

Kenneth H. Grant

*422nd Combat Infantry Regiment
106th Infantry Division*

S/Sgt. Kenneth H. Grant
S/N 36-583-632
Stalag IV-B S/N 311949
Anti-Tank Platoon
Headquarters Company
Third Battalion
422nd Combat Infantry Regiment
106th Infantry Division

Over the past couple of years I have been trying to recreate the journey that my father took during the time that he served in the United States Army and took part in what has come to be known as the Battle of Bulge. I have written to his former comrades and I have read numerous historical books and articles on the subject. My father was a very private person and did not feel comfortable in relating his experiences to his family. I hope that in trying to tell his story I can share with others the truly remarkable events that overtook my father and the brave men who experienced them with him.

The dates that I have used to give a timeline to the events that I describe are taken from my fathers Service Record, letters he wrote to my mother and a letter written to me by Sgt. William Dickerson in response to my request for information.

My father was born in Detroit, Michigan July 30, 1923. He attended Southwestern High School in Detroit up to the Eleventh Grade. He then quit school and got a job as a Lathe Operator at the DeSoto automobile plant on Jefferson Ave. In Detroit. My mother and father met at the Lincoln Park Roller-rink in Lincoln Park, Michigan and were married in the Summer of 1942.

My father received his Notice for Induction and had to report for processing at Fort Wayne on Jefferson Ave. In Detroit on March 12, 1942. This Fort was originally build during the Civil War and was still in use as an Induction Center when I went into the Navy in 1961. It is now used as a Civil War museum. My father's next stop was at Fort Custer in Battle Creek, Michigan.

From Fort Custer he went to Basic Training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina and became a member of the 106th Division. I assume that during his time at Fort Jackson he was kept busy with all the usual things that the military is fond of like close order drill, weapons training, long hikes, etc. During this time he was trained as a 35mm Anti-Tank Gun Crewman which would be his permanent job during his time in the army.



This is a picture of my parents taken around the time they were married.

01/24/1944 The 106th Division left Fort Jackson and participated in 2nd Army winter maneuvers in Stones River State Park near Nashville, Tennessee. This was supposed to simulate the weather and terrain conditions that the Division would face in the Ardennes when they got to Europe. This went on until the middle of April when the division moved on to **Camp Atterbury in Indiana**. Through correspondence with other members of my father's unit I learned that the Ant-Tank Platoon of the Headquarters Company consisted of 30 enlisted men and was commanded by a Lieutenant. The platoon had 3 Anti-Tank guns and they were upgraded from 35mm to a British 57mm gun when they arrived in Indiana. In my reading about this weapon it seems to be the consensus of opinion that this gun was not terribly effective against the type of tanks the Division would be facing in the Ardennes.

During the summer of 1944 the 106th Division had to face the loss of many trained soldiers that were taken and sent to Europe as replacements for the men lost during the D-Day invasion of France and the subsequent fighting as the Allies moved inland and pushed the German Army back toward Germany.

During the Summer of 1944 my mother and I moved to a rented house in Edinburg, Indiana that we shared with the wife of one of the other soldiers in my father's

unit. The only name I have for him is Bob. I do not know his last name nor his wife's name but the following picture is a picture of his wife and me (I'm the one with the tie).



At this time the chain of command for my father's regiment as far as I have been able to determine is as follows:

Commanding Officer of the 422nd
Col. George L. Descheneau

Commanding Officer of the 3rd Battalion
Lt. Col. Donald Thompson

Commanding Officer of Headquarters Company
Capt. Clair R. Ernst

The Headquarters Company consisted of three platoons. The Communications Platoon, Anti-Tank Platoon and Pioneer Platoon. The Pioneer Platoon, as I understand it, was tasked with duties that you might expect a company of Engineers to do. I am not sure if the following picture was taken at Fort Jackson or at Camp Atterbury, but on the back my father has written that he is at the dentist and he appears to be wearing his winter uniform.



In October of 1944 the 106th Division finally got orders to move into an active part of the war and traveled by troop train to Camp Miles Standish just outside of Boston and my mother and I returned to Michigan to live with my grandparents in Lincoln Park. My father had the opportunity to call my mother on the phone while at Camp Miles Standish, but his location was secret.



The above picture was taken in December of 1943. This my father, my mother and me standing in front of my grandparent's house in Lincoln Park, Michigan.

10-21-44 My father then traveled by troop train to the Port of New York and boarded the HMT Aquitania. The Aquitania was a four funnel British ship converted from a passenger liner to a troop transport. She was 901 feet long and 97 feet wide at the widest point. She was equipped with deck guns fore and aft, but was otherwise unarmed. She was to cross the Atlantic by herself and not in a convoy because it was felt that she was fast enough to outrun any German subs they might encounter. The troops were packed like sardines into large compartments. Bunks were heavy canvas attached to metal frames with rope. Two meals a day were served and were eaten standing at counters. The meals consisted mostly of dehydrated eggs, bully beef and stale rolls. Some of the men preferred to live on Hershey bars and cookies from the canteen. For those brave enough the showers were cold salt water.

10/25/1944 The following are excerpts from a letter my father wrote while on the Aquitania.

The trip so far has been fairly nice..... They have had boxing matches on deck. Irene Manning has a small USO show on board. All they did was sing some old songs and they had a ballet dancer who is the granddaughter of some French painter..... I am in a compartment with 329 other guys. I remember your dad telling about staying down in the hold (during WW I) and playing cards and dice all night. Tell him for me it's still the same.

On 10-28-1944 the Aquitania arrived in the Firth of Clyde near Glasgow, Scotland and the following excerpts are from a letter from my father.

10-29-1944 I would like to tell you just where we are, but I am not allowed. I will tell you just a little bit about it. I can see land on both sides of the ship and there are a lot of cute houses along the shore. In the background there are high mountains and the tops of them are covered with snow.

My father's unit then boarded a train and traveled to Stow-on-the-Wold near Oxford in the Midlands of England. Once there he was dismayed that the physical and marksmanship training intensified rather than slacking off since they were soon to be in combat and could use the rest.



57mm Anti-Tank Gun

11-7-44 We had a seven mile hike yesterday and an eight mile hike today. I thought they had mechanized the infantry. I don't doubt they would make us walk all the way back to the states if it weren't for all the water.

11-16-44 I am in London on a four day furlough. I was on a sight seeing tour this morning and saw many of the famous places and buildings..... I got to ride on top of a double deck bus and in one of those funny looking cabs. Trying to buy meals outside of the Red Cross Cafe is a problem. I am living in a hotel here that the Red Cross has got.

11-17-44 We had one of those robot bombs land near here last night. The corner on which the Red Cross Building is located is called Rainbow Corner. It is in Piccadilly Circus. Coffee and doughnuts have become a habit with me since they serve them 24 hours a day. I got to see the changing of the guard and the Tower of London today.

11-19-44 *We left for the range yesterday morning and as usual it was raining. Our full field pack felt like it weighed a ton after it got wet. When we got to the range we had to pitch tents in the mud.*

11-27-44 *As usual honey it was a lousy day and we finished cleaning our 57mm guns. When we left Atturbury we had to pack them with grease and it took over 15 gallons of gas to get them clean. We are just about ready for battle, but when we will get in it is another question. I just got back from dinner and it was 20 minutes wasted as far as I'm concerned. We had corn-beef hash, stewed onions, peanut butter with biscuits and coffee. There is no danger of me putting on weight. Everything is rationed here. We can only buy 6 packs of cigarettes, two cigars and there is a limit on candy and gum.*

One month later I bet he would have given a months pay for that meal I bet.

On 11-28-44 my father's unit left Stow-on-the Wold and traveled to South Hampton on the coast of England. On 11-29-44 they boarded the Llangibby Castle and crossed the English Channel arriving in LeHarve, France on 11-30-44. After leaving the ship they camped out in pup tents in a muddy field in the rain while waiting for the rest of the Division to catch up. My father's unit began moving to the front by truck through France and Belgium and arrived in the area of the Schnee Eifel on 12-10-44.

12-11-44 *We left England and landed in France. It sure is a mess. In some of the towns there isn't a building left standing anymore. We went through France and I was disappointed because I didn't get to see Paris. We kept traveling right on through France and into Belgium. All along the way things were in ruins. I was under the impression we would stay in Belgium, but changed my mind when I found myself in Germany. Don't worry honey. I think I am as safe here as I was in France.*

The excerpts from the following letter is the last one that my mother received from my father until he was liberated in May of 1945.

12-12-44 *It was nice and sunny when we got up this morning, but it clouded up and we really had a snowstorm this afternoon. The only fighting we have done so far is snowball fighting within the squad. The hut we live in is made of logs and pine boughs and it is nice and warm. It is hard to get water all the time so we have to melt snow. The squad has a cook stove so we do most of our own cooking. As far as I know we will get a bath about every three weeks. It has been almost a month now so they better hurry up.*

On 12-19-44 my father was moving with his unit down a narrow road when he was wounded in both his legs by shrapnel. While I was still very young I asked my father what it felt like to be shot. He told me that you didn't feel a thing until you hit the ground and then it hurt like hell. That was the only time he ever shared any of his experience with me, but I have never forgotten it. After I was older I can recall seeing 5 or 6 quarter size scars on each of his legs and I recall him saying that his legs were painful from time to time.

I don't know much about what happened to him from this point on except that one time my grandmother told me that the German doctors were going to amputate both his legs, but a British doctor who was also a POW convinced them to let him try to save them. I know that at some point my father was a POW at Stalag IV-B located near

Muhlberg, Germany. His POW I.D. # was 311949. He was liberated around 5-5-45. He didn't leave Europe until 6-15-45 so I assume that he was sent to either a hospital in France or if he was well enough, to Camp Lucky Strike. Records indicate that my father didn't reach the United States until 6-24-45 so I am again assuming that he traveled by ship. He was finally discharged from the Processing Center at Fort Sheridan, Illinois on 9-21-45.

Once my family was back together again my father went to work for the Detroit Street Railway as a bus driver and we lived in some of the temporary housing that had been built during the war to house workers near the Ford Motor Plant in Dearborn, Michigan. In 1949 my father got a job with the Wayne County Sheriff's Department worked there until he passed away from heart failure in 1969.



This picture was taken in the summer of 1945 shortly before my father was discharged from the army. It shows my mother, father and I on the sidewalk in front of my grandparents house in Lincoln Park, Michigan.

I have tried my best to be accurate with my facts and to show a personal side to my father's story of his time in the army. If anyone who reads this can correct errors or add information that I have missed please feel free to do so. [Email me here](#)

Thank-you for taking the time to read my father's story.

Franklin Grant

S/Sgt. Kenneth H. Grant
S/N 36-583-632

Stalag IV-B S/N 311 949

Anti-Tank Platoon
Headquarters Company
Third Battalion
422nd Combat Infantry Regiment
106th Infantry Division

The material included here was copied from a diary that my father kept while he was a POW following his capture by the German Army during The Battle of the Bulge. This diary was recently discovered among my Mother's papers and gives an almost day by day account of my father's experience as a POW.

On the following page is a picture of the cover of the diary. The actual diary is about 2.5 by 4.0 inches and would fit in a shirt pocket. I am assuming my father went to great lengths to hide his diary during the many searches that he describes in it. In one entry he states that he is not able to record some of the cruelty he observed in detail so there must have been a penalty for recording it if his writings were discovered.

POW Diary of S/Sgt Kenneth Grant

Sunday Dec. 11, 1944

Today we moved up on the front lines and put our gun in position. In fact, the barrel stuck out over the line. Our chow was mostly C and K rations. We were all in high spirits and were ready for anything. We had a lot of snow and had to use it as drinking water. We were living in log huts and it was very cozy. There were seven of us and we had to pull guard duty 24 hours a day. We started a Bible class the first night and will read two chapters every night.

Monday Dec. 12, 1944

Today was rather quiet and not much doing. I scouted around and finally made arrangements with I Company for chow. It sure was good to eat some good chow. The C and K rations were only to be used when we couldn't get to chow. Spent a lot of time cleaning our weapons and keeping them in working order, It was still snowing today and it sure made me homesick. Was told that mail was coming through and would get it tomorrow. Something to look forward to.

Tuesday Dec. 13, 1944

Today we got mail and there was one from my sweet wife and one from El. (his sister) Made me feel like a new man. Wrote letters most of the morning and then melted a can of snow so I could wash and shave. There was a little firing on our left flank and it kept us on the alert for the rest of the day. Things are a lot different on the front than I thought it would be. The news that we got was good. Patton was pushing into Cologne and doing well. Had our Bible class as usual.

Wednesday Dec. 14, 1944

It got rather cold today and we had to keep close watch on the gun to keep it in working order. Air Force was on the ball today. Well, I saw my first buzz bomb in flight today. It reminded me of something out of Buck Rogers. They sure are fast. We were told that we would get paid tomorrow. We have no use for money here. There was a lot of firing today and we were expecting an attack. We were just holding a hill and Jerry was trying to get back.

Thursday Dec. 15, 1944

Well, we got paid today and it was in Belgian Francs. Got another letter from my honey. Answered it right away. Artillery has been busy today and some have come over very low. Jerry made it hot for Regiment today and they were forced to move out. Regiment moved in and occupied a Jerry pill-box. Had a treat today at chow. Had pork chops, mashed potatoes and gravy with a bread pudding. I ate like a king. Got a bad case of homesickness and went to bed.

Friday Dec. 16, 1945

Jerry attacked on our right flank today and was pushing through. Got orders to move out as quick as I could. All we could take was our ammo and gun. Had to leave our duffle bags behind. We moved back to the Company and set up another position. Saw Sgt. Sessums and he was complaining about the Yankee weather. Didn't sleep any during the day and will probably be awake all night. Haven't found a hut to live in so we crowded in with Ben. (S/Sgt. Benjamin Tingle ?)

Saturday Dec. 17, 1944

Well, today I found a hut for us to live in and had a chance to go back to our old hut on the front and get our bags. Had a change of clothes and sure do feel good. The Jerries are still raising hell on our left flank and it looks as if we may have to retreat some more. Buzz bombs are still busy. Am looking forward to a good nights sleep. Have a pair of rubber boots now and wear them to keep my feet dry. Don't wear shoes with them.

Sunday Dec. 18, 1944

Well, we had to move out today, but was delayed and couldn't move out till late. Drove blackout for seven or eight miles. Got lost and turned on the wrong road. We then were ambushed by the Jerries. Had quite a battle and some came close. We made a get away and came into a town by dawn where we met a bunch of T. D's. (Tank Destroyers?) We set up positions and prepared to stay and hold the town.

Monday Dec. 19, 1944

Today we searched some of the houses and found Jerries hiding in the cellars. We captured them and later a Jerry Captain. 88's started to zero in on us and we decided to move out. We left the town and was still under 88 fire. We decided to keep going but, were stopped by a battalion of Jerry tanks. We gave them a tough battle, but they were too much for us. They got quite a few of our boys and we gave up to them. We were kept in a barn all night. 470 of us.

Tuesday Dec. 20, 1944

We didn't get any chow for today. They put us with 1400 other Yanks and we were marched 30 miles to a rail center. Stayed out in the cold all night and still without chow. It was hard for me to march in my rubber boots and they made my feet sore. We saw many things that I could hardly believe could happen. I wasn't wearing my overcoat when captured and I sure was cold and miserable.

Wednesday Dec. 21, 1944

Well, we were promised food today and I sure was glad. They finally gave us two packs of hardtack and a little cheese. It had to last us for two days. We were then divided into groups of 60 and put in box cars. We rode the rest of the day and all night long. It was impossible for anyone to sleep in the car so we sat or stood like a bunch of cattle. In fact, it was a cattle car.

Thursday Dec. 22, 1944

We got to a small town this morning and have been here all day. We got a half loaf of bread apiece and some butter. They also gave us some molasses. It has to last us two days. It wouldn't have been so bad if we could have gotten some water to go with it. We were supposed to move from here and may still do so tonight. I didn't sleep at all last night and sure am tired. Tonight we have been singing songs to pass the time.

Friday Dec. 23, 1944

Well, we didn't move at all last night and today. Finished eating my bread today and only hope we get more tomorrow. The R.A.F. was busy here tonight and they got a few of our boys. I had a very close call myself and am lucky to be able to write here now. Wig got it tonight and we sure hated to see that. I helped put a tourniquet on his leg. He passed away in a shell hole with us boys.

Saturday Dec. 24, 1944

Well, here it is Christmas Eve and haven't been moved yet. We got our bread for today and spent most of the time singing Christmas carols. When you get 49 men singing them all at the same time it sure sounds good. It was the same way in all the cars. We thought the Jerries would stop us, but they didn't. Sure am lonesome for my honey and boy tonight. Hope it won't be too long now.

Sunday Dec. 25, 1944

Today was Christmas and all we had to celebrate was that we were alive and that the R.A.F. took it easy on us today. We are still in the same place and are getting restless. Sure wish they would get us to a camp so we could get some food and rest. We get water every two days. Had to use my steel helmet to drink out of. Sure wish I was having dinner at home today with my honey.

Dec. 26, 1944

So Christmas is gone and we will be too if they don't us some food soon. We moved today and sure was glad. Maybe we will get to a camp now. We got to another town and have been here all night. I am weak and very tired. Sleep has become a thing

of the past. I would even settle for a twin bed now. We have started to move again and they say we are supposed to get a camp tomorrow. I hope so.

Dec. 27, 1944

We got to where we were going today (**Stalag IV-B Muhlberg**) and had to stand out in the cold before we got a bath and our clothes deloused. We then had to go and get registered and searched. After that was over we finally were split up and put into huts with some R.C.A.F. boys. They had some hot soup and a cigarette waiting for us. They gave us a bed to sleep in. I mean a sort of a bed. They were boards with a little straw on them.

Dec. 28, 1944

Today we had our Christmas. We were issued a British Red Cross Package and a ration of bread and butter for two men. I am with Ben now and we really had a meal. The package has to last us a week, so we will have to take it easy the rest of the week. These Canadian boys sure treat us good. We got five cigarettes apiece. They don't even taste good to me anymore.

Dec. 29, 1944

Had to get up at 6:30 this morning so we could have roll call at 7:00 outside. We will have to do it every day from now on. They count us to see if any of us escaped during the night. The Jerries gave us a hot pan of turnips today and some boiled spuds with the jackets on. We made a good meal out of it with a little corned beef from our package. Sure wish my honey was doing my cooking for me.

Dec. 30, 1944

Well, everyone is getting ready for New Years Eve. We got an issue of Jerry flour and we decided to make a cake. I mixed up the flour and some powdered milk and butter. Added some sugar and raisins and put it in our home made oven to bake. It turned out good. Will make some icing for it tomorrow. They are supposed to have a play put on here in the hut for us tomorrow night.

Dec. 31, 1944

Well, here we are about to see the old out and the new in. Never thought I would be doing it as a P.W. I made some icing for our cake out of a chocolate bar and it made our cake perfect. I intend to bake one when I get home and give El a taste of it. We have to do things for ourselves or we would go hungry. We have been doing quite nicely so far. Didn't have our play tonight. Will have a play and dance New Years night.

Jan. 1, 1945

Today was sort of a big day here. We had a big Mulligan stew and our cake. It was real good. We had a short play and then the dance. Some of the R.C.A.F. boys dressed up as girls and it sure was a laugh. Everybody seemed to have a lot of fun, but my mind was with my loved ones at home. I was glad to see the day come to an end. The dance lasted until 12:30. The band was really good.

Jan. 2, 1945

Well, I got a haircut today and it cost me two cigarettes. If a guy has enough cigarettes he don't have to worry. They are the same as cash. Most fellows use them to buy their food with. Oh for a Red Cross package. We also hit fatigue detail and hauled a few stones from one pile to another. Have to go easy on food the rest of the week. Guess we had too much yesterday. I am supposed to get a pair of shoes in place of my rubber boots tomorrow. I hope so.

Jan. 3, 1945

Went to the British Red Cross and got a pair of shoes and they sure are a relief. I hope they last the duration. We get Red Cross parcels soon I hope and they will be one for every two men. Not much, but it helps. Am thinking of home tonight and wondering what it will be like to live a normal life again. I have lost 19 pounds since I was captured. Sure hope we get enough food so I don't lose more.

Jan. 4, 1945

Spent most of the day in bed. Have a bad cold and don't feel so good. Some good warm food sure would hit the spot. We get 1/6 of a loaf of bread a day now from the Jerries. It sure don't go far. We were told today that we were going to an American NCOs' camp and that we would leave the 6th. It sounds like a good deal. We have to go and be deloused again tomorrow before we leave.

Jan. 5, 1945

We got deloused this morning and will move to another part of the camp tonight. We got two days travel rations so it can't be far to our new camp. Had a rather good meal today and feel pretty good. Bob (Robert Markham?) gave me a package of cigarettes to last me until we could get some more at our new camp. (later) Am in another part of camp now and ready to move out. We will spend the night here. Have to sleep on the floor tonight.

Jan. 6, 1945

Today sure has been a miserable one. We had to be searched again before we left and it took a long time. We were marched to a railroad and loaded into box cars. We had a small stove in it, but hardly any fuel. We rode all day and most of the night. We finally got to our new camp which is **Stalag 3-B** (Furstenberg). We had to be searched again and were then issued two old blankets apiece and put in a barracks. It sure was cold.

Jan. 8, 1945

We spent the whole day waiting to be deloused again. They sure must think we are lousy. We didn't get to go, so we will have to go in the morning. We ate the rest of our travel rations and won't get any more until tomorrow. The old prisoners donated enough coffee to make us some and it was a God send. It sure is cold and miserable here. We don't have any fire in here. I sure am homesick and miss my honey so awfully much.

Jan. 9, 1945

Well, we finally got our bath and was deloused. The American Red Cross gave us a clean set of underclothes and a towel and some soap. I also got an overcoat from them. We were put in a different hut which is the one we will be in from now on. It is going to take a lot to fix it up. We got some good G.I. soup and bread today and it sure did hit the spot. Read a good part of the Testament and went to bed.

Jan 10, 1945

Today we were issued a Red Cross food parcel. It has to last two men a week. It has a lot of good stuff in it such as: 1 lb. can of margarine, 12 oz. can of meat and vegetable stew, 6 oz. can of liver paste, ½ a pound of sugar, 1 lb. can of powdered milk, 1 lb. box of prunes, 6 oz. can of jam, two 2 1/2 oz. cans of salmon, 7 oz. box of C ration crackers, 8 oz. can of chopped pork, 5 packs of cigarettes and two D ration bars. It is quite a variety, but just barely a taste for two men. It also has a 4 oz. can of soluble coffee..

Jan. 11, 1945

We got an issue of potatoes from Jerry today so Ben and I used our can of stew and made a good big stew out of it. It was really good. Am getting sort of settled now and are trying to make it as homey as possible. We are going to fix some stoves to cook on if we can get some steel plates for them. We have 75 men in our hut now and will get in about 60 more tomorrow.

Jan. 12, 1945

Well, we now have the grand total of 146 men in our hut now and it sure is crowded. We have a roll call at 7 in the morning and Jerry comes around to see if anyone has escaped. We get some G.I. soup every day now. It comes in around noon every day and we have something out of our parcel for supper. We never get full, but we just manage to survive. Boy, how I could go for some of the food my honey used to try to get me to eat.

Jan. 13, 1945

We got one stove fixed today. We can have a hot supper now. We usually have a hot cup of coffee before we hit the boards. I washed my field jacket today and have to wear my overcoat until it gets dry which will be in about five days. I am learning how to make some good meals and make our parcel last us a week. I intend to make up some of our Stalag dishes as we call them when I get home for my honey.

Jan. 14, 1945

The days are running pretty much the same now and we are all waiting for the day to come when we will be liberated. I have had a bad case of homesickness today and miss Ginny and Lin (wife and son) and the family. I don't know how some of the older men have stayed here two and three years without going crazy. My honey will like me now. I only weigh 153 and losing more all the time.

Jan. 15, 1945

We now have two stoves to cook on, but no oven. If we had an oven I would try to bake a cake using our crackers as flour. We were issued by the Red Cross a shaving kit and tooth brush and powder, another towel, 2 handkerchiefs and two shirts. Will get a chance to wash the ones I have on now. My resistance sure is low. I guess some good food and my honey would build it back up again.

Jan. 16,1945

Have been saving the crust off my bread for a week now and today I made a big bread pudding with prunes, sugar and milk. It was nice and thick and it sure did fill me up. We got some books in to read and it will help pass the time away. I never thought I would ever get tired of sleeping. Went for a walk around the compound several times and it sure tired me out.

Jan. 17, 1945

I haven't said much about the letter forms Jerry issues us. We are allowed 2 letter forms and 6 post cards a month. They are very strict about how you use them and most of all about what you put in them. I would like to tell you just what has happened since we hit the front until now, but if Jerry ever got a hold of it I would be spending some time in solitary. All I can say for now it is no bed of roses.

Jan 18, 1945

The Red Cross issued us a toilet article kit and now I can shave and stay that way. We have our church services every Tuesday and also have a very nice Chapel here. Of course it has all been fixed up by POW's and the Red Cross. All a fellow thinks about here is his family and the good food he would like to have. I sure could go for some of Nancy's (sister-in-law) lemon pie.

Jan. 19, 1945

Today was duty day for our group of six. We had to go to the kitchen at 6 A.M. and get the Jerry coffee and then soup at 11:30. We then have to go for Jerry tea at 4:30 and all we get from Jerry is some bread and butter. It gives a guy something to do and gets his mind off his troubles for a while.

Jan. 20, 1945

It has been nasty out today. It started off by raining, but we now have a blizzard out. It is a good day to stay in bed and that is just what I am doing. Ben and I are going to have toasted salmon sandwiches and coffee for supper if we can wait that long. I sure wish I had a loaf of Wonder Bread. (a local Detroit brand) Miss my honey a lot today. Wonder what mom is having for dinner today.

Jan. 21, 1945

Today it was rumored that we may have to evacuate here because of the Russians. I am wondering just where we will go. It sort of sounds as if it won't be long

now. I hope so. Then I can get home to my darling wife and loved ones. The weather is still bad and it sure would freeze us to death if we had to leave here now. I sure do love my wife.

Jan. 22, 1945

Nothing much happened today. We got an issue of potatoes today and mashed them up and had mashed potatoes and corn. Well, it sure was good. We ran out of spread, so I made some out of powdered milk, sugar and coffee. It was a lot better than I thought it would be. The Russians are in a big drive and it may not be long before we have to leave.

Jan. 23, 1945

We were told to save whatever food we could because we would have to march 125 Km. if we had to move. I don't know what we could save. We hardly get enough to eat as it is. If only we could have got a Red Cross parcel we would be all set. I thought we might be moved in box cars, but I was told we would have to walk and that makes it worse.

Jan. 24, 1945

Saw a train load of Jerry civilians go by on open flat cars and they looked half frozen to death. They sure must be hard up for transportation. I made another bread pudding today and sort of got filled up a little. I am going to have my honey fix me up some of her famous chili when I get home. I am so damn hungry I could eat a horse. I have had a lot of that lately.

Jan. 26, 1945

News is today that the Russians are 75 Km. from Berlin. I would rather stay here and let them liberate us, but Jerry don't want that to happen. Didn't do much of anything but sleep today. There are train loads of civilians still going by once in a while. So long as a guy sleeps he has his mind off of food. That is one reason I sleep so much. People at home would never believe that things like this could happen.

Jan. 27, 1945

Nothing new today. It still looks as if we are to leave here. It is 10 below zero out.

Jan. 28, 1945

Well, here it is Sunday so I guess I will just say I spent the whole day sleeping and doing a little eating.

Jan. 29, 1945

Today we got our Red Cross package and had a good meal for supper. We made a big pot of stew with corn, potatoes and some carrots.

Jan. 30, 1945

It is beginning to look bad now. The Russians are closing in and Jerry is all excited around here.

Jan. 31, 1945

Well, today is the day we put on what clothes we could wear and one blanket. Packed what little food we had and 1/7 of a loaf of Jerry bread and left camp. It is really cold out.

Feb. 1, 1945

I am going to stop beating around the bush and put in just what happens now. I just don't care any more. We marched all last night and today. It was so cold you had to keep moving to keep warm. We marched about 35 miles and they finally put us in a barn to sleep. I should say to sit up. There were at least 475 of us in it. I sure am weak and tired.

Feb. 2, 1945

We marched about 28 miles again today. They didn't give us any bread today and I am almost starved to death. Just did get in a barn tonight or I would have had to sleep outside all night. I am so tired and weak I can hardly move. These Jerries aren't human. If we don't get any food tomorrow I won't be able to go any further.

Feb. 3, 1945

A lot of the boys escaped last night and that made it bad on the rest of us. We marched about 30 miles again today. I never would of made it, but I saw a G.I. get shot in the head for stopping and I knew I would get the same if I stopped. They gave us 1/5 of a loaf of bread per man which I ate right away. We were then put in a barn to sleep for the night.

Feb. 4, 1945

Today is Sunday and we didn't march but 10 miles. We got to a town and they gave us some more bread. They couldn't find a place for us to sleep so some of us were put in a church and some in a school. My feet are and bleeding now, but I guess I will just have to grin and bear it. Sure could use a good hot meal.

Feb. 5, 1945

Today was plain hell for me. I could hardly walk and they made us go 20 miles today. We got to a deserted town and put us up for the night. We managed to trade some soap to a woman for some bread. I doubt if I can go much further.

Feb. 6, 1945

Today was as bad as yesterday. I tried to get a ride on a wagon, but there was no room. We went about 12 miles today. We were told we would get there tomorrow.

Feb. 7, 1945

We got to our destination today. It is **Stalag 3-A** (Luckenwalde) about 35 miles from Berlin. They didn't have enough barracks for us so we were put in tents. My feet were so bad some fellows had to drag me the last mile or so. We got 1/5 of a loaf of bread again.

Feb. 8, 1945

Feel pretty good today after laying in a bed of straw all night. Got some more bread and a little bit of soup today. Can't get any medical attention for my feet as yet.

Feb. 9, 1945

Today we got some bread, soup and potatoes. It is hardly enough to know you have had any. We are slowly starving to death here. I hope it is over soon so we can get something to eat.

Feb. 10, 1945

I finally got a little tape and used one of my hankies for a bandage. We got the same amount of food. If only the Red Cross could see how we are being treated we might get more food. I am thinking of my honey tonight.

Feb. 11, 1945

Today wasn't so bad. We got some hot soup and bread and had church services. Poor feet of mine are starting to heal now. Played cards most of the afternoon. I wish I was home with all my loved ones.

Feb. 12, 1945

Living in these tents is no joke. We have straw for a bed and it sure is cold at night. We are barely getting enough to eat and if we don't get more soon we will all be starving to death. Sure wish the Red Cross could do something.

Feb. 13, 1945

Sure am hungry this morning as usual. I sure am going to eat all I want if I ever get back home to my honey. Stayed in bed to day to keep warm.

Feb. 14, 1945

Had a little luck today. Traded a bar of soap for a slice of bread from a Jerry guard. We also got soup and a ration of bread.

Feb. 15, 1945

Sun came out today so I washed and shaved. We are supposed to move to a camp where we will have a barracks to live in. Rumors of course.

Feb. 16, 1945

Today was a good day as far as food goes. Did some more trading with soap for bread and Jerry got us some cooked spuds. Sure could go for a nice big piece of liver to go with it. How about that honey?

Feb. 17, 1945

Today was rather good. I made a pot full of potato soup that the Jerry issued today. It was thin, but good. We also got 1/7 of a loaf of bread. I sure do miss my honey.

Feb. 18, 1945 Sunday

Today was nice and sunny and I got out and walked around. Dreamed I was with my honey and Lin last night and was surprised to see how big he was. Wish I had some of mom's hot biscuits right now.

Feb. 19, 1945

I don't know what to make of Jerry today. They gave us 1/4 of a loaf of bread and some soup today. It has been cold so I spent most of the day in bed. Dreamed I was home again last night.

Feb. 20, 1945

Today was just like Spring out. Walked around quite a bit. It was a beautiful day in Chicago as my honey used to say. Must remember to have her bake me an apple pie like she did in Edinberg (Indiana) and have El bake me a cake and Nancy a lemon pie and mom some hot biscuits.

Feb. 21, 1945

It was cold again today so I stayed in bed. Got some hot soup and a little bread from Jerry. News is pretty good so I still have hopes of getting home before too long.

Feb. 22, 1945

Today was still cold so I didn't get out much. Just got some soup today and I sure am hungry. These Jerries think we are a bunch of canaries. Sure could use a Red Cross parcel.

Feb. 23, 1945

Today was a rainy and nasty day. Got bread and soup again. The R.A.F. and A.A.F. sure has been busy around here. I just pray none hits close to me. Did a lot of thinking about my loved ones at home and sure wish I was home again.

Feb. 24, 1945

It turned cold again today and I stayed in bed. What a life. All you do is hope you get a piece of bread each and sleep. Sure could use a good hot meal to give me some strength.

Feb. 25, 1945

Well, today is Sunday and we got some hot soup and bread. I guess my prayers were answered. Have been doing a lot of dreaming about home. Miss my honey and family so awfully much.

Feb. 26, 1945

Today was really blue Monday. It rained all day and it was cold. No soup or bread today. I don't understand how anyone can be as inhuman as these Jerries.

Feb. 27, 1945

It is still raining today. We did some soup and potatoes today and it tasted like steak after not eating for such a long time.

Feb. 28, 1945

Well, here is another month gone and we are no closer to home. Nothing to eat again today. This is getting to be a habit.

Mar. 1, 1945

Well, March got off to a good start today. It is really windy out. We got some soup and bread today and I feel a little better. Sure wish I was home with my honey.

Mar. 2, 1945

Today is my darling wife's birthday. Sure wish I could have been home to help her celebrate it. We had a bad wind storm and it tore up our tent. Will have to sleep out in the cold if I can't find a place to sleep.

Mar. 3, 1945

Today after the storm it wasn't too bad. We got some hot soup and bread and I feel a lot better. I guess my stomach has shrunk a lot. Sure wish I was home so my honey could fix me a big meal.

Mar. 4, 1945

It is winter out today. It snowed quite a bit. We got soup again. It is just hot broth, but it helps a lot. Had church service in what is left of our tent. Sure wish I was home with all my loved ones. I am going to be a good church member.

Mar. 5, 1945

Today was rather nice, so I washed and shaved. We got bread and potatoes today. I have been having a lot of dreams about home. It is rumored that we are going to move to the Swiss border. Sure miss my sweet honey.

Mar. 6, 1945

Had some good news today. We are supposed to get a Red Cross box per man. Oh happy day. I guess we will eat again. I only hope they keep coming. Dreamed I was home with my honey again last night. It won't be long now.

Mar. 7, 1945

Well, I guess we will get our boxes tomorrow. I am going to have one good meal if it's the last thing I do. We also got some bread and soup today. News looks as if I may be home soon.

Mar. 8, 1945

We got our Red Cross box and I sure did fix me a good meal. We got a box per man. If Jerry would issue soup and bread every day we would get along fine. Sure wish I was home with all my loved ones.

Mar. 9, 1945

Had a good hot cup of coffee just now with milk and sugar and it sure did hit the spot. It looks as if Patton will be here soon and then I will be on my way home.

Mar. 10, 1945

Am still eating good and we were told we would get another issue Monday. Have been dreaming home again. Hope it won't be long now. I love my honey.

Mar. 11, 1945

Well, today is Sunday and I went to church. I guess I have a lot to be thankful for. AMEN

Mar. 12, 1945

We got another Red Cross box today. We were told we had enough boxes to last the duration. We either have a lot of boxes or the war is going to end soon. I hope it's the latter.

Mar. 13, 1945

Well, I sure am doing some good eating. Hope I can keep it up. Dreamed about my honey and Lin last night.

Mar. 14, 1945

It has been just like Spring out and I have been out most of the day. Saw a lot of A.A.F. headed for Berlin. Had fried ham and potatoes for my supper. I sure love my honey.

Mar. 15, 1945

Another nice day and I was out most of it. Saw another air raid today. Fixed another "primo" Stalag pudding and had hot coffee to go with it.

Mar. 16, 1945

Had a chance to get a good bath today. Feel pretty good now. The war looks as if it may end soon. Then home again to all my loved ones.

Mar. 31, 1945

I came down with diphtheria and was a pretty sick boy for a while.

April 22, 1945

Today we were liberated by the Reds. It won't be long now honey pie. G.I.'s should be here to get us in a day or so.

The following lists were in the back pages of his diary:

Candy bars I am going to try.

1. Clark
2. Baby Ruth

3. Mounds

4. Butter Finger

5. Hershey Almond

6. Hershey Plain

7. Hershey Crunch

8. Zero

9. Fudge

10. Pecan Roll

11. Pay Day

12. Honest Square

13. Mr. Goodbar

14. Snickers

15. Echo

16. Nestles Almond

17. Nestles Plain

18. Nestles Crunch

19. Mars

20. Bit-o-Honey

21. Bolster

22. Cold Turkey

23. Bakers Almond

24. Dream

25. Pecan Pete

26. Harvester

27. Planters Peanut

28. Whiz

Dishes I want when I get home.

Banana pudding

Apple pie and ice cream

Lemon pie

Liver fried with gravy and hot biscuits

Hot biscuits and gravy

Chocolate cake

Spaghetti and meat balls

Waffles, syrup and powdered sugar

Fruit cake

All kinds of pie and cake.

Bar-B-Que spare ribs

Mashed potatoes, eggs, cheese, bacon, toast, coffee

Macaroni and cheese

Vegetable soup and crackers

Every kind of a candy bar

States I have been in while in the service:

Ohio
Indiana - Indianapolis
Kentucky - Louisville
Tennessee - Nashville
Georgia - Fort Oglethorpe
North Carolina - Ashville
South Carolina - Charleston
Maryland (Washington, D.C.)
Pennsylvania - Pittsburg
New Jersey - Jersey City
New York - New York
Mass. - Boston
Vermont
Rhode Island
New Hampshire
Florida

Countries I have been in since I have been overseas:

Scotland - Glasgow
England - London
Ireland
France - Le Harve and Cherbourg
Belgium
Luxemburg
Germany - Berlin
Towns in England:
Burton on the Water
Stow on the Wold
Kingham
South Hampton
Cheltenham
Morton on the Marsh
Oxford
Liverpool

Towns I have been in while in Germany:

Berlin
Auw
Prunea
Lindberg
Leipzig
Furstenberg
Lublin
Frankfort on the Oder
Limbrose
Jeterburg
Tirpitz
Brandenburg
Cottbus

Magdeburg
Gottow
Mark Bucknow
Nea Lebbenau
Halbe
Hammelsdorf
St. Vith

The following name and address entries were in the back pages of his diary:

Benjamin A. Tingle
P.O. Box 134
Jackson, Georgia

William P. Meyer
Box # 421
La Marque, Texas

Roy E. Reigle
Box 606
Brodhead, Wisconsin

Herbert H. Hoover
3522 Berkeley Ave.
Alton, Ill.

Joseph Beaucha
603 2nd. Ave.
Waterville, New York

James H. Williams
110 W. Garden St.
Valdosta, Georgia

Maynard Dechambeau
221 River Road
Welland, Ontario
Canada

Ken Lees "Zoot"
12 South Street
Port Hope, Ontario
Canada

Howard Bondett
156 McIntyre Street East
North Bay, Ontario
Canada

Gordon Redwood "Red"
11 Stanton Road, Southfields

London S.W.
England

Home Again



Page last revised
James D. West
www.IndianaMilitary.org