkpatrick - 21st, 17 years; Andrew and Jennifer Seaman - 21st, 6 years; Hollis and Mildred Smart - 26th, 65 years; Ross and Wanda Lewis - 29th, 63 years; Joe and Gloria Anfuso - 31st, 63 years; Charles and Susan Hardberger - 31st, 44 years.

HELLO FOLKS: Starting the June column on March 17. Mailed our May column of the 43rd yesterday. Ann is still spring house cleaning so I'll have to act very busy doing something, anything, so I will start the June column.

Farmer Kile: Naomi, Charlie's wife fell and banged herself up quite well. Charlie, Naomi, and their daughter, Shirley, had finished breakfast when Naomi got up and started for the bathroom to get ready for an early doctors appointment. She lost her balance and fell between their bathroom and their bedroom, fracturing her hip and wrist. She is taking therapy and will probably be in extended care for two-three weeks.

LITTLE "OLD" LADIES: A young man shopping in a supermarket noticed a little old lady following him around. If he stopped, she stopped. Furthermore she kept staring at him. She finally overtook him at the checkout, and she turned to him and said, "I hope I haven't made you feel ill at ease; it's just that you look so much like my late son." He answered, "That's okay." "I know it's silly, but if you'd call out "Goodbye, Mom" as I leave the store, it would make me feel so happy." She then went through the checkout, and as she was on her way out of the store, the man called out, "Goodbye, Mom." The little old lady waved, and smiled back at him. Pleased that he had brought a little sunshine

woman, "I'm always on time."

I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you and your families a very Merry Christmas and may you enjoy the holiday season with your loved ones and may the coming New Year be a healthy and happy one for all of you.

God bless you all.

Change of Address

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RR 3, Box 385-A

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555 SE 8th St., Apt 256

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Ft. Myers, FL 33908

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Pasadena, CA 91107

ELMER BECKSTROM - 92nd

Capeside Cove

Siren, WI 54872

JEWEL BREKKE - Hq/92

3038 Vine Lane

Sebring, FL 33870

Dec. 1982

HELLCAT NEWS

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Ninfa Riggio, wife of Dom, 152nd, with well known "single" Laverl Kennedy, also 152nd, at St. Louis reunion.

WILLIAM R. HILL - B/493

215 Hillcrest Drive

Du Bois, PA 15801

WILLIAM L. CUNNINGHAM

Rt. 1, 225 Lakewood Road

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Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

GILBERT P. GOODING - Sv/495

331 Brookview

Channelview, TX 77530

CLIFFORD F. KLOSE - C/495

5474 W. Flying Circle

Tucson, AZ 85713

LAST CHANCE
DUES ARE DUE
You must pay by
Dec. 10 or you will
dropped

CECIL JONES - A/92

213 S. Mill St.

Pryor, OK 74361

ELLERY A. LIKENS, JR. - B/92

385 S. Union, Apt. 116

Colorado Springs, CO 80910

KARL H. MEYER - D/92

15536 Hamner Drive

Los Angeles, CA 90077

EARL W. AUXIER - E/92

5517 S. 4th Street

St. Joseph, MO 64504

PETER J. WILCZEWSKI - D/92

S. Phillips Ave., Box 25

Speonk, L.I., NY 11972

DIXON C. BAILEY - Hq/119

4051 S. 1535 W, No 12-D

West Valley City, UT 84107

JAMES BARHAM - Hq/119

PO Box 25066

Prescott Valley, AZ 86312

HAROLD B. FERGUSON - B/119

Rt. 2, Box 585

Troutville, VA 24175

Official 12th Armored Jewelry



EARRINGS for the Hellkitten come in 3 different styles, Pierced wire (shown) post-type for pierced ears and screw-on type for un-pierced ears. \$3.50 each plus postage. See order blank for full details.



Happy 152nd foursome enjoying the St. Louis Reunion.
L to R: Joe Gray, Janet and Larry Mintz, and LaVern Gray.

HELLCAT NEWS: Herman Ernsperker mention: Address Change from Leatherwood Lake Resort (TENNESSEE) back to J'town?

returned home safely.

At this writing, the division membership dues are approximately 1,000 in arrears. We trust many have renewed by now as all are needed these days to remain and continue to be a solid and financially strong association. IT'S GREAT TO BE A HELLCAT. . .



17th Armored Infantry Battalion

WARRENE E. MAUE

4320 Germantown - Liberty Rd.

GERMANTOWN, OH 45327

Phone [513] 866-5004

BOOSTERS

Rhonda B. Keller - B

J. Norman Habicht - B

Joseph P. Laurie - A

Edward T. Logue - A

Russel D. Rasmussen - A

Nicholas A. Bartushintz - Sv

James L. LaFond - B

Robert A. Stanton - A

I wonder how many of us out of state drivers got lost, or made the wrong turn. You wouldn't want this reunion to be any different than any others. Many of us got lost trying to find the hotel in Rochester, St. Louis, Nashville, and now Denver. It's quite different for those being in the city for the first time, than living here for several years. One sees where he wants to go, but how does he get there from here. There is always something left out on directions.

Directions from the various highways to the Denver - Marriott hotel were published in the August issue, so hopefully everyone was able to find the way to the reunion site this year (editor)

As of this date, last week of August, I don't know whether we have a Friday night dinner, or not. We'll have to wait and see how this works out. I received about eight letters in favor of this dinner, but now I have to wait on the party to return from Europe, (who were going to help us on this dinner). Its going to be interesting to see how this works out. I am positive we will have a great time in any event. John Speedy, Jr., Hq. & C., wrote us a short letter. This will be the first time to see Speedy. I believe he was to Louisville. In his letter he spoke of Herman Ernspeker, C., whom he talked to while in Louisville. One of the things they spoke of in their conversation, was that Ernspeker

thanked him, as he was never wounded while Speedy was C.O.. But after he left, he was wounded twice. Speedy was interested in answering John Cozzie, A., on his question of an ole buddy, who Speedy says was K.I.A., and he was close when it happened. Thanks John for answering an ole buddies question, even though it isn't the kind of an answer he may want.

While in Louisville, the middle of July, I called several ole A - Co. men. Rex Higdon, A., third

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platoon Sergeant, and we shot the breeze for close to a half hour. He was glad to learn I had found one of his sergeants, Russel Rasmussen. We talked of several others in town, and this got me to calling them.

Called Pat Padgett, A., and this brought up his sergeant, in the conversation, as he, Warren Harding, A., died several months ago. Pat said you could class Harding as a loner. This made the whole

squad not close, and lacking in spirit. Pat has been retired for several years now. He says he should see Higdon more, as they only live several blocks from one another.

Then I called an ole buddy to all of us, who was transferred out at Camp Barkley, to the 4th armored. Bill Lockard, A., and he has a lot of information on our ole buddies who went with him. I know we talked the better part of

It's simple, easy and inexpensive to say Merry Christmas to all your friends in the 12th ADA by placing a Holiday ad in the Dec. issue of Hellcat News. Fill out this form and rush it back to Norb Bruemmer by Nov. 1st. Make check payable to the 12th ADA. Please print plainly so your copy can be followed. Do it today, so you won't forget it tomorrow.

Greeting Length	1 Column	2 Columns	3 Columns
1"	\$3.00	\$6.00	\$9.00
2"	\$6.00	\$12.00	\$18.00
3"	\$9.00	\$18.00	\$27.00

(ADD \$3.00 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL INCH OR COLUMN)

Holiday Greetings
Send Your's By Placing An Ad in the December Hellcat News

Enclosed find \$ _____ Please insert a Holiday Greeting ad for me in the December Hellcat News.

Name _____ Unit: Co. _____ Bn. _____

My Greeting is as follows _____

Ad Size: No. of columns _____ Length in inches _____

(If you do not insert your own greeting above, your add will read "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.")

DO IT TODAY!

APPENDIX A CHRONOLOGY OF THE 17th ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

In U.S.A. prior to departure overseas - 1942-44

DATE	LOCATION
15 Sept. 1942	56th Armored Infantry Regiment (17th AIB predecessor) activated at Camp Campbell, Kentucky, along with, and as part of, the 12th Armored Division.
15 Sept. 1942 - 3 Sept. 1943	Camp Campbell (56th Armored Infantry Regiment)
3 Sept. - 12 Nov. 1943	Tennessee Maneuvers (56th Armored Infantry Regiment)
8 Nov. 1943	12th Armored Division ordered to move to Camp Barkeley, Texas (Gen. Order No. 35)
11 Nov. 1943	17th Armored Infantry Battalion was formed to be a part of reorganized 12th Armored Division. The 56th AIR, as such, was eliminated. (Gen. Order No. 36) (From here forward the unit is 17th Armored Infantry Battalion.)
12 Nov. 1943 - 8 Sept. 1944	Camp Barkeley, Texas
8-11 Sept. 1944	Entrained from Camp Barkeley to Camp Shanks
11-19 Sept. 1944	Camp Shanks, New York
20 Sept. 1944	Depart New York City on the Empress of Australia

17th AIB overseas prior to combat - 1944

DATE	LOCATION
2 Oct. 1944	Debarc Empress of Australia in Liverpool, England
3-6 Oct. 1944	Camp "R", Hungerford, England (???)
6 Oct. - 11 Nov. 1944	Pennings Camp, Tidworth Barracks, England
11 Nov. 1944	Depart Tidworth Barracks
11 Nov. 1944	Depart Southampton, England on troop transport HMT Antenor and LST No. 1, et al
12 -13 Nov. 1944	Troops and vehicles land at le Havre, France
13-30 Nov. 1944	Chateau de Bosmelet, Auffay, France
30 Nov. - 2 Dec. 1944	Companies in a convoy of armored and other vehicles traveled across northern France through Compiègne, Soissons, Reims, and Bar-le-Duc en route to Lunéville
3-6 Dec. 1944	French army barracks in Lunéville
7 Dec. 1944	Companies' combat troops proceeded in armored convoys to points south of the front. Troops dismounted and marched on foot to locales of initial combat action.

APPENDIX A CHRONOLOGY OF THE 17th ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

17th AIB during combat - 1944-45

7 Dec. 1944 - 5 May 1945 — Combat period in France and Germany. The 17th AIB was assigned along with the rest of the Division to the U.S. 7th Army. Temporary assignments were made to the U.S. 3rd Army on 18-24 Mar., and the French First Army on 22 Jan. - 7 Feb. (See Co. Combat Chronologies for more specific locations during this period.)

DATE	TIME	LOCATION
1944		France
7 Dec. Hq./Hq Co.	arr 1430	Rahling
7 Dec. Cos. B & C	arr 2400	Bining
8 Dec. Co. A	arr 0300	Bining
9 December		Bining Barracks
10 Dec.	lv 0830	Bining Barracks
10 Dec.	arr 1330	Rohrbach and hill to north
12 Dec.	lv 0400	Hill
12 Dec.	arr 1530	Hoeling
12-14 Dec.		Hoeling
7-14 Dec. Hq/Hq Co.		Bining
14-31 Dec.		Eywiller
1945		France
1-7 Jan.		Inswiller
7-15 Jan.		Schweigshausen
15 Jan.	lv 0001+	Schweigshausen
15 Jan.	lv 0935	Weyersheim
15 Jan.	arr 0950	LD near Zorn R.
15-16 Jan.		Vicinity Zorn R. and Stainwald
16-17 Jan.		In field between Zorn and Steinwald
17-18 Jan.		Herrlisheim
18-19 Jan.		Geudertheim
19-20 Jan.		Schweigshausen and Gougenheim
20 Jan.		Gougenheim
21-25 Jan.		Kienheim
25 Jan - 2 Feb.		Breuschwickersheim
2 Feb.	lv	Breuschwickersheim
2 Feb.	arr	Houssen
2 Feb.	lv	Houssen
2 Feb.	arr	Colmar
2-3 Feb.		Colmar
3-4 Feb.		Wettolsheim, Eguisheim, Husseren
4 Feb.		Voegtlinshoffen
4 Feb.		Obermorschwihr
4 Feb.	arr	Herrlisheim près Colmar
4 -5 Feb.		Herrlisheim près Colmar
5 Feb.	lv	Herrlisheim près Colmar
5 Feb.	arr	Niederhergheim
5-6 Feb.		Niederhergheim
6 Feb.		Niederentzen
6-9 Feb.		Husseren-Voegtlinshoffen
9-13 Feb.		Eywiller
13 Feb. - 9 Mar.		Zimming
9-14 Mar.		vicinity Karlsbrunn (Germany)
14-17 Mar.		Zimming
17 Mar.	lv 0730	Zimming
17 Mar.	arr 1530	Borg
17 Mar.	lv 1805	Borg
17-18 Mar.		Road to 3rd Army: Remich, over Moselle, Luxembourg, Trier, over Moselle

January 19, 1945 through March 12, 1945 Grandpa was not in theater of operation due to injuries sustained in Herrlisheim. He did not fight with the FRENCH Army in the COLMAR POCKET

18 Mar 45	Hermeskief	Rhineland	Germany
18 Mar 45	Brucken	Rhineland	Germany
19 Mar 45	Baumholden	Rhineland	Germany
21 Mar 45	Sausenheim	Pfalz	Germany
22 Mar 45	Mutterstadt	Pfalz	Germany
24 mar 45	Deidesheim	Pfalz	Germany
28 Mar 45	Lorsch	Hessen	Germany
29 Mar 45	Beerfelden	Bavaria	Germany
30 Mar 45	Amorbach	Bavaria	Germany
31 Mar 45	Hardheim	Baden	Germany
31 Mar 45	Paimar	Baden	Germany
3 Apr 45	Giebelstadt	Bavaria	Germany
10 Apr 45	Kitzingen (airfield)	Bavaria	Germany
14 Apr 45	Uffenheim	Bavaria	Germany
16 Apr 45	Illesheim	Bavaria	Germany
18 Apr 45	Oberdachstetten	Bavaria	Germany
20 Apr 45	Ansbach	Wurttemberg	Germany
21 Apr 45	Dinkelsbuhl	Wurttemberg	Germany
22 Apr 45	Bopfingen	Wurttemberg	Germany
24 Apr 45	Dillingen	Bavaria	Germany
27 Apr 45	Ziemetshausen	Bavaria	Germany
28 Apr 45	Schwabmunchen	Bavaria	Germany
29 Apr 45	Landsberg	Bavaria	Germany
1 May 45	Murnau	Bavaria	Germany
2 May 45	Redenfelden	Bavaria	Germany
5 May 45	Heidenheim	Wurttemberg	Germany

Grandpa returned to battlefield around March 16, 1945 just before the 12th Armored joined General Patton's 3rd Army to cross the RHINE River. They became known as the Mystery Division of Patton's Army.

Grandpa was wounded again on APRIL 25, 1945 and was out of action for a few days.

The 17th AIB was credited with the all time battle record of clearing enemy soldiers from towns in the least amount of time. Reference "SPEED IS THE PASSWORD" where it credits 17th company C as the first to reach the objective on their 59 mile journey at the end of World War II.

Occupational Duty was performed throughout Germany from May 7th until late September 1945 for Grandpa before he had enough points earned to come home. He was one of the first from the 12th Armored to leave the European Theater after the conclusion of the war.

Occupational Duty included managing the displaced Jewish, Polish, French POW's from Concentration Camps.

Liberation of Concentration Camps

Dachau satellite annihilation camps liberated by the 12th Armored Division

- Hurlach
- Erpting
- Kaufering
- Schrosbenhausen
- Schwabigg
- Langerringen
- Turkheim
- Lawingen
- Schwastach
- Germering

RESEARCH

The best source for a more complete history of the 12th Armored Division is the Museum located in Abilene, TX. www.12tharmoredmuseum.com is a great site.

I encourage you to visit the web site: www.12tharmoredmuseum.com/oral-history.asp

This site has videos of former soldiers that served with Grandpa. You must listen to these stories to get a better understanding of how terrible the war was for these guys. The ones with the most interest are:

PG 12) **Harlan Showers** explains how he moved up in rank when Ernspeker got hurt at Herrlisheim @ the 39 + minute mark.

PG 15) **Thaddeus J. Zawacki** @ 10 + minute mark explains Machine Gun operators being wiped out at Herrlisheim. He was following the 17th co. in the mortar platoon.

PG 2) **Logan Bowling** @ 10:20 mark explains incident that killed Grandpa's "*Buddy*" Richard Carroll. This is the same story Grandpa tells in his memoirs where he earns his second Purple Heart.

PG3) **Dr. Vincent Cotroneo** was the doctor (Medic) with Grandpa's troop. He has two interviews. 1st video @ 41+ mark he goes into detail on how the 17th C took the Danube Bridge, he tells the story of Clarence Thornhill (Medic) getting killed trying to help Richard Carroll. Very soft spoken so you have to listen closely. At 52 + mark he explains GERMAN **10th SS PANZER** and two other Germans fought against the 17th AIB (600 men) in Herrlisheim.

Second interview, @ 38 + mark gives more detail of the Carroll – Thornhill story @ 44+mark tells how the 17th captured 90K German Soldiers of which 30% had no guns.

PG 1) Round Table 17th AIB

PG 11) Dr. Brendan P. Phibbs, was taped at a reunion and has a unique perspective on the war. Excellent speech. He was the Author of three WWII books.

HELLCAT News is still operating. You can become an associate member of the 12th Armored Museum as well.

12th Armored Books



*This book has a lot of pictures that may be disturbing



There have been plenty of books written about WWII, these books have stories that Grandpa actually experienced. Hopefully the pictures of these books will help you to find the books if you choose to learn more. The 12th armored web site will give you a better prospective of what every soldier in his division experienced. If you search the books on the Museum website, go to left column of page and link to Written Experiences: look up 17th AIB. You must read the book “MOUNT UP the History of Company C”. This is the book given to Grandpa from a member of his division while Grandpa was recovering from his stroke.

END NOTES

When I (Richie Roberts) was about 9 years old I was out on the lake fishing with Grandpa at LEATHERWOOD when I first asked him about the War. Herman and Hazel ran the Campgrounds, Cabins, Restaurant and Dock at LEATHERWOOD LAKE RESORT when Herman, a machinist retired from Naval Ordnance in Louisville, KY in the early 70's.

I was confused that the previous day Grandpa had yelled at me for playing *ARMY* with two boys of families that were guests of Leatherwood. We were playing in the back of the cabins near the steps leading to the back cove when Grandpa came through the breezeway of the cabins yelling at me to get down to the restaurant and wait for him. Boy, I knew I was in trouble.

Once he came down to the store he started yelling "WAR IS NOT A GAME, DO YOU UNDERSTAND ME?" I was just waiting for him to tell me to go get a switch. Instead he just walked away. For a young boy this confused me because I had always thought I was Grandpa's favorite grandchild. I guess we all thought we were the favorite, which was just the way he made you feel. I felt like I had hurt him in some terrible way, I felt so guilty. So of course you know to whom I would seek guidance. Grandma!

Grandma told me that Grandpa had seen some terrible things during World War II and even she could not understand what all of his experiences were. She told me to wait a while before the subject could be approached again. Well for a little boy an hour seemed like a week.

So the next day when Grandpa took me out fishing as the boat turned right- to the Northern cove, I knew I had a chance to ask the question. We were too far from shore and he was not turning the boat around. We were fishing. Of course he was fishing for Crappie or Bass and I was fishing for Shad to sell to Chuck. We were on a mission.

So I built up the courage to ask, "Grandpa, tell me about the War, what did you do, where did you sleep, was it fun?" Forgetting of course that Grandma had told me he had witnessed some terrible things. His response was, "BOY, I did what I was asked to do, I followed my orders, I didn't sleep and war is not fun, it is not a game". He explained that he had lost several friends that were killed during the war. He showed me his scars then he said "Now HUSH, the fish will here you, be quiet". That was it, no more discussion about his role in WWII.

Grandpa was no different than the majority of former WWII veterans when it came time to discuss their actions in the war. That war was gruesome, disgusting crimes committed by the German S.S. (Schutzstaffel means "Protective Squadron") against all of mankind. Our American soldiers faced the enemy with courage and discipline unlike any other force known prior to WWII. The atrocities our veterans witnessed were unspeakable. Therefore they chose not to speak of their experiences.

As the years had past I could sometimes get a small story out of Grandpa concerning a few incidents that occurred during the war. On the seldom occasion when one of his former soldiers would stop by the house to visit, I was able to pick up on a few stories. Most Veterans will reminisce with former comrades that witnessed the same experiences.

In his memoirs Grandpa didn't speak of the stories about feeding starving young German children with his own K rations. He never mentioned being trapped in a fox hole due to enemy fire for almost two days where his kidneys had frozen and his partner was "cut down" trying to leave the foxhole (at the ***Maginot Line*** on hill north of Rohbach near Bettwiller). Didn't mention sharing a foxhole with enemy combatants [offering up a cigarette in peace], this seemed to be a common occurrence that many soldiers experienced. Nor did he write about the incident that left him and his buddy surrounded and trapped in a town overnight (1st attempt to capture Herrlisheim near the Water Works).

Although, he never bragged about his role as a World War II hero or his Divisions' historical accomplishments he did actually give me some good information during my college years.

Not only was Grandpa my hero personally, his actions during the war allow our family to call him a WORLD WAR II HERO.

In 1995, after Grandma had passed, I asked Grandpa to write down his memories so the family could learn more about his life prior to our existence. We all knew he was a GOD fearing loving person that dedicated his life and family to the LORD. We knew he was a great football player, hunter, fisherman with the ability to tell a great story. Not only was he well respected within the extended family but he was respected by members of the church and the community at large. Herman Ernspiker was the man that set the standard for all of us to follow.

As I looked over his memoirs it was difficult to read because his handwriting wasn't as steady in his advanced years. So I decided to copy them for everyone to share. I had some confusion with whom Grandpa had actually fought with during the war. Time lines, cities, battles and people other than his friend Richard Carroll that was KIA. You know the same questions I had when I was younger.

Let me just say, I had no idea what Grandpa went through until I started researching his journey through France and Germany. He was a member of the 12th Armored Div. one of the most decorated Divisions in World History. I have read many historical documents, books, watched countless hours of video to help in my research to try to help our family understand how lucky we all are to have known Herman. I think most importantly, being able to share his bloodline.

First and Foremost, outside of Barry and Carol, NONE of us would have been born (Sandy and Shane came after the war) if one single incident went differently for Grandpa during the war. I can not stress enough how GOD'S plan, Grandpa's expertise, luck and Guardian Angels got him through the war. Grandma never would have moved out to the country (Hopewell) if Grandpa had died in the war. Let that soak in for a while.

As you noticed while reading the memoirs I took the liberty to insert some clarification to help the reader get an understanding of certain circumstances. I have copied Grandpa's memoirs word for word. His sentences were so matter of fact and to the point.

A few more things I need to point out that may help you if you choose to learn a little more about our heroes.

SGT. Herman J. Ernsperger served as a Machine Gun Specialist, Rifle & Carbine Expert and Combat Infantry Expert in the 17th Armored Infantry Battalion Company C of the historic 12th Armored Division.

Accomplishments of the 12th Armored that Grandpa didn't share

Liberation of 10 concentration / work camps

Captured over 90 thousand Prisoners of war Adjusted from 70+ K after the war.

Captured:

Otto Adolf Eichmann (pronounced [ˈoʊto ˈaːdɔlf ˈaɪçˈmən]; 19 March 1906 – 1 June 1962) was a German [Nazi SS-Obersturmbannführer](#) ([lieutenant colonel](#)) and one of the major organizers of [the Holocaust](#). Eichmann was charged by SS-[Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich](#) with facilitating and managing the logistics of [mass deportation](#) of [Jews](#) to [ghettos](#) and [extermination camps](#) in German-occupied Eastern Europe during [World War II](#).

Aka: **Ike the Terrible**

After [Germany invaded Hungary](#) in March 1944, Eichmann oversaw the deportation and extermination of that country's Jewish population. Most of the victims were sent to [Auschwitz concentration camp](#), where 75 to 90 per cent were killed on arrival. By the time the transports were stopped in July, 437,000 of Hungary's 725,000 Jews had been killed. Historian [Richard J. Evans](#) estimates that between 5.5 and 6 million Jews were exterminated by the Nazis. Eichmann said towards the end of the war that he would "leap laughing into the grave because the feeling that he had five million people on his conscience would be for him a source of extraordinary satisfaction."^[1]

Eichmann escaped P.O.W. custody using fake documents from clergy and NAZI Sympathizers around 1946 then fled to Austria. He lived there until 1950, when he moved to [Argentina](#) using false papers.

In 1960, he was captured in [Argentina](#) by [Mossad](#), Israel's intelligence service. Following a widely publicized trial in Israel, he was found guilty of [war crimes](#) and hanged in 1962.

*From Wikipedia

Captured:

Wernher Magnus Maximilian, [Freiherr](#) von Braun (March 23, 1912 – June 16, 1977) was a German ([and later American](#)) [aerospace engineer](#)^[1] and [space architect](#) credited with inventing the [V-2 Rocket](#) and the [Saturn-V](#), for [Nazi Germany](#) and the [United States](#), respectively.^{[2][3]} He was one of the leading figures in the development of rocket technology in [WWII Germany](#) and the United States and is considered by NASA to be the "Father of [Rocket Science](#)". He was also a member of the [Nazi Party](#) and the [SS](#).

*From Wikipedia

Participated in the *Battle of Castle Itter* where 14 French Diplomats were rescued. The book "The Last Battle" was written to explain this last battle of WWII.

Total number of days in combat was 102 actual fighting days out of 210 days in the ETO once the fighting began. Amazing!

Another important item of interest for me is that the politics in war reward some individuals that may not have achieved such impressive résumés. Sometimes other Armies were given credit for the efforts of the 12th Armored Div. for political reasons.

General Patton (3rd Army) is revered as one the greatest Generals to lead troops in war. Patton took every opportunity to boast his war time achievements. Patton had his own Public Relation Corps travel with him to the battlefield. Patton was a great leader, no doubt. He convinced the government to concentrate on Armor and Tank ordinances to better prepare our military for war, enabling us to win World War II. However, General Patch of the 7th Army and General Allen of the 12th Armored accomplished much more than Patton but Patch was not as politically connected as Patton whose father was a politician. Patton Sr. was well connected to the Democratic establishment during the 1940's. A lot of Patton's successes were actually those of other Generals but nevertheless history has chosen Patton to be credited with other division's accomplishments. Conspiratorial scenarios let us believe Patton may have been intentionally killed due to injuries sustained in a car wreck that eventually took his life, because he was sure to parley his successes on the battlefield into a run for President of the United States.

There are quite a few war stories that correct which outfits actually accomplished certain feats while others claimed credit, including the Russians being the first to reach Berlin at the end of WWII. The U.S. government had an agreement with the Soviets to allow them to enter Berlin first so the Russians could claim the end of the war although the hostilities had ended a day earlier.

I encourage you to visit all of the websites that were mentioned previously. Join the 12th Armored Museum Association where membership dues help fund future research for other families trying to get answers of lost loved ones.

If only the internet was as accessible as it is today when Grandpa was alive, maybe I could have explored more clues. I may have found more information to share with you.

I feel sorry for the younger grandchildren that do not remember the great times with Grandpa before his stroke. I wish they had the opportunity to know Grandpa when he was so loving, funny and compassionate about his family. I have always felt that it was so unfair Grandpa had to deal with the after effects of a stroke after all of his accomplishments. He was a fair honest person who really loved family.

I now have a better understanding of why at times he could become so angry. Thank God none of us had to see the evil he had to face during the war.

Please write down some of your experiences to share with future members of the family. If you have any old pictures please copy them and share with the family.

