



517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

MailCall No. 2212

May 4, 2014

*517th Parachute Infantry Regiment
460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion
596th Parachute Combat Engineer Company*

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Charlie Casey's Battleship

RE: **Lt. Charles D. Casey**, I Company

Dear Bob, This is wonderful news for me too!!! My family certainly has pictures of Charlie in his civilian life. There is certainly a picture of him (official military picture) at the Fall River, Massachusetts, Maritime Museum.

Charlie was a real American Hero.

Why is he recognized at a Maritime Museum?? I am one of the last people to know.

He was significantly affected after one of his jumps. When recuperating he got assigned to an American Prisoner of War Camp for German's (I think it was in Belgium???). When he was there he oversaw recreational activities of the German POW's. He asked them about the German Battleship Tirpitz. Everyone knew about the Bismarck, but there was great fear about the Tirpitz. It was a sister ship of the Bismarck and after outfitting and with enhancements it was bigger - tonnage and firepower. He commissioned (I should say assigned) some of the German's under his watch to build the Tirpitz.

They asked for drafting paper and pencils and drafting tools. Charlie did the best he could. The German POW's vanished for two months once supplies were found. Upon emerging from their intense planning sessions they then asked to meet with Charlie. He granted them an audience. The POW's reported to him they had done much work with the blueprints but said they were at an impasse. Detail drawings would require further direction because they were at the point where they were working on plumbing details and if it was his desire to have American plumbing over German plumbing?

He was shocked. The POW's thought that they had been impressed to build the Tirpitz for their captors. I am not kidding you Bob. At this point Germany was a beaten nation. None of these POW's knew their fate.



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After the meeting they asked for permission to find materials to build a model. He granted them permission to forage for any materials they could find outside the camp. They found a balsa wood glider wing (remember many troops came in via glider) and they used it for the hull. With sea ration cans and the eyes of their shoes (every eye from their shoes) they built a model of the Tirpitz. The deck planking is from glued wooden match sticks. Charlie tried to donate it to the US Navel (at any site the Navy might approve - the Naval Academy etc.) they were snobs. The model was not a scale model. The model today is in Fall River Mass. It is/was a real working model - it has electric motors. All the German POW's signed the interior of the hull before the bridge components and deck were attached (prior to completion). I would love to know whether any of the POW's are still alive - I am sure a family member would love to see this model. This model ship and two others (one of the others is also at the Museum - Charlie's sister gave the other model built by the POW's to a family friend) were put in four coffins (Tirpitz required two - one for hull and one for the deck and bridges) and shipped to Providence, RI. So no one could know what then were he gave them names of Streets and neighborhoods he had grown up near in the City of Providence or areas of Providence. I remember one of the German ships was the Mount Pleasant - that was the neighborhood he and my father grew up in.

His sister left me some wooden bowls made by the German POW's - quite amazing. All have Airborne 517th patches and symbols on them. The most impressive item is a pencil sketch (Charlie had it framed when the other items came to Providence). The sketch was done with what Charlie said was a 3 inch pencil and razor blade on a paper bag. I have it. He said the POW did it by memory or from his state of his mind. It is a house tittering on a cliff. It is done in such detail you would think it were a B&W photo. God Bless,

Brian McNamee
Quincy MA

German battleship *Tirpitz*

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



Tirpitz was the second of two [Bismarck-class battleships](#) built for the German [Kriegsmarine](#) (War Navy) during World War II. Named after Grand Admiral [Alfred von Tirpitz](#), the architect of the [Kaiserliche Marine](#) (Imperial Navy), the ship was laid down at the [Kriegsmarinewerft Wilhelmshaven](#) in November 1936 and her [hull](#) was launched two and a half years later. Work was completed in February 1941, when she was commissioned into the German fleet. Like her sister ship [Bismarck](#), *Tirpitz* was armed with a main battery of eight 38-centimeter (15 in) guns in four twin turrets. After a series of wartime modifications she was 2,000 metric tons (2,000 long tons; 2,200 short tons) heavier than *Bismarck*, making her the heaviest battleship ever built by a European Navy.^[3]



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After completing [sea trials](#) in early 1941, *Tirpitz* briefly served as the centerpiece of the Baltic Fleet, which was intended to prevent a possible break-out attempt by the [Soviet Baltic Fleet](#). In early 1942, the ship sailed to Norway to act as a deterrent against an Allied invasion. While stationed in Norway, *Tirpitz* was also intended to be used to intercept Allied convoys to the Soviet Union, and two such missions were attempted in 1942. *Tirpitz* acted as a [fleet in being](#), forcing the British [Royal Navy](#) to retain significant naval forces in the area to contain the battleship.^[4]

In September 1943, *Tirpitz*, along with the battleship [Scharnhorst](#), bombarded Allied positions on the island of [Spitzbergen](#), the only time the ship used her main battery in combat. Shortly thereafter, the ship was damaged in [an attack by British mini-submarines](#) and subsequently subjected to a series of large-scale air raids. On 12 November 1944, British [Lancaster bombers](#) equipped with 12,000-pound (5,400 kg) "[Tallboy](#)" bombs destroyed the ship; two direct hits and a near miss caused the ship to [capsize](#) rapidly. A deck fire spread to the ammunition magazine for one of the main battery turrets, which caused a large explosion. Figures for the number of men killed in the attack range from 950 to 1,204. Between 1948 and 1957 the wreck was broken up by a joint Norwegian and German salvage operation.

Bob, I am a busy guy, but I do not want to cheat history on **Charlie Casey** and the 517th. I shared with you some information that is only known to two or three people. Here is a link to the picture of the *Tirpitz* at the Museum in Fall River Massachusetts. I hope you enjoy.

Best wishes,

Brian McNamee





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Hello Ron and Bob,

I contacted the Marine Museum in Fall River Massachusetts this past Wednesday 4/30/14. I left a message for the curator.

Ironically on the day I contacted the Museum they rotated to their storage area the Battleship Turpitz **Charlie Casey** had German POW's build which his sister donated to the Museum after his death (I learned the ship was moved today when the Museum returned my call). The ship model was moved after nearly 20 years on the main floor of the Museum. I am still shaking my head trying to comprehend what the odds were of my calling on the very day the ship model was being moved.

Today, Friday, I received a call from an assistant to the curator. Because I had left a message on Wednesday he knew my inquiry regarded Charlie. I sent you a picture earlier of the model Turpitz. If you could see closely inside the case there was a picture of Charlie with the ship before he shipped it to US. The gentleman who called me had opened the case and had the picture in hand. He is going to make a copy and I asked him for the dedication program when Charlie's articles were donated to the Museum. He promised to look for other material they might have on file. I will contact you when I have whatever I can get in hand. At some point I will get your mailing address.

Best wishes, Brian

Excellent. The picture of Charlie is the one thing we've been missing, and I'll take any other info.

Too bad they're moving the unit to storage. Not sure when I'll get to Fall River, but next time I'm in that area I'll be sure to check in. (I live north of Boston.)

You didn't hear back anything from **Ronald Hagen**, did you? He contacted us just this past December, so I was hoping that he would answer that email.

Anything you can scan in or photo, I can take via email. Contact me for my home address if you need to send any papers.

Bob Barrett

Hi Bob, yes I did hear from Ron. He sent me a picture of some of the articles (dog tags, etc.) that belonged to Charlie. I do not know how he got them. I think he is traveling at this time, but I am in touch and will share with the both of you what I get from the Museum.

Regards, Brian



MailCall News

Bob, Saw this in the paper in the town I live in this morning.

Mimsey (Boyle Kelly)

Might as well jump: WWII vet to celebrate 90th by skydiving

By Paul Post, *The Saratogian* Tuesday, April 29, 2014



In this May 30, 2013, photo, Leo Dean rides the Screamin' Eagle at The Great Escape in Queensbury. On Saturday, weather-permitting, Dean will celebrate his 90th birthday by jumping out of an airplane. SARATOGIAN FILE PHOTO

FORT ANN >> **Leo Dean** took up skydiving at 75, when some people that age have resigned themselves to a rocking chair.

This Saturday, weather-permitting, the World War II veteran will celebrate his 90th birthday by making his 162nd jump in Fort Ann, and he's looking for other daredevils to join him.

While a relative newcomer to the sport of skydiving, Dean is no stranger to jumping out of airplanes. During the war, he belonged to the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team that suffered heavy casualties during the invasion of Southern France, and later fought with ground forces in the Battle of the Bulge.

"My cardiologist asked me, 'Are you still skydiving?' I told him, 'It's better than the pills you give me.' It keeps my adrenaline pumped up," Dean said, laughing.

Nothing much seems to stop him.

Renee Farley, a close family friend, said she was lounging on a beach in Jamaica one day when a parasailer drifted by, waving at her. Sure enough, it was Dean.

Last spring, the Albany resident was a special guest at The Great Escape theme park, where he helped christen the Screamin' Eagles, a new thrill ride.

Saturday's planned outing, led by Adirondack Skydiving Adventures, is obviously a bit riskier — and higher off the ground. In deference to his late wife Helen's wishes, Dean gave up parachuting for most of his adult life. After she passed away, he began having second thoughts.

"I wondered if I still had the nerve to step out the door of a plane," Dean said. "When I got up there, I said, 'What the heck am I doing here?'"

Several friends have already agreed to jump with him on Saturday. However, at least two more are needed. If eight others take part, Dean will be allowed to jump for free.



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“The best gift we could give our hero and friend is to share this special day with him,” Farley said. “An even better gift would be to jump with him.”

Dean said he wrote to former president, World War II veteran and parachutist George H. Bush, inviting him to go along on his birthday adventure. Bush marked his 75th, 80th and 85th birthdays with parachute jumps.

“He wrote back and said, ‘Sure, if Barbara lets me,’” Dean said.

Dean likes to kid about his skydiving pursuits, but turns serious when reflecting about his wartime service.

“Even when I was a little kid, I wanted to be a soldier,” he said. “I went to Christian Brothers Academy, a Junior ROTC (Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) school. In my senior year, I was cadet captain and company commander.”

As a teen, in the 1930s, he went to month-long Citizens’ Military Training Camps, a summer program held each year from 1921-40 that gave young men basic military training. But unlike the National Guard and Reserves, there was no obligation to call-up for active duty. One of the largest camps was near Plattsburgh.

Dean faked his age so he could join the program early.

“I went to my first one in 1939,” he said. “At 15, I was firing machine guns over Lake Champlain.”

Five years later, however, Dean was fighting an enemy that shot back. He got his first taste of combat north of Rome, in the summer of 1944. On Aug. 15, his 517th parachute team left Italy and crossed the Mediterranean for a night-time jump into Southern France.

Although overshadowed in history by D-Day, two months earlier, this highly successful invasion was critical to the war’s outcome. Working in concert with the 3rd, 36th and 45th Infantry Divisions, Dean’s airborne group began liberating one small French town after another, at great cost in American lives.

He’s already purchased airline tickets to return back there this Aug. 15 for solemn memorial services at a U.S. military cemetery. He’s been there each of the past 10 years.

Dean said each town that was liberated still holds parades, in which he’s participated, and ceremonies to mark the date of their freedom from Nazi control.

“Those French people on the Riviera are really very good,” he said.

The combat lasted 90 days until November as Dean’s outfit pushed German forces into northern Italy. The Allied thrust also drove northward in France.

A month later, he was preparing for a parachute the next spring into Germany, when Hitler counter-attacked with the Battle of the Bulge. Dean was quickly transferred north and spent the winter of 1944-45 in northern France and Belgium.

“I almost froze to death up there,” he said. “What a contrast from the French Riviera. The Bulge started in mid-December. I never got pulled out of line until the first week of February.”

After Germany surrendered in May, fighting still raged in the Pacific against Japan. That summer, Dean was ordered back to the U.S., expecting to be sent to Alaska to prepare for an invasion of northern Japan. However, two days before his troop ship reached New York, he learned that Japan had surrendered, too, following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“I lucked out on that one,” Dean said.



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Coming home, he went to Siena College, became a certified public accountant and had a long career in the insurance business. Never one to stay idle, his latest job is with Norvest Financial Services in Latham.

"I didn't say I go to work," he said. "I said I go to the office and I take long lunch hours."

Dean understands why most people don't care to take part in Saturday's skydiving celebration. However, anyone who shows up can enjoy a champagne toast afterward. Adirondack Skydiving Adventures is located at 10913 Route 149 in Fort Ann, 9.3 miles east of Route 9.

Dean's jump is scheduled for 9:30 a.m.

Even those who don't make it can still help him.

"Pray for good weather," he said, smiling.

From: <http://www.saratogian.com/general-news/20140429/might-as-well-jump-wwii-vet-to-celebrate-90th-by-skydiving>

Bob:

Here are some photos. I have never seen most of them. We sometimes forget how terrible the war in the Pacific really was.

Merle W. Mc Morrow

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2010/03/18/captured-blog-the-pacific-and-adjacent-theaters/#more-1547>

To: **Howard Hensleigh**

Sir,

Somehow I got a message over the linked in network that had your name attached. Amazingly it was within days of my viewing the two part history of the 517th on U Tube. I wasn't even certain it was the correct Howard Hensleigh but with the Menlo Park address, couldn't risk it and so responded. Another of the coincidences / mysteries that seem to be sprinkled into this life, I guess.

At any rate this follow up "action report" is long overdue.

Dad (**Frank Fenton**, HQ/3) passed 9 April 2003. At that time I was assigned to Naval Special Warfare Development Group (2001 to 2006) and retired from the Navy from that unit. A top shelf group of guys not unlike the 517th, I'll bet.

Was able to spend several, nearly uninterrupted, months on leave with Dad until February 2003 when I received orders for deployment with a task force headed for Iraq just prior to things starting up there. Talked it over with Dad and I said given the circumstances I could likely get those orders changed. His words were "no you won't; when they call you; you go. That's what we do". Clearly the 517th to the end.

I'll never forget the ride down that drive way and the trip back to Dam Neck VA as I knew I wouldn't see him again, in this world.



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Word came to me in Iraq April 8th his condition was critical and shortly thereafter that he'd passed. I went to a spot to be by myself for awhile and realized I was at the same location in that desert that we'd had a service for 5 rangers we'd lost a few days earlier. All of them in their 20s with wives, children & mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. Hundreds that would never see them again. I realized I was so fortunate to have had such a man by my side for 79 years. I also thought of the many friends that I'm sure you both shared that were taken so young so many years before their time.

I can't tell you how much I appreciated your sharing your memories of the 517th and Dad. The bonds, lives and character you guys have passed remain a hard act to follow. Thank You for everything you've given thank you for ceaselessly continuing.

Best to you and yours,

Les Fenton
CDR USN Retired

Dear Les,

In the attack across the tracks on D plus one in the south end of les Arcs, France, your father probably saved my life. He was in my machine gun section in the 3rd Bn. Hq. Company of the 517th. He carried a BAR as his personal weapon. The BAR, an excellent weapon, is much heavier than the carbine and M1, which increased his load along with our heavy machine guns, ammo and personal gear. All this went up and down the mountains of Italy, Southern France and the Bulge.

We were to attack and take the south end of les Arcs over the multiple line rail road tracks and rout the Germans who held good fields of fire and buildings on the other side. I was one of the few who made it over in a hail of enemy fire. The rest of the Bn. had the good sense to realize that there was a better way to do it. The other two who made it across the tracks were cut down by enemy fire. I decided after several near misses that my place was on the other side of the tracks leading my MG section. The enemy in a house fired at me as I crossed, but your father with his BAR and **Zawicci** with his bazooka disturbed their accuracy. We found an underpass for drainage down to the right and the entire Bn. went through it to flank the Germans and take the south end of les Arcs.

You are to be commended on your respect and loyalty to your father. He was a good man. I am sure he brought you up properly. Most of the kids thought their 517th fathers were a little strict. Although I did not see him at any of the reunions I attended, I did get his phone number and we had a long chat several years ago. I could tell that he lived a good constructive life after his 517th service.

Congratulations to you on your Navy service and retirement. Let's keep in touch.

Howard Hensleigh

I'm so happy I got to the intended, **Howard Hensleigh** and that you're "CHARGING and Choosing the Best Way Across The Tracks". This technology is amazing sometimes for the good and sometimes I think out of control. Somehow apparently, by its own devices, a couple of days ago I received "out of the blue" an email asking if I wanted to connect with **Howard Hensleigh** on Linked In.



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I responded because I didn't want to risk missing a connect with you. At any rate thanks to "whatever, whomever" we connected again. Of course, I think of Dad often and not infrequently, more and more it seems, the image that comes to mind is Dad as he was as a younger man. Probably has something to do with my own reflection as I look in the mirror at an older fellow looking back at me and thinking that might change. I still get a "hey Frank" from some of the "other finely matured characters" in the grocery store.

Dad wasn't much for details of his military time, at least to his sons (my younger brother Jeff is 60 and lives 10 miles away and will be here this afternoon for burgers). The more I learn the more I'm amazed at similarities of the choices we made and experiences we've had.

I went to Benning for Jump school in 1967 and was surprised to be called out as one of 4 or 5 during the jump wings ceremony as a second generation paratrooper. I had no idea they kept those kind of records. I think Dad did get a charge out of that. 1967-70 I was Army enlisted as a Special Forces medic and went through SF combat swimmer school at Fleming Key in Key West Florida. I got out in 1970 (times then were like now, everyone thought we were over wars, wish that we're so but obviously it isn't). Went to undergrad and medical school and residency and then amazing, joined the Navy and spent most of my career with Naval Special Warfare. Unbelievably 4 years of that was at the University of Penn that ended in a PhD. The reason for that is a longer story for another time but my mentor there was Christian Lambertsen MD (former Army Major - OSS Special Detachment 101 underwater operations 1942-45) who had invented the diving rig we used in the Army SF combat swimmer course, the Emerson-Lambertsen rebreather.

Sending you a video that has the Cabin we live in that was Dad's dream for retirement. He retired at 78 and we hadn't started building by the time he was diagnosed but he got to be in it from Thanksgiving Nov. 2002 until 9 April 2003. Jeff and I were both with him for most of that time, Jeff right to the end when I went to Iraq. We had firing lanes cut and his 300 savage locked and loaded and by his wheel chair for deer season but the deer proved to be better hunters than we were that year. Heaven help us if we'd have found a BAR. I have a box full of BAR manuals Dad brought home with him, apparently he took that weapon quite seriously.

Well enough of all of that for now. It's great to be in contact again, all the best to you and yours, trusting this finds you "well and "reloading".

Best

Les



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Dear **Patricia & Roland**,

It is my pleasure to make your acquaintance. My father was **George A. Sullivan, Co A, 1st Bn** of the 517th.

As I mentioned to Bob, there is a possibility that my wife Kathy and I will be in Europe in October. If the timing works out, we would like to attend the activities in Sospel.

While it may be too early to know the details of the ceremonies, if you just know the dates and could send that to me, it would be most helpful.

Merci Beaucoup!

Roger Sullivan

Dear Roger,

it will be a pleasure to welcome you in Sospel.

for the moment it's too early, as you write, to know the details but the ceremonies will be during 2 days **26 and 27th of october 2014.**

More a s a p.....

Maybe you don't know but ashes of **Major Fraser** are on our property, dispersed by his daughter in 2009.....

Patricia and Roland

Bob: your kindness and helpfulness to those who contact you looking for news about their family members who might have been in the 517th as in this week's Mail Call is exemplary. Thank you for doing that and for sharing your correspondence with the families. Their delight and pleasure of finding the treasure trove that you manage to provide always makes my day.

Also enjoyed reading **Howard Hensleigh's** Bronze Star citation -- what a special treat it was to visit with him in California -- a hero of the first order among his many talents and gifts.

Thank you also for the piece on **Dunaway** and for reprinting **William Houston's** accounts -- reading this segment made me flash back to standing next to Dad while watching the re-enactors jump out near Dulles at the D.C. national reunion. Very special memories.

Pat Seitz and Alan Greer



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Administrivia

- If you miss any MailCalls, they are all available online at <http://www.517prct.org/mailcall/>

At any time, if you

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- At any time, if you want to be added or removed from the MailCall list, just let me know, or just click on the unsubscribe link on the email.
- Send any news, stories, or feedback to: MailCall@517prct.org
- If you send me email that you do not want included in MailCall, just label it as FYEO.
- I now understand how Ben could get confused about what he already posted and what he didn't. If I miss something, please just send it again.
- Donations for any programs involving the 517th should be sent to our new Association Treasurer: Identify the purpose of any donation (Annual Donations, In Memory of... etc.) and make all checks payable to:

517 PRCT Association, Inc.
c/o Joanne Barrett
70 Pleasant Street
Cohasset, MA 02025

Army Life, as told by PFC William B. Houston (Part 4)

Another chapter from **William Houston's** biography are on the following pages.

This chapter covers "**Back at Camp MacKall**" from **September 1943 to February 1944.**

Radio commentator Walter Winchell devoted part of his September 18th broadcast to the men of Camp Mackall and even mentioned the camp by name. The text of the commentary was far from flattering, he said that we worked harder and longer, had less recreation and had more A.W.O.L.s than any other camp in the United States.

Next week: Tennessee Maneuvers

BACK AT CAMP MACKALL

We returned to Camp Mackall on September 19, 1943 and, during the first week after our return, we were ordered to turn in our leggings which had been replaced by the jump boots issued at Benning. From then on we wore our pants bloused over our boots, paratrooper style, even when in class A uniform. On the opposite side of the street which lead from our barracks to the supply room were the quarters of the 625th Glider Artillery. So, on the way to the supply room, we tossed our leggings into the 625th glider barracks to advertise that we were now paratroopers and would no longer be wearing leggings. This act resulted in everybody being restricted to the battery area for the week-end and the threat of a statement of charges for those who could not produce and turn in a pair of leggings - a threat that was never carried out.

Radio commentator Walter Winchell devoted part of his September 18th broadcast to the men of Camp Mackall and even mentioned the camp by name. The text of the commentary was far from flattering, he said that we worked harder and longer, had less recreation and had more A.W.O.L.s than any other camp in the United States.

We were awarded our wings on the 20th of September. My plan was to take the G.I. issued wings home on my next furlough and save them. It was almost a sin to polish or shine a pair of wings since this made them look new and fresh thereby leading people to think the wearer is a rookie. This is the last thing a paratrooper wants to be thought as. Much the same goes for the boots. The boots, of course, always wore a high shine but at the same time should have a well used look. To achieve this goal most of the fellows put alcohol or lighter fluid on their boots, then lit the fluid on fire, to produce a darker, older and a more used appearance.

The only bright part of the day was when we got our wings. It had started to rain before we got up in the morning and the rain was still coming down pretty hard as I wrote a letter home at 2130. I had a math class that evening and the rain continued throughout the night. The next two evenings I had two more math sessions so by now I was tired of both rain and math. It seems that the army was having a problem pumping their math into me but I guess it worked out all right - I was not dropped from the course.

I was still looking forward to getting my radio and to a furlough. While I waited the second battalion of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment took a different approach to the furlough problem. When they did not get their furloughs when they thought they should the entire battalion went A.W.O.L. As soon as they left camp the commanding officer cut orders giving every man a furlough. This covered the commanding officer as well as the men. We were issued steel helmets on September 27th. At jump school we wore steel helmets but they were not our own. In fact we were the first complete outfit to make our qualifying jumps while wearing the regulation airborne helmet, some individuals had worn the helmets but not an entire unit. Those before us who did not wear the steel helmets wore standard leather football helmets.

On September 28th we went to Fort Bragg to fire our howitzers. The gun crews faced the threat of having to pull the howitzers by hand, about forty miles. I was fortunate, I only had to carry an aiming circle which, along with my personal things, made about a thirty-two pound load. As luck would have it we only had to walk a few miles before trucks came along and picked us up. The same was true of the return trip to Mackall.

At Bragg we bivouacked so it was difficult to write. It was at this time that I discovered why jeeps have flat hoods - it is so the hood can be used as a desk. This may not

be the true reason but the hoods do make excellent desks or tables while out in the field. At times they even served as an altar for Mass.

I closed the month by working K.P. until 2215 cleaning field stoves. It seemed as though I got gigged for not having my flags for a visual signaling class. You can bet your life that I will have them next time, and every time thereafter!

We were issued "clothes lines" on the first day of October. The "clothes lines" were thirty foot pieces of rope which looked like an ordinary clothes line but was about three times the diameter of the regular line. Its purpose was to be used to lower yourself to the ground if you should be unfortunate enough to land high in a tree. With this rope you could easily lower yourself down from a sixty foot tree by spilling out your reserve which is about thirty feet, sliding down it and tying your clothes line on to the reserve then sliding down it.

On October 1, 1943 I became \$50.00 richer each month - that was the first time we drew our jump pay.

On the first Sunday of October I tried to catch up on some rest and on a few letters. Most of the battery was in town and A.W.O.L. They had forged passes and that Sunday morning they were reported to be "In church".

Karl, Andersen, Ping and Fritz had returned from Fort Fisher where they spent several weeks taking anti-aircraft training with the .50 caliber machine-guns. They fired out over the ocean at targets towed by planes. Our guys did clash with the anti-aircraft men because the anti-aircraft men insisted on calling our men "Bloomer boys".

We still have Vogel as our commanding officer but there seems to be a change in his attitude. He may have been afraid that he would be replaced by Lt. Roberts or Lt. Cooper if things remained unchanged. With the morale as low as it was emotions were running too high and something had to change before it was too late.

Most of the men tried to follow college football when they could and listened to the games which were broadcast on the radio each Saturday during the college football season. On October 2nd I heard part of the Minnesota-Northwestern game but it started to fade out so we switched to the Notre Dame game. I did hear later that the Gophers had won. One particular week-end Lt. Cooper borrowed my camera to take to a local football game - if Vogel had asked I would have refused him.

In North Carolina radio stations gave the time in two forms, military and civilian, and a time check may sound like this, "2:30 P.M., E.W.T., 1430 hours. The civilian time was in Eastern War Time which was the same as daylight saving time except that it continued throughout the entire year rather than just during the summer months. Of course military time was on a twenty-four hour basis.

We took our A.B.C. tests. These tests are the Airborne Command tests and are similar to those taken at the end of a quarter in college. They are given to determine what you had learned, if anything, during basic training. As far as I know everyone passed.

We went to the movie "Phantom Of The Opera" for the second time. There was an argument in the barracks as to where the chandelier fell, on the audience or into the orchestra pit so two of us "volunteered" to go the second time to find out for sure.

I had planned to write home one Saturday night in October so packed up my stuff and headed for the service club in an attempt to avoid distractions or even an unexpected detail. But, again my plans went astray. Just as I began to write the letter the lights were turned off and they began to show the movie "Look Whose Laughing". I did not stay because it was a 16mm film which is usually of a poor quality and I had seen the movie in Minneapolis. I never did finish my letter writing that evening.

My sixth jump, the first after leaving jump school, was made at Mackall on Friday the sixth of October and most of the fellows, including myself, were air sick. Many were vomiting during the flight and the one and only bucket was not large enough to do the job. The situation was so bad that I was actually glad to jump when my turn came. It had been a forty minute ride to the airfield then we were in the air for twenty minutes before we were back over our own camp and the drop zone, which was nine and a half miles from our barracks. We jumped from 625 feet and marched the 9 1/2 miles to our "objective". The objective was filled with booby traps and the plan was to crawl through the "mine field" without tripping the mines, but again the plan failed. As we approached the "mine field" and with only about two hundred to go, we saw a dog run through the field and set off most of the booby traps. This made it easy for us.

This was the first time we had jumped with full equipment and it went well except that I ended up with a stiff neck from the helmet. The helmet must not have been tight enough because, at the time of the opening shock, the three pound helmet jarred my neck. The landing was very soft. I was oscillating and at the very top of a forward swing, while in a nearly parallel position with the ground and I landed flat on my back rather than on my feet. It was the softest landing I ever made.

This was the jump on which Ernie Rutherford, the fellow who slept above me at Benning, nearly met his doom. Ernie's chute did not open fully, it was a streamer, so he pulled his reserve which opened so late, that it was still breathing. That is, when a parachute first opens, it inflates with air then partially collapses, then fills again until the pressure finally keeps the canopy fully inflated. Ernie's chute was still "breathing" when he hit the ground. The impact was hard enough to cause him to sink into the soft earth to a depth just above his ankles. It shook him up but he suffered no serious injuries. On this jump Ernie and I had both jumped in the same stick.

Only on one occasion did I make more than one jump on the same day, and this was the day. Both jumps were made in daylight and I did not make any comments about the seventh jump at the time but, to this day, I can remember the ease with which the second jump was made. It was as easy as walking out of the door of the barracks.

On the second jump I wrote about watching a steel helmet pass me on the way down. As the helmet headed toward the ground I felt sorry for the G.I. who had lost it. I guess it was the thought of the three dollar statement of charges he would have to pay for the missing helmet. When I landed I felt even sorrier, for it was then that I realized that it was my helmet. It must have been my lucky day though, the helmet had landed on the canopy of the man who had jumped just ahead of me and he returned it soon after we landed. I stopped writing the letter just after describing the jumps because we were out in the field and in a four-man tent, trying to use a candle for light but the wind was so strong that it was difficult to keep the candle burning. This was in spite of the fact that we had the end flaps buttoned up.

Here is one of the exercises we did one morning in October. While flat on our backs, with our legs extended and our arms straight out to the sides, we then balanced our right foot on the toes of the left foot, then by the numbers blinked our eyes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 1, 2, 3, 4. Army life can be really tough at times.

On the second Tuesday of October I was trying to write a letter at the service club but had difficulty because of the surrounding activity. Behind me someone was playing some good records, across the room there were two fast games of ping-pong going on and, to top it off, there was a girl who reminded me of Ginny. All of these things combined to make it difficult to concentrate on letter writing.

It was in October that I made my first trip to town except for the three day pass that I had received for working on the bridge last July. I don't remember which town I went to but it was either Southern Pines or Rockingham. Southern Pines was by far the largest and most interesting. The railroad tracks cut right through town on a slice of land almost a block wide. They separated the main street into two one way streets with the tracks between them. The railroad station was located between the tracks which placed it in the center of town. It was a pretty little town with more places to shop than Rockingham. Rockingham had a bowling alley with about four lanes but the lanes looked like waves on a lake. The main reason for going to either town was to shop and shoe dye topped my list.

We had been out on a bivouac and were supposed to make a twenty-five mile hike back to camp but we were unexpectedly saved by an unknown sergeant in the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment. We were to honor him at a formation at Camp Mackall because, while overseas, he had invented a table which could be set up in the field and used to pack parachutes on. This was a canvas top table with light-weight metal legs which could be set up much the same as a tent, using ropes and pegs as tie-downs. Its advantage was that it was light, could be easily be moved, could be set up quickly and was easy to store.

Some of the guys decided to test the guards one night while we were out in the field so they turned into unofficial commandos and stole the breech block from one of the howitzers. The ninety pound breech block was stored in the tent of one of the culprits, then stolen by another fellow - all this made for a complicated night.

For some reason there was a period of three weeks, between October 17th and November 5th, during which there were no letters or explanation as to the long silence. Some letters may have been lost but it was not normal that I would have gone so long without writing or explaining such a delay.

On November the 6th we were on duty until 2200 so had no time to write that day. The following day we left in the early afternoon to go out in the field.

By November 7th I had been counting the days until I got a furlough, hopeful of getting one in the next week or two. But it was not to be - my furlough had been moved up to the thirteenth. This was welcome, but not good news to me, since it meant I would have to be back at Mackall on Thanksgiving Day. I had been looking forward to spending it at home. Not all furloughs were the same length of time. Consideration was given for travel time, therefore those who lived the farthest from Mackall were given the greatest amount of time.

At this time we got some replacements from the P.T.R. (Parachute Training Regiment) and as soon as they reported to C battery they were sorry. Their first day was a day when anybody not on duty could have had a pass but the battery was restricted to the area instead. The reason was that a firing section did not fall out fast enough for a formation and had to make a second, and faster, attempt. On the second attempt the men "forgot" to open the screen doors as they went out and as a result were restricted. Since the restriction was on the whole battery it included the new guys. The barrack's doors were double doors at each end of the barracks with screen doors outside of the regular doors. At the time the regular doors were open but when the guys had to fall out for the second time they failed to open the screen doors and ran right through them. After several practice attempts they were excused but not without punishment - all were restricted.

Our last bivouac was a miserable mess. We got up Monday morning, November the 8th at 0100 and pulled out at 0200. They trucked us to Fort Bragg where we laid out our disassembled howitzers, then we found and assembled them in the dark and started off down the road. When the second battalion of the 517th called for fire support we had to pull

off the road and dig in, then simulate a firing problem. During this time the survey section, which included me, ran a survey from the gun position to the forward observation post, a distance of two miles. To make matters more miserable it was raining, we were cold and wet and did not have any dry clothes to change into, so we pitched a masterpiece of a four-man tent. It would seem as if I would at last be dry, with such a tent, but not so, one quarter of the tent leaked - my quarter. As a result I only got wetter. Then I went on guard duty, with the rain still coming down, so by time my tour was over I was soaked. The only redeeming feature of the night was the feast we had of K-rations and the last can of Spam I had which had been sent from home. The Spam had arrived before I left for Benning but the key had been lost so I had to wait until I came upon another key to open the can. This was the time, with a key salvaged from another can, I opened the Spam and had a treat. The army's K-ration is all right if you are really hungry but ordinarily I would not wish them on my worse enemy. Tuesday morning we ran another survey, then folded up and went back to the barracks.

We had two field rations of note, the K-ration and the C-ration. The K-ration was especially designed for the paratroops and provided high energy value in a small package. This ration did not offer much variety but they were only supposed to be used from one to three days after a jump, then we should be on regular rations. This was not always the case and often they were used for extended periods as emergency rations. There was a breakfast package with a fruit bar, Nescafe (an instant coffee), crackers and a can of ham and cheese. Packed in the same box was a small package of toilet paper and a package of four cigarettes, usually some off brand such as Wings. There was also a lunch and dinner version which contained a can of potted meat or cheese, crackers, lemonade powder, sugar, a chocolate bar and chewing gum. The lemonade must have been sweetened with saccharin because the last swallow left a bitter aftertaste. To avoid the bitterness we usually drank the canteen cupful in one long, interrupted drink in order to limit the number of "last swallows". The chocolate bar was small but with high energy value, however by the time we opened the package the bar had already turned to a white color. The chocolate could withstand fairly high temperatures before it melted which made it ideal for field rations.

The C-rations came in ten different varieties. Each meal was packaged in a can, O.D. color and the can was packaged in an O.D. color box. The selections were chicken and vegetables, frankfurts and beans, meat and noodles, pork and beans, meat and rice, vegetable stew and meat and spaghetti. Also provided was cereal, crackers, jam, powdered drinks and sugar. The rations could be eaten either hot or cold but they always tasted better when hot. One way to heat the rations was to leave them in the can and place the can on a hot or running engine of a jeep or truck then, when heated, try to figure a way to open the hot can without burning your fingers. A small can opener was supplied with the rations - it was a small, folding unit which could be conveniently and safely carried in the pocket.

On one bivouac there were "cloverleaf" containers all over the area. The containers were called cloverleaves because they looked like a three leaf clover when viewed from the end. Their purpose was to carry three 75mm shells in but in this particular incident the cloverleaves were filled with sand to simulate the weight of shells. Some of the B battery men were busy throwing the cloverleaves across the road and emptying the sand until they discovered two live 75s in one cloverleaf instead of sand. From then on each and every cloverleaf was checked before it was thrown.

Armistice Day of 1943 was spent in a specialist's class until 2100, then we had to scrub the floor of the barracks.

My furlough finally came through, I left camp on the afternoon of November 22

thirteenth and I expected to be home by the following Tuesday. The furlough came and went all too fast and soon I had to leave to get back to Mackall by Thanksgiving. I left Minneapolis on a train, I believe it was the Hiawatha, and by time I got to St. Paul I had met a woman marine corporal who soon left me for an officer. She tried to talk me out of my wings but when I got to Chicago I still had them.

While on furlough I was walking down Hennepin Avenue with my sister, Marion, on one arm and Bobbie on the other when I heard one sailor remark to another sailor, "The paratroopers get all of the girls".

By accident I met Karl in Washington, D.C. on my way back to Camp Mackall so we went sightseeing together and saw a small portion of the city before returning to camp. We got back to camp at about 2200 hours on Thanksgiving Day but did not report in immediately. Instead we went to a movie, saw 'Thousands Cheer' and took a little walk before checking in at about midnight. The battery was heading out on a problem at 0130 but we were too late to join them. We were sorry to miss out on the problem but more sorry to have missed the Thanksgiving Day dinner of turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, corn, cranberry sauce, peas, ice cream, nuts, four kinds of pie and two kinds of cake plus a few other things thrown in. So be it.

While at home I ran into a love triangle, Bobbie, Bob Lucian and myself. It so happened that Bob came home on leave from the navy at the same time and had planned to give Bobbie and engagement ring. Neither she or her dad went for the idea and I heard from Bob later. On December 8th I got a hot letter from him. It was a three page handwritten manuscript on 8 1/2 X 11 typing paper, filled on both sides, and not one kind word in it. I, naturally shared the letter with the rest of the men in the barracks, and we all had a good laugh.

But let's go back to the fifth of December. We were supposed to go out into the field but it was postponed. Bud and I went to confession instead then to the service club to write a few letters. Then we went out into the field for six days with the third battalion of the 517th. I did not mind sleeping outside, in fact it was rather nice sleeping in the pine forests in North Carolina. A bed of pine needles was at least as comfortable as the army cots in the barracks. It never seemed as cold out in the woods as it did in the drafty barracks, and if I had a cold, all I had to do was spend a couple of nights out in the open air and the cold seemed to disappear.

During the night of December 8th - 9th it rained so hard that we were flooded out. When it rains in North Carolina the water doesn't run off or soak in, it just sits on the bog ground and sits and sits. The roads turn to mud, mud so deep that even the 6 X 6s, with power to all wheels, sink in so deep that only the top of the tires can be seen. This is even with dual wheels on the front and chains on all wheels! They do have a system for pulling stuck trucks out of the mud - most of the trucks have a wench on the front so this is used. They attach a chain to the back of a second truck, wrap and anchor the chain around a sturdy tree, then string a block and tackle between the tow truck and the stuck truck. By using the wench, along with the block and tackle arrangement, the truck can usually be pulled out of the mud.

The little jeeps do not fare so well, their axles hang up on the mud and their wheels just spin as if in mid-air.

The big news of December 12th was the loss of my fountain pen. We had been practicing infantry tactics and probably lost it when diving for a foxhole. After jumps from 625 to 1200 feet why should I lose it on a three foot dive into a hole?

Our jump-knives have been recalled - it appears that the Air Corps took exception to them. The jump knives were issued mainly to cut your way down from trees if your chute

hung up in one and for defense in a combat area. They were actually switch blade knives and our jump suit had a special pocket built into the lapel which may be overlooked in the event you were captured.

On the thirteenth of December we went out on our first problem with the howitzers where we fired live ammunition. Letters that followed made no mention of the event but I do remember how exciting it was to see the guns firing in the pitch black of night.

Snow fell at Camp Mackall on the 15th of December. By the next day it was pretty dirty, and within the next couple of days it had melted. But it was cold! The ground had frozen solid and it was almost as cold inside of the barracks as it was outside. There were two coal burning, pot belly stoves in each barracks and they got hot, very hot when stoked up, but in the barracks it was still cold only a few feet from the stove. It was too hot next to the stove, too cold ten feet away from them and there was no in between, no comfort zone. It seems that there were more holes in our barracks than our battery commander has enemies. During the night our boots froze into a solid mass and the water in our canteens turned into ice.

Coal for the stoves was stored in a large coal-box outside of the barracks, along side of the company street, and had to be carried into the barracks in buckets. You can guess who did the carrying.

On about the 17th of December we piled into trucks at 1100 and headed for Maxton Field at Fort Bragg for a jump. The ride was a cold one, so the first thing we did when we got there was to look for a warm place. We found one, it was the pilots orderly room which was nice and warm, so we marched in and made ourselves comfortable. No sooner had we warmed up when the O.D. came in and kicked us out. A short time later we loaded onto the planes only to find out that the jump had been called off because of the frozen ground which was too hard for a safe landing.

In order to keep as warm as possible I boarded a C-47 and went as far forward as possible, right up to the door leading to the cockpit. I would have gone further had it not been for the sign on the cockpit door which read, "Crew members only" so I sat on the floor near the door and rested against the bulkhead. I must have had a longing look on my face because, when a second lieutenant came out from the cockpit he he asked, "Haven't you ever been up in a cockpit, trooper?". So, there I was, up in the cockpit of a C-47. The lieutenant told me to sit in the pilot's seat and make myself comfortable while he explained the controls and what they did. He explained the magnetic compass and the landing procedure. My tour ended with a sergeant taking a picture of me hanging out of the cockpit window. After the jump was called off the plane took off without us but with our equipment which was dropped on a field. We tried to recover the loads but many of the containers were missing. We did find enough of the container containing one howitzer to assemble it, but for the other three guns we only found enough parts to assemble a second gun. One gun section lost a tube, the rear trail section and cradle with the recoil mechanism because the loads jammed and could not be released from the racks beneath the plane. In the drop zone there were many colored equipment chutes, red, yellow, blue, green and orange either on the ground or draped from the trees. The color of the chute designated the type of equipment it carried such as howitzer parts, ammunition, a machine gun, radio etc. This is the story of what would have been my eighth jump, a jump which will be made at a later date.

I have been trying to get to town to buy some Christmas presents but have not been able to get away. It is tough to have a few dollars in your pocket and not enough time to spend them.

Monday, the 20th of December. I was fire or barracks guard while some of the guys made a jump. I was scheduled to make a jump on the following day but that jump was called off. This was great by me because I did not feel very well so, after the jump was canceled, reported for sick call. There was nothing really wrong but my stomach ached so I just took it easy. By Wednesday morning I felt good enough to go out and practice infantry training with the rest of the guys. For this exercise each man had a string tied around his forearm, then we teamed up in pairs and tried to remove the string from the arm of our opponent. It was a mild hand-to-hand combat exercise. When your string had been removed you were considered "killed" and went where all dead men go - off to the side to watch. I was only killed twice.

Most of the men went for a glider ride on December 21st but I was in a survey class and missed out. Instead I ended up with homework, or should I say barrackswork, that night while the others had the evening free.

This is how things went on my first Christmas in the army. On Christmas Eve Bud and I went to a movie - "Happy Land" which was very sad, then we went to midnight Mass. Mass was said in the service club and was very plain and simple. There were no Christmas decorations, only a few decorations left over from an earlier dance, it was the first time I have ever gone to a Mass where the ceiling of the church was decorated with parachutes. It was nice to see about eight times as many men at Mass as there were at the movie, and three out of every four went to Communion.

After Mass we went back to the barracks and started to open our presents but found it to be a little too dark at 0100, so we went to bed. Bright and early Christmas morning, well 1000 is early for Christmas, especially in the army, we started in where we left off with the presents the preceding night. I lost track of what I got from who but it was just as perfect of a Christmas as one could have and, at the same time, be so far away from home. December 26th was a Sunday and where do you think I was? On K.P. of course. I kept telling them that they couldn't do this to me and all they would say was, "Oh no?". About all I could do is go on K.P. then go to the chaplain's office and have my I.S. slip punched.

My eighth jump was made three days after Christmas. This was one of my easiest jumps. The pilot was an ex-paratrooper, who still wore his wings, and did a beautiful job of cutting the power as we left the plane which resulted in very little opening shock. On this jump I carried my new checker board and took some pictures.

I had lost my fountain pen on December 12th but had another one by the second of January. The new one was a Shaeffer and not bad looking but I did not like it as well as the lost Eversharp.

Through Nat Schoenberg I had started writing to a girl by the name of Peggy who lived in Connecticut and had an invitation to visit her. I must not have taken the matter too seriously because when I did get a pass I went to see Edith instead in New Jersey. In 1951 I did stop to visit Peggy, who was married by then, and feel that I had made a good choice back in 1943.

Back to Nat. At one time while at Mackail we had to go through the infiltration course, which dictated that we creep and crawl under low slung barbed wire, while machine-guns fired live ammunition over our heads. Actually it was rather safe. The machine-guns had a fixed bar under the firing end of the barrel to prevent them from firing too low and after a number of men had gone through the course they wore a groove in the ground - this added even a greater distance between you and the bullets. Nat did not recognize how safe it really was, nor did he go for such nonsense so, since he was on the extreme left lane of the course, he proceeded to go outside of the course, make his way to the other end then return

to the course to make it look as he had gone through the exercise. However, he was caught and spent the next two days crawling through the infiltration course until he could barely drag himself over the ground.

On the second of January we went out for a week on a maneuver. We loaded on to trucks, rode thirty-six miles to Maxton Air Base, only to have the jump called off so we returned to Camp Mackall. The weather was too bad for jumping. Monday morning we had reveille and roll call in bed - now that's something new for the army. Then it was back into the trucks and off to Florence, North Carolina where we bivouacked at the airport. That night was a dull one for me but not for most of the battery - they took off for town in their jump suits and steel helmets.

Tuesday morning was when my trouble started. Bud and I took off to look for a latrine with hot water, where we could wash and shave at the airport. On the way we happened upon some planes that looked interesting so we stopped to investigate them. At this point two pilots came out and the four of us became engaged in conversation. Soon the pilots invited us to take a ride with them, Bud in a B-25 and I in an A-20.

After we were aloft I found out the true mission of my pilot; it was to practice strafing. His target was a small building, about the size of a single car garage, in the center of the field. It only took one dive and pull-out to get my stomach going and by the second or third pass I was using my helmet as a bucket in which to vomit. You can't imagine how hard it is to keep a half full helmet level through dives and pull-outs when your head is spinning at the same time. I must not have been successful with my balancing act because after we had landed I had a little cleaning up to do in the plane before I could go back to the battery area. When I got back to our area I was charged with going R.W.O.L. First we had to go out after hours and double time around a circle, with a sergeant stationed at the center, who did not want to be there in the first place. This did not make the sergeant very happy and so he took it out on us.

Wednesday morning, although I was trying to be a model soldier, things did not go too well. Ten of us did not fall out fast enough so again we found ourselves out in the field double timing, but only for twenty minutes this time. In the afternoon we fitted our chutes, and in the evening hiked out to the planes, loaded them then word came down that the jump had been canceled.

Thursday morning, January 3th we stood reveille, took our C-rations back to camp, pulled the stove out of our pocket and heated the hash. That was our breakfast. Following breakfast we took our tents down and sat around until lunch time when we had more hash. After lunch we loaded the equipment on the planes, climbed aboard and flew around for three hours, then jumped. This was my ninth jump. For some reason I was really scared - so scared that my knees were weak to the point that I had to use both hands to get myself up to the door. We jumped at 2330 and by this time a night jump was no more scary than a day one. The landing was not good but it was an easy one - I landed in a tree. Fortunately my back hit the branches rather than my face and I came to rest my feet were dangling a foot or two off the ground. By the time we had assembled and gathered the equipment, then marched four miles it was 0400. We pulled into a woods and picked up four hours of sleep. Friday was a dull day until evening when we started out on a twenty mile march. At the end of the hike we pulled into firing position and pitched our tents.

Saturday, the tenth of January, three of us were sent out on patrol. It was a wet, snowy day so we went a reasonable distance from the battery and proceeded to set our tents up in the woods, then we declared a rest period and took it easy. When we did finally return we could not find the battery; it had moved out. A short time later we met three

headquarters battery men with a 150 pound .50 caliber machine-gun so we joined up with them. Since we were both of the 'Red Army' it was only logical that we should unite and try to get back to our unit. We knew we were in luck when two more of our men came along in a jeep full of Sterno which they had found. It was not until the next morning that we realized that the jeep belonged to the 'Red Army', not the 'Blue Army'. It was a cold night so we piled into the jeep and headed off for the U.S.O. in Aberdeen. We got there at 0300 only to be notified that the war, or maneuvers, had been over for three hours. It was hard to tell though, there were men with .50 caliber machines-guns set up on every corner, shooting blanks at anything that moved. Meanwhile, back in our area, a 517th man proceeded to shoot a mess sergeant with an '03 rifle. He blew the sergeant's brains out and killed him.

The jump, made on January 8th, was a bad one with two 517th men killed and an unusually large number of broken bones. The medics and meat-wagons were busy for most of the night.

I mailed one of the "ashtrays" to Dad. The ashtray was a window port from a C-47, a plastic plug three inches in diameter and .800 of an inch thick. When in place in the plane the inside surface has a depression 2.7 inches in diameter and .700 of an inch deep with a one-quarter inch wide web on the center-line which stands one inch high and tapers off as it goes from side to side like a bridge. Crosswise in the bridge is a hole through which a strong string is tied to hold the plug when it is not in place in the window. The plug looks like an ashtray but, since it is made of plastic, does not stand up very well to cigarettes and must be replaced often. As we leave the plane when making a jump we grab the plug and our momentum breaks the string then, low and behold, we have an ashtray. I still have the ashtray I sent to Dad on a shelf in our basement.

On January tenth I wrote to Dad and told him that we were going to Tennessee in the early part of February and asked him to hold off on their trip to Mackall for a while.

I did not get court-martialled for the plane ride I took on the sixth of January but I won't be going anywhere for the next week, instead I will be restricted to the battery area. I figure that I got off easy but that probably was because there were so many others that did the same thing along with Bud and myself. Luck was with me in another way in that I had already had my furlough. With Bud it was a different story, he missed out on his furlough when he had expected to go because that date fell during his week long restriction. It is safe to say that Bud is not a happy camper.

Between the seventeenth and twenty-third we were out in the field and on the nineteenth I made my tenth jump. For the first few nights we had it easy with fires and four blankets per man but for the last night they told us there would be no fires and had us turn in all but one blanket per man. It was explained to us that it would be good for our health to use only one blanket, now almost everyone in the battery has a cold.

As I put it in a letter to Dad on January 23rd, "The battery commander got permission from the first sergeant to speak to me so I asked him for a three day pass and I am pretty sure of getting one for the next weekend". The real facts are that I asked the first sergeant to speak to the battery commander and asked for a pass, but more of the pass later.

My first pair of boots, we had two pair, were worn out by the end of January so I had to turn them in for a new pair. This means that a pair of boots lasted less than five months.

On January 24th we had our first chance to fire a bazooka. It looks like a stovepipe and fires a 2.36 inch rocket. We fired practice rockets at a moving tank and I was able to bounce two out of three off the tank.

I received a three day pass on the 29th of January and I headed north. Another fellow and I left Mackall by train and traveled together until he got off at Camden, New Jersey,

then I continued on to Westfield where Edee lived. Something must have gotten mixed up because I told Peggy that I was coming to see her and had not told Edee that I was coming. Regardless, I arrived at the house where Edee was renting a room at 1900 only to find that she had left work with a girl friend and was staying in Newark for the night. The people that Edee rented from had an extra room and invited me to stay for the night. The next morning the woman called the plant where Edee worked and found out that it would be all right for me to go to the lab and meet her. Since it was Saturday and she was scheduled to work until 1230 I made it a point to arrive at 1200, this gave me a chance to look around. When I arrived she was boiling something on a small burner, just like a chemist in the movies.

From her work we got a ride to Westfield which was about twelve miles from the lab with a girl that Edee worked with. On the way we stopped to shop for some groceries which we dropped off at her apartment, then we started off for Newark. Our plans changed however and we never did make it, instead we got off the bus in a small town and took the train to New York City. In New York we rode the ferry across the Hudson River and saw the Statue of Liberty, Times Square, the Empire State Building, Radio City Music Hall and walked in Central Park. We had dinner in New York, rode ferries, subways and double-deck busses, ate at an Automat and got back to Westfield at 2300. We then had a malted and went back to her apartment. After leaving Edee I went back to my \$1.00 per night room in the only hotel in town, and slept for a while. At 0730 the next morning I was back at Edee's. We took the bus from Westfield to Plainsfield where we caught a train for Philadelphia. We only had about twenty minutes before my train pulled out so we barely had time to say good-bye, then I was on my way back to Mackall. That is how my three day pass went - very well, thank you.

While in New York City I saw an unusual billboard. It was a picture of a soldier smoking a Camel cigarette and he was blowing smoke rings.

Back at Mackall on February the 1st four of us had a water fight with the fire extinguishers and as a result spent the evening scrubbing the floor in a squad tent. This type of tent measures only sixteen by sixteen feet so it only took about twenty minutes to finish the task.

My eleventh jump was made on February the third, but I only recorded the date. It must have been a routine jump otherwise I would have made some remark in a letter home. It was a happy moment on the fourth of February when I found the pen I had lost about two months earlier. One of the fellows in the barracks had it; someone had left it on his shelf at about that time, which put it in the right time frame. What probably happened is that I left it on the shelf, someone borrowed it and returned it to the wrong shelf. I was so glad to get the Eversharp back that I traded the new Shaeffer. What it adds up to is that I traded my pen for my pen and walked away happy.

In letters at that time the planned trip of Mom and Dad to come down to Mackall were discussed. It was my opinion that they should wait until after the Tennessee maneuvers were over and we were back at Camp Mackall.

Our battery commander, Vogel, caught two sergeants and a corporal gambling with some privates and told them, "If you want to gamble with privates remind me to reduce you to the grade of private". That same night at retreat the order came out that reduced all three to privates and removed them from jump status at the same time.

Early in the first week of February we were all packed and ready to go to Tennessee.