



**THE HISTORY OF THE
32ND MACHINE RECORDS UNIT (MOBILE)
OR
The First Million Cards Punched
Are the Toughest!**





THE HISTORY OF THE
32nd MACHINE RECORDS UNIT
(MOBILE)

DEDICATION
Otis F. Wollenberg
March 30, 1922 - February 14, 2003
Age 80

This book is dedicated to the memory of my uncle, Otis. F. Wollenberg who served with the 32nd Machine Records Unit (MRU) during World War II from 1942 to 1945. He was born to Bernard A. and Edna Kroening Wollenberg in Pendleton, New York and graduated from North Tonawanda, New York High School in 1940. He was 20 years old when he was drafted to serve his country.



When I discovered the hard copy of this book itemizing my uncle's journey through Europe during World War II, I knew it was not only a memoir to cherish as a remembrance of him, but of all who served and worked with him. The 32nd MRU were a close group of men who shared pup tents; dreams; letters from home; C rations; good and bad times together. The book gives a small glimpse of what life was like during World War II. I hope by having this in electronic format and making it available to the world that it may be read by additional relatives of some of the other men that were in the 32nd MRU and served with my uncle, Otis F. Wollenberg.

Donna Burolla, Niece of Otis Ontario, NY

Otis F. Wollenberg and one of the 32nd MRU's mascots

Foreword and Photographs of the Men of the 32nd MRU

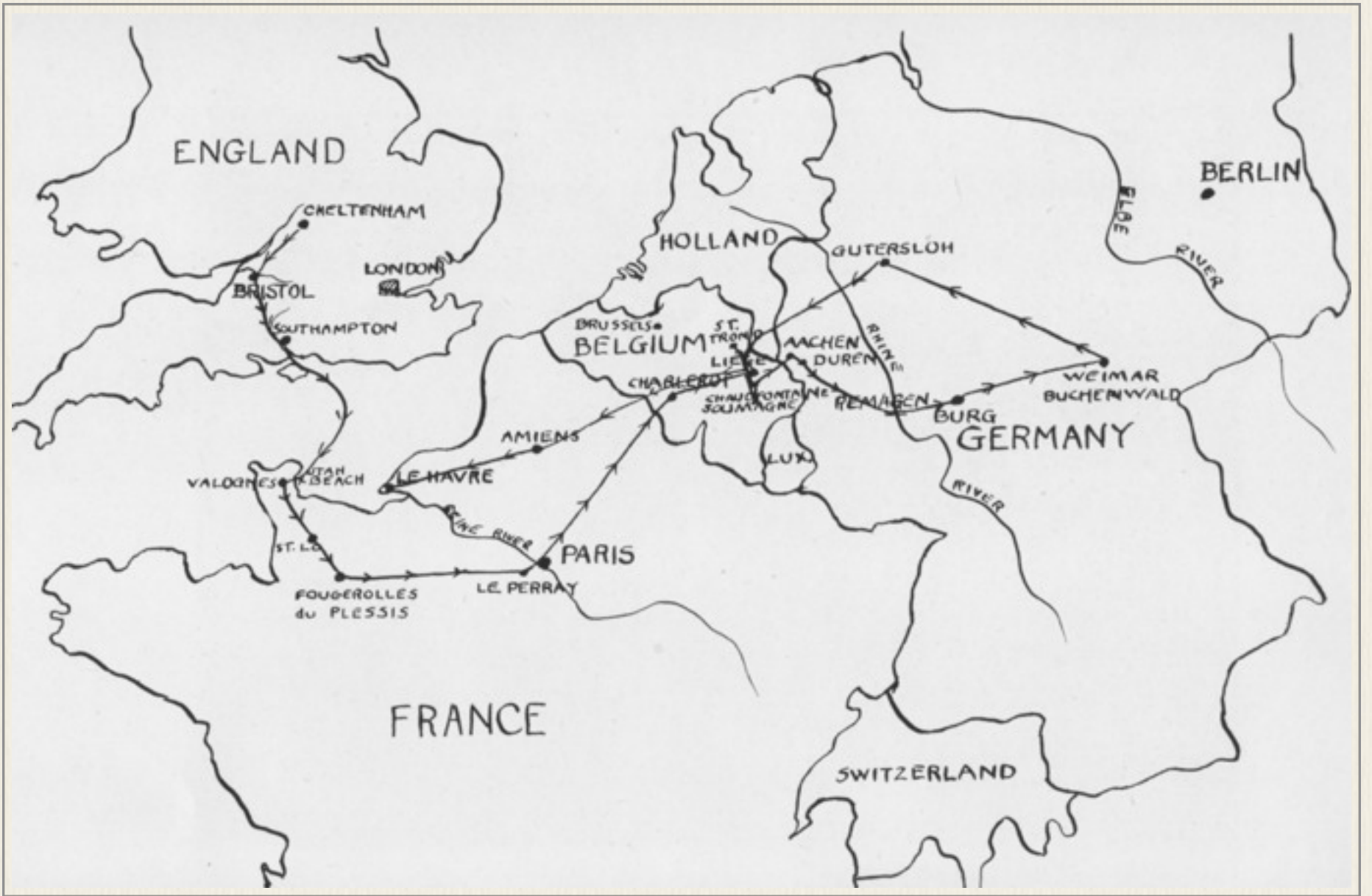
This is the story of a unit, and of its trek, which, following in the wake of our fighting men, was to take the 32nd Machine Records Unit (Mobile) from its activation home, Governors Island, New York, through its fledgling days with the First U.S. Army Headquarters in Bristol, and across the Channel in a spearhead that exploded in 337 days the myth of Naziism and supermen in the homeland of the Germans.

It is a story of work, of danger, of play, of individual courage to face new problems and solve them. It is a tale of men working together to do a job, men from all part of America, east and west, north and south, welding their different personalities into a unit that would not be surpassed in work, play or esprit de corps.

Since we were servicing and serving with the finest army the world had ever known, the First U.S. Army, it would have been inconceivable not to have attained the high standard of efficiency and discipline which was prevalent in the 32nd throughout the campaign. For not only was the First U.S. Army the largest aggregation of troops ever assembled as an army, but by their deeds they earned the right to their titular "First". They were first ashore on D-Day, and carried the attack alone through Normandy until the Third Army became operational on 1 August 1944. They did not slacken, but pushed on through France and Belgium into Germany. They crossed the Rhine first, accomplishing what the military experts had not conceived of, and thereby shortening the war's duration tremendously. Once again, by their daring, First Army made history when, on the 25th of April they joined guns with the Russians, thus splitting the German nation in half and virtually forcing the resulting unconditional surrender of the Germans.

Shortly after VE-Day the news of the First U.S. Army's new assignment reached us. It was our hope then that it would be our good fortune to continue to serve with them, but that was not to be. And it was with a pang and a sigh of envy that we watched the First pull out for home.

So to the First Army, with whom we worked, and to our gallant army commanders, [Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley](#) and [Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges](#), we would like to dedicate this book, and wish them God speed and good luck on their New Mission



Unit Directory

Officers



Summers, Major
St. Louis, Missouri



Caruso, Captain
Long Island City, NY



Lindabury, 1st Lt.
Lebanon, New Jersey



Graybill, 1st Lt.
Houston, Texas

Enlisted Men

(in alphabetical order)



Adamson, Pfc
Springfield, Missouri



Armenia, Tec 5
Staten Island, NY



Baldwin, Sgt
Baltimore, Maryland



Barclay, Sgt
Chicago, Illinois



Barkeley, Tec 4
Bellrose, Long Is. NY



Beard, Tec 3
Baldwin, NY



Binau, Tec 4
Upper Sandusky, Ohio



Britland, Pfc
Fall River, MA



Campeau, MSgt
Detroit, Michigan



Chapin, Pfc
Hartford, Connecticut



Cornelius, Tec 4
La Follette, Tennessee



Crandall, SSgt
Oakville, Connecticut



Croll, TSgt
Philadelphia, PA



Cuca, Tec 4
Chicago, Illinois



Davis, Tec 4
Greensboro, NC



Euth, Pfc
Detroit, Michigan



Finley, Tec 5
Jacksonville, Florida



Freeman, Pfc
Jacksonville, Florida



Galetti, SSgt
Kansas City, Missouri



Goldsmith, Tec 5
Onset, Massachusetts



Griffis, SSgt
Washington, DC



Haider, Tec 5
Arlington, Virginia



Hall, Pfc
Shubert, Nebraska



Hoffman, Tec 4
San Francisco, CA



Howard, Tec 5
Findlay, Ohio



Jackson, Tec 5
Carroll, Ohio



Johns, Pfc
Johnson, Kansas



Johnson, Tec 5
Grand Rapids, MI



Jones
Childress, Texas



Larkin, Pfc
New York, New York



Lish, MSgt
Nutley, New Jersey



Lyons, Tec 5
San Francisco, CA



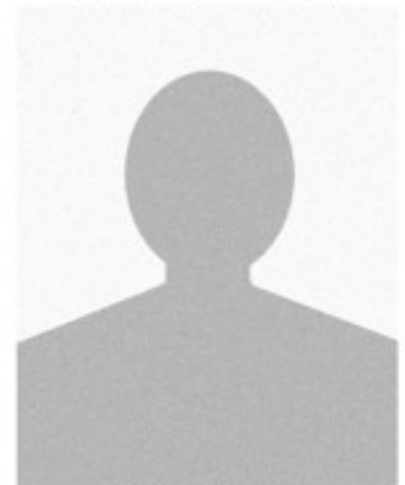
Mahnke, Pfc
Chicago, Illinois



Mandell, Tec 5
Brooklyn, New York



Marantette, Tec 4
Detroit, Michigan



May, Tec 4
Birdseye, Indiana



Miangolarra, Tec 4
New Orleans, LA



Michelinie, Tec 5
Nashville, Tennessee



Miller, Tec 3
Chicago, Illinois



Moody, SSgt
Kingsport, Tennessee



Nagel, Tec 5
Cleveland, Ohio



O'Connell, Sgt
Brooklyn, New York



Odermatt, Tec 4
Woodhaven Long Is., NY



Penn, Tec 3
Washington, DC



Post, Tec 4
Seattle, Washington



Race, Pfc
Huntington, WV



Roland, SSgt
Anderson, IN



Roshon, Pfc
Washington, DC



Rozen, Tec 5
Chicago, Illinois



Sears, Tec 4
Bloomington, Illinois



Shanks, Pfc
Bloomington, Illinois



Sinisi,



Skinner, Tec 5
Washington, DC



Stalcup, Tec 5
Chicago, Illinois



Stein, Tec 4
Tampa, Florida



Stender, Pfc
Buffalo, New York



Stocklausner, Pfc
St. Louis, Missouri



Vittetoe, Tec 5
Greeley, Colorado



Westberg
Chicago, Illinois



Wheeler, Tec 4
New Haven, Connecticut



Wollenberg, Tec 5
North Tonawanda, NY



Zito, Pfc
Emporium, Pennsylvania

General History

For the first time in the history of warfare the complicated procedure of accounting for personnel and battle casualties was put on a machine basis in World War II.

Realizing the need for a system to handle an unprecedented volume of personnel, the War Department started experimenting with the use of International Business Machines to accomplish the mission. Having proved successful in the early stages of build-up, a program was initiated to activate a number of fixed and mobile units for domestic and overseas service. The result was that the framework of this new type unit was rapidly established and the part it was to play in the great show written in a quiet but important role.

This all leads up to the activation on the 32nd MRU (M) at Governors Island, N.Y., on 5 August 1943. The first few months were spent studying, planning, getting harnessed to the job, and preparing for movement overseas.

Shortly after arrival in the United Kingdom we received our first operational mission with Headquarters First U.S. Army at Bristol, England. Prior to D-Day, the unit played an important part in the build-up of troops in the United Kingdom which resulted in servicing up to 190,000 troops, 65,000 in excess of normal operating capacity. As more MRU's landed in the UK the servicing load was reduced to normal about thirty days prior to the invasion. This, however, was offset by the detailed planning and training necessary to efficiently execute the processing of battle casualties in combat. Many additional hours were spent in dry runs and the writing of detailed technical procedure on this subject.

When D-Day finally arrived on 6 June 1944, we knew the real test was on its way and anxiously awaited the first reports. Operations were carried on at Bristol up to D plus 27, at which time the unit moved to a marshalling area near Southampton for cross-channel movement. The movement was made in two echelons, the vans and vehicles crossing on a [Liberty Ship](#) and the march party going over on an [LCI](#). Both echelons landed on Utah Beach and reconsolidated at Valognes, France, to resume operation on 7 July 1944.

In the first sixty days of the campaign we were responsible for consolidating the reports of the largest army the world has ever seen. In addition to that, it was necessary to process the reports of most of the Third U.S. Army troops for about fourteen days prior to that Army becoming operational 1 August.

Operations in general were very difficult due to the rapid major tactical changes and the speed at which the Army travelled once a break-through was accomplished.

Some of the most difficult problems encountered in machine records field operations were created by the rapid movement of the Army through France and Belgium, following the St. Lo break-through. For example: major re-groupings of divisions due to other armies becoming operational; the sudden increase of battle casualties during the German break-through into Belgium, which involved the total loss of some organizations and required a special procedure to meet the emergency; and, finally the rapid indoctrination necessary to obtain complete coordination under adverse conditions.

The servicing of Army troops, consolidation of BCR's, strength returns, organizational information and preparation of special staff reports from machine records information was accomplished by the 32nd operating at Army Headquarters.

Our routine work consisted of daily processing of Army troops serviced, transfer of files due to gains and losses of organizations by troop assignment, processing of Initial Battle Casualty reports and subsequent changes, and the punching and processing of non-battle casualty cards from Morning Reports. Also, disposition cards were punched daily from hospital Admission and Disposition Reports for use by the Army Battle Casualty Section and were later submitted to Theater Headquarters in accordance with a new theater procedure.

Special machine-prepared reports rendered in addition to those normally required by ETO and the War Department were as follows:

- a. Army Station List.
- b. Officers' Roster, Hq First U.S. Army
- c. T/O and E Report
- d. Weekly Battle and Non-battle Casualties Summary
- e. Daily Major Echelon Strength Report
- f. Weekly PU Strength Listing of Army Troops
- g. Unit Commanding Officer listings and changes
- h. Special Strength Report of all units in the Army, to G-1
- i. Special Authorized and Actual Strength Report, to G-1
- j. Tri-monthly AWOL Report to all General and Special Staff Sections
- k. Daily AWOL figures to QM Section
- l. Monthly AWOL report to Provost Marshal
- m. Various strength and organization lists to Special Services
- n. Daily summary of Battle Casualties processed (to AG BCR Section)
- o. Semi-monthly summary of Battle Casualties processed type by echelon
- p. Monthly summary of Battle Casualties type by date of casualty to G-1
- q. Monthly strength summary of the Army (by A or S by grade of QM Section)

The transfer of files between corps machine records units and other armies was coordinated by the 32nd Machine Records Unit. When the situation became fluid and attachments were purely operational, certain changes were made to prevent rapid changes of machine records administration, and excess time lag in reports received from organizations serviced. Transfers were also closely coordinated with AC of S, G-3. A listing prepared at this unit and distributed to all machine record units in the field forces, materially aided in the accounting of missing morning reports before the files were sent to the War Department.

When Headquarters First U.S. Army became non-operational shortly after VE-Day, our unit moved to Headquarters, Ninth U.S. Army, Gutersloh, Germany, for the purpose of transferring all files to that headquarters. On 21 May, 1945, we were released from our assignment to Ninth Army and assigned to Normandy Base Section.

Upon arrival at Le Havre, France, this unit was assigned the mission of accounting for all personnel passing through the Le Havre POE to the ZI. The first three or four days were spent in laying considerable groundwork, and in coordinating the procedure back through channels to the field MRU's in order to insure a smooth flow of records. Due to the rapid readjustment of troops taking place, and the speeding up of embarkation schedules, it was necessary to maintain very close liaison with the Assembly and Staging Areas to see that troops were familiar with the procedure. In a little over two months the machine records unit files for many divisions, casualties (redeployment, ramps, and Army to duty) and separate intact units, were processed and shipped to the United States.

On the 14th of August we were relieved of our assignment and turned our files over to the 26th MRU and departed from Le Havre on the *Archbishop Lamy*.

Now that it's over, we can add up a few general observations of some importance, such as realization as to how flexible a unit must be to operate efficiently in the field.

As the war pitched and strained, separate units would shift about without much advance notice. Soon, divisions were involved likewise. Then, not only one or two at a time, but several. And in the final stages a fluid condition existed in which corps came and went overnight. And at times, when the geographic displacement of troops found themselves in the territory of flanking armies such as the Ardennes ("Bulge"), whole corps, divisions, and miscellaneous units were ripped down the middle between the respective army commands. And all the time the ever-growing casualty file followed them from MRU to MRU.

For the personnel manning the unit, it was a masterpiece of readjustment. For one thing, coming from spacious offices and other fixed units the first task was overcoming the obstacle of less freedom of movement and the development of patience and coordination of movements inside the trailers. Then, when divisions or corps were transferred at month-end operation at the time the unit had to move up to a new location behind the front lines, you would find no other place to put your work but in boxes or trays at your feet while working out of cartons of new stock also at your feet. It was one continuous vigilance of dispersion of manpower between shifts so as not to be overcrowded, to operate twenty-four hours daily, to keep your work dry from rain as you went from one trailer to another, fighting through blackout curtains, to meet deadlines daily on BCR's and at month end, etc. Then trudging through a rain-soaked field with the mud sucking at your heels, to crawl on all fours into the pup tent hoping it didn't leak or that the ground hog wouldn't burrow his way under your sack again tonight and keep you awake. If it wasn't that, it would be the C rations you had for supper, a lizard in the sack, or maybe a snail, or else some Joe floundering around lost in the dark and wollering into the side of the tent with a muddy GI boot in your midsection. Pretty soon the lullaby of buzz bombs, their cut-off, and the inevitable boom would put you to sleep wondering what was next.

Before you'd know it, "Butch" (*a dog*) had made a running broad jump from the entrance of the pup tent and landed smack dab into your prostrate form awakening you to the steel gray light of another day. And, throwing "Butch" and his muddy paws out, you would drag yourself together inside the pup tent, wiggle into the raincoat, and hope for pancakes.

Yeh, these accountants, clerks, etc. knew it was "tough all over," but it was plenty of spirit and ingenuity that made the grade. For instance, the generator did more than just provide electricity. Its exhaust heated GI cans of water during the night and in the morning, by replacing a helmet full of water for each one taken out, there was always warm water for shaving and washing; and the warm air from the fan dried clothes. Tents were improvised as office, day room, and supply room. Yeh, quite a community, the Mobile MRU.

Take it from them, the first million cards punched are the toughest. From then on, no matter how rough it gets you're flexible and you're in.

The 32nd MRU Itinerary

Location	Date Arrived	Distance
Port of New York (Queen Elizabeth)	22 November 1943	-----
Greenock, Scotland	29 November 1943	3205 miles
Cheltenham, England	30 November 1943	300 “
Bristol, England	22 January 1944	40
Southampton, England	3 July 1944	61
Lymington Hard, England	4 July 1944	12
Utah Beach, France	5 July 1944	94
Valognes, France	6 July 1944	13
St. Lo, France	6 August 1944	34
Fougerolles du Plessis, France	21 August 1944	31
Le Perray, France	31 August 1944	132
Charleroi, Belgium	12 September 1944	146
Soumagne, Belgium	23 September 1944	50
Chaufontaine, Belgium	29 November 1944	12
St. Trond, Belgium	20 December 1944	34
Chaufontaine, Belgium	6 February 1945	34
Duren, Germany	19 March 1945	42
Burg, Germany	7 April 1945	98
Weimar, Germany	30 April 1945	130
Gutersloh, Germany	15 May 1945	145
Liege, Belgium	17 May 1945	150
Amiens, France	18 May 1945	153
Le Harve, France	19 May 1945	108
New York, N.Y.	31 August 1945	3169
TOTAL		8193 Miles

(Distances shown are approximate, straight-line distances from previous stops)

Battle Campaigns

Campaigns in Europe for which battle stars and combat credits were awarded to members of the 32nd MRU follows:

NORMANDY – 6 June to 24 July 1944

ETO, exclusive of land area of UK and Iceland

NORTHERN FRANCE – 25 July to 14 September 1944

ETO, exclusive of land areas of UK and Iceland

RHINELAND – 15 September 1944 to 21 March 1945

Those portions of France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany east of the line: Franco-Belgium frontier to 4 deg. East longitude, thence south along that meridian to 47 deg. Latitude, thence east along that parallel to 5 deg. east longitude, thence south along that meridian to the Mediterranean coast.

ARDENNES – 16 December 1944 to 25 January 1945

Area forward of line: Euskirchen-Eupen (inclusive) – Liege (exclusive), east bank of the Meuse River to its intersection with Franco-Belgian border, thence south and east along this border and the southern border of Luxembourg.

CENTRAL EUROPE – 22 March 1945 to final date to be announced

Area occupied by troops assigned to ETOUSA which lies beyond line 10 miles west of Rhine River between Switzerland and Waal River until 28 March 1945 inclusive, and thereafter beyond east bank of Rhine.



Commendation Letters

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY
Office of the Adjutant General

France
August 1, 1944

SUBJECT: Appreciation.
TO: Each Officer and Enlisted Man, Adjutant
General's Office, First United States Army, and
32 M.R.U.

At this time I want to express to you my appreciation for the splendid effort you have made during the planning phase and the execution of the initial phase of the greatest amphibious operation in history, the landing on the continent of Europe.

Each of you have done more than could reasonably have been expected of you six months ago. You have worked long without regard for personal desires or comfort. You have produced work the magnitude of which is unprecedented. Your efficiency of operation, cooperation, and loyalty cannot be praised too much.

You will probably never be mentioned when the heroes of this war are talked of, but each of you may feel that you have played a great part in the success that has thus far been ours. We will not relax our efforts but redouble them with the knowledge that by these redoubled efforts we can hurry the defeat of our enemies and return to our homes and loved ones bringing them peace and security for all time.

I sincerely thank each of you individually and the section as a whole. It has been only through the concerted and determined efforts of the section that we have been able to successfully complete the unprecedented amount of administration required of us. Let our next amphibious operation, the landing on the coast of the United States of America, come quickly!

Good luck - carry on.

/s/ R S. NOURSE
Col., A.G.D.
Adjutant General

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 230

GENERAL ORDERS)

NO. :
6)

9 January 1945
SECTION

Award of Meritorious Service Unit Plaque (32nd Machine Records Unit, Mobile)

EXTRACT

I - - AWARD OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE UNIT PLAQUE (32nd MACHINE RECORDS UNIT, MOBILE) - Under the provisions of War Department Circular 345, 23 August 1944, the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque is awarded to the 32nd Machine Records Unit, Mobile, United States Army, for superior performance of duty in the accomplishment of exceptionally difficult tasks during the period 6 June 1944 to 6 December 1944.

EXTRACT

By Command of Lieutenant General HODGES:

OFFICIAL: /s/RS. Nourse
/t/R.S. NOURSE
Colonel, AGD
Adjutant General.

W. B. KEAN
Major General, G.S.C.
Chief of Staff

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 230

GENERAL ORDERS)

NO. :
37)

2 March 1945

SECTION

Award, Posthumous, of Bronze Star Medal -----I

Award of Bronze Star Medal -----II

+++++
EXTRACT

II - AWARD OF BRONZE STAR MEDAL -- Under the Provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, as Amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Paragraph 30, Section I, Circular 32, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, United States Army, 20 March 1944, as amended, the Bronze Star Medal is awarded to the following officers and enlisted men:

+++++

Technical Sergeant Frederick P. Campeau, 36103892, Adjutant General's Department, United States Army, for meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy as Battle Casualty Leader, 32nd Machine Records Unit, from 6 June 1944 to 31 January 1945, in England, France, and Belgium. Entered military service from Michigan.

EXTRACT

+++++

By Command of Lieutenant General HODGES:

OFFICIAL: /s/RS. Nourse
/t/R.S. NOURSE
Colonel, AGD,
Adjutant General.

W. B. KEAN
Major General, G.S.C.
Chief of Staff

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 230

200.6 – Campeau, Frederick P. (A)

SUBJECT: Award of Bronze Star Medal.
TO: Technical Sergeant Frederick P. Campeau,
36103892, Adjutant General's Department,
United States Army.

Under the provisions of Army Regulations 600-45, as amended, you are awarded a Bronze Star Medal for meritorious service as set forth in the following:

CITATION

Technical Sergeant Frederick P. Campeau, 36103892, Adjutant General's Department, United States Army. For meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy as Battle Casualty Leader, 32nd Machine Records Unit, from 6 June 1944 to 31 January 1945, in England, France, and Belgium. Displaying ability and marked initiative Technical Sergeant Campeau ably prepared operating procedures which insured the rapid and accurate recording of First Army battle casualties. By his demonstration of skill and devotion to duty, Technical Sergeant Campeau contributed materially to the efficient functioning of his section, thus reflecting credit upon himself and the military service. Entered military service from Michigan.

COURTNEY H. HODGES,
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 230

GENERAL ORDERS)

NO. :
46)

22 March 1945

SECTION

Award of Bronze Star Medal ----- V

+++++

EXTRACT

V - AWARD OF BRONZE STAR MEDAL -- Under the Provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Paragraph 30, Section I, Circular 32, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, United States Army, 20 March 1944, as amended, the Bronze Star Medal is awarded to the following officers and enlisted men:

+++++

First Lieutenant Warren G. Graybill (then Second Lieutenant and First Lieutenant), 01003740, Adjutant General's Department, United States Army, For meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy as Supervisor, Battle Casualty Section, 32nd machine Records Unit, Mobile, From 6 June 1944 to 31 January 1945, in England, France, and Belgium. Entered military service from Texas.

EXTRACT

+++++

By Command of Lieutenant General HODGES:

OFFICIAL: /s/S. E. Senior
t/S. E. SENIOR
Colonel, AGD
Asst. Adjutant General.

W. B. KEAN
Major General, G.S.C.
Chief of Staff

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY
Office of the Adjutant General

AG 201.22

APO 887
7 April 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation.
TO: Major Glenn Summers, Commanding Officer,
32nd Machine Records Unit (Mobile) APO
230, U.S. Army

A copy of General Order No. 6, Headquarters First U.S. Army, dated 9 January 1945, awarding the 32nd Machine Records Unit (Mobile) the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque, has reached this office.

It is very gratifying to know that a unit of The Adjutant General's Department has, through superior performance and outstanding devotion to duty under difficult circumstances, merited the award of the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque. The outstanding service performed by the 32nd Machine records Unit (Mobile) in personnel accounting and casualty reporting for First U.S. Army exemplifies the best traditions of the Military Service and the Adjutant General's Department.

I wish to express my personal appreciation to you and to the other members of the 32nd Machine Records Unit (Mobile) for having performed your duties in a superior manner.

/s/ R. B. Lovett
/t/ R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, U.S.A.
Adjutant General.

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 230

GENERAL ORDERS)

NO. :
74)

12 May 1945

SECTION

Award of Bronze Star Medal -----I

Award of Air Medal -----II

I - AWARD OF BRONZE STAR MEDAL -- Under the Provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, and pursuant to authority contained in Paragraph 30, Section I, Circular 32, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, United States Army, 20 March 1944, as amended, the Bronze Star Medal is awarded to the following officers and enlisted men:

+++++

EXTRACT

Master Sergeant Victor R Lish, Jr., 32055176, 32 Machine Records Unit (Mobile), United States Army, for meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy from 6 June 1944 to 7 May 1945, in England, France, Belgium, and Germany. Entered military service from New Jersey.

+++++

Technical Sergeant Monte B Croll (then Sergeant, Staff Sergeant and Technical Sergeant), 331335987, 32nd Machine Records Unit (Mobile), United States Army, for meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy from 6 June 1944 to 7 May 1945, in England, France, Belgium and Germany. Entered military service from Pennsylvania.

EXTRACT

+++++

BY COMMAND OF GENERAL HODGES:

OFFICIAL: /s/S. E. Senior
/t/S. E. SENIOR
Colonel, AGD
Asst. Adjutant General.

W. B. KEAN
Major General, G.S.C.
Chief of Staff

HEADQUARTERS
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS
UNITED STATES ARMY

GO 111

7 June 1945

Legion of Merit -----I

Legion of Merit (Oak-Leaf Cluster) -----II

I - LEGION OF MERIT. By direction of the President, under provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, the legion of Merit is awarded, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services during the respective periods indicated, to:

+++++
EXTRACT

Major Glenn W. Summers (Army Serial No. 0405864), Adjutant General's Department, United State Army ---7 May 1944 to 8 May 1945.

EXTRACT

+++++
BY COMMAD OF GENERAL EISENHOWER:

OFFICIAL:

T. B. LARKIN,
Major General, USA
Deputy Chief of Staff.

/s/R. B. Lovett
/t/R. B. LOVETT
Brigadier General, U.S.A.
Adjutant General.

CITATION FOR LEGION OF MERIT

Major Glenn W. Summers (Army Serial No. 0405864), Adjutant General's Department, United States Army, for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services as Commanding Officer, 32nd Machine Records Unit, from 7 May 1944 to 8 May 1945. Without precedent on which to base his planning, Major Summers brought his unit to the high order of efficiency required for combat operations. During the two months following the amphibious assault, battle casualty reports for the greatly augmented First Army were processed under Major Summers' constant supervision. Special reports reflecting unit and army strength, location of units and individuals, and breakdowns of casualties were prepared for Staff Sections under the able direction of Major Summers. By his marked judgment and initiative, Major Summers was greatly instrumental in the successful personnel accounting by First Army, reflecting highest credit upon himself and the armed forces of the United States. Entered military service from Missouri.

32ND MACHINE RECORDS UNIT (M)

APO 563

SUBJECT: Commendation.

29 July 1945

TO : Officers and Enlisted Men, 32nd M.R.U. (M).

1. I would like to sent forth in this letter a resume of your accomplishments which have contributed to establishing a record beyond reproach in the machine records program.
2. You operated under adverse conditions from the time of assignment to your first primary mission at Hq. First U.S. Army, Bristol, England, 21 January 1944. Although the responsibilities placed on the unit exceeded its normal capacity, due to a sudden influx of troops arriving in the United Kingdom from the USA, you met the requirements even though it was necessary to develop working teams under extreme conditions. You successfully prepared yourselves for combat operations which required a high state of efficiency and morale. Your devotion to duty and loyalty during the campaign with Hq, First US Army, which covered the period of 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945, contributed to successful operations which included the accurate processing of a volume of battle casualties which exceeded the amount processed by any other ground force machine records unit in the European Theater, in addition to the normal requirements of accounting for Army Troops and furnishing special reports to staff sections of the headquarters. This high standard of work won the unit the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque and certain letters of commendation. You accepted your second mission, which was to account for all military personnel shipping out of the Le Havre POE, with the same enthusiasm and desire to produce accurate results as in past operations.
3. In view of the above accomplishments, it certainly gives me a sense of pride to have the honor of writing this letter.
4. In closing, I want to wish every member of this unit a successful and happy future wherever you go.

/s/G.W. Summers

/t/G.W. SUMMERS

Major, A.G.D.

Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY
APO 230

200.6 MSUP

13 May 1945

SUBJECT: Recommendation for 32 Machine Records Unit (M).
TO: Commanding General, Ninth United States Army, APO 339.

1. The 32nd Machine Records Unit (M), recently transferred to your command, has served the First Army in a highly efficient manner throughout combat operations.
2. Since D-Day this unit has processed 255,145 initial battle casualty reports and 124,343 subsequent changes promptly and accurately, and has at all times been most helpful and cooperative in rendering special reports. This unit has also been responsible for controlling and distributing some 110 tons of special machine records supplies, and has coordinated all machine records activities within the command.
3. The 32nd Machine Records Unit (M) was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque for service rendered from 6 June 1944 to 6 December 1944. It was intended to recommend that a star to this plaque be awarded for service during the six months subsequent to 6 December 1944. Transfer prior to the completion of this time requirement precludes such action at this time.
4. It is earnestly recommended that the superior service rendered the First Army during the past five months serve as a basis for such recognition when eligibility is established on 5 June 1945.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

/s/S/ E. Senior
/t/S. E. SENIOR
Colonel, AGD,
Asst. Adjutant General.

200.6

1st Ind.

(13 May 45)

HEADQUARTERS NINTH UNITED STATES ARMY, APO 339, U.S.

Army, 21 May 1945.

TO: Commanding General, Normandy Base Section, APO 562, U.S. Army

As a matter pertaining to your command.

For the Commanding General:

/s/W. B. Coler

/t/W. B. COLER

Capt., A. G. D.

Asst. Adj. Gen.

AG 200.6 (P)

HER/fs/lc

HQ. NORMANDY BASE SECTION, APO 562, 29 May 1945.

TO: Commanding Officer, 32nd Machine Records Unit, APO 562, U.S. Army

The commanding general has noted with pleasure the outstanding services your unit has rendered and wishes to extend his congratulations upon receipt of this recognition.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL KOENIG:

/s/Harold E. Rigdon

/t/HAROLD E. RIGDON

Captain, A.G.D.,

Asst. Adj. General.



Short Word Sketches of 32nd MRU Members

ADAMSON, William E.
Pfc 33745122
5 Battle Stars

611 East Belmont Street
Springfield, Missouri

Bill, one of our Chaudfontaine additions, quickly fitted himself into the unit. He is a good magician and his suave line and corny chatter have helped to make many an hour of idle time pass pleasantly. He was working as a tab operator in Washington when the draft caught up with him. He is single. His main work has been processing on the midnight shift.

ARMENIA, Elia
Tec 5 3235315
5 Battle Stars

110 Watchogue Road
Staten Island 2, N.Y.

The most unusual person in the unit is Armenia. He is quite unpredictable and is practically the only person in the 32nd with a personality all of his own. His love in the MRU has been the officer's file. Formerly, he worked on it two shifts on his own initiative, but later decided it wasn't that much fun. He came to the 32nd from the Second Service Command MRU.

BALDWIN, Don M.
Sgt 33156443
3 Battle Stars

327 South Bouldin Street
Baltimore 24, Maryland

When the requisite eight-five points are acquired, this red-haired sergeant will again live with his wife in Baltimore. He is the unit's only ex-Marine. He came overseas as a rifleman (MOS 745) but was taught to be a key-puncher after joining the MRU at St. Trond, Belgium. He is quiet, soft-spoken person who never forces himself upon the attentions of anyone. As a civilian he was a clerk. He claims no particular hobbies or sports.

BARCLAY, Joseph J.
Sgt 36661781
5 Battle Stars

2823 Arlington Street
Chicago, Illinois

Nicknamed "The Brain" because he has the unit's highest AGCT score, Barclay has a reputation for being meticulously accurate. He can find interpretation errors no one else ever sees. First on alpha file, then an AWOL specialist, he later was midnight BCR supervisor. Scotland is his birthplace; Chicago, his home.

BARKELEW, Arthur W.
Tec 4 32868680
5 Battle Stars

57 Ontario Road
Bellrose, Long Island, N.Y.

Formerly a company clerk in the cadre at Fort Bragg, N.C., Barkelew came to the unit from Wales when we were still at Bristol. Almost immediately we went into the Battle Casualty Section. He became a BCR file processing man and worked on the numerous BCR files. As a civilian, he worked for Chase National Bank, ZNew York. His wife is so good to him that he fears to request anything from home. She always multiplies his requests and he is flooded with articles.

BEARD, William J.
Tec 3 329000904
5 Battle Stars

53 Victoria Street
Baldwin, New York

Beard, senior repairman, is continuing his civilian occupation but likes the army even less than most of us. Big and heavy, he never bothers the machines unless they bother him. He's no brush and oil can repairman, but really knows what to do when things go wrong. His needling is directed at all and sundry, but is never resented because it is truthful and meant in good humor.

BINAU, Robert E.
Tec 4 15017159
5 Battle Stars

452 North Seventh Street
Upper Sandusky, Ohio

Binau is our only regular army man. He enlisted way back before Pearl Harbor, when it wasn't even necessary to wear the army uniform when off duty. His service previous to joining the 32nd at Governors Island was at Fifth Service Command, Fort Hayes, Ohio. His chief job is keypunching. For a long time he worked almost exclusively in the Battle Casualty Section. He has a reputation for taking many baths and writing many letters. He's no pub habitue. Recently he has displayed a picture of a beautiful girl who isn't his sister. Civilian occupation: student.

BRITLAND, Edward V.
Pfc 31356695
5 Battle Stars

8 Mount Hope Avenue
Fall River, Massachusetts

Known variously as “The Voice” and “The Thin Man,” Britland has vigorously disclaimed right to either nickname. He is single, and has the reputation for writing the longest daily letters. They go to Mary in Boston. His work in the unit has been in the file section and on non-battle casualties.

CAMPEAU, Frederick P.
M Sgt 36103892
Bronze Star Medal, 5 Battle Stars

12046 Coyle Avenue
Detroit, Michigan

Campeau was the first of our unit to earn the Bronze Star Medal. This he earned for his tireless and single-minded devotion to battle casualty reporting during the eleven months of the Western Europe Campaign. As a civilian, he worked for the Harry Ferguson division of Henry Ford’s Detroit empire. He was in the Army early in 1941 and actually got out for a time before Pearl Harbor. He joined the 32nd from 92nd MRU (Fort Knox). His wife, to whom he sometimes forgets to write, lives in Detroit.

CARUSO, Nicholas J.
Capt. 0-403431
5 Battle Stars

30-95th Street
Long Island City, 2, N.Y.

Genial Captain Caruso, executive and supply officer, is the hail-fellow-well-met of the MRU. He delights in showing visiting colonels and movie stars around the trailers and demonstrating his famous color sort. Miss Dinah Shore was puzzled. “What are you doing that for?” she asked innocently. He is married and claims Astoria, Long Island, New York as home. As a civilian he was a clerk in Wall Street.

CHAPIN, Dudley W.
Pfc 31381928
5 Battle Stars

131 South Beacon Street
Hartford, Connecticut

Known familiarly as “Duffell Bag,” Chapin joined the unit when it was in the woods at Valognes. His MRU service was exclusively in the Battle Casualty Section where he did a superlative job of doing the messy little card-hunting jobs nobody wanted to do. He kept his usual good humor, too. He is single and formerly worked in the underwriting department of Travelers Fire Insurance Company in Hartford, Conn.

CORNELIUS, James A., Jr.

Tec 4 34733302

5 Battle Stars

Route 1

La Follette, Tennessee

He claims eating and sleeping as hobbies. Anyone who has been on a day pass with him knows he wants to eat at every opportunity. And once he slept nineteen hours at a stretch. He used to work for the railroad down in Tennessee and now drives for he MRU. He is single but "hopeful." Above all else, he has a mind of his own. He has unusually keen judgment when unexpected situations come up.

CRANDALL, Harold V.

S Sgt 33190879

5 Battle Stars

100 Morro Street

Oakville, Connecticut

Crandall, midnight shift supervisor, came to the 32nd MRU from Waterbury, Conn, via the Census Bureau in Washington and the Second Service Command at 52 Broadway. He doesn't know too much about the machines, but is a good supervisor and knows how to keep everybody busy and how to get the work out. He is as yet single, but relates lurid tales of numerous gals he left behind him.

CROLL, Monte, B.

T Sgt 33125987

Bronze Star Medal, 5 Battle Stars

5853 Larchwood Avenue

Philadelphia 43, Pennsylvania

Croll began his career in this unit as chief of the coding section, but has since become the premier noncom liaison man and administration supervisor. Born in England, he has lived most of his life in Canada and the States. As a civilian he was an accountant. Previous to coming to the 32nd, he was at the Armored Command MRU, at Fort Knox, Ky. He has recently married a WAC in Paris. Hobbies: photography, philately, music appreciation.

CUCA, Ralph P.

Tec 4 36657799

5 Battle Stars

2850 Wallace Street

Chicago, Illinois

Cuca is short, fat, dark-featured and has just turned 21. When working for the Treasury in Chicago, he did no wiring of IBM boards. He has learned so much since joining this MRU at its activation that he is now one of our most competent operators. First he was assistant strength man. Later (at Fourgerolles du Plessis) he was transferred to Battle Casualty. Everybody is Cuca's friend. He has the gift for gab superb. It's a pure joy to listen to him.

DAVIS, Rudolph H.
Tec 4 14135365
4 Battle Stars

927 Union Street
Greensboro, North Carolina

Rudy, a personable college student, had some wonderful jams when he first joined us, but has since worked on the alpha file, officers' file, and strength, and learned more about IBM than most of us. Though husky and healthy in appearance, he's rathr a tender lily and is frequently frequenting the hospitals.

EUTH, Howard
Pfc 36581211
4 Battle Stars

12163 Northlawn
Detroit, Michigan

Howard, prankster supreme, member of the kindergarten, and our only non-BC, discovered the boys were smartening up-result: some of his practical jokes backfiring. Euth, a competent machine operator, spent most of his time processing doing the miscellaneous machine work on the evening shift. As a civilian, he worked for Packard in Detroit. A loaf of bread, a jug of wine, Howard is determined to remain a bachelor.

FINLEY, John E.
Tec 5 34546531
5 Battle Stars

2124 Thelma Street
Jacksonville, Florida

John hails from the cigar center of the world, Tampa, Florida. He's single and worked with IBM in civilian life. Like Rozen, Finley is fond of the girls, and like Rozen, doesn't get to first base. Formerly quiet and reticent, has has since become outspoken and pugnacious. An early expression of his, "Going to town, Brown?" became a Governors Island byword.

FREEMAN, Sollace M.
Pfc 34795552
4 Battle Stars

2005 Park Street
Jacksonville 4, Florida

Freeman operated a successful business of his own as a civilian and has two young boys (twenty-four points). He was a general insurance agent in Florida. In this unit he has done coding. He joined the unit in Chaudfontaine and shortly after took off for the hospital with scarlet fever. He likes hunting and swimming.

GALETTI, Anthony
S Sgt 37514222
5 Battle Stars

541 Cherry Street
Kansas City, Missouri

Tony has had the sad task of keeping us all satisfied with our clothing and equipment from Governors Island to now. He is supply sergeant and has become recreation supervisor also. He is unmarried. Before basic training at Fort Warren, he was a supervisor in the accounting section of the Kansas City QM Depot.

GOLDSMITH, Alan T.
Tec 5 31310893
5 Battle Stars

24 Sixth Street
Onset, Massachusetts

Goldsmith is one of our younger and more exuberant members. Formerly, he lived in Brooklyn near movie actress Veronica Lake. His present home is at Onset, Mass. on Cape Cod. When we were in England he practically go married, but didn't. He is one of our "production" machine men. Early in the campaign he processed the two airborne divisions directly assigned to the Army. Since he has done varied work. His inverted language is distinctive and interesting.

GRAYBILL, Warren J.
1 Lt. 013003740
Bronze Star Medal, 5 Battle Stars

1124 Lawrence Street
Houston, Texas

Lt. Graybill was assigned to the 32nd MRU upon graduation from Fort Washington OCS. But before that he had had already a considerable career in the Army. Drafted in August, 1941, he was assigned to 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division after basic training. He was then on DS with the 8th Service Command MRU before being assigned to the 13th MRU. A machine operator before army service, he was married after entering the Army and has a baby daughter he has not yet seen.

GRIFFIS, John V.
S Sgt 33096038
5 Battle Stars

4922 4th Street, N.W.
Washington 11, D.C.

Griffis, night shift supervisor, has been doing this sort of thing for a long time. As a civilian he was a tab operator for the War Department in Washington. Later, he was at the Fort Washington MRU. There he would usually find himself free each afternoon to take off in his sports roadster with white side-wall tires for his home in Washington, D.C. He is single, but has a Washington girl friend who writes every day. He is a good machine man, but has been at it so long that he doesn't get excited about the work any more. Hobby: "Needlecraft."

HAIDER, John A.
Tec 5 33635074
4 Battle Stars

906 North Wayne Street
Arlington, Virginia

Old man Haider (soon old enough to get out on age) gets more out of life than many of us younger sprouts. He manages to keep up a continually amiable and cheerful front. One of our more faithful writers, he writes every day to his wife in Arlington, Va. Nor does he forget his parents in East St. Louis. A civilian bookkeeper with RFC in Washington, he codes for MRU. As hobbies he lists sampling wines, testing the sack, and wise-cracking.

HALL, Floyd R.

Shubert, Nebraska

Pfc 17120319

5 Battle Stars

Hall lists Shubert, Nebraska as home. He is single and was studying and farming when free. When called to active duty, he was majoring in business administration at Peru College. Baseball is Hall's major sport and he plays the game for real enjoyment. He is, undoubtedly, the best all-around athlete of the unit. His work in the unit has been in keypunching and typing.

HOFFMAN, William W.

227 Garfield Street

Tec 4 39045524

San Francisco, California

He's homesick and wants to go home to San Francisco to his wife and son who is growing up without a father's influence. Hoffman is one of the charter members of the 32nd MRU who arrived at Governors Island from Class 10, Fort Washington on 4 August 1943, the day before the unit was activated. He was a civilian bookkeeper and is now in Morning Report Control. He has a droll sense of humor. Back during the depths of the depression he did some not very lucrative gold mining with several others. They shot deer for food from time to time. Hobbies: astronomy, weight-lifting, hiking, home workshop, drawing or printing, reading, gardening, digging latrines, and making artillery shell ash trays. Sports: football.

HOWARD, Marion C.

303 Ewing Building

Tec 5 15354240

Findlay, Ohio

5 Battle Stars

Formerly a division man (393 Inf Reft, 99 Inf Div), Howard reached us at our first Chaudfontaine stop and was consequently converted to a keypuncher. So far he has evaded most of the overtime that seems to dog the rest of the unit. He doesn't worry about anything, especially work. He has a mind that is quick and open. Like Michelinie, he likes to make strange noises. Unmarried, and claims indifference to that state of bliss.

JACKSON, Kenneth E.

Carroll, Ohio

Tec 5 35220734

5 Battle Stars

Army service interrupted Jackson's routine of working as a bank clerk in Columbus, Ohio, making a home with his wife in suburban Carroll, and enjoying auto tours each summer vacation. He is a Camp Lee alumnus and has coded during his MRU service, which dates from Governors Island. A handy man around the house, he usually is drafted for hammer and saw details in the unit, and was a platform specialist each time we moved.

JOHNS, Martin R.

Johnson, Kansas

Pfc 17099573

5 Battle Stars

This well-fed Kansas farm boy joined the ERC hoping to get through college, but was rudely disillusioned and sent to Fort Warren. His hopes of learning a lot about IBM machines seemed to have been nipped in the bud and he contented himself with his key-punch. His amateur dark-room, first begun at Soumagne, has been the foundation of the unit's photography and dark-room craze. Johns is a good boy, doesn't consort with lewd women, or drink spirituous liquors. Uniformly congenial, he is everybody's friend. His weight is explained by fondness for eating. Not married yet! His home is at Johnson, Kansas, where his father farms thousands of acres.

JOHNSON, Robert T.

1963 Martindale Avenue

Tec 5 36463458

Grand Rapids, Michigan

5 Battle Stars

Young and hot-blooded, Johnson a couple of times tried to get into the infantry. Since, he has learned a little sense and kept quiet. One of the "production" machine men, Johnson always arrives early to pick up some good clean job before the dirty details are handed out. For a long period he processed the status file single-handed. Later he processed the A and D's.

JONES, Clark E.

310 Avenue G, N.W.

Tec 4 18184326

Childress, Texas

5 Battle Stars

Clark lists Childress, Texas as home (his father is mayor there) and, as is usual with people from the Lone Star state, the other forty-seven just don't count. Jones was seeking higher education when Uncle Sam called and he hopes to continue these pursuits as soon as the Army will permit. He's single. Tennis is his major pastime. It is needless to say that the administration section wouldn't be where it is today if it weren't for Jone-ze and his typewriter.

LARKIN, David P.
Pfc 42056460
2 Battle Stars

200 West 94th Street
New York, New York

Almost immediately after he reached us at St. Trond, Larkin became the most quoted man in the unit. His most notable expressions, "A good fellow never hollers," "Better days are coming," "For the pure love of Ireland," "It's a pleasure to meet nice people," and "Why, certainly" have become MRU bywords. His job, processing the status file, was originally the most important job in the unit, but he handled the basic job all alone.

LINDABURY, Nathan L.
1 Lt 01001396
5 Battle Stars

Route 2
Lebanon, New Jersey

A certain Tec 4 was heard to say of Lt. Lindabury, "I like him. He doesn't mind shooting the bull with anybody. And can he shoot the bull!" He is from Lebanon, N.J., an IBM salesman as a civilian. He attended AGD OCS and was assigned to 17th MRU, Fort McPherson, Ga. He was flown over the Atlantic in April 1944 to replace Lt. Cornelius at Bristol. His is married, but has no children.

LISH, Victor R., Jr.
M Sgt 32055176
Bronze Star Medal, 5 Battle Stars

131 Center Street
Nutley, New Jersey

Lish, the "Fuehrer" of the unit during his most hectic days, has left us already and gone back to his wife and son in Nutley, N.J. He had beaucoup points. In civilian life he was a tab supervisor at Prudential Insurance in Newark. Later, he was in the Fort Washington MRU and the 3rd MRU on Governors Island. Early in the game, when we began operations at Cheltenham, he worked long shifts, sometimes thirty-six hours or more at a time. When things straightened out, he adopted bankers' hours. Likes to cuss and drink, but is strictly a puritan regarding sex.

LYONS, Lee M.
Tec 5 39045522
5 Battle Stars

181 Duncan Street
San Francisco, California

During the campaign, Lyons had a racket all his own--the station list. Weekly he went down to Command for additional information. Short, clean-shaven, and young-looking, Lyons is really older than he appears. He is unmarried and formerly worked as a tab operator for Pacific Gas and Electric in San Francisco, his home city. He is continually defending the California weather against detractors.

MAHNKE, Harold F.
Pfc 36666356
5 Battle Stars

6225 South Kedvale Avenue
Chicago 29, Illinois

In spite of all the wisecracks about his poor health, Mahnke hasn't been in the hospital since we left Cheltenham many long months ago. He gets pretty peeved at the constant queries about the mail, but really thinks we are all swell fellows. He is a Chicago postman still practicing his trade. He has been married eleven years. His hobbies are piano playing, golf, and pinochle.

MANDELL, Lawrence J.
Tec 5 12134467
5 Battle Stars

191 East 42nd Street
Brooklyn, New York

Mandell is the originator and planner of this MRU history and should merit warm applause from all of us for it. His work in the MRU has been chiefly with the alpha, AWOL, and First Army Officers Alpha File. When called, he went through basic training on Governors Island and was assigned to the Second Service Command MRU at 52 Broadway. He joined the 32nd MRU at his own request while we were still on Governors Island. Claims a multitude of hobbies and engages in numerous sports. Civilian occupation: accountant. Marital status: single --a real mystery!

MARENTETTE, Lawrence E.
Tec 4 36851288
5 Battle Stars

4374 Manistique
Detroit 24, Michigan

His whole MRU career has been tied up with Master Organization, in which section he is the junior member. His intimate knowledge of machines allows him to do his own work as well as help others. Quiet in manner, he never spouts off when he has nothing to say. Usually he is congenial, but sometimes becomes ruffled. He is another of our members with real personality. Single.

MAY, Forrest A.
Tec 4 35497589
5 Battle Stars

Birdseye, Indianan

May used to work for Social Security in Baltimore. Later he was with the Second Service Command MRU at 52 Broadway. He came to this unit as a collator expert. He is good at all the machines. His wife lives in Tell city, Ind. They have an attractive little daughter, born not long efore we left Governors Island. he was first a processor, but later went into Battle Casualty, specializing in the ETOUSA listing. He claims no hobbies, but likes basketball and baseball.

MIANGOLARRA, Manuel R., Jr.
Tec 4 38377298
5 battle Stars

2566 Wisteria Street
New Orleans 17, Louisiana

Manny's whole name won't go on the status card. He is further distinguished by being a college chemistry man and knows about wartime gases. He was working for the government in his home city, New Orleans, when greeted by the President. He has been married only a short time before. He joined the unit at Governors Island after sweating out several fruitless months waiting for QM OCS at Fort Warren, Wyoming. He is file clerk in the unit.

MILLER, Frank
Tec 3 36735958
5 Battle Stars

7959 South Essex Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Miller was one of the Fort Warren OCS "sweaters" assigned to the 32nd MRU and gained all his four stripes in this MRU. A "front office" man all the time, he has done his work suavely, smoothly, and efficiently. He is single and was a traffic manager as a civilian.

MOODY, Claude W.
S Sgt 34497969

Route 1
Kingsport, Tennessee

This real southerner from Kingsport, Tenn. is an MRU man from way back. He was at the Service Command MRU at Fort Hayes, Ohio, pre-32nd MRU. He came overseas as a Pfc but received rapid promotion. Formerly a coder, he has now assumed the broader functions of administration. "Mighty fine," is his favorite expression. He is particularly faithful to beautiful Miss Louise Harr whom he plans to marry at the first opportunity. His civilian job was IBM operator for Mason and Dixon Truck Lines. He is our premier sleeper.

NAGEL, George E.
Tec 5 35061752
5 Battle Stars

P.O. Box 5165
Cleveland 1, Ohio

"Want to see something swell?" Put a sponge in water." Jokes of this age and type are always being put out by Nagel. Slow, sure, and exceedingly competent, he rarely can be hurried or ruffled in his work. In England he was a locator man. On the Continent he was a BCR man. Now in our POE set-up he is a 301 Status Card specialist. He is one of the more faithful and devoted husbands in our unit. Civilian occupation: paymaster.

O'CONNELL, Charles R.
Sgt 12001274
5 Battle Stars

41 New York Avenue
Brooklyn 3, New York

O'Connell, a benedict just a few days before we sailed from New York, has been sweating out getting back to his bride in Brooklyn these many long months. He is the unit truckmaster and keeps Stalcup, Cornelius, and Sinisi well-satisfied. His Irish accent is the best in the unit, though it is only a little better than Larkin's.

ODERMATT, George E.
Tec 4 32886545
5 Battle Stars

80-15 87th Avenue
Woodhaven, Long Island, N.Y.

Back in November, 1943, Odermatt was sweating out the trip overseas and the stork at the same time. His baby daughter arrived a few days before the MRU embarked for Britain. When Odermatt was home he worked as a bank teller in a Brooklyn bank. Nicknamed "Codermatic" by Lt. Lindabury, he has been a coder during his MRU service. He is athletic and plays baseball, basketball, tennis and handball. Always good-humored, he shows considerable leadership and is never a man to try to run over.

PENN, William A.
Tec 3 13106064
5 Battle Stars

2006 Kingle Road, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

This tall, thin southerner from 2006 Kingle Road, N.W., Washington, D.C., and Virginia, is never at a loss for words. His hobby and chief interest is politics on which subject he always likes to talk. Formerly a civilian tab operator, he served in the Second Service Command MRU at 52 Broadway, New York, before coming to the 32nd. His work in the MRU has been only in Master Organization; there he has been chief of a two-man section. He is an addict of soluble coffee and has made his trailer a storehouse of beverages, milk, sugar, and canned meats--sometimes called "Penn's Diner." He is unmarried.

POST, Malcolm O.
Tec 4 39206980
5 Battle Stars

1027 23rd Avenue, North
Seattle 2, Washington

Our junior repairman from Seattle is uniformly interested in all things mechanical and chemical. He is especially interested in building model planes and in photography. His civilian job was IBM Operator for Boeing in Seattle. His father is an Episcopal minister there. So far he is unmarried, but most girls fall for him if given a chance.

RACE, Thomas G., Jr.
Pfc 35773834
5 Battle Stars

409 West 9th Avenue
Huntington, West Virginia

Race came to us as an overstrength “replacement” in the dripping forest of Valognes to help out on the crushing burden of BCR’s. Not experienced in IBM machines at the time, he has since become a versatile operator. He gets along easily with everyone. He has an attractive wife and baby daughter in Huntington, W. Va., where he formerly worked as a billing clerk in the service department of Owens-Illinois Glass Company.

ROLAND, Chester G.
S Sgt 35143075
5 Battle Stars

3020 Jefferson Street
Anderson, Indiana

If the discharge age comes down to thirty-eight, “Pop” will get out. Though known as “Pop”, he has no children. His age explains his nickname. His wife lives in Anderson, Ind. As a civilian, he used to work long hours overtime (at time and a half and double time) as supervisor in the tabulating department of the Delco-Remy Division of General Motors. He had had no previous MRU experience when he joined this unit at Governors Island upon activation. He has been chief of the two-man strength section during his service here. Sports: golf, fishing and swimming.

ROSHON, Karl K., Jr.
Pfc 33741874
5 Battle Stars

1338 Ridge Road, S.E.
Washington, D.C.

Roshon is known as the “Old Soldier” or the “Colonel” because he was once in the CMTC. A native of Utah, he has worked for several years in Washington in the Census Bureau. His first work in this MRU was coding, but he has since been in Morning Report control. Karl will be remembered for his dry wit and quick tongue. Married.

ROZEN, Walter A.
Tec 5 36383815
5 Battle Stars

3608 West 69th Street
Chicago 29, Illinois

Hails from the Windy city and truly lives up to its name for he can make more noise than any four others. Claims chasing pigs is his hobby, but he never seems to catch any of them; could it be the mustache, Walter? Just because he won the ping-pong tournament, he thinks he’s champion. Plays a good game of baseball and indulges in such indoor sports as beer drinking, dice rolling, and gum chewing. Always in a happy mood, Walter’s civilian duties are unknown. He’s still single, too! Why?

SEARS, Glenn F.
Tec 4 36433862
5 Battle Stars

604 North Madison Street
Bloomington, Illinois

L.S., the Little Soldier from Bloomington, used to work as a tab operator for State Farm Insurance there. He was at Fort Hayes, Ohio before joining the 32nd MRU. His first assignment in the unit was in charge of the Morning Report Control Section. Later was in processing. He is single. Sports: roller skating, swimming, and golf.

SHANKS, Clarence O.
Pfc 36685916
5 Battle Stars

Route 4
Bloomington, Illinois

Shanks, trained for the field artillery, landed on the Continent on D plus 12, and joined us at Valognes. His work during the campaign was on BCR, in which he became a meticulously careful operator. Married, but has no children.

SKINNER, Snider W.
Tec 5 33639452
5 Battle Stars

3924 Southern Avenue, S.E.
Washington 20, D.C.

Skinner considers himself something of a newspaper man, but has never made any money at it. Even now he is writing an amateur newspaper column for four newspapers in the States. He used to raise cotton and peanuts in Alabama, but moved to Washington in 1939 where he worked for the Census Bureau. His only Army assignment has been the 32nd MRU. His work in the MRU was varied until he became a full-time, overtime man in BCR. Married and very glad of it, his life in the ETO has been blameless if somewhat monotonous.

STALCUP, Claude
Tec 5 36752492
2 Battle Stars

3237 North Monticello Avenue
Chicago 18, Illinois

“Pop” Stalcup plays the roles of two men--one with teeth, one without. Formerly with the 484th Ordnance Evacuation Company, he joined us at our most exciting period--on 13 December 1944 at Chaudfontaine. He is a truck driver as a civilian in Chicago. He is unvarying competent and considerate in his work. He is married, but has no children.

STEIN, Frank J.
Tec 4 34209621
5 Battle Stars

115 West Plymouth Street
Tampa, Florida

Capt. Barnett converted Stein to a keypuncher when he joined the unit from the Fort Washington, MRU. His present nickname, "Abie," was given him by Cuca. He's a quiet sort, never gripes, never gossips about other people. He's not nearly so shy as he used to be, though. Generally, he is first (with Stender) to explore each new stop. He is not married. Civilian occupation: junior accountant.

STENDER, Albert H., Jr.
Pfc 32930112
5 Battle Stars

60 Humason Avenue
Buffalo, New York

Sometimes known as "Stender, the Nervous," he is always the first to explore each new station and first to find all available souvenirs. He also has something of a reputation as a dial-twister. One thing certain--Stender would be able to take care of himself alone in any situation. Before coming to the Army he was a repairman for a competing business machines system--Remington Rand. In this MRU he has not been in machines at all but in Morning Report Control. He is single but shows interest still in a girl who used to live in Old Sodbury, England.

STOCKGLAUSNER, Ray O.
Pfc 37379988

4631 Varrelman Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri

He's one of the newest members of the unit, reached us at LeHavre, and was formerly with the 29th MRU. He has been assigned to Morning Report Control. Not married. Poor boy--he hasn't a single battle star though he has a hash mark and has been overseas twenty-six months.

SUMMER, Glenn W.
Maj 0-405864
Legion of Merit, 5 Battle Stars

5075 Raymond Avenue
St. Louis 13, Missouri

Maj. Summers entered service in December 1940 as a 2nd Lt. in Co M, 140 Inf Regt, 35 Inf Div. He became an MRU man in September 1942, and served with Fourth Army Headquarters, mostly on the West Coast. For a short period he served in Alaska. He came overseas with the 37th MRU and took over command of the 32nd MRU from Capt. Barnett when we were at Bristol. He is uniformly fair and courteous to his men, though he can be hard enough if need be. His hobby, as with most members of his command, is photography. Never claiming expert technical knowledge of IBM machines, the major has confined his activities to management. His civilian occupation was in the glass industry where he made time studies. Married.

VITTETOE, Craig B.
Tec 5 17088328
5 Battle Stars

1303 Fourth Street
Greeley, Colorado

Vittetoe is the child prodigy of the unit. He is not abashed by anyone, "high brass" or not. Within a month after we landed in England he was singing in the Cheltenham town choir. A student before entering the Army, he has never had a civilian occupation. He is our company clerk, a job which isn't too arduous since we are a small unit. he speaks fluent French. Unmarried, but has prospects.

WESTBERG, Harold M.
Tec 5 36666452
5 battle Stars

4213 Grace Street
Chicago, Illinois

Westberg, our senior mail clerk, is simply carrying on with his civilian occupation of mail carrier in Chicago. His wife lives there. His only Army assignment has been with the 32nd MRU. Back at Cheltenham he had a really tough time. There he drove and cared for the recon and burned the trash in addition to his mail clerk duties. Later, he convinced his superiors that such jobs were not part of a mail clerk's duties. He coined the word "rough," meaning practically anything.

WHEELER, Kenneth
Tec 4 31040977
5 Battle Stars

34 Whalley Avenue
New Haven, Connecticut

Wheeler came to us from the 11th MRU in a trade for Griffin when we were at Bristol. He took over the Morning Report Control Section on his arrival and has since got the work done without fuss or feathers. A long-time MRU man, he was in on the Morning Report deal from the time of the changeover from Report of Change Cards. He is single and was a civilian draftsman.

WOLLENBERG, Otis F.
Tec 5 12207205
5 Battle Stars

RFD 2
North Tonawanda, NY

Wollenberg is the locator man of this unit. Back in England he broke his back working and kept two others busy with him. Later his job settled down to a leisurely one-man job. He is girl-crazy and likes to make love in all languages. He is growing a bit bald, but that is no sign of advancing age. He was an IBM operator as a civilian.

ZITO, Anthony J., Jr.
Pfc 33680339
2 Battle Stars

East Second Street
Emporium, Pennsylvania

Tony calls Emporium, Pa., home, is married and has one child, a son. He gets around, having served with four different MRU's, three in the ETO. Joined the unit in February, '45, at Chaudfontaine. Says dancing is his hobby--ballet or tap, Tony? For a little man, he demands and gets plenty of attention. He had machine experience civilian life. Tony's accomplishments are many. Sleeping or playing pitch with Euth are his major pastimes.

Sketches of Some Former 32nd MRU Members

BARNETT, George

Capt

Captain Barnett is the person most directly responsible for the fine work and high efficiency of the 32 Machine Records Unit during the training and planning stages of the campaign. he relinquished his job as CO of our unit while we were still in Bristol, shortly before D-Day, and was later attached to the 29th MRU. "Little George" was the man who supervised our basic training and few of us have forgotten the pace he set on the way back from the infiltration course that day at Camp Dix. The next day he won our admiration by refusing to ride but elected to lead us back though we all knew his feet were sorely blistered. Thank you, Captain, for molding us into a unit fit and ready to accomplish the mission required of us.

CHADWICK, Thomas

Pvt

Neither rank nor loss of same could take away his claim to fame.

He paid his fine without a whine,

And charged it up to one good time.

From the Island to Weimar he traveled along,

Drinking his spirits and singing us songs.

Happy to go lucky though the going got tough,

He never grumbled or moaned how rough.

Life to Thomas was just one good time

As long as he had his jug of wine.

CORNELIUS, William P.

1 Lt.

Handsome Lt. Cornelius was the very first CO of the 32nd MRU. He was in command until Capt Barnett's arrival. His previous army work, both as an enlisted man and as an officer, has been in MRU administration. Some of his previous assignments have been at Fort Hayes and New Orleans. His wife stayed in New York while we were at Governors Island. He left us at Bristol and was later reported at Newport News, Virginia.

GRIFFIN, Victor

Tec 4

Griffin, a front office man, was the guy always high pressuring the guys to sign up for bonds and allotments before coming overseas. A Texan, he was first at Fort Washington. He went to the 11th MRU from Bristol and later to 37th MRU. He enjoyed a fit for gab unsurpassed. It was the Southern conversational habit of talking for pure enjoyment.

HOGAN, Vincent E.

Pvt

Hogan, who had been overseas for more months than he cared to remember, went home on points from LeHavre. Most of his work in the ETO had been with the 91st and Central MRU's where he reached the grade of Tec 4. Joined us at Chaudfontaine (second phase). Married shortly before leaving the U.S. He was a whiz at the cards, both tabulating and playing.

KAINO, Birger A.

Tec 5

Kaino came to us as a Pfc at Chaudfontaine (first phase) and left with May for the Provisional MRU at Rheims when we were at LeHavre. A smooth, suave sort, he had worked in export sales as a civilian and was in Morning Report control in the unit. Married. Lived in Long Island City, N.Y.

LENT, Thomas J.

Tec 5

Lent and Salone, like bacon and eggs, go together. both are Brooklyn boys, both were at Second Service Command MRU, both key-punched, and both left together. Lent later was assigned to Third Corps Hq where he was driving a colonel around. As a civilian he worked for a sugar company. A good vocalist and pianist, he had ambitions of joining a name band.

McBRIDE, John

T Sgt

Mac, our only real soldier, got tired of our red tape factory when we were at St. Trond and transferred to his old outfit, 16th Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division. He gave us our modified training on Governors Island and, later, was our First Sergeant, though retaining the grade of T Sgt. He was a whiz at close order drill and blackjack. Before the war he served in the Pacific.

SALONE, Raymond

Tec 4

Salone, who was transferred out during the first Chaudfontaine period, was another Brooklyn boy who first was in MRU work at 52 Broadway. A keypuncher, he also pioneered in the Battle Casualty Section. After leaving the unit, he was reputed to be in Military Government on the Continent. Previous to his Army service, he had been in the Marine Corps in San Diego.

SANDSTROM, Carl A.

Pvt

Carl reached us at Valognes and debated his way with us through Chaudfontaine on the merits of the hardware business, Sweden, and whatever else anyone dared mention in his presence. His going was due to a technicality. He was a conscientious objector to the extent that he would not bear arms, though he was willing to be a combat medic (the MRU is an armed unit, so we lost Sandy). During his stay he worked in the administration and on the Morning Report Control desk. As a civilian he was in the hardware business, about which we all learned a great deal.

STEINKOHL, Jules

Pfc

Steinkohl, one of the Chaudfontaine replacements, was transferred to 16th Major Port when we were at Le-Havre. He was a native of Brooklyn, where he had a wife and child. In the unit he was a truck driver and acted as a CPA (cleaning, pressing, alterations) in his spare time.

TOP, Alfred H.

Pvt

Top, of the Valognes “replacements,” went to the hospital from St. Trond and did not get to rejoin our unit. When last heard from, he was headed for home to rejoin his wife and baby in Grand Rapids, Mich. His knowledge helped many of us get our laundry washed, for the people of St. Trond were Flemish and he spieled their lingo. His MRU work was in the BCR section.



Carrying A Dry Run Too Far

The time was 4:15, 22 November 1943, as we hurried down those familiar halls to our messhall. There was an early chow for us this day and we were being treated with ham, spuds, raisin sauce, and all the trimmings. Many of us commented on this as being the last supper of the condemned. Others were debating among themselves whether this was a dry run or did it mean that we were really going overseas. Personally, my stomach felt like a bunch of butterflies had gotten inside and were raising Hell.

We all sat around after eating and listened to a few of the officers beat their gums at our expense. Just before we piled out of the messhall, we all said goodbye to Larry on KP who had been with our outfit but because of some ailment was declared unfit for overseas service. There were tears in his eyes as he said goodbye. He was a swell egg and we would all miss him...all, that is, except the crap shooters. He was good at that.

Upstairs to our squadroom we went to gather up our equipment, then downstairs and out to the company street where we lined up with our A and B bags. The butterflies inside me were really raising Hell now. Some of us at this point began muttering that they were carrying this dry run a bit too far.

Well, we lugged our bags down to the pier where we piled into a tug. With the help of the sailors on board we managed to get aboard safely without falling into the Hudson River which was mighty cold this time of year.

It was growing dark as we plowed our way up the Hudson and lights of Manhattan came on and all at once we felt low. We had spent many a happy night in that glorious city during our three and a half months spent on [Governors Island](#). We passed 42nd Street and we could just visualize what was going on there.

Finally, after much chugging, we pulled up at a pier and there stood a very stately ship. It was the [Queen Elizabeth](#). Off the tug we scrambled as fast as one can while lugging two barracks bags filled to the bursting point, a rifle that was always slipping off the shoulder, and a gas mask that would never stay where it belonged.

On the pier a band broke into "The Beer Barrel Polka" and we all chimed. After one murderous round on that we got the band to give out with "Pistol Packin' Mamma." That song will always remind me of Governors Island as each time we took a break we would beat it for the PX for a coke and I would invariably irritate the boys by slipping a nickel in the juke box and up would come "Pistol Packin' Mamma."

About this time ladies in a familiar light blue uniform of the ARC (*American Red Cross*) came along with doughnuts, coffee, and bars of candy. This was the first time I had been on the receiving end of the ARC and I sure did appreciate what they were doing for us.

We just had about enough time to gulp down the hot coffee and cram a couple of extra doughnuts in our coat pockets before we were hurried on board the ship that was to be our home for several days to come. We lugged those bags up to B deck and I was guided into a stateroom that in peacetime might possibly accommodate two small people. I found that I was to share this room with eleven of my comrades. This was home.

Working in shifts we managed to make ourselves halfway near comfortable. When a man got his equipment piled in some order he crawled into his bunk and let another take his place on the floor. So it went until we wound up with all twelve of us in the sack starting new rumors.

We sat around or wandered around to other staterooms to see how the rest of our unit was making out. Finally, after much ado about nothing, we all decided to get a little shuteye and see what the morning would bring.



Governors Island, New York, birthplace of the 32nd Machine Records Unit, Mobile. (Photo from *New York Journal-American*).



The Landing at Greenock

The Landing at [Greenock](#) (29 November, 1943)

Some members of the 32nd MRU have said that the most beautiful sight they ever saw was that view of Scotland from a porthole on the Queen Elizabeth anchored in the [Firth of Clyde](#). One side of the Firth was rather barren—much like our preconceived notions of the Scottish landscape. On the other side was Greenock, a ship-building city.

The Queen Elizabeth did not anchor at Greenock but simply lay out in the Firth. The boat had anchored before we awoke that morning but it was after noon before our unit was loaded on to a lighter.

We were below deck on the lighter and could not see where the boat was headed. A radio gave us our introduction to BBC programs. A trilly female singer, of the type popular with the British, was singing something about “a garden of roses for you and for me.”

Four hours later we unloaded. We thought we must be to Glasgow but when we debarked the Queen Elizabeth was still only a few hundred feet out in the Firth. We were still at Greenock.

Some apple-cheeked Scotch lassies representing the ARC (*American Red Cross*) plied us with doughnuts, chewing gum, and matches as we struggled to our train.

On the train we learned that our destination was to be Cheltenham Spa, a place we had never heard of.



The *Queen Elizabeth*, loaded with troops, arrives in the Firth of Clyde after a voyage from America (Photo from British Information Services)



Cheltenham, more English than the English

Cheltenham, more English than the English (30 November, 1943)

Who could ever forget getting off [the train](#) in the pitch-black darkness before the dawn at Cheltenham? As we rode through the town on Army trucks we saw the feeble bicycle lights of residents on their way to work.

Settled on a muddy hillside at Charlton Kings, the horizon still seemed to be moving up and down, as it had on the boat. Our little world was unsettled and we were none too happy.

From our vantage point, Cheltenham looked like England – only more so! Craig Vittetoe ventured out to the street that first morning and dramatically announced on his return, “I have just seen England!”

We were quartered far up the hill in a row of winterized tents, eight men to a tent designed for five. For heat we had coal-burning pot-bellied stoves and for light we had candles which we purchased ourselves. At one end of the row of tents was a cold-water tap and near the other end was a bucket latrine. Down the hill was a bath-house with showers and pull-chain latrines.

Also in the area was the Nissen hut messhall where we became acquainted with dried eggs, dried milk, dehydrated sweet potatoes, and so on.

We just lived (or existed) at [Charlton Kings](#). Each day we marched to work at [Oakley Farms](#) about a mile and a half away. Because of the short winter days, we marched over before sunrise and back after sunset. It was at Oakley Farms that we received our machine trailers and administration trailer and set up operations.

The hard-boiled messhall policy at Oakley Farms (where the day shift ate noon meals) was something to write home about. Except for meat and dessert, everyone could take as much as he wanted so long as he ate it every bite. The mess sergeant stood by the garbage can to make sure that this was done. Floyd Hall, on a night shift, had to see the mess officer for not eating some spoiled oatmeal at breakfast. Even Lt Cornelius had to report for not licking his platter clean.

At Charlton Kings, Robert Binau performed the nightly miracle of getting from the tents to the paved street with his shoes still spotless. The rest of us had to use the hose to wash the mud off our shoes before venturing downtown.

Unforgettable was an Englishman’s routing to the [Queens Hotel](#). “Straight ahead to the second roundabout; then turn left. You cawn’t miss it!” The Queens Hotel, occupied entirely by the American Red Cross Club, was an oasis of light and warmth where we could listen to the British accents on the wireless and read the London Times.

Cheltenham Spa naturally had baths of supposedly curative value but none of us ever took any of them. The town, surrounded by towering hills, in peacetime was a favorite place for Britishers home from a lifetime of service or moneymaking in India to come to retire.

The town was HQ, SOS, ETOUSA, under the command of [Lt. Gen John C.H. Lee](#), who made the place strictly a blouse-overcoat-gloves Hq.

When we reached First U.S Army Hq at Bristol, we found it to be a field-jacket Hq and nobody seemed to care just what we wore.

Besides the camps of Charlton Kings and Oakley Farms, troops were stationed at Ben Hall, Race Course, Bishops Cleve, and Sandy Wells.



(1) Rozen and Sears looking out of winterized tent at Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, England. Behind them are Crandall and Cornelius.
(2) Griffis, McBride, and Lish on coal detail at Cheltenham. Could be Griffin, Salone, and O'Connell in rear.
(3) Armenia leaving the Bristol PX with a week's rations.
(4) Galetti in front of his billet in Henleaze, Bristol.



Bristol, England

Bristol, England (22 January, 1944)

The five months and thirteen days spent in Bristol were second in our affections only to our four months in New York City. It was the only overseas location where we were able to take part freely in social activities. In all future locations, the huge barrier of language was to be a serious handicap for mot of us.

When we left the train at [Temple Meads station](#), there was a great welcoming committee there to greet us. If I remember correctly, there was a total of four GI's, including one staff sergeant, and four trucks. The English weather was upholding its age-old tradition by giving forth with the inevitable drizzle of rain. Sixty dampened, but no less excited, spirits climbed aboard the trucks and proceeded to their new home. As we rode through the city we glimpsed our first bomb damage, the calling card of Germany, which was to become so commonplace in the following two years.

Our new home was the Pollack House located at Clifton College in an area known as Clifton Downs, one of the most beautiful spots in Bristol. The College, previous to occupation by the First U.S. Army Headquarters, had been a boys' school. The most famous landmark on the Downs was undoubtedly the [Suspension Bridge](#). This bridge spanned a huge gorge at the bottom of which flowed the Bristol Avon. The sides of the gorge were solid rock. The English people have a fable which states that the gorge was caused by a couple of giants who moved a few rocks around during a little disagreement.

A few hours after our arrival, our trailers were set up on a rugby field in the rear of the Pollack House. This ideal arrangement lasted not more than a week. It seems that our generators operating twenty-four hours daily caused no little loss of sleep among our English neighbors. And so it was necessary to move our trailers to a new location across from the Bristol Zoo into the First Army motor pool. This meant that we had to walk quite a distance to work. The hike, however, soon assumed brighter aspects due to the presence of a WAF barrage balloon post along the route.

For an MRU, any inspection other than a minor one is certainly a very rare occurrence and any GI will tell you that a General's inspection is anything but minor. As the English would say, 'We had it.' No less a figure than the First Army's Chief of Staff, Brigadier General W.B. Kean, did the honors. No nickel and dime stuff for the 32nd! After several attempts which were thwarted by slight showers, we finally managed a formation. There we were lined up in open ranks; and as the General and his entourage passed each man there was a timely present arms. I would like to describe the sensation felt by each individual as it came his turn to sweat out those stars but Mr. Webster, in writing his dictionary, did not take such circumstances into consideration.

It didn't take long to get into the social swing-such as it was. A discovery here, a discovery there, and pretty soon we weren't doing so badly. With the focal points being: Blackboy Hill, Old Market, and the Center, we found innumerable pleasant distractions from our work. Also necessary to complete this list of recreational places of interest, were: the American Red Cross, the Victoria Rooms, Crockers, St. James's Park, the Ironmonger's Daughter, the Oclion, the Green Lantern, the Freight Loader, the Kings Arms, the Princess, the Bee Hive, the Windsor Café, and just the plain Downs.

It was somewhat amusing to see some of the boys adopt certain English customs. One sight, not uncommon, was that of a couple of GI's walking nonchalantly down the street eating chips from a greasy paper bag.

After about two months at the Pollack House, we moved into private billets in a section of the city called [Henleaze](#). It was here that we experienced our most intimate contact with the English people because we were all living practically as charter members of our respective households. Although there were naturally a few instances which were none too harmonious, by far the greater number of us were extremely happy and contented with our adopted parents. When you stop to consider that we were actually forced upon these people, the amount of consideration which they bestowed upon us was wonderful. Many of us were pleasantly awakened by having breakfast brought to our bedside. Others received afternoon "tea" in a manner befitting nobility. The English people were required only to furnish us with sleeping and toilet facilities – any act beyond this they performed in order to make our stay more comfortable and aptly illustrated their generosity and kindness

After a couple of months which seemed more like a couple of weeks, we left our homes and returned to the Pollack House (first floor this time). This time each shift was put into a separate room. Probably the most versatile room was the one known as the "kindergarten," under the able influence and leadership of Professor John V. (You can't be a good-time Charlie and get the work out) Griffis. The students, or members of the evening shift, learned a great deal about pin-ups, miniature air raids, and miscellaneous practical jokes. To illustrate the latter, one member of the institution awoke from a pleasant night's rest to find his bed balanced precariously on a window ledge and surrounded by the startled eyes of the local citizens.

It was here that we lost our commanding officer, Capt. George Barnett, who had been with us since Governors Island. He was replaced by Major Glenn Summers who remains with us to this day as our commanding officer.

On the third of July, 1944, with a large part of First Army Headquarters, we boarded trucks at the College and rode to Temple Meads station. The trains were waiting to carry us to a small station just outside Southampton. This was it! No one need ask where we were going. We were approaching the most important phase of our careers.



D Day Plus 29

D-Day Plus 29 (6 June, 1944)

Early days in Bristol were busy ones with a group of 55 enlisted men and four officers trying for the first time to organize themselves into an efficient machine for its place in the Army. It was an anxious time, too, for everyone realized the approach of the storm about to break over Europe. We were more on the “in,” as it were, for many phases of the business at hand flashed lights upon the picture of things to come; but the actual date of D-Day was left to the speculation of the individual. There was much of it.

With the arrival of dawn, 6 June 1944, came the electrifying news flashes on all radios that the landings on the Normandy beaches of France were accomplished facts and the tremendous springboard of action accumulated during months of feverish preparation in England had thrown its first weight with a might heave. Little springs were released somewhere within the beings of all men, and so for the men in the 32nd. Tension eased and, undoubtedly, a prayer for continued success was in the heart of each of us. Then, work upon our assigned jobs continued and the spring began to coil.

Now the preparation for “moving out” so evident everywhere began to concentrate in the particular ways we were to be affected. A million things seemed to cry for attention and all had to be completed in the haze of uncertainty surround the preparation for a little D-Day of our own. The three shifts, into which our working days were divided, continued to pour out the detailed work assigned and, in addition, the vans and all vehicles had to be made waterproof with a putty like substance. We swarmed the underparts like so many ants, all busy plugging every crack. Each had to see to the marking of his equipment, checking and rechecking the numerous articles, besides stenciling name, rank, and serial number on his duffel bag and putting a common identification on its side and bottom. The great white star, marking all the vans, had to be carefully painted on the ascribed places. Meetings were held for last-minute instructions. There was the final reading of the Articles of War. The chaplain’s lecture was heard. Nothing was overlooked.

With all these preparations proceeding smoothly to a termination, official orders informed us that we would proceed to the staging area and from there to the port of embarkation by July 3. In the span of a day all last-minute adjustments were made and, after each man had stuffed his duffel bag until nothing more could be crammed inside, it seemed that all prescribed articles did have a place – a thing few would have believed possible.

Up until the time of departing from Bristol, fortune was with us. There was no restriction placed upon us, so that one last evening was ours to bid farewell to the city which had been so hospitable for almost six months. Although under orders not to divulge the next day’s departure, the undercurrent of expectancy betrayed itself.

All the men guessed that our destination lay in the south of England, but until arriving at Southampton, none but a few were certain. Many assumed this as the convoy train headed south from the Bristol station.

Spirits were high and the English countryside was at its peak of beauty...for all will vouch that, in the spring and summer, all of this isle is a garden.

Arriving at the staging area, speculation began once more as to the duration of the wait there. Rumors ranging from one day to several were current but whatever the set-up we were engaged in a new adventure and everyone was enjoying the change from the office routine. Inside the park like area we were assigned pyramidal tents, sufficient for comfort, and then furnished folding cots and blankets. The first "free" rations fell to us –candy, cigarettes, toilet articles – all the things which the Post Exchange **sold** to us prior to this. This was the beginning of being in the combat area. Scarcely accustomed to the new surroundings order came for movement the following day.

The area was quickly policed (an indispensable part of every program), cots and blankets returned to supply sections and equipment donned. The heavy duffel bags were stored in our trailers, which proceeded by separate route, so that was a relief, but the full field-pack, gas mask, arms, and steel helmet were more than enough weight under the hot sun. For greater comfort these were shed once we were loaded in the trucks ready to convoy us to the docks.

The craft, of the LCI type, did not receive us directly at the Southampton docks, but at the small port of Lymington, some twelve miles distant. The ride was pleasant, giving but one special event which pleased all but certain members of the upper three grades. It so happened that, in order to accommodate a capacity load, small trailers were drawn by each truck and these were filled by standing men. By some trick of fate, all the first three graders fell to riding in one of these conveyances. Enroute one of the typical English showers overtook the convoy and no one will deny the secret satisfaction of seeing the discomfort of the "high and mighty." The short duration did not dampen anyone to a degree that bad dispositions ensued; so that it was merely a good laugh on the sergeants for a change.

Having started in the early afternoon, our appetites began to grow as the sun neared the treetops and, without K rations, questions as to where the manna was to come from began to form on most lips. Even when the trucks halted along the roadside, it scarcely appeared to be a likely place in which to eat, until one's eye caught a long lane bordered on either side by huge, long-needed pines. Hurrying its full length, cans of hot C rations and a canteen cup of coffee were handed everyone. With a hefty appetite, nurtured by waiting, the rations disappeared quickly. The usual policing – up followed. There was a brief respite in which to enjoy a cigarette before clambering back into the trucks to resume the journey.

Embarking was an easy, orderly procedure. Orders, like the stop and go signal at any street corner, were given and followed so that within a half-hour of arriving at the docks, each man had taken possession of a bunk. The room was small and completely filled with bunks, leaving little space for movement, but little was needed. Tired, nearly everyone settled for the night's sleep, after dutifully swallowing the seasick pills issued him. There were no unpleasant experiences aboard ship during the crossing. The bands around crates of new blankets were broken and each man was at liberty to take as many as he chose for the night and later, in the morning, carry them away with him.

With the reliability of a train schedule, when we had gathered on deck in the brilliant morning sunshine to disembark, landing crafts moored themselves at the ship's side as we scrambled clumsily over the side into the smaller vessels. The weight of equipment made the change rather precarious, for a careless move and one might have slipped between the two craft into the water, but plenty of helping hands reached from both directions to aid the thoroughly unseagoing sailors.

So, the Fourth of July, 1944 was, for the members of the 32nd MRU, celebrated by beginning the crossing of the Channel. The next day, 5 July 1944, we landed on Utah Beach in a land that had been freshly restored to her liberties once more. The sounds of battle were in the distance but only carnage and wounds inflicted were evidence of what had preceded us.

For the first time, our own two feet had to be the means of locomotion for getting us to the assembly area some six or seven miles inland. It was a type of exercise to which none had been accustomed in recent months and proved a tiring ordeal as our Indian file march along carefully guided paths of white tape line looked two or three centuries out of place...especially when, to our tired eyes, everyone else seemed to be riding. In this fashion our line wound in and out of a series of pastures to that one designated for our particular group. With great relief we fell as a body on the cool grass shaded by a fence row of trees. At this hour of nine o'clock in the evening, the sun was still riding high and after eating heartily of the K rations, which all carried, each turned to his own method of preparing a comfortable bed on the ground. Many of us were rudely awakened at what the watch told us was only ten-thirty in the evening and not the morning sunlight. Before our eyes stretched another long convoy of trucks -evidence that were were in for more of a ride before the day was really finished.

We were jammed like so many sardines into the trucks so that those who could not sit stood clinging to one another as best they could. Quickly, the highway brought us in sight of the much discussed hedgerows through which all the early fighting had to be conducted and with the fading sun the pictures did not disappear because a brilliant moon flooded the countryside. As we sped along those roads it was difficult to believe that not many miles away a bitter war was in progress, for about us was only peace and beauty. The war's certainty was brought to us for the first time as we neared and finally drove through the rubble streets of [Montebourg](#) and, and later, [Valognes](#).

With the feeling abounding that we had pulled into a deep tunnel because of the inky blackness, the convoy stopped and orders were given to dismount, which was done more by a sense of feel than anything else. It became evident that we were threading our way in groups to wooden barracks as our eyes became accustomed to the dark, and we were left with the curt remark, "You'll sleep here on the floor tonight." Even a wooden floor could no longer detain sleep.

The healthy curiosity of all Americans soon gleaned from other fellows all information as to our immediate surroundings during the next day as we idled about awaiting the arrival of equipment. The more fortunate chaps imagined themselves lost through the looking glass of Alice in Wonderland, for they wakened with crystal chandeliers blinking at them from frescoed ceilings and the mouths of gaping fireplaces opened in surprise at the new occupants---we had come to rest on the estate of the enchanting [Chateau de Chriffevast](#), near Valognes.

Our lives were to function about the marred loveliness of this old place for the ensuing month---composed mainly of steady, grinding work. In the few hours of leisure afforded us, we enjoyed the luxury of bathing in the waterfall of a nearby stream, sunbathing, writing letters home telling about this lovely, emerald-green countryside---or just sleeping---wondering how long it was all to last.



Excerpts from Letters Written at Valognes

Excerpts from Letters Written at Valognes

About 6 July 1944 – Here I am in France. So far we have fared all right and have not been exposed to any evident danger. We have had a rather long transition, most of it quite interesting.

France looks a lot like I expected. The parts I've seen seem a little wilder than I expected. Some of the small towns really have been blown to pieces.

There doesn't seem to be much crop farming around here, though there are lots of spotted cows and orchards of apple trees.

Tec 5 Vittetoe, who has fluent knowledge of French, has been having a field day talking to the French peasants we have met. My own French isn't good enough to catch much they say. They seem even more provincial than the English farmers.

We've been eating K rations but had some 10 in 1 rations tonight. We had canned peas, corned beef, cocoa, crackers, and blackberry jelly (with guava). I was about to get sick of eating the K's.

We are really situated in a beautiful spot which I will describe in full when I get home.

9 July 1944 – Getting back into operation has been a rather nerve-wracking job. The work has piled up and getting going under new conditions is kind of hard.

11 July 1944 – We've had arrangements made for all of us to have our laundry done for us by French women. We have to make out our laundry lists in English and French. Here is a tentative price list: (1 franc equals 2 cents).

<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Cost</u>
O.D. Shirt	Chemise	4 francs
Wool Undershirt	Camisol	4 francs
Wool Underpants	Calcon	4 francs
Cotton Underpants	Calcon Court	2 francs
Cotton Undershirts	Chemisettes	2 francs
Towels	Serviettes de Toilette	2 francs
Handkerchiefs	Mouchoirs	1 franc for 2
Socks	Chausettes	2 francs for a pair
Leggings	Gaitres	3 francs a pair
O.D. Trousers	Culottes	15 francs a pair
Wash Cloths	Petites Serviettes	1 franc

Some of these French names look like articles of feminine apparel to me!

12 July 1944 – We had a good breakfast this morning – hot cakes, sausage, syrup, tomato juice, and pre-mixed cereal. This pre-mixed cereal has sugar and dry milk in it already. You need only add water. Tastes pretty good.

14 July 1944 – Ernie Pyle had a good description of Normandy in a Stars and Stripes this week. Maybe you read it. I like the place better after reading it. The houses and barns all in a connecting unit around a court do look good.

15 July 1944 – Having done nothing but eat, sleep, and work for a week, this afternoon I arbitrarily got up two hours early. Post and I went on a “patrol” of about three kilometers to the outskirts of a village (all towns and villages are off limits to American troops). Gee, it was good to get out and around a little once more.

We saw the usual apple trees and tan-spotted cows. The apples are still small and green. Blackberries are still blooming. The cows look fat and well-fed.

In one farmyard some GI’s were getting some cider from a farmer, who seemed well-pleased and was smiling all over his face.

In another farmyard a GI had just bought a couple of eggs (“des oeufs”), He was the one well-pleased in this case.

We saw one really stunning looking girl in our travels. She was clean, well-dressed, and pretty. Post noted that she had a wedding ring, however.

A couple of two-wheeled carts passed us. One was pulled by a horse and was covered over. Three women were driving a donkey to another two-wheeled cart without a top.

In one farm gateway we saw two beautiful, bright-faced little girls. I can’t agree with Ernie Pyle that all Normandy children are beautiful.

Coming back we met a man, boy, and woman driving a heard of yellow cows. The woman stayed in front to keep them from running away. She had on wooden shoes but managed to clatter around in them pretty fast.

We also saw a public wash place. It consisted of a midget swimming pool covered with galvanized iron. A woman was washing. She knelt beside the pool, soused the clothes, and “battled” them on a flat stone built into the floor. She was doing some GI washing. Another place a woman was ironing GI clothes.

Well, I guess that’s about what we saw in our seventy-five minutes. Everybody (almost) seemed glad to see us and waved to us. A number of houses were flying the French tricolor.

17 July 1944 – No kidding, this overwork is getting old. I’m in the Battle Casualty Section. We have to take a lot of abuse and non-cooperation from other sections which don’t work the twelve to thirteen hours we do. However, I don’t think I’ll have any pangs of conscience that I didn’t do my part in this war when it’s all over. In fact, I think I’ll wear my “Spam” ribbon with pride.

19 July 1944 – We don’t have much to spend money for here. I bought some air mail stamps with francs – that’s all the French money I’ve spent. We got free PX rations this week – 7 packs cigarettes, 7 boxes matches, 7 1-oz bars chocolate, 1 razor blade, 7 sticks gum. All I wanted of it was the chocolate.

I’s so damp out here that a candy bar I had melted down so I threw it away.

22 July 1944 – I have no French coins, only 5, 10, 50, 100, and 500 franc notes. The 5 and 10 franc notes are “invasion money” printed especially for American soldiers. The 50 franc and higher values are authentic French money. The money is pretty. The 100 franc notes show a man in a ruff collar contemplating a pastoral **scene**. There is a shepherd with sheep, a girl milking a cow, and a man plowing. In the background is a castle and a river. The other side shows symbolic pictures of a girl and woman against a background of Paris. My one 500 franc note is a whopper. Almost as big as a 5 pound note.

The splotches of these pages are not tears but drops of water which keep falling out of the trees. I am sitting half in, half out of the pup tent I share with Tec 5 Lee Lyons.

Roosevelt was renominated again, as everyone expected.

23 July 1944 – I have just eaten a breakfast of grapefruit juice, French toast (no pun intended), syrup, bacon, dried peaches, and hot cereal. We've actually got bread enough for toast now.

What a night! The trailers closed at 6:30 last night so we could see a Special Service Show which was coming. It was due to start at 8 p.m. but the entertainers didn't arrive. To fill the gap, some soldier instrumentalists gave an impromptu show which was very good.

The show didn't arrive so they put on a movie outside. This started late and ran on for reel after reel until 12:30 a.m. out in the open, long, long after blackout time!

The picture was the "Song of Bernadette," a really great movie. I was proud of the privilege of seeing it. I never realized such a long picture could be made from the story. The sound and picture were both good.

26 July 1944 – We got off to see the USO Show last night. It was pretty good – a dancer, a singer, and a puppet show, as well as a comedian, and an accordion player – three girls and two men.

27 July 1944 – Believe it or not we had another USO show last night. Beetle, the comedian who used to be Phil Baker's stooge on the Gulf Radio Show on Sunday nights was in this one. He was really funny. Also a pretty girl contortionist, a male tap dancer, a torch singer, and an accordion player. I enjoyed the show.

29 July 1944 – This week we've had some extra help but so far we haven't gotten out much earlier. They haven't learned enough to be of much help so far. One group of men (from another MRU) is really on the ball as far as the machines go but don't know our procedure so well.

30 July 1944 – Lee woke me up to say we had roast beef for Sunday dinner, so I go up – the first time I've been up for dinner since we began operating in France. It was good.

1 August 1944 – Yesterday was a red letter day in food. Lee woke me at noon to say we had chicken. However, my stomach was in such shape that I didn't eat. I was able to eat the delicious STEAK we had for supper. I'm getting just like everybody else – steak crazy. However, I arrived a little late for the super-special doughnuts they had.

3 August 1944 – Pfc Jackson and I went out on a "patrol" this afternoon. He had a superfluity of cigarettes and candy which he disposed of along the way. He would hold up a pack of cigarettes to a an on a bicycle. Not one failed to stop. "Merci", "Merci bien", and "Thank You" (in English). I gave away my sack of Duke's Mixture, books of matches, and four sticks of gum. We met four girls on their way to do some haying. They seemed fresh and happy. We gave them some cigarettes and gum.

5 August 1944 – Tonight I finally got down to take a bath at the artificial waterfall. It was certainly cold. The steam is an artificial one built along the rim of a small valley to keep the valley from being swampy.



(top) Jackson and typical French farmstead on the Valognes-Cherbourg Road. The slotted "something" just back of Jackson is a utility pole.

(bottom left) Post taking a helmet bath in the St. Lo apple orchard.

(bottom right) Stein with empty artillery shell-ash-tray material-at St. Lo.



St. Lo

St. Lo (6 August, 1944)

On the morning of 5 August 1944, the first contingent of the 32nd left Valognes for a new location. The last days of July had seen long pent-up forces unleashed against the enemy at the base of the Cotentin Peninsula. August 1 had brought the announcement that the First U.S. Army under its new C.G., Lt. Gen Courtney H. Hodges, had been joined in battle by Lt. Gen George Patton's Third Army. For the first time since D-Day the full might of our armed force had been employed against the enemy. He had reeled, and then withdrawn. The gateway to the heart of France had been thrown wide open and by the morning of 5 August, as we moved slowly along narrow, bomb-pocked, Normandy roads, the two American armies were well astride the brilliant offensive that was to carry them in a grand sweep across the continent.

The town most named in the headlines during the days leading up to the opening of this offensive was St. Lo, France. Throughout July, the two armies had been grouping in the St Lo area and all this time the city was under constant allied bombardment from land and air. The Germans considered it a vital point in their line of defense, and defended it at terrific cost to both sides. The fall of the city heralded the opening of the great offensive.

It was with high spirits and "morale excellent" that the 32nd was heading for the famed St. Lo that bright August morning. All of us were riding the crest of a great wave of optimism concerning the length of the war. Most were convinced that the end was only a few weeks away.

The last shot had been fired in the city only a few days before our arrival there. The war was over for St. Lo, but we found no cheering natives there to greet us and tell us of their appreciation for their liberation; rather, we found a town leveled almost to the ground and deserted of all inhabitants save those who lay mangled and crushed under the ruins of their homes—mute and awful testimony to the horror and destruction of total war.

The trailers were spotted in the courtyard of the Institute d'Agneu, a large boys' school on the outskirts of the city, in which First U.S. Army had set up HQ. In the rear of the school, beneath a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, was buried the body of General d'Artl Marcks, Commandant of all German troops in the Normandy area, who had used the school for his HQ prior to our arrival. Badly damaged though the building was, it was by far the least damaged of any left in the city.

We were bivouacked in an apple orchard a short distance from the school. Here, for the first time, the men began to add personal touches to their pup tents, and, with the aid of furnishings from the school, some managed to live in considerable comfort. The hard green apples that loaded the branches of the trees provided ammunition for many lively battles in the orchard.

The highlight of our stay in St. Lo was the visit paid the unit by Dinah Shore whose infectious personality and sincere interest in the unit made her the undisputed favorite among all celebrities who visited the 32nd. She was the first celebrity asked to autograph one of our trailers and the only one whose name actually came to be used in reference to the trailer autographed.

Edward G Robinson was another Hollywood personality who entertained us at St. Lo. There also, Willie Shore and his USO troupe joined us and entertained us on the lawn in front of the Red Cross cha-
teau one evening. We will all remember the little Chi Chi girl from his troupe whose specialty was South
American dances. We were visited by a distinguished military figure while in St. Lo—Brig Gen R.B.
Lovett, ETOUSA AG, who made a brief informal visit. Col Norman A. Donges, Chief of the Strength Ac-
counting Program in ETO, also paid us a visit.

The wave of optimism that we rode into St. Lo was heightened during our stay there by the invasion
of Southern France. Little did we realize when we left St. Lo for Fougerolles du Plessis how many times
that wave was to rise and fall before the end finally came.



A Typical Mobile Records Unit Trailer



A Typical Move- from St. Lo to Fougerolles du Plessis

A Typical Move: From St. Lo to Fougerolles du Plessis (21 August 1944)

For days rumors of this variety and that had been circulating in whispers among the fellows of the unit, each of us adding his own personal flourish to the half-truth we knew until finally we had travelled to Berlin and back by way of mouth. But, with all of this whispering and despite the indications, most of us were surprised when the news finally broke that on the morrow we were to move.

There was loads of work to be done and time was short. First, a concentrated drive to clean up the work on hand. Everything had to be marked and put in its proper place, or some other place to be picked up at our new destination when work was resumed. Our trailers were to be shut down at six. For minutes everything was in a scramble. Then we went to work, each one looking out for his own work first. Finally, just at six, or very close to it, we were all ready. Then began the manual labor, all day long, as the men finished putting their work in shape they were called on to help get all our supplies packed, the tent pulled down, etc. Now came the job of removing the camouflage nets, taking the huge, cumbersome platform apart, lifting the wheels of the trailers, policing up the area, and all the other little pertinent things, so familiar to us now, so unimportant to relate, and yet so essential to our successful moving.

Everything all cleaned up around the trailers, we were told to take off and get our personal belongings packed. What a job that always turned out to be ----trying to pack twice as much junk into a duffel bag as could possibly fit, even with the use of a duffel bag shoe horn. Finally, the compromise.....making a bed roll and carrying loads of junk in our pockets and supposedly light field-pack which became lots heavier than any preceding field-pack we'd ever had to struggle with.

To do or not to do? To tear down our shelter half and sleep in the open, risking the hazards of this French weather and thus being assured of being ready in the morning, with time to eat. Some of us did and some of us didn't. Early to bed, 11:30 p.m., after a last-minute snack of half the chocolate we had left to carry on our long trip. Five o'clock arriving all too soon—out of bed now and half awake stumbling around in the dark pulling our tents down, checking the time---time goes fast. Lugging our bags to the trailer, the mud and steep incline don't make things any easier. Almost---there it goes, there I go, aw, the heck with it---slightly mud caked but none the worse for it. Duffel bag and bed roll packed in the trailer. Ten minutes before roll call---can we make it? Heck, no harm in trying a mad dash for the mess tent. Luck is with us---no queue. A cup of coffee, a couple of the hot cakes with jelly, a rare treat for moving day. Three minutes to get it down---quickest mess kit was ever---and a wild run back to the trailers. Just in time!

Whew, it's going to be a hot day. Roll call...O.K. let's go. We hike down to where the trucks are formed in convoy. Pack them in, the Looie hollers...twenty-two to a truck...nine on each side. We fit like sardines in a can and four of the boys stretch out in the middle. Suddenly discovering more room down the line, the four in the middle are changed to another truck and two more take the place of the four on the floor, thus loosening up the sides so we can breathe at ease and not by the numbers. Finally, trucks begin to roll and we are off to our new home.

It was warm at first, but as the sun played hide and seek among the clouds and the rolling trucks whipped up a breeze, many of us who had not put on additional clothing were none too comfortable. We were all eyes at first and our eyes were full of dust. We rolled through town, hamlet, and village; many a mile of farmland we looked at; we moved on between hedgerows and through the cold shadows of forests. As we passed through towns, or by lonely country houses ravaged by the scythes of time and riddled with the bullets of conqueror and liberator alike, the children stood outside their homes and cheered us on, and in return we threw our rationed candy and cigarettes, the lumps of sugar from our K rations, and returned the waves and smiles until our arms were so tired we could only smile.

At 12 we stopped to grab a snack of K rations. The trucks pulled off the side of the road and we stumbled out and into the adjacent field with its apple trees and cool, clean grass. A French woman saw us and came bringing a couple of bottles of cider which went well with our otherwise dry dinner (as many of us did not make use of the lemon powder included in the dinner K rations). A smoke, an apple from the nearby trees, and once more we were on our way.

The roads were flat and sandy and we were soon covered with dust so that none of us was sad to hear that our journey's end was just around the bend on the banks of a small lake, that sounded good to us who were hot and dirty with sand. On arrival, we stopped for a break, cleaned up a bit, and pitched our pup tents in a hay field. The trailers arrived all too soon, and place was humming with activity as the boys unpacked, cleaned the trailers, set up the mail, the day-room, the administration, and the officers' tents. By chow time the evening shift was ready to resume operations and did.



The inside of a machine trailer. Euth is leaning on a tabulator. We had three, one in each machine trailer. Griffis is sitting at a key punch. There were four of these, one in each machine trailer and one in the administration trailer. Johnson is leaning on one of the three collators. In the right foreground is one of the three interpreters. Not shown are the six sorters, located two to each machine trailer.



Fougerolles du Plessis

Fougerolles du Plessis (21 August 1944)

Probably the most oft-mispronounced town name of all the MRU itinerary, with the possible exception of Soumagne, was Fougerolles du Plessis. The location was approximately in the center of the huge right flank crescent of the Falaise pocket where the Wehrmacht was desperately trying to extricate its forces from the Allied trap.

At this town, that had been bypassed and spared of destruction, there was not the customary large building that normally was sought by First Army Headquarters, and consequently various small and widely scattered buildings were used. The MRU picked a suitable field and set up the trailers laterally, camouflaging as usual. Another field, flanked by hedgerows, was used to set up our pup tents.

Our craving for fresh eggs that had been with us since first landing in England was for the most part satisfied here. ‘Des oeufs’ were plentiful and French youngsters constantly brought baskets full to our trailers in exchange for candy, “cigarettes pour Papa,” or plain cold cash. [Calvados](#) (*apple brandy*) was also fairly plentiful---and powerful. Even mixing it with grapefruit juice didn’t seem to cut down on its potency (ask Charlie O’Connell). Some of the more enterprising members managed to acquire some steaks and spuds which when cooked over open fires made excellent additions to our drab C ration diet. The mess at this stop was about 90 per cent pork roll and any formerly slight appreciation for this “tasty” dish was promptly dispelled by repetition (and in more ways than one).

Some of the best weather of the campaign was experienced here, and we took advantage of it by an occasional dip in the nearby lake.

The armies soon snapped shut the [Falaise Gap](#) and spearheads struck out towards Paris and around our back door through the Brittany Peninsula. Things were really progressing rapidly now, and with the fall of Paris our next move became imminent.



A Visit To Mont St. Michel

A Visit to [Mont St. Michel](#), France (August, 1944)

In late August of 1944 some of the members of the 32nd MRU had the opportunity to visit Mont St. Michel. This landmark, famous in French history, was located about forty-five miles from where we were stationed in Fougerolles du Plessis. While riding along and still about five miles from our destination, we hit a flat stretch of land and in the distance, rising majestically into the sky, stood Mont St. Michel. It was a beautiful sight and one, I'm sure, that all who witnessed will never forget. It seemed that we were observing something out of a picture-book of some scene in wonderland. On nearing Mont St. Michel, we could see that it stood out into the Bay of Biscay and the only entrance to it by land was a narrow road with room enough only for one car to pass in each direction.

Parking our vehicle outside the high wall of Mont St. Michel, we proceeded by foot through the entrance. Inside were narrow streets lined with souvenir shops, restaurants, and even homes. In fact, Mont St. Michel was in itself a little city set away all alone from the rest of France. Climbing up many, many stairs, we ascended almost to the top of the fort for which Mont St. Michel was famous. This fort was constructed a long time ago, about 1100 A.D. There are many stories and legends about how it was build and one that sounded plausible was that it was erected by convicts and took many years to build.

High up in the fort was a room which had a huge wooden wheel about two feet wide. It is said that this wheel was operated by convicts who turned it by simply walking the inside of the wheel on the rungs placed thereon. It was used to haul up supplies and other needs from the ground which otherwise would have had to be carried up. Inhabitants on Mont St. Michel claim also that the fort was a monastery for the monks of France and there was inside a beautiful chapel to substantiate those claims. The fort was also used as an observation tower by the Germans when they took it over from the French. We observed German markings and the year 1942 was painted under some of the German words. It was a very strategic spot and as an observation tower it must have been valuable to the Germans in spotting American and English planes crossing the channel in their raids on German installations. Inside the fort itself were countless rooms and dark chambers and it would have been very easy to lose one's self inside of them. We did not venture very far into these dark chambers because we respected the history and the legends of this famous place.

After buying various souvenirs as a memento of Mont St. Michel we departed. Riding back to camp, we again took one last look at that beautiful structure rising up into the sky and put it away in our memory book as a remembrance of France during our war days.



Le Perray

Le Perray, France (31 August 1944)

The roofs of the ancient guardhouse just topped the brick wall which surrounded the entire estate. Closing in the spacious grounds with its virgin forest from the rest of France, like a cloak on Venus, the ivy-covered wall only added mystery and charm of what lay behind. After travelling miles along the tree-shaded road which ran parallel to the wall, we finally arrived at the entrance to our new home. The gate, a huge, massive work of art in iron, was topped by the arms of the [Rothschilds](#). Inside, like a carpet of green velvet, the lawn stretched to the edge of the forest. On the right of the entrance the refreshing, cool, blue waters of a lake lapped softly at the feet of the weeping willow trees that stood at its edge. The chateau itself had been built facing the lake and, in contrast to its orderly array of Gothic spires, the remaining ruins of the once beautiful [Abbaye des Vaulxde-Cernay](#), built in 1100, stood as a reminder of the past.

The home of the 32nd was located just behind the ruins of the abbey in the shade of the forest edge. Our homes, as usual, were pup tents, and as Indian summer was just beginning we were fairly comfortable in our canvas chateaux. Water was plentiful, for a fast-running brook of cool water burred along its ancient bed of rocks a short distance from the trailers.

We remained visitors at the home of the Director of the Amiot Airplane Co. for twelve days, along with our camp followers and the Red Cross. Concerning the camp followers, it might be well to explain that they were both male and female and were mammals of the sheep species branded with an A, in insignia of First Army. Our messhall was located just a mere mile or so away in a clearing of the woods, thus giving us a naturally camouflaged messhall with tree tops as a ceiling and soft pine needles for a floor on which we squatted to eat our C rations and feed the bees.

First Army's rapid advance through Northern France and Belgium, following the lines of World War I and running parallel to our Allies, the Canadians and the British, along the coast, were factors of which we were all familiar and it was merely a matter of days before we knew it was imperative that we advance if we were to keep in contact with the troops we were servicing.



The Rothschild chateau at Le Perray, France. The members of the 32nd MRU bivouacked in pup tents in the woods at the rear.



Charleroi

Charleroi (12 September 1944)

As the rout of the German Army continued, it was inevitable that we pull stakes from Le Perry and head east once more. This time, in addition to making one of our longest moves, we left France in our wake and entered Belgium, setting up Charleroi on 12 September 1944.

Our set-up was a Belgian cavalry school that had been taken over by the Germans during their period of occupancy. Having been in pup tents since landing in Normandy, being quartered inside was something “out of this world.” A former stable served as both messhall and theater and, while it may not sound very appetizing, it wasn’t as bad as the imagination may be led to believe. It was really a pleasure when “Pluvius” was operating with a vengeance.

Having operated from stations previously that were more or less isolated from city life, we were rather surprised this time to find ourselves stationed almost in the heart of the city. Our first thought was—wonder what effect this will have on First Army’s “Off Limits” policy? The answer was published soon after our arrival. Charleroi was declared “On Limits”...what a break! However, twenty-four hours later and back in stride again, everything outside the vicinity of one block of our installation was declared “Off Limits.”

Charleroi was typical of that which we later came to associate with Belgium, progressive and rather modern compared to what we had viewed so far. It was an industrial enter, hummed with activity, and reminded one of our American cities. The people themselves were quite friendly but still rather dazed from the appearance of the American army not too many days earlier. The stockade close by was teeming with collaborators jailed after the liberation, and just as many families or friends were outside eagerly awaiting any news they could obtain...evidently the grapevine is a universal service.

As in any average city, there seemed to be two sides of Charleroi, the higher social class and the honky-tonk district. The higher class night clubs compared very favorably with those back home and those who missed that sort of life were able once again almost to have that “civilian feeling.” The honky-tonks got quite a play from our boys for there was plenty of beer, babes, and music. Practically every other store along the street contained a bar, a small dance floor, and generally, a three-piece orchestra. For most of us, it was the first taste of beer since arriving on the continent and it really hit the spot. Needless to say, the MRU boys made themselves at home—an aftermath of their training at Governors Island.

Being stationed in Charleroi was really a break in the rather drab social existence we had been experiencing, and for that reason we regretted having to leave. However, “Business before pleasure,” and it wasn’t long before we were headed eastward again.



If this isn't the cavalry post at Charleroi, Belgium, where we lived, it looks just like it. Even the street in front slopes the right way.



Soumagne

Soumagne, Belgium (23 September 1944)

We arrived in Soumagne at 1500 hours on the afternoon of the 23rd of September. We were all, of course, interested in the surroundings of what was to be our new home for a while. There was a huge chateau, surrounded by a moat filled with stagnant water. The chateau [Wegimont](#) had previously been used by the Master Race as a production plant for producing frauleins and future members of the Wehrmacht, Volksturm, SS troops, Luftwaffe, etc. Though to us the chateau was a huge place, it was soon fully occupied with Hq, Hq Co, Special Troops, Signal Co, and other assigned or attached units of the First Army.

A small road bordered with trees, just across the moat, on one side of the chateau, was the spot selected for our trailers and it wasn't long before we were set up for business. Adjacent to the trailers was an oat field and on the fringe of the outer edge, across from the trailers, under lovely shade trees and excellent camouflage, we set up our pup tents. Yes, this was our home for sixty-eight definitely unforgettable days of our G.I. life. Most of the fellows improved their chateaus by adding side walls which allowed them to put their duffel bags inside the tents and thus giving many of them dry clothes instead of damp ones for a change.

It was here, also, that the camera fiends finally started to print their own pictures and today nearly the whole unit is familiar with processing a roll of film. It took M.R. Johns to really pioneer and set up our first darkroom.

Our messhall was a combination of several tents placed together, housing tables and chairs and, later on, even lights, so we could see what were eating but, as some of the fellows remarked, "Maybe it would have been better if we had continued eating in the dark." Though we must admit after two weeks of C rations – fried, boiled, patty-caked, and how not, our Thanksgiving dinner of turkey with all the trimmings was a real feast and in the days that followed many of us just used our imagination to help get the pork sausage down. This open-air diner of ours was located just across a few fields and a couple of lakes, about a half mile from our billets as a fish swims. We waded through the river of mud-that was supposed to be a road-three times a day in almost continuous rain which made even the fields soggy, slippery, and rough to walk through.

It was during this period that the Strength Trailer, better known to most of us as "Penn's diner," had its maximum flow of customers and rarely was the coffee pot off the stove-morning, noon, or night – and rank or ownership of supplies meant little to the boys. It was share and share alike when it came to the Nescafe and other soluble coffees the boys got from home, the Red Cross, or by other means too obvious to the G.I. to be mentioned. Joe Sinisi and the cooks got along fine and so we had an ample supply of sugar and cream.

There was a lovely swimming pool which we did not get to take advantage of during our visit due to the cold weather, but it was lovely to look at after the duty company cleaned it out. We did have quite a surprise during our stay. There were actually a couple of days without any rain and on one of them the sun came out and thermometer actually soared to above 40 degrees and brought back memories of the dear old South, U.S.A.

About a month after we arrived at Soumagne, some of the fellows made a trip to Luxemburg and brought back some double decker bunks formerly used by the Jerries and we started putting up some large wall tents and equipping them with double decker bunks. But still some of the fellows just could not see their way clear to leaving their pup tent chateaux for the luxurious large wall tents which made things that much less congested all around.

It was here also that, due to a number of things – mainly, our sleeping on the wet ground, the lack of galoshes and coats at first, and the rain and cold – that most of the unit suffered with severe colds and a few contracted minor cases of trench foot. Just about a week before we left, Rudy Davis was brought down with meningitis and many an anxious hour of worry was experienced by all until news finally reached us of his condition (he had been taken to the hospital in an ambulance while he was still unconscious). The whole unit was dosed with pills and the medics dubbed us the pill eaters as a result of the number we ate to protect ourselves from the dreaded meningitis.

Some of the lonely hours were made bright by roasting chestnuts which were plentiful around our area. Then there were the radio programs produced, acted, and listened to by the boys. Our “Little Soldier” Sears, Johnny Armenia, and that handsome yodeling hillbilly from Tennessee, Claude Moody, with his mountaineers, made the imaginary microphone fairly vibrate with sweet music, and the actual audience obligingly swooned at appropriate intervals. Yes, sir, those were the days! Bill Hoffman on the mouth organ with Johns and Johnson rounding out the chorus under the skillful guidance of Griffis, the evening shift supervisor and instigator of more than one method of killing boredom, made the time pass pleasantly.

The Luftwaffe paid us a visit and with their usual accuracy managed to kill a few cattle in the adjacent field to our bivouac area, with a shower of anti-personnel bombs.

Perhaps the one thing for which Soumagne will be remembered was the daily sweating out of the V-1's and V-2's, mainly the former, whose destination was Liege, just a stone's throw away from us. By day and by night they passed overhead, sometimes as low as 500 feet. Many were the times the quiet of the night was broken by the hum of V-1, then suddenly it would drop, and we would sweat it out as it made its graceful, destructive descent, seemingly straight for us. There were times at night when without warning or sound, a buzz bomb short of its original destination hit so close that our trailers shook from the vibration of the blast and we were sure the next one would pitch us into the moat.

Yes, sixty-eight days in the worst hell-hole we had yet experienced, C rations for breakfast, dinner and supper, the never-ending rain and mud, buzz bombs at regular intervals. All this combined with the sixteen and eighteen hour shifts that most of the boys were working, still failed to break their morale.

It was here that we received the battle credit award for participation in the campaign, “Western Europe,” per letter HQ ETOUSA, dated 24 August 1944, file AG 200.6 OPGA, subject: “Battle Participation Awards (Western Europe Campaign, No. 3).”

Of course, everyone was unhappy when our vacation at Soumagne ended and moving day came around again because we had all learned to love our little homes and the surroundings, but we knew that the more we moved the nearer the end of the war and sooner we could be on our way home, so there was not a tear trickling down the cheek of even one of the men as we pulled out of Soumagne and headed for another temporary pause on the road to victory.



Pup-tent row at Soumagne, Belgium. The tents, each "accommodating" two GI's, were set up on the border of the oat field and the woods. Other tents were located in the woods to the left.



Chaufontaine

Chaufontaine, Belgium (29 November 1944)

Chaufontaine, a small resort town on the road to Liege, was our next point of occupation in our drive to the east.

The town was protected on both sides by mountains which rose rather steeply from the little town nestled so snugly at its base. On one side ran a zig-zag path and a stone stairway to the summit. At the top was a small village which had been half demolished by a direct hit from a buzz bomb. The inhabitants, far from bitter, were patriotic and friendly and many a G.I. stumbled his way down the hill in a happy if not uninebriated condition in the dark hours after sunset.

On the other side, a narrow vehicle road led up the mountainside to a German pill box and flak tower and to the [World War I fort](#) Chaufontaine. From these points, too, a commanding view of the fortress city of Liege could be had.

Our billets were in the elegant roulette room of the Chaufontaine Casino, built in 1939 and closed by the German occupation immediately after its gala opening. Souvenir programs, printed for the opening and featuring Maurice Chevalier and other stars in person, were still to be found about the Casino.

Our sleeping quarters, with their modernistic murals, indirect lighting, and thick, luxurious carpets, contrasted sharply with our rough double-decker wooden bunks and straw mattresses. The huge and equally elegant room adjoining, which had been intended for floor show presentations, was turned into a messhall for Master Rear.

It was here, also, that the travelling shows, including a couple of Belgian girlie units, performed for us. And, on a number of occasions, the 299th AGF and the 104th AGF Bands played dinner music from the stage as we sat enjoying our supper in the slow, leisurely manner of civilians.

Across the little River Vesdre was the Hotel des Bains where we bathed in unexcelled luxury in sunken bathtubs in individual bathrooms. The water was naturally warm from the only natural hot springs in Belgium. Best of all, there were no cleanup details. The place was kept spotless by the Belgian bath keeps.

Along the side of the Hotel des Bains was the working apparatus of the 32nd MRU, complete with the small darkroom tent for the photography fiends, who were now as numerous as there were men in the unit.

Along the road and railroad passing Chaufontaine flowed much of the supplies and many of the men for the First U.S. Army fighting front. Thus, on 16 December, with Von Runstedt making his spectacular push and our own forces being pulled back and reformed, it was not a comfortable feeling for us squatted in the center directly in the line of the German counter-offensive.

The radio was tuned to the news broadcast all day and with anxious ears we listened for news of the German counter-attack. At five o'clock, the day shift took off for chow with the last radio bulletins re-

porting the German panzer divisions spearheading through a small town a mere thirty-five kilometers away.

The air in the messhall was tense with excitement and the constant blatter of tongues wagging away was louder than usual, as each man reported what he had heard and made his own comments on the news.

At about 1750, a sergeant from Duty Company came in and announced that everyone was to report back to his respective unit or office. At 1800 hours an actual alert was sounded.

Back at our unit, Sgt McBride gave us orders in short, terse words, ‘Rifles, ammunition, canteens, overcoats, and raincoats—on the double!’ In the meantime, Tony had pulled the cover off our 30-caliber machine gun and had set all the ammunition alongside of it to be ready for the designated squad.

It was dusk as we moved across the Vesdre River to the assembly point at the foot of the hill to await the pre-arranged move-out signal. There was a sudden silence, as, zooming over the crest of the hill like a mammoth rocket on the Fourth of July, one of Hitler’s Follies came winging toward us carrying its deadly load of havoc and destruction.

The move-out signal came shortly thereafter and we started up the hill, but before long we were all huffing, for what had appeared to be a gently slope from the trailers turned out to be rather a steep incline over some very tricky terrain, including some wet grass and slippery mud and hidden rocks.

From the military crest just above the old fort we could look down into the valley and barely make out our trailers in the dim light of the remaining day. Standing there alongside the hotel they looked like a child’s toys lying in a sand pile.

Nothing exciting happened until about 2200 hours when Bed Check Charlie came over to reconnoiter the layout and received a warm welcome from our ack ack boys who threw everything but their kitchen sink at him in their vain attempt to blow him from the skies.

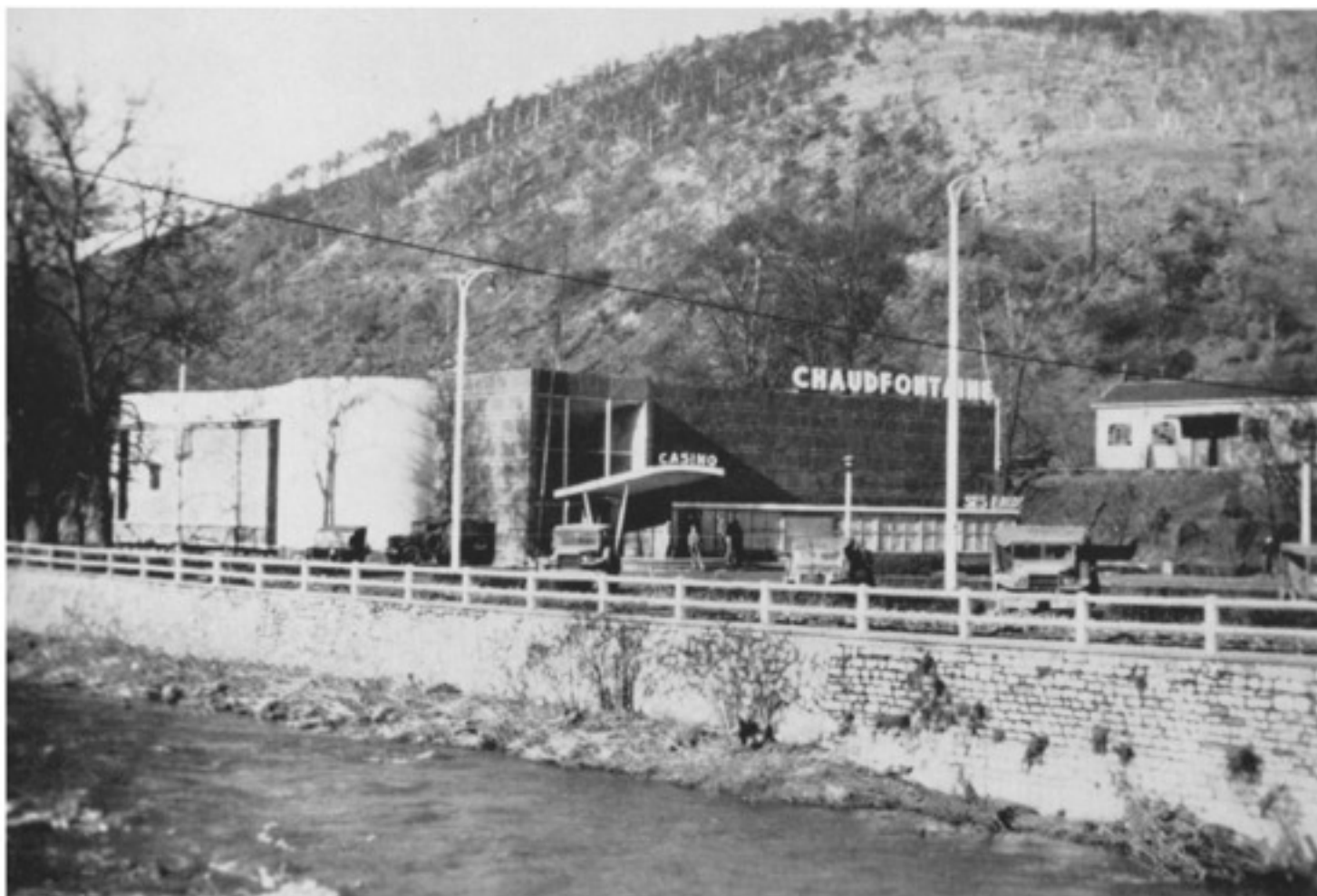
As the night closed in round us, the dampness and wind began to chill us to the bone; and though we were all wearing our overcoats and raincoats, there were few of us who were feeling very comfortable. Time lagged and seemed endless as we sweated out the continuous stream of buzz bombs and watched the sky above for signs of the enemy. In the distance, a town was burning, and the red flames seemed to shoot miles up into the atmosphere, while, just below us in the town of Liege, the dying flames from the church hit earlier in the evening seemed to be only a scar of red on the horizon.

At about four o’clock, activity was seen below in the vicinity of our billets. Those of us observing this sudden commotion were curious and excited, as the possibility of the enemy break-through reaching us was always present. Our fears were soon alleviated for word was passed along that it was just the forward echelon of the Headquarters moving in with us temporarily. Along with this news from below came some very welcome refreshments – cold sandwiches and steaming hot coffee –which we received by going in shifts to the CP, located in a pill box on the side of the hill. With the dawn came our relief –a battery to take over our guard duty—and soon we were on our way back to our billets and breakfast.

The day crew returned to work and the rest of us hit the sack, stumbling over the guys from “Master Forward” who had moved into our billets during the night and had slept in our beds and on the floor.

At noon we were all called, and the job of packing the trailers began amid the bustle of “Master Forward” units moving in to replace us. However, it was not until the morning of December 20 that our trailers and the six-by-six’s with the 32nd and the “Master Rear” men left Chaudfontaine on their first and only move to the rear. As Lord Haw Haw would have said of a similar German movement—an orderly, strategic withdrawal was made to the consternation of the enemy a mere fifteen miles away.

(We returned to Chaudfontaine on 6 February 1945 and occupied our old billets until 19 March 1945.)



The "Says you" casino at Chaudfontaine, Belgium, where the 32nd MRU slept and ate 29 November - 20 December 1944 and 6 February - 19 March 1945. The river in the foreground is the Vesdre. At the right is the railroad station.



St. Trond

St. Trond, Belgium (20 December 1944)

Our move to St. Trond on 20 December 1944, though a scant thirty-four miles to the rear, was a bitter pill to swallow. The weather was sharp and cold but the scorn of the Belgians as they reminded us that the war was in the opposite direction had us shrinking down in our seats even more than the weather warranted. However, the constant flow of replacements headed for the front were cheered on, not only by the Belgians, but also by a more realistic group of men from the 32nd.

We spent the first night with the Hq of the First U.S. Army but, due to the fact that our trailers could not be driven into the courtyard of the school where the Hq was located, we were shifted to a separate and much smaller school about a mile away. Our trailers were set up in the park that was just across the road from the school. Next to the school and just across the street from our trailers was a small café; upstairs were the billets of the officers; the downstairs became the Hq and dayroom of the 32nd MRU (unofficially, of course).

I was at St. Trond that Marlene Dietrich and Mickey Rooney paid us a much heralded visit and autographed two of our trailers.

With our first snow, we had a mystery on our hands---our canned milk was disappearing. However, it was soon discovered that the men on the midnight shift were the culprits. They were using it to make snow cream, the half - brother to ice cream. Which brings to mind the Mandell innovation. Not satisfied with making chocolate snow-cream by the canteen cup, Larry decided to try a new flavor in a fairly large quantity. So, with the use of an electric drill, two spoons, Joe's huge coffee pot, and loads of snow, cream, and two cans of precious fruit salad, he commenced. Result: plenty of ice cream for all. Alas, three guys (Mandell, Wollenberg, and Goldsmith) sent fatigues to the laundry. Michelinie helped wipe up the floor and ate most of the ice cream which, by the way, was tres bien.

Christmas and New Year's Eve was celebrated at Henry's. We had lots of good beer and cognac and the café had been closed to all but the 32nd and their guests, the MP guards of the night.

Besides Henry's, there were innumerable other cafes with their three-or-four-piece orchestras where the boys danced and drank and even threw darts, the latter very reminiscent of our English days.

A short distance away was an airfield from which [Thunderbolts](#) took off in perfect formation to dose Runstedt's troops with some hellish medicine. The Germans retaliated with buzz bombs. On one occasion, the Luftwaffe had us in a dither of excitement as they peeled off directly over our billets to strafe the airport. However, the ack ack was right on the ball and managed to knock two of the four Jerries out of the sky. Reminiscing over that day, Lt Lindabury was heard to remark that he thought he'd recognized one of the Jerry pilots. "At least, he added, condescending to our looks of scorn, "I'd recognize him if I saw him again!"

Among the things left at the school was a statute of St. Anthony which Croll insisted looked like Napoleon. However, add a German helmet and coat and even a sober soldier might ask him for a pass, heh, Johnson?

On 9 January 1945, for the first time in over six months, we closed our trailers for something other than a regular move...to receive the award of the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque. It was a cold clear day—uniform was O.D.'s—and we assembled in formation on the white, snow-covered tennis court behind Henry's. As usual, there was a SNAFU so we got a fifteen-minute break and Henry was kept busy serving the bracers. However, once more we formed and Croll and the Major took moving pictures. Nourse, Adjutant General, made fine speeches and called upon Major Summers to accept on behalf of the unit the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque. The visiting brass departed, once more the generators hummed, and work was resumed as though nothing had happened.

T Sgt McBride finally decided he'd had enough of our red tape factory and requested a transfer back to his old outfit—16th Regiment of the 1st Division. However, he did not leave us immediately.

Rumors were hot about this time that paratroops might be dropped by the Germans so Britland cleaned his carbine. Many of us saw "Rhapsody in Blue" at the Palace. Few of the fellows were missing from the Tuesday night dance that the Red Cross sponsored and Wollenberg had to defend his pig-chasing reputation when the boys found out he had found consolation in one. Dave Larkin's "Better Days are Coming" seemed most appropriate. Don't you think so, Wally?



At St. Trond Belgium: (top left) This school house made a surprisingly cozy billet for the EM of the 32nd MRU during the coldest weather experienced by them in Europe.
 (top right) Sears and Barkeley entering Henry's pub.
 (below) Chapin, Butch, and Odermatt in front of the trailers.



Duren, Germany

Duren, Germany (19 March 1945)

As we left Chaudfontaine (after our second sojourn there), we travelled to Duren, our first station inside Germany. It was a cold ride that day. Most of us were wrapped in blankets. Some used their sleeping bags. It was the first time we had travelled on a German autobahn (superhighway).

Anyway, as we travelled through Duren, we could see the rubble, ruins, and devastation caused by the terrific bombardments of our air force and field artillery. Very few buildings and homes were left standing. Some German civilians were walking around on what was left of the streets. They evidently lived in cellars.

We continued our way through the town of Duren to the outskirts. We halted at a group of buildings heavily damaged by artillery fire. This was where we were going to be stationed for the next nineteen days.

After we drove into the grounds, we found that this place used to be a German officer candidate school. We parked and set up our trailers on the parade ground. We set up the camouflage nets here. The policy of no fraternization went into effect, much to the disgust of some of our boys.

Our sleeping quarters were up on the third floor of one of the buildings. Each shift was in a separate room which made sleeping easier for each shift. It wasn't such a bad set-up. The toughest part of living up on the third floor was carrying our duffel bags and double decker beds up there.

It was here, too, that sports blossomed out. First of all, we had some good football games. Tough tackle, of course, and many cuts and bruises were obtained from the rocks on the field. Also, our baseball team went into action again under the management of Tec 5 Rozen.

Although our baseball team was good and played some good games, the most popular sport was our volley ball games. As soon as Jim Cornelius put up the net, someone was playing volleyball almost continually. Every noon, during lunch hour, and in the evenings there was always a game. Just about everyone in our unit played in a volley ball game. That is one reason why it was so popular. Our enlisted men played the officers a number of times and, although they tried hard, I don't think the officers ever beat us. Later on, a volley ball court was set up on the other side of the grounds for officers.

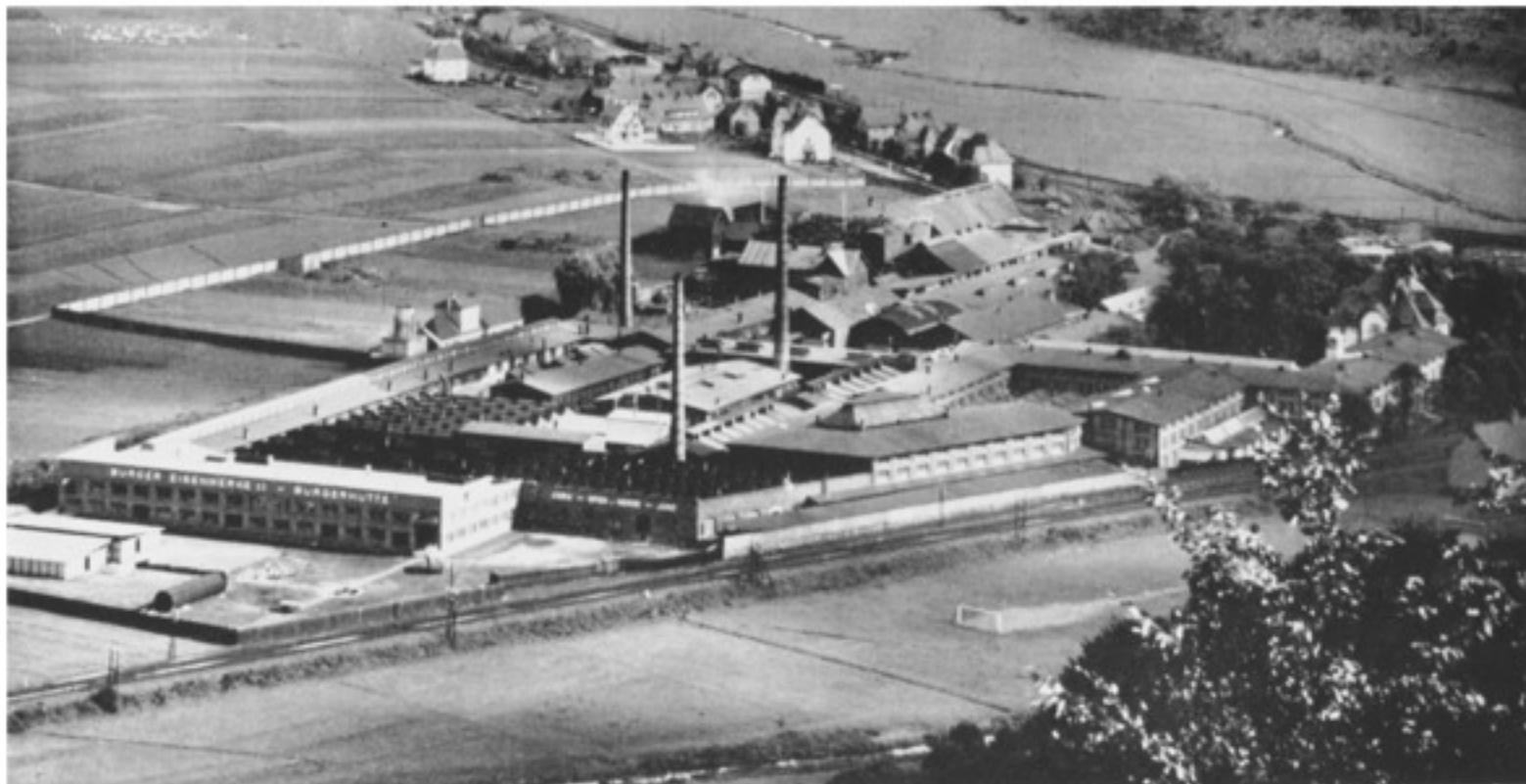
We arrived at Duren on 19 March 1945 and we left on 7 April.

So, all in all, we had a lot of fun while we were there besides getting the work out regularly. Duren wasn't such a bad place to stay. When it came time for us to move again we lugged the duffel bags and double decker beds back down again and prepared to move on to our next place.



DUREN, WHERE WE ALL "ATTENDED" OCS! Some members of the 32nd MRU playing ball in the courtyard of the shelled German officer candidate school which was our home for a time.

Burg



We lived in all sorts of places! This stove factory at Burg, Germany, 17 miles northwest of Giessen, was one of the less desirable stops. The Burger Eisenwerke had been assembling buzz bombs, too.

Burg, Germany (7 April 1945)

This was a long haul – Duren to Burg. Our armies had crossed the Rhine. The unexpected seizure of the [Remagen Bridge](#) intact by First Army’s Ninth Armored Division made crossings possible at a more rapid pace than had been previously anticipated. Fingers of Allied steel were now racing in all directions in the inner Reich. The 32nd, in the palm of the hand that controlled the First Army’s group of fingers, was coming along as rapidly as the tactical situation would allow and set up in a factory in the town of Burg.

The factory was the Burger Eisenwerke, the home of Juno stoves, and, upon further inspection, the manufacturer of component parts of our old “friend” by previous acquaintance under more violent circumstances, the V-1 flying bomb. The unit “holed up” in the third floor loft of the factory, one of the more miserable lodgings, but being used to expecting nothing much in the way of quarters, it wasn’t long before some of the boys made their “homes” comfortable, even to the extent of separate electrical lighting fixtures attached to their wooden double decker beds. By strategic deployment of bunks under our starlit roof, everyone managed to pick a spot reasonably rainproof.

Souvenir hunters were rampant, especially those mechanically minded. The factory revealed a lot of good machine tools, and only the immense bulk prevented the removal of a few automatic die-casting machines and many thousands of pounds of aluminum plate.

After a few bone-breaking games of softball on the stony rubble of Duren, our previous location, we were in good enough shape to play four league games at Burg on fields varying from good to grassy above the knees. Winning all four and about set to play a highly touted Finance team, we packed up shop once more and hit the autobahns of Central Germany.

It was at Burg that we heard of the tragic death of our Commander-in-Chief, President Roosevelt. And it was here, also, that we received the news of the link-up of the First U.S. Army and the Fifth USSR Army at Torgau.



The 32nd MRU crossing the Rhine river on a pontoon bridge



32nd MRU Sports Parade

32nd MRU Sports Parade

Our 32nd Machine Records Unit softball team won the First Army Headquarters championship for 1944 at Bristol, England. Our record at the end of the season was 11 wins and 0 losses. During the course of the schedule, a practice game was played with AG. Our CO at that time, Capt Barnett, had plenty at stake on the outcome of the game. Everything went wrong for the MRU that day. Late in the game, many runs behind, Haider, our short center fielder, made a remark that we often laugh about as we recall those games at Bristol. With runners on base, AG still at bat, and our team gone haywire, Haider yelled out, "Put her in there, Georgie boy, we're all behind you." George Nagel turned with a scowl on his face and asked, "Are you?"

We lost that game 11 to 2 and didn't get a chance to avenge that defeat until the last day of the season when we played the same AG team for the championship. We weren't very cocky during the game and many members of the team didn't think we could win. Nagel, however, was in superb form and AG batters were swinging at air for they were barely able to see a little white sphere that breezed by them a mile a minute. The final score was 2 to 0 and it clearly showed what a major part Nagel played in the victory. Our officers bet on this game also, but we had a new CO, Major Summers, and so little George Barnett never got even.

The lineup of the ball team was as follows: Nagel, pitcher; Sinisi, catcher; Griffis, first base; Hall, second base; Rozen, shortstop; Miller, third base; Haider, short center field; Goldsmith, left field; Davis, center field; and Croll, right field. Substitutes were as follows: Cuca, Odermatt, Wheeler, Salone, and Lent. Our team was to get a trophy for winning the championship, but D-Day came off just about then and we became a winner without a trophy.

When the baseball season for 1945 opened up, the 32nd was in Burg, Germany, a small village the other side of the Rhine. Our team had most of the previous year's championship club, but we did have some newcomers. Our first league game was a mighty close game that went into extra innings before we finally came out on top, 2 to 1. Our second game was much easier and Nagel was able to breeze through for an easy victory by the score of 12 to 3. The third and fourth games were also won quite handily, both being shutouts, 5 to 0 and 7 to 0. The fourth game which, because of circumstances was also our last game, was pitching masterpiece. At the end of the game, Nagel had a no-hit, no-run game, a grand climax for a great pitcher.

In league play for '44 and '45, the 32nd never tasted defeat. Our team for the unfinished 1945 season was: Nagel, pitcher; Sinis, catcher; Croll, first base; Hall, second base; Rozen, shortstop; Hogan, third base; Zito, short center; Wheeler, left field; Miller, center field; and Howard, right field. Goldsmith and Lish were substitutes. Stender was our ready and reliable scorekeeper. The members of the team were proud of their ball club and they gave to the best of their ability. The baseball team's record of 15 wins and 0 losses indicates the measure of their success. We may have never fired a rifle in Europe, but we swung a mean bat whenever we came on a ball diamond to play.



Weimar

Weimar, Germany (30 April, 1945)

With the Ruhr pocket liquidated, once again we found ourselves fairly distant from the troops we were servicing. Naturally, the time was ripe for rumors concerning a contemplated move forward and the third stool came up with the usual authentic dope, this time destination Weimar and consolidating the rear echelon with Command. We pulled out of Burg in the wee hours of the morning, 30 April 1945, and before long were coasting along on one of the German superhighways, a real novelty compared to some of the roads we had travelled on our previous moves. The distance travelled was approximately 130 miles, and everything went along smoothly, with the equipment arriving in mid-afternoon.

Headquarters had chosen a Panzer Grenadier school for their location this time. It was larger than our site at Duren, and in addition, hadn't felt the effects of Allied bombing or any action whatsoever. Our unit was set up on the parade ground, plenty of wide open space and hard ground, a break for the drivers inasmuch as the usual jockeying of the trailers was eliminated. In addition, we were located close to the messhall and billets, a break in any man's language. All told, the camp must have consisted of about twenty-five buildings, each four stories high

Sections that coordinated with others found themselves in the same building; consequently, we found ourselves in the AG building. Our quarters were on the fourth floor and consisted of one large room and two smaller ones. It was a pretty cold spot at times but, as the weather turned milder, it kind of eased the situation. The Germans had pulled out in such a hurry that they left vast quantities of stationery, supplies, and other articles too numerous to mention, that were necessary in the courses of instruction. Gradually, we had a real accumulation but, as was the case in past moves, when it came time to pack and the duffel bag couldn't be made to hold another iota, most of it was left behind.

From the Stars and Stripes and radio broadcasts, we knew that action forward of us had practically ceased and the prevalent thought in everyone's mind was, "When is VE-Day coming?" We could see through operations maps the "Super World" tottering on its last legs and knew it was only a matter of days. Finally, on 7 May 1945, from official sources, the word was passed around that the Germans had agreed to unconditional surrender and that the effective time would be 0001 9 May 1945. Somehow, or other, it didn't come as a shock to most of us for, as explained, it more or less was expected. Camp life went along in normal channels; the only variance from the regular routine was the band marching and playing throughout the area.

Next day, the radio broadcasts were followed quite closely and towards noontime it was announced that Prime Minister Churchill and President Truman would make the long-awaited announcement. The only man in the unit that was "sweating" at that time was Jackson. He had 9 May in the unit pool, and

boy! how he needed that confirmation to bolster his spirits to the exuberant point. The announcement came; we listened to the celebrations throughout the world, but being in Germany with non-fraternization hovering over our heads, we were happy but unable to do anything about it.

A few days later, with no preliminary latrine rumor, we were all assembled in the large squadroom. When the “old man” walked in we could see that something exciting was in the offing and it wasn’t long before that was verified. We were told that the Headquarters, First U.S. Army, was scheduled to leave immediately for the States – a thirty-day furlough – and then on to the Pacific. The catch was that our unit wasn’t included in the scheduled movement but Headquarters had wired for permission to have us go along. It really put all of us in a whirl. Firstly, we didn’t know whether or not we were going and, secondly, was it good or bad? Many of us paced the floor that night trying to decide the issue in our own minds but we knew that we wouldn’t have any peace of mind until we were told one way or the other. To this day, none of us know for sure how favorable or unfavorable the decision was. Maybe the answer will develop in one of the future “After War” conventions.

About the fourth day, when Major Summers announced a formation, we knew that we would have the answer. Rumor had it that we had been turned down for the voyage so none of us were too greatly shocked when told that. However, a stiff breeze would have floored all of us when the Major came out with the news that he had been transferred from the MRU to the AG section and was leaving with Headquarters. Things were really hitting us from all sides.

After we had more or less become reconciled to that and preparations were being made for the change in command, ETOUSA took a hand and made things complete. They rejected the change in assignment of Major Summers and he found himself back in the unit, face slightly red after that farewell speech of a couple of days ago, but none the worse for wear.

It was decided, after all of that, a party would be appropriate and, inasmuch as we had accumulated quite a stock of liquor, it turned out to be quite an affair. It doesn’t take much of an imagination to picture that evening. The situation can pretty well be covered by saying that German rum mixed with fruit juice has the wallop of a mule.

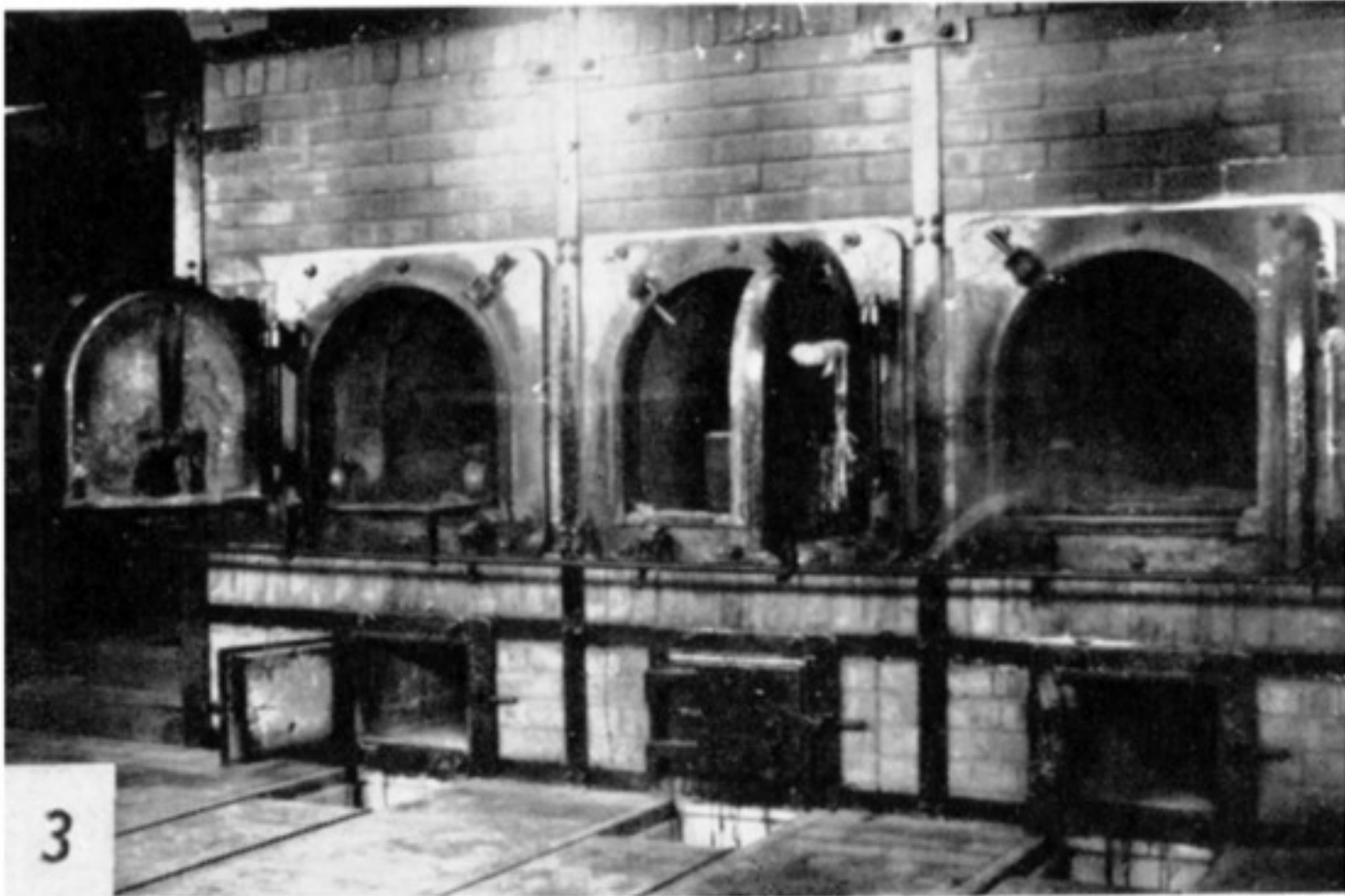
The [Buchenwald Concentration Camp](#) was located a trifle outside of Weimar and, inasmuch as all of us had read so much about the atrocities committed there, we were given an opportunity to see for ourselves that there was no exaggeration on the part of the newspaper correspondents. Although it had been cleaned up a bit from the time it was overrun, we were able to see the devilry that took place...the room where dead bodies were dumped, the hooks they were hung on, the elevator for sending the bodies up a floor to the incinerators, and, finally, the incinerators themselves. Some of the prisoners were still left—many too sick to leave and others waiting transportation to their native lands. A few of the prisoners spoke English and it was from them that we were able to gather the story of the mass murder routine hardly believable in this day and age.

Weimar will be remembered by the majority of the boys as our most easterly station in Germany, the spot at which we spent VE-Day, and for the week in which we were really going around in circles in so far as our own particular status was concerned.



(1) Buchenwald Concentration Camp, near Weimar, showing some of the inmates who were still alive and still there.

(2) Bunks at Buchenwald. Each cubbyhole held five persons, who shared one blanket for cover.



(3) The infamous Buchenwald ovens.

(4) A jet plane flown in by a German who wanted to surrender to the Americans rather than to the Russians.



Trip from Weimar

Trip from Weimar, Germany to [Le Havre](#), France, 15 to 19 May 1945

The long convoy comprising the members of the Headquarters, first Army, stretched itself across the open parade ground at the Weimar Military Academy and dwarfed beside it that of the 32nd MRU. On this morning of 15 May, what a difference in spirit prevailed within the two groups. Elated over the prospects of boarding ship at Le Havre, France, the First Army men were all smiles, with thoughts of home and a thirty-day furlough uppermost in mind; keen disappointment still cast its shadow over every member of the 32nd. Like a stepchild, we were moving under orders to the unheard-of town of Guttersloh, Germany, to join the Ninth Army...little dreaming that before the First Army would sail, we should be in operation at the Port of Embarkation, Le Havre, France.

Discussion ran high and disappointment lost its sharp edge as, speeding over the smooth autobahns toward Guttersloh, the general conclusion was reached that by having to remain in the ETO a few months longer, we might well be spared the redeployment to the Pacific Theater of Operations and be returned to the States. Now at this writing, that hope is to be a reality. We are to see what seems like the Promised Land before further active service.

Current rumors were usually a substantial part of everyday gossip among the fellows but that which we apparently all missed had to do with consequent events after reaching the Ninth Army Headquarters. Everyone there was well aware of our next move. A ripple of excitement was evident when it became known that after a day's interim, our files were to be turned over to the 47th MRU; then, with all possible speed, journeying to the coast...destination, Le Havre, France!

Only the necessary personal equipment was unloaded from the vans and the men distributed in billets for the night...some in private homes and others in a schoolhouse, all commandeered from the city and made secure by rolls of barbed-wire fence and guards, for we were in the land of non-fraternization. It was a pleasure to turn the complete set of our files to someone else and all hands were **willing** to aid, so that the journey should begin promptly at 6 a.m. on the morning of 17 May.

A bright sun gave promise of a fair day as bedrolls and packs were pushed back into the vans and the four trucks quickly filled with men ready for the trip to come. The three succeeding days were the finest kind of weather; perfect for such a journey and the late spring made the ever changing panorama a thing of beauty. The scars of the recent conflict were evident only at contested points of cities and other strategic spots. It was evident that we would pause the first night in Liege, Belgium and the second in Amiens, France before coming to rest in Le Havre.

Everyone looked forward to returning to Liege, for we had come to know the city well during the campaign months from September 1944 to March 1945. While never actually stationed in the city, we were for a long period stationed in the resort village of Chaudfontaine, only a half hour ride on the trolley-bus which was free to all servicemen. After transit quarters were found in the city and guards selected for two-hour periods of watch around the vans and trucks, the remainder of the men were permitted to "take off" for favorite haunts. For the most, it was a café well-known; but places to fill up on ice

cream took the greatest number of eyes. There was ice cream in abundance to be had...great heaps of it...deliciously cold in every hue of the rainbow.

The stop in Amiens the following night was looked forward to because it would be the first city in France, after so many months, that we would be at liberty to enjoy freely. Two days of almost constant riding over ill-kept roads was a tiring experience, so the eleven o'clock curfew was not difficult to obey. The [cathedral](#) dominating the little city was the chief source of interest. Of the many in France, this is one of the most famous and it was the first structure since our departure from New York that required a craning of the neck skyward as the eye glided up the twin towers to its lofty heights. The bandages of war, which had protected the delicate stone carving over the great doorways, had not yet been removed but that scarcely marred its beauty.

The dusty approach to the city of Le Havre on 19 May started all speculating what it would hold for us in the way of accommodations. After living for the past twelve months in every conceivable type of lodging from a four-story military barracks to pup tents, nothing could be a surprise, we felt. However, it was. In the very center of the city, the trucks drew up to a small tree-filled area containing three [Nissen huts](#), evidence of English occupation. This was to be the exclusive domain of the 32nd MRU. At last we were to have a place entirely our own.

No upstairs to climb to the billets was a treat in itself and the roomy huts afforded ample breathing space, which became "home" again as soon as sleeping cots were in place. After a series of no less than thirteen moves during the campaign, the business of setting up equipment had become routine as the assembly line of any factory and it was quickly finished here. Before the inquisitiveness of the men could be satisfied by exploring the city, the trailers had to be thoroughly G.I.d. Business before pleasure. With that, we were ready and the old question of "What next?" stood before us. We soon learned that we were to prepare the work for those men who would proceed home first and then to the CBI and at its completion lay the promise of our own return...which, at last, is just around the corner.



Paris, Visited by All but Adamson

Paris, Visited by All but Adamson

For those who know of the history and tradition of Paris for so long that they have forgotten when they first began to realize the magic in that name, the first visit to the City of Light is one of the most important and thrilling firsts of a lifetime. It must surely seem that way to all those whose genuine interest in the role of French life and culture in the history of civilization would have compelled them eventually to make the trip; the war took them there sooner than they had anticipated, and under conditions which all must earnestly hope will never be repeated. And while Paris became for them as they hoped, a living, gratifying experience, it was an experience whose pleasure was greatly sobered by the realization of the miserable plight, not only of Paris, but of all of liberated Europe, and of the great price paid by so many people so that a shining symbol of liberty for all the world could once again be free.

One saw immediately the intrinsic physical beauty of Paris, a beauty which is always worth recalling. Even when we were there, a couple of weeks after the Liberation, there was still in the atmosphere the buoyant and inexpressible feeling of joy that the crushing weight of the conqueror had at last been lifted. But it was inevitable that soon the overwhelming aspects of mere physical existence could no longer be denied. Hunger, cold, and want – want of everything, the simplest, most ridiculous, basic needs of life, became worse and worse. The average Parisian suffered, in bitter contrast to his reborn freedom, the worst winter since 1870.

It was then that the tragic pattern of Liberation was first worked out, and a great example of the inability of masses to understand one another demonstrated. In his own bitter struggle for mere existence, the Frenchman was constantly confronted with the opulence of the American soldier. For us who have never known gnawing hunger, it is extremely difficult to imagine what it can influence one to do. The fabulous Parisian black market was inevitable, inflation was rampant, and the average American soldier, although perhaps accepting a thousand francs for a carton of cigarettes one moment, the next bitterly cursed a people who were unable to see beyond their present needs, however dire, and recognize the military necessity and tragic sacrifices of Americans and Allies in their behalf. And so the enormous barrier of mutual suspicion, distrust, and dislike was built, and exists to such an unfortunate degree that it would be incomprehensibly naive to exclude it from any discussion of Paris. But we may hope and expect that all this will improve as a natural result of the gradual amelioration of conditions, and will have no more than a passing effect on the ultimate state of French-American relationships.

I have already mentioned that the physical beauty of Paris is as it always has been, refreshing and inspiring. From the [Place de l'Etoile](#) and the [Arc de Triomphe](#), down the broad [Champs Elysees](#) to the Place [de la Concorde](#), and on to the [spires of Notre Dame](#); or in the opposite direction to the [Bois de Boulogne](#), the [Eiffel Tower](#) and the [Pantheon](#), wherever one goes, the traditional landmarks of Paris seen for the first time more than fulfill all expectations of grandeur and beauty. The scars of war have not marred the outward aspects of a city built on a sweeping and magnificent scale.

And if it were possible, the glittery, superficial aspects of Parisian life have become more glamorous and gay during the years of war. There is ample and stimulating evidence that feminine Parisian beauty and chic occupy a unique position in the world. One is compelled to ask how so many gorgeous women came to be in the same city. It is possible to see beyond the surface to ersatz clothing and wooden shoes,

but the surface itself is presented with such ingenuity and charm that it is easy to think that Parisian elegance and style were never cognizant of war.

Entertainment and pleasure are madly pursued, and the diversity of joys which one can taste is incredible. It is a very short road which leads from the Opera or the Comedie-Francaise to the bare-breasted sophistication of the Folies-Bergere or the lusty life of Pigalle. Perhaps no metropolis in the world excels Paris in the great contrast at one's command; all the sensual experiences that have ever been invented on the one hand, and on the other, the highly intellectual, and perhaps aesthetic experiences of a Gertrude Stein lecture, or a Picasso exhibition, or a course of study at the Sorbonne.

Whether the traditional spirit of responsible freedom remains as an integral part of the French mind, or has been greatly altered by the momentous events of the past five years, it is still too early to determine, and too long and difficult a question to consider here. But it is certain that the pattern of French life and political activity will be a reflection of the immense social revolution of the world, only begun by this war. If Paris may be judged by her past, we may well look to that city as reflecting not only the changes and growth in French life, but as symbolizing the entire pattern of change in Western European civilization.



Finale & Postscript

Finale

The 32nd ended its mission in the ETO, as it had begun it, with a Service Force assignment. Within a few days after being assigned to the Ninth U.S. Army, we were relieved of that assignment and assigned to Normandy Base Section. Normandy Base Section, in turn, attached us to the 16th Major Port in Le Havre.

Our job with the 16th Port was to prepare necessary personnel records for all units being processed in the staging area for shipment through Le Havre P.O.E. to the States. The assignment was not a difficult one, but we again found ourselves faced with the task of pioneering in the setting up of an efficient procedure.

The most noteworthy occurrence in the unit during our stay in Le Havre was the award of the Legion of Merit to our C.O., Major Summers. The award was given on the recommendation of First Army Hq, and presented to Major Summers by Colonel Weed, Commander of the Port of Le Havre.

A number of personnel changes were made in the unit while we were in Le Havre, but not as many as we had feared would be made. Two men, Vic Lish and Vince Hogan, both having over 100 points, were sent home for discharge. We lost Forrest May and Bill Kaino to the 6925th MRU, a provisional unit servicing troops in the assembly area. Jules Steinkohl was transferred to 16th Port. To replace these men, we picked up Jack Letellier, Mike Fiore, Andrew Cathy, Jack Wusterfield, and Ray Stocklausner.

Le Havre will be remembered as the spot in the ETO where we engaged in the most sports. This was probably due to the fact that the city offered very little in the way of entertainment. Ping-pong, badminton, horseshoe pitching, darts, and volley ball were the games most frequently played.

It was in Le Havre, during the final days of our stay in the ETO, that we learned with thankful and joyous hearts of the acceptance by the Japanese Government of the surrender terms outlined at the Potsdam Conference. V-J Day was declared on August 17. At a little after two o'clock that same afternoon, the men of the 32nd climbed up the gangplank to board the liberty ship, *ss. Archbishop Lamy*. Several hours later they were easing out of Le Havre, leaving the ETO behind and heading for home.

Postscript

If Larry Mandell is the alpha of this history, I guess I am the omega. There are many others, both in and out of our old unit, who have made this book possible by their contributions of writing, pictures, money, and time. Getting this book printed has been a long, arduous, and fascinating job. I have jokingly planned to write a magazine article entitled, "You, Too, Can Publish a Book!" Please forgive any mistakes or omissions. One more thing – did we actually use such a vocabulary in 1945?

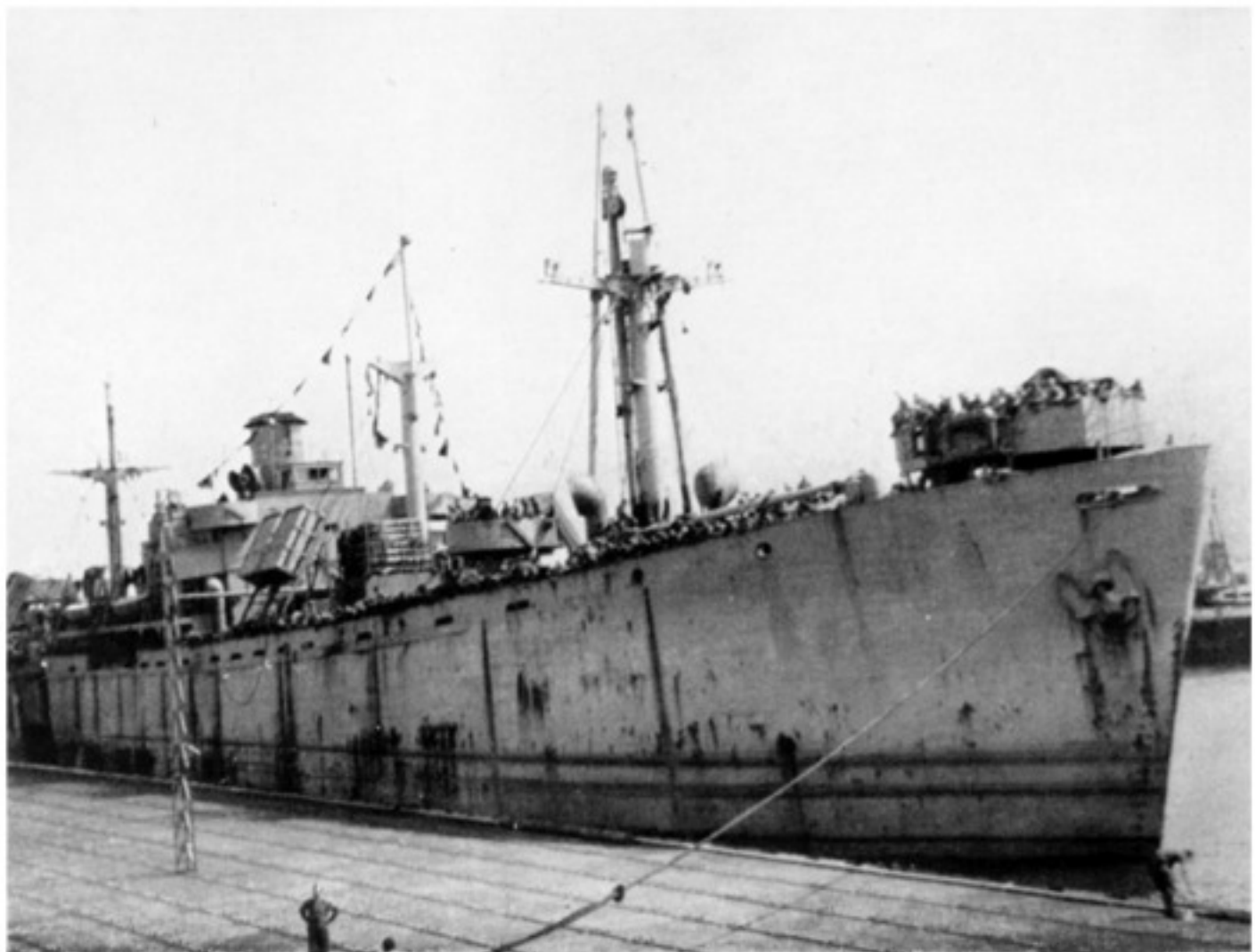
Best wishes!

April, 1952

SNIDER W. SKINNER, Nashville Tennessee



Goodbye to Le Havre! Duffel bags packed and ready to leave the Nissen huts behind.



The Archbishop Lamy, the Liberty ship which carried the 32nd MRU from Le Havre. The ship also carried the 130th General Hospital (except nurses), 32nd Ordnance Medium Maintenance Company, and 113th Bomb Disposal Squad.

Prologue

After returning from the war in 1945, Otis Wollenberg married his sweetheart, Evelyn A. Pagels, on June 15, 1946. Evelyn also served in the WAC's during World War II and was the first woman to enlist from North Tonawanda, New York. She preceded him in death in December 1994. In 1947 he went to work for Sylvania in Buffalo, New York transferring to El Paso, Texas in 1972 and retiring in 1983 as a specification writer after 36 years with the company, which is now Verizon.

While living in North Tonawanda, New York, he was a chaplain with the Volunteer Rescue Fire Company No. 5, an association he cherished dearly.

In El Paso he was a devoted church worker at Our Savior Lutheran Church. His service to the congregation included making wooden crosses for the members of the congregation. On many occasions he generously donated many items for the church. Both Evelyn and Otis are interred at Fort Bliss National Cemetery, Texas.



Evelyn A. Pagels, circa 1940's