



## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team



PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

### MailCall No. 2222

July 13, 2014

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

Website

[www.517prct.org](http://www.517prct.org)

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2013 Roster (updated!)

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Thunderbolt (Winter 2014)

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### *MailCall News*

The account in this MailCall ([#2221](#)) called the fight for Col de Braus is the best summary I have read about this full Combat Team attack. It may be hard for some who did not go through it to follow and the Third Battalion was already in firm control of Col de Braus and Ridge X before the attack began. What we had to get rid of in that attack were the German company that kept retaking Hill 1098, which we called **Lissner's** hill, and the German company that occupied the break in our lines between G and H Companies on Ridge X and I Company occupying Mt. Scandeous. Here is where **Joe McGeever** was killed leading **Reed Terrill's** platoon in the aborted attack from Scandeous to link up with Ridge X. The Second Battalion's problem with taking Hill 1098 so many times was that after driving the Germans off the hill, the enormous guns in the French forts would open up and drive the 2nd Battalion men off the hill. The reason the Germans could do this was that they had an artillery observation post behind Mt. Scandeous that had an excellent view of Hill 1098. This German OP was one of the primary objectives of the attack. **Red Meline** of my S-2 section and some I Company men wiped out the OP so that when **Jonnie Lissner** took Hill 1098 again he held it against a counter attack and never gave it up again.

The elimination and capture of the company holding the ground between Ridge X and Scandeous is clearly covered. I could add one detail; the guy who went down the hill with some of his clothes burned off was the German first sergeant whose hind end was showing and the seat of his pants the victim of a G Company white phosphorous grenade.

This was our last big attack in Southern France. The entire Combat Team was galvanized by the loss of **McGeever** and every man in the Combat Team participated in it with great planning and vigor. The huge Naval guns down in the Mediterranean were great in softening up the enemy positions. This attack cleared the way for inducing the Germans to pull out of Sospel and back into Italy.

Again I say that someone did a good job of putting it all together.

Highest Airborne regards, **Howard Hensleigh**



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Subject: **Michael Sura**

Bob, the last mail call was terrific and I want to thank you for the great content. I was wondering if the morning reports are done now? I wanted to know how to access them as I wanted to find the one that showed my dad being wounded and taken off the field in Bergstein, Germany. Thanks for your dedication to this website and the memories of our fathers who served in Company H 3 Battalion.

Sincerely

Dennis Sura

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Hi Dennis,

I haven't put all the morning reports on the web site. I have started to do that a couple of times, but it is a lot of work to set up. And most of the scanned files are very large files. For the amount of times someone is looking for information, it is easier for me to do the research myself. **Mike Wells** spend a lot of time indexing the reports into a spreadsheet that I can search those quickly and then go find the scanned copy of the individual company and date. (We do not have all the Companies nor all the dates).

But I do have most of H Company. I see 3 records for **Michael Sura**:

29-Sep-44 - 1 mile NE of Peira Cava, France, rd to gr of Pvt

30-Jan-45 - Stavelot, Belgium 718.009, promoted to Cpl as of 22 Jan 45

08-Feb-45 - Vergstein, Germany 324-077, fr duty to abs sk hosp BC LWA as of 7 Feb 45. basic status changed fr asgd to atchd unasgd as of 7 Feb 45.

Attached are the morning reports for 08-Feb-45.

Bob B.

*[That was a rough couple of days for H Company. On Feb 8<sup>th</sup> alone there were 5 MIA, 17 LWA, 1 LIA, 1 AWOL, and 8 LDNBC. The company was relieved the next day.]*

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Dad had a hard time holding rank. He never thought he would survive the war and lived everyday over there like it was his last. His best friends were **Monkhouse, Seeberger and Huggler**. I believe they are caught it in the minefield together. At the reunion in Atlanta I called Huggler in Alpina, MI and he was still alive. Thanks so much for what you do. We spend time in Sterling, MA and maybe I will see if we can hook sometime.

Best Airborne Regards

Dennis Sura son of a Buzzard

Richard Huggler (middle),  
Mike Sura (right)





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Note to Anne Justice: As Bob properly pointed out, the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team was composed of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion and the 596th Parachute Engineer Company.

Importantly, all the things you say about the misidentified unit apply to the 509th Parachute Battalion. They were the first to jump in combat in North Africa and did heavy fighting in Italy before the S. France jump, which they made with us and later were virtually wiped out in the Battle of the Bulge.

### Howard Hensleigh

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From Wikipedia:

#### World War II

The 509th carried out the first US combat drop during the invasion of [North Africa](#). The transport planes flew all the way from English airfields to the African coast. This first operation was unsuccessful, with 7 of its 39 C-47s widely scattered. Only 10 aircraft actually dropped their troops, while the others unloaded after 28 troop carriers, nearly out of fuel, landed on the Sebokra d'Oran, a dry lake near their target. The 509th marched overland to occupy its objective, and on 15 November, 300 paratroopers successfully dropped on the [Youks-les-Bains Airfield](#).

Forty-six Paratroopers from the 509th participated in the liberation of [Ventotene](#), a small Italian island, on 9 September 1943. The German commander was tricked into surrendering to the weaker American force before realizing his mistake. An account of this is given in [John Steinbeck's "Once There Was a War."](#)

Later, the 509th saw two more combat jumps in [Italy](#) and [Southern France](#). After landing, they were often used as elite mountain infantry in the Italian mountains and [French Alps](#). [Paul B. Huff](#), a member of the 509th, was the first American Paratrooper awarded the [Medal of Honor](#) on 29 February 1944 for action at [Anzio](#), Italy.

During the [Battle of the Bulge](#), the 509th fought in Belgium to blunt the German attack. An account of this battle is described in the book "Bloody Clash at Sadzot." The war ended for the 509th at the end of January 1945 near [St. Vith](#), Belgium, with only about 50 remaining unwounded of the original 700 who entered the battle. At this time, the 509th was disbanded, and the men left were used as replacements for the U.S. [82d Airborne Division](#).

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From **Gilles G**:

*The Army of Shadows* - a good old French war movie about the resistance with English subs

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxM5HWYMa5Q>



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Mimsey,

I hear that you might be visiting Belgium during your trip to Europe. I am still trying to figure out a more exact location of where Bill Boyle's was wounded. The best info is in Paratrooper's Odyssey, and it says that he was in Bergeval, then:

Regiment urged Colonel Boyle to move to the high ground overlooking Bergeval, telling him that the 551st and 2/517 were already there. Despite this pressure Boyle decided to wait for darkness to make the move.

A broad stretch of open ground lay between Bergeval and the ridge. Moving across open ground in daylight had proven disastrous in too many recent instances.

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With A and C Companies in position, Colonel Boyle decided to return to Bergeval to coordinate efforts to find the 551st. With Intelligence NCO Bob Steele and two others he moved down the hill. As they reached level ground and headed for Bergeval they were challenged in German and dove for the ground. A burst of automatic fire ripped into the group from a few feet away. Colonel Boyle was hit three times. A few seconds later a tremendous racket of fire broke out to the northeast, in the direction of C Company.

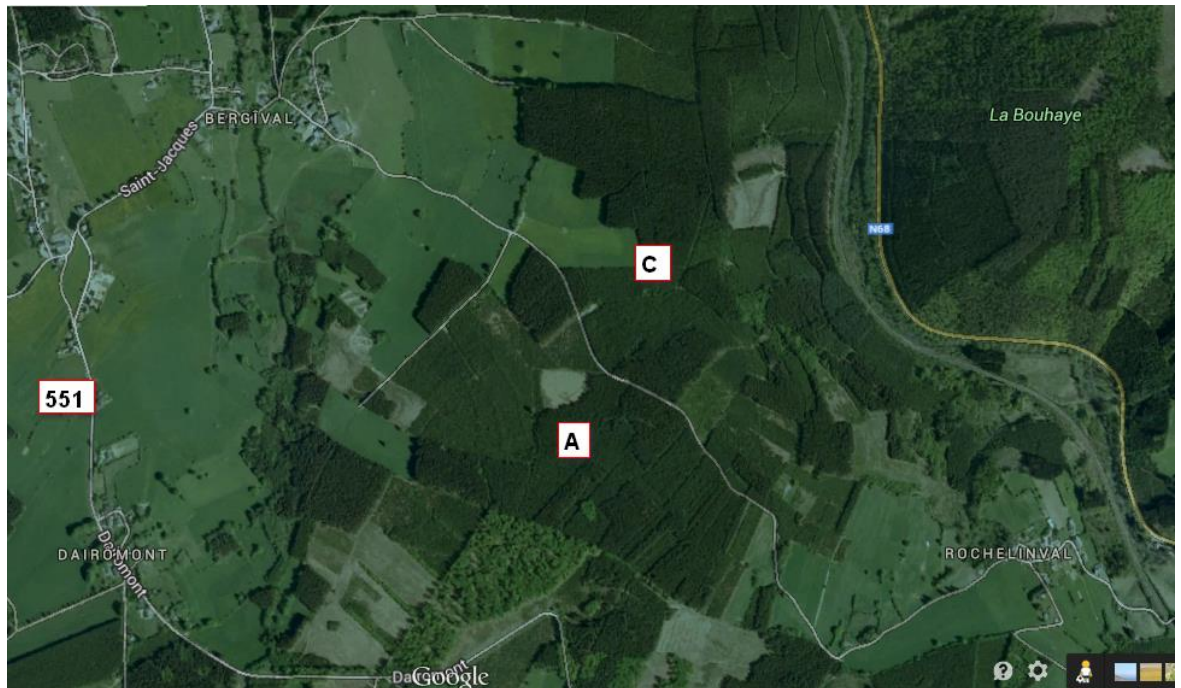
So we know that he moved down from a ridge overlooking Bergeval onto a stretch of open ground. And that C Company was to his northeast. If you look at the map on page 135 of Paratroopers' Odyssey, my best guess is that he would be east of Bergeval, on level ground at the bottom of a hill, moving off the hills from east to west, somewhere in a triangle between A Company, C Company and Bergeval on the map.

Here is a map of that area today, which doesn't look very much changed. The hills are the forest-covered areas east of Bergeval, and the level ground is where the fields are clear.

Hope that helps.

PS: Ben was wounded with H Company, on the other side of Bergeval, near Maria Gaspar's house, just north of the "B" in Bergeval on the map.

Bob B.







## 517<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regimental Combat Team

### 517<sup>th</sup> History – D plus One

This photo was recently posted on  
<https://www.facebook.com/FirstAirborneTaskForceTheForgottenFront>



A gang from 1/517 Heavy Mortar Platoon on Roque Rousse near Les Arcs.

From Paratroopers' Odyssey:

Les Arcs is at the intersection of Highway N7 and a road from Trans to Vidauban. Just south of Les Arcs a railroad runs parallel to and north of N7, crossing to the south of the highway at an overpass a mile and a half east of town. Most of the built-up area is along the north-south road above the railroad. At the southern edge of the built-up area Major Boyle and his men had held off the Germans throughout D-Day.

On D plus 1 the 2nd Battalion had a dual mission: to relieve Captain Fraser's reserve on the original 3rd Battalion objective, and to extricate Major Boyle and his men from Les Arcs.

At about 0900 two platoons of D Company under Lieutenant Carl Starkey entered Les Arcs from the north. The 2nd Platoon moved to the south edge of town, contacted some of Boyle's men, and set up a defense a few hundred yards from the railroad station. Jim Witt's 1st Platoon moved through the western part of the village.

Continuing south, they encountered enemy. After a fire fight in which Witt and another man were wounded, the platoon fell back into the western edge of town.

Skirmishing continued though out the day. German efforts to concentrate were broken up by small arms and mortar fire, 4.2" concentrations, and P-51's dropping 500-pounders along the railroad. Eight or ten D Company men were wounded. With the help of a French doctor and German prisoners serving as orderlies, an Aid Station was set up in a local hotel. In mid-afternoon F Company arrived, taking position in the north of the village facing west, and Major Boyle's force withdrew to Ste Roseline.



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Confronted with the arrival of American reinforcements, the Germans began to shift towards the vineyards and railroad overpass on the east.

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The 1st Battalion (less Boyle's group and the Regimental reserve) had been occupying its objective area since 1130 on D-Day. The Battalion was split into two groups, the largest on a steep bluff named "Roque Rouse" overlooking the vineyards and overpass east of Les Arcs. The smaller group, about half of B Company, was astride N7 a half-mile north. From Roque Rouse observation was excellent over most of the 517th area, particularly to the east of Les Arcs.

Soon after the 2nd Battalion arrived in Les Arcs, German infiltration into the vineyard east of the village became noticeable from Roque Rouse. The enemy came individually and in small groups. By late afternoon it was estimated that several hundred Germans had closed in the locality. The 460th Artillery and the Battalion's 81mm mortars fired several concentrations into the vineyards. Although the infiltration was checked temporarily, the build-up continued.

At 1400 a motorized patrol from the 45th Division appeared at the B Company roadblock.\* The recon men wanted to know if the overpass a half-mile west was prepared for demolition. Sergeant Montgomery volunteered to find out, and, moved down the railroad track with his squad. Just short of the overpass they came under machine gun fire. Montgomery and two others were killed. Four were pinned down and unable to move, and one made it back to the roadblock. Whether the overpass was prepared for demolition was still unknown, but it was certain that it had just been taken over by the Germans.

\* This was the first contact made by the 517th with the seaborne forces.

The enemy then launched a probing attack against the B Company road block. After an inconclusive fire fight they were driven back, leaving behind three prisoners.

At noon the Germans began a systematic shelling of the American positions on the Ste Roseline hill mass. Most of the shells were ordinary-size mortar and artillery; but at about 1300 one or more guns of extremely large caliber joined in. As each round struck it shook the earth. Ground tremors could be felt at Roque Rouse, over two miles away. The noise, blast, and detonating power of these shells was tremendous.\*\* In the course of the afternoon thirty to forty of these shells came in on the 1st and 2nd Battalion elements west of Ste Roseline. Two men were killed and over twenty-five wounded. It was apparent that the shelling was intended to cover the German assembly in the vineyard east of Les Arcs.

\*\* It is the author's opinion that this fire came from the 340mm Naval guns at Cape Cepet near Toulon, 30 miles away, and was intended to support a German attack from Les Arcs to Le Muy.

The German infiltration into the vineyard had also been noted by observers on the Ste Roseline hill mass, and was becoming a very serious concern to Colonel Graves.

A 'spoiling' attack, to hit the enemy when they are assembling for an attack and unprepared for defense, is every tactician's dream. A perfect opportunity for such an attack was developing.



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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 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](mailto: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 Miriam Boyle Kelly  
19 Oriole Court  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

### *Army Life, as told by PFC William B. Houston (Part 10)*

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

This chapter covers "*England*".

Next week: "*Occupation*"

## ENGLAND

A lucky break came my way while I was in Epinal. The army had set up a college in England was looking for men who wanted to attend. I put my name on the list and the next thing I knew I was headed for "Jolly Old England". The college was staffed by American professors from the States and any qualified army personnel they could scrape up and most of the courses that I took earned credits at the University of Minnesota after the war.

It was Sunday morning, July 22, 1945, when a jeep and driver came to pick me up and I started off on my journey to England. The name of the driver was Jack and the pair of us took off for Nancy, which was about a forty-five mile drive from Epinal. We arrived there sometime between 1000 and 1100 hours only to find that I would not be able to get a train to Paris until the following morning. The thought of having to spend almost a whole day in Nancy was crushing but I planned to make the most of it. After a chicken dinner Jack and I cruised the streets of Nancy until it was time for him to return to Epinal. Then I was on my own. I walked and did as much sightseeing as my feet could stand then went to a movie. Yes, alone and saw "Without Love". After the movie I went to the Red Cross where I ate donuts, drank cokes, watched a ping-pong tournament and listened to some music. By 2000 hours I was in bed, but not for long because I had to get up at 0400 to catch the train. At 0500 the train pulled out and I tried to get a little more sleep on one of the straight-back seats on a third-class French train. It just could not be done.

At one point we stopped to wait for a train to come through a tunnel from the opposite direction on the single track. An hour later the train emerged. We went through the tunnel and as we came out I saw another train waiting for us to get clear. I arrived in Paris at noon, was forced to go through the chow line, picked up my orders and had until 2145 hours before I could board the train for Le Havre. To the French, Monday afternoon was like Saturday afternoon in pre-war America - most of the stores were closed. The time was not wasted though, I found an air show at the base of the Eiffel Tower and I spent several interesting hours there.

I had a great time on the subway and discovered just how easy it was to find your way around. To make the experience even more enjoyable G.I.s did not have to pay for the rides.

At 2145 I was back on the train and on my way, still headed for England. This train was a better one than the first; the cars were British style with the aisle along one side of the car and with compartments along the other side with much more comfortable seats. The seats were as soft as any I had ever experienced in Europe. I fell asleep and only woke up once an hour, but that was not the complete story - after awaking it took me fifty-nine minutes to fall asleep again. Really, it was a comfortable ride and I caught upon some sleep.

I arrived at Le Havre in the morning and got off the train only to get back on the same train and continue on to Camp Pall Mall with others headed for England. I went by truck to a chateau outside of Epinal where we were to be billeted. The chateau was beautiful, old and so quiet and peaceful. I admired the grounds as the truck rolled along the winding, tree lined driveway and into the back yard where they let us off in front of rows of tents. The tents were for the enlisted men, the chateau was for "Officers only" and off limits to us. The tents had wooden floors but looked bare with only bunks for furnishings.

I took a ribbing that night because I was, not only the only artilleryman in the tent, but also the only paratrooper. The other men, who were from line outfits, tried on my E.T.O. jacket and my jump boots, admired my wings and asked numerous questions.



At 0400 the following morning we had breakfast, drew a new set of clothes and exchanged our money for English pounds. Then we loaded back on to the trucks and and rode to Le Havre where we boarded a small boat for England.

On the boat I met a poor sailer who did not have much love for airborne men. I could understand his point of view after he told me about the 101st man that he gave a roast beef sandwich and a half of quart of cognac, then the 101st man said that he would like to repay the sailor for the favor. He offered to get him a Jerry 17-jewel wrist watch for a mere three English pounds (\$12.12). He explained that a friend of his had the watch but, he himself did not have any money, so the sailor would have to pay in advance. The sailor paid and the trooper left to get the watch. A short time later the trooper returned with the watch. He proceeded to explain that it was a waterproof, self-winding model and should be opened only by a jeweler. About two hours later the sailor noticed that the watch still read the same time as it did when the deal was made so he took it to a jeweler. The jeweler opened the watch and found that the case was filled with sand.

The Channel crossing was smooth and after nine hours someone spotted land. There was so much excitement that one would think the guys had been at sea for a full two years.

In a letter written on July 25th I stated that I was looking for a camera. My best bet was to buy one from a G. I. who desperate for a little extra cash. To buy one from the P.K. was almost impossible, it seems as though the officers get them, not the enlisted men. I felt that a good German camera, especially a 35mm one, would last me a lifetime. Little did I realize how much cameras would change and improve between 1945 and 1990.

I reached the college at about 2200 hours and by 1100 the next morning I was on pass in Shrivvingham. It was like being in the States when I saw the stores and read the names on them - even to the Woolworth 3p & 6p, instead of our 5 & 10. The people were great too. Three of us were walking down the street when an elderly couple started talking to us and, after a few minutes of conversation, they invited us to their home anytime we had some free time.

In the evening we went to a carnival in Swindon where I met Dian, a pretty blond who modeled for an art class at our college. We spent the evening together at the carnival and, during the course of the evening, I met a British paratrooper who was with an English girl. The evening came to an end and I made arrangements to meet Dian again at the carnival on the following evening. Well, she did not show up and, as I wandered around I noticed the girl who had spent the previous evening with the British "Para". For some reason he had failed to meet her so Eileen and I spent the evening together. She lived with her family about five miles outside of Swindon on a four hundred year old farm. The family had 85 to 90 milking cows and some chickens which was a wonderful combination in the eyes of a G.I. It meant fresh eggs and milk and the end of powdered milk for a while. Eileen's dad was a squadron leader in the R.A.F. and had been a pilot for Imperial Airways before the war. The family moved out of London after their house had been hit twice by bombs and a third time by a U-1 bomb. About the first of September they plan to move back to the Purley Surrey district of London.

The school, known as the Shrivvingham American University (SAU) was located in Shrivvingham, just eight miles from Swindon. Swindon was about seventy miles due west of London. The school furnished a free inter-campus bus and free bus service to Swindon. In addition to these services there was a special train to London and back every weekend which was free. Before the army set up the college, and this was the first term, the facilities had been used by the British as an anti-aircraft officers training school.

Our barracks were beautiful - red brick buildings with hot water and bathrooms. Ten of us were assigned to the room I was in and the room had a fireplace and even a doormat built into a shallow depression just inside of the door. The bed had two sheets and a pillow, complete with a pillowcase, but we combat veterans did not fall for the bait. Obviously it was a booby trap, so we rolled out our bedrolls and slept on the floor. Do you believe that?

On July 27th we registered in the afternoon and were immediately off to London where the army made sure we had a place to sleep at the Red Cross. Rooms had been reserved for two nights and meals were available. The rooms were comfortable and the meals reasonable. Our first stop in London was at the Red Cross to check in, then we had to sweat out a chow line but by 1930 we were out on the streets and ready to do some serious sightseeing. We went to Piccadilly Circus and there I suffered my first disappointment. The fountain had a concrete shield around it plus a layer of sandbags to protect it from bombs. In 1984 I returned to Piccadilly only to find that the fountain had been shipped to Scotland for restoration. Finally, on my third visit in 1986, I did see the fountain.

From Piccadilly we wandered to beautiful St. James' Park where we met a couple of girls. In a short time they left because the one I was with got mad when I would not kiss her. Within a half hour we met two others and became engaged in friendly conversation. Maud and I made a date for Sunday evening but there was a catch, she did not get off from work until 1600 hours and on alternate weeks she had to be back to work at 1930 until 2100 - it was all very complicated. Her schedule often made it a little late to go anywhere and do anything, but it also made it easy on the billfold. Both Maud and her sister worked and stayed at the Royal Automobile Club and had to be in by 0015 because at that time the doors were locked.

On Saturday morning I started out bright and early with another fellow to see London. However, it was not early enough to join the 0945 tour but this proved to be to our advantage because the 0945 one was a walking tour so we were forced to take the 1030 bus tour. Heaven only knows where we went; I was totally lost, but we saw the main tourist attractions. We saw the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, London Bridge, Buckingham Palace, Dickenson's Old Curiosity Shop, the Tower Bridge and the Tower of London. In the afternoon we revisited some of the same places and took a few pictures, pictures which we were unable to take in the morning because the tour bus was moving too fast or we were sitting on the wrong side.

That evening we went out - well I did. The other fellow, Thorne, was stood up so Maud and I went on our own little tour to see the sights. We walked to Buckingham Palace, to the Houses of Parliament with Big Ben, Westminster Abbey, the Tower Bridge, and then back to St. James' Park. Somehow I did not mind seeing these places three times in one day but the third trip, with Maud, was the most fun.

Sunday morning I set out for Mass which was to be celebrated at a different Red Cross, one located on Caldron Street. Forty-five minutes later, after finding Caldron Square, Caldron Gate, Caldron Lane and Caldron Place I found Caldron Street and attended Mass. I was able to walk back to my Red Cross in four or five minutes after I had learned my way around. It is not hard to get lost in London because the streets are in a random pattern (there just do not know what a square block is), and the name of any given street may change every two or three blocks. After Mass I ate and went to Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum. I really enjoyed the museum, perhaps better than anything else in London except Maud.

One of the most interesting displays was the "Sleeping Beauty", it even looked like she was breathing. Then there were ushers, also of wax, to guide you through the museum

and bobbies too, again of wax standing around. I was amused by their hats. Every figure on display looked so lifelike!

There were many good theaters in London where you could see first run movies. The movie theaters used a different price structure from those in the States, they charged according to the location of your seat was, the balcony being the cheapest. At home I usually sat in the balcony so the prices in English theaters suited me just fine - I got both the seat and price I preferred.

Back to Maud. I liked her. She was an Irish girl with freckles on her nose, long sandy colored hair that hung down to her waist in the back and a very nice personality. She and her sister came from Ireland and both worked at the Royal Automobile Club in London. She did show me a picture of her home back in Ireland; it was a two-story, thatched roof house which she referred to as a cottage. She could not quite grasp the American definition of a cottage.

The weather was not too good during August of 1945 and I made no secret of it in letters I sent home. I complained that it was never sunny in the morning, it rained often and the sun only came out for a few hours about two days a week and then only in the afternoon. I had signed up for a tennis class at school but the cards were stacked against me - one factor was the rotten weather and the other was that there were only three outdoor courts on campus. With these two strikes against me I was able to get out only three times so I never became a great tennis player. I did get out on Thursday, the seventeenth of August but that session only served to prove that I could still hit the ball. Eileen said that she liked to play tennis too, but we never did get a chance to play. I also had planned to take fencing but must not have been able to get into the class. I don't remember ever taking such a class and that is something I most certainly not forget.

It is difficult to recall the other classes I took but I do remember a U.S. History class and one in Educational Psychology. These probably stick in my mind because I received credit for them at the University of Minnesota later on.

I tried to stay for a second term and S.A.U. but my request was turned down. I did not know it at the time but there was to be only one more term at the university then the school would be closed. The war had suddenly ended in Japan on August 15th 1945 and the troops would start to be sent home on points and discharged, therefore the school closed and reverted back to the British. On a visit to Shrewsbury and the school in 1986 I found it still to be in operation but it is now the Royal Military School of Science.

I must admit that I liked London and went there whenever I got a chance. On August 17, 18 and 19th I was in London again and had a chance to see the king and queen and their daughters Ann and Margaret. On the first occasion the royal family was in the royal coach but later the King and queen appeared on a balcony at Buckingham Palace. To me Buckingham Palace was fascinating and I watched the changing of the guard several times. The changing of the guard was not as colorful in 1945 as it is in peacetime because the guards wore regulation army uniforms rather than the colorful red and black dress uniforms.

The subway, or Underground, was fun to ride and easy to use. The thing that I did not like about it was that the English charged the American G.I.s to ride both the Underground and the regular busses. There was a way to beat the system though - back in 1945 there were ticket machines in each underground station where you put change in to buy a ticket to your destination. It was a zone system, the greater the distance the higher the price. Our system was to get off one station before our final destination on our first trip and buy several tickets from there to the station closest to our Red Cross. These tickets were saved for use

on future trips when we returned from a more distant station on the same line. We would then use the prepurchased ticket just as if we had bought it at the station near to our Red Cross when we got off the train and present the "short line" ticket to the ticket taker. In this manner we could ride from the farthest station to our base for the lowest possible fare.

The English people, especially those in London, seemed to go for models in a big way and there were models in many store windows and showrooms. This was especially true of steamship lines where there were models of their prize ships and also models of the cabins on those ships. Airplane models were frequently on display and seemed to be on more popular there than in the States. I did see a beautiful model of a British army tank in an automobile showroom which I spent some time admiring. It may be that the automobile company had switched to building tanks during the war. The war may have made the civilian goods so scarce that models were used to remind the people of the real thing.

Some of the other exhibits I saw in London, in model form, was an R.A.F. exhibit, a post-war home exhibit, one depicting how the medics evacuated and cared for the wounded, one on "Children Of Europe", London during the Blitz, a plan for rebuilding London and U-1 and U-2 exhibit. To me this was interesting and exciting so I went from exhibit to exhibit to study them.

There were numerous chess sets on display in store windows which caught my eye. Most were hand crafted and of individual designs which would be difficult to play with.

I was interested in the cars I saw in England. It was there that I first saw a Mercedes-Benz 540-K, and noticed that the American Plymouth bore a Chrysler monogram. I fell in love with the London taxi, and to this day still like them, even the more modern ones.

I received a letter from Bud, written on August 15th, announcing that he and the 376th P.F.A. battalion, was already in Berlin. I noted that that was just one year after our jump into France.

A trip to London for a weekend, which began on Friday at 1400 hours and lasted until about 2345 Sunday, was rather inexpensive. As an example: I spent the third weekend of August there for a total of \$5.28. The train ride should have cost \$2.48 each way but that was paid for by the school - they chartered the trains. I paid for two nights at the Red Cross, paid for all my meals, Maud and I went to a movie, had tea and went to some free events.

It was necessary to watch my spending because I was on partial pay and only got \$16.14 per month. To help offset this condition I wrote to Jim Andersen and asked him to loan me some money. Jim sent some money, but though no fault of his, the cash created an unusual problem. I received the money on a Friday morning, the day is important to the story, and I had planned to leave for London that afternoon but first it was necessary to convert the occupation marks into English pounds before I left the campus. I took the marks to the paymaster's office to make the exchange. There was a non-commissioned officer at the pay window who looked at the money, then divided it into two piles. One pile he converted into pounds, the other he returned to me with instructions to return next Monday when an officer would be on duty. He explained that he thought that the money might be counterfeit and he did not want to take the responsibility of exchanging it. After spending the weekend in London I took the remaining suspicious money back to the paymaster. I explained my problem to the officer on duty who inspected the marks and immediately exchanged them. He said that the money was legal but the questionable notes had been printed by the Russians. He pointed out the poor registration of the different colors and compared the job with that is sometimes seen in the comics in the Sunday paper.



In London there are escalators in the subways but not in the department stores, not even in the large ones. Eileen would not believe that we had them in stores, especially if the store already had a "lift" in it, or that busses had their motors in the rear or that trains had reclining seats until I stopped another G. I. and had him verify the facts.

While in London I had to do as the English do, have a spot of tea. I found that I enjoyed these these little formalities. The English magazines did not have colored (or should I say coloured) pictures in them, at least during the war, so the English greatly enjoyed the American magazines. For this reason I had magazines mailed to me and I passed them on to my English friends.

V-J was a big day at school but I would rather have been in London for the celebration. Even in Shrivvingham there was music and dancing in the streets. Some of the fellows went into a house and moved a piano from the second floor out into the street, enjoyed the music and dancing then left and went back to school. The last I saw of the piano it was still standing out in the middle of the street.

For the weekend of August 24th to August 26th I was back in London where, on the 25th I went through the Houses of Parliament. When I visited the House of Commons it was in poor condition. It had suffered a direct hit by a German bomb. Tradition is an important part of British life and in the House of Lords each meeting is started with a prayer. If a member was there for a prayer he is then entitled to reserve a seat for himself by writing his name on a small white card to reserve a seat. About a week before I toured the building a group of G.I.s went through and thought that the cards would make good souvenirs, especially since they had already been autographed, so they helped themselves to the prizes. This did not go over too well with the British government and we were warned to leave the cards in place. While in London I was able to buy about twenty pair of paratrooper wings for only \$.38 apiece. I knew that many of the men would like to have an extra pair so I mailed fifteen of them back to the outfit in Berlin. The wings never made it to the 376th, they were probably stolen.

By the first of September I had accumulated 70 to 75 points toward my discharge. For a discharge a G.I. needed 85 points. The points were earned for by various ways such as, one point for each month in the service, one for each month spent over seas, points if married, points for each child, for a wound etc. The Stars and Stripes stated that all with seventy or more points, as of August 1st, could expect to be on their way home, or already home, by Christmas of 1945.

On September 1 I weighed in at 12 stone and 12.

On September the second Eileen and her family moved back to Purley, Surry, a suburb of London to a house at 8. Northwood Avenue.

On the second weekend of September I discovered Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park and I was highly amused by the characters and their audiences. The speakers used anything available for a speaker's stand, it could be a box, a chair, maybe a step ladder or even a portable stand just so they were up higher than the rest of the people. The subject matter could be anything but politics and religion seemed to be the most popular ones. While I was watching, one speaker got a little too excited, leaned too far forward and fell off his stand. Hecklers add to the fun, they get on a speaker and try to grind him into the ground but most speakers are able to hold their own.

In the same letter I again praised the underground all the way from the entrances to the stations, to the escalators, to the size of the stations and even down to their clever ticket dispensing machines.

Meanwhile, back at school there was a water problem and we could not drink the water from the fountains from Sunday until Tuesday.

On Monday I not only had to contend with the water problem but also with my iron.

The iron probably came with the room, I am not sure, but I didn't buy it and it is not logical that I would carry that much weight around before coming to England. What is more, I had no intention of using it after leaving school. For some reason the iron went cold on me so I sent it in for repairs at the school. It was returned without being repaired and they said it needed a new "filament" or heating element. Rather than wait until they got around to it I took the iron into town and bought a replacement which the store installed. Back to school I went, happy until I plugged it in and blew a fuse. Back to the store I went and had the correct element installed. From then on the iron worked well and I had a pressed uniform.

The Stars and Stripes announced that a state representative from Ohio had introduced a bill to stop "jumping troopers in Europe for European dignitaries. Naturally I was all for him and his proposed bill!

I saw the movie "The Picture Of Dorian Gray" and liked it very much, it had such a surprising and unusual ending.

On September 17th I wrote my last letter from England. The stay there had been fun and I was thankful to have seen at least part of the country. In that letter I accused mother of bring me up without teaching me the social graces. I had made a grave error in England, that of pouring the tea into the cup before putting in the milk and sugar.

I also described Eileen's house at 8, Northwood Avenue in Purley, Surry, about thirteen miles from Victoria Station. It was a two story house with a garage on the ground floor and three bedrooms upstairs. The house was on a hill and the view from the dining room window overlooked a valley.

On my visits to Eileen's I was able to bring treats to her younger brother and sister, usually candy or chewing gum, or even an orange when possible. Many of the children in England had never seen an orange so it was a real treat. For the family there was another advantage in that I received ration coupons for food for the three days I was in London. I gave the coupons to Eileen's mother and Eileen and I usually ate out, so the family made out all right too.

One Saturday Eileen and I went to a football game, soccer to Americans, but what made it interesting was the half time entertainment - it was a polo game played on bicycles. The bikes had a direct drive, which meant that there was no coasting, and since the rider had to use one hand to hold the mallet, he had little or no braking power. To stop, or rather to try to stop, he attempted to pedal backward - this caused the rider to bounce up and down about three times before coming to a halt. It was a wild game! To start the game the referee tossed the ball on to the center of the field and two riders started from opposite ends of the field. By the time they got to the center of the field they were going full speed and looking at the ball, that was when the game got interesting.

The last Sunday I was in London Eileen and I made our final sightseeing trip. We saw the theater where Shakespeare put on some of his plays, then we took a boat ride down the Thames River from the Houses of Parliament to the Tower of London.

Along with having tea and crumpets at four I learned to eat fish and chips. The chips were french fries and usually served in a piece of newspaper rolled into a cone shape.

Life was pleasant in England and I can prove it by the weight I gained, something between a stone and a stone and a half.

The people were really nice, they would invite you into their home and Eileen's sister, Hazel, offered to do my laundry, pressing and mending.

I left behind the English taxi with its right hand drive and a space next to the driver for luggage. And I will always miss the red double deck busses which were s so much fun to ride, especially on the upper deck.