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106th Infantry Division

Stalags 1-A, 3-A, 4-A, 5-A, 7-A, 11-A, 12-A, 13-A

I started this July 5 1994 , edited a couple of times as I remember Events, and have lots of events to include in this bit of History.

When I became 18 years old I volunteered "Before Being Drafted" to go into the military service.

I was sent by Bus From Blythsville, Arkansas to an induction Center Camp Joe T Robinson near Little Rock Arkansas. At the induction Center I was Physically and mentally examined including an IQ test. As I was going through the line of different Doctors and Specialists, the Dentist called other Dentists over to take a look at my perfect and flawless teeth, Then X ray Dept called the others over to view the extent of my chest expansion. When I finished the line I was called to a room where there were a group of Officers for evaluation. One of them asked me "what I would Like to pursue" That I had exceptional qualities and could be assigned to Navy, Army Air Corp, Navy Air Corp, Navy and Army air Corp, Navy or Army OCS. Or any Branch of service that I desired.

I was totally surprised and asked for more time to make a decision, I was sent to Camp Polk La probably due to my Exam results, I was assigned to take Advanced Martial Arts. I decided that I would Like a career in the Army Air Corp. I applied for and passed the exams and was shipped Shepard Field Texas for Aptitude tests, and pre flight, "I aced the test", " I wanted to be a pilot Because I had ambitions of becoming a Commercial Pilot after the war, I deducted that there would be no use for Bombardier and possible Navigator after the war". I made a score of 95 for Pilot and 55 and 45 for Navigator and Bombardier, As expected I was assigned to Pilot training". I was then sent to the University Of Nebraska for math and Science enhancement and Basic Flight training, I was a very proud and ambitious young man, I was doing great and had a great future forthcoming.. Another enjoyment was that University Of Nebraska was one of the great Wrestling Schools and since we were required to participate, I enjoyed the sport of wrestling under the instruction of a former world Champ. "Jerry Adams" In fact I won a match against him in an intramural tournament. We were also taught the dirty stuff that we might need to survive if we were ever down in enemy territory. About this time the German and Japanese Air Might had been virtually demolished and there were many thousands of men in Air Crew Training There was apparently little need for more Air crew and My Class received a polite notice from Our Government.

"Quote" For the convenience of the Government and without Prejudice you are ordered to report to [Camp Atterbury, Indiana](#) to be assigned to the 97<sup>th</sup> infantry division. This was the first great disappointment in my life.

I was shipped to [Camp Atterbury, Indiana](#) to the 97<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and took basic training over and over because there was no assignments for the division, Finally the 97<sup>th</sup> was ordered to go to San Luis Obispo Ca for Amphibious training. In San Luis Obispo We did more and more basic training while waiting for facilities for Amphibious training.

My Good Friend Dwight Stokes and I decided to go the Fort Commander and ask to be transferred to a unit that would soon see action. The Fort Commander stated that yes he would Accommodate us. Soon we were transferred to the [106<sup>th</sup> Division](#) and shortly there after were on our way to the European area.

A large part of the 106<sup>th</sup> was made up of young men from Flight Training, OCS, ASTP and other elements that were disbanded or severely reduced., The men had no combat training as a unit, However the Division was loaded with talent, Lots of anger and frustration by being demoted from a Flying Carrier or other Respected and profitable Carriers.

Fortunately the anger and frustration was focused on the Enemy. We recovered from our disappointments and were bored and tired of going through Basic training over and over. And were anxious to get into Combat and take care of the enemy.

We crossed the Atlantic on the Aquitania, Landing at Glasgow Scotland, Traveled to Banbury Cross England, only to Take another basic training. then to Lomerswieller, Belgium.

I was assigned as a runner in [Company A, 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment and 424th Battalion of the 106th Infantry Division](#). We GI's were scattered sparsely in a holding action, for a couple of Weeks before December 16, 1944 we were almost at leisure with little or no action for several days. We were billeted in the village Lomerswieller in various houses that had a spare room We were issued only 40 rounds of Caliber 30 Ammunition, or approximately 40 rounds for whatever weapon you carried, if it was Small Arms. At this time The Battle of the Bulge was not anticipated and 40 rounds appeared to be more than adequate. We were informed that there was a Dock Workers Strike on the east Coast and that The Dock Workers were on strike for better working conditions, they should have seen our working conditions They would not load ships anywhere on the East Coast, therefore ammunition was rationed. On or about December 10, 1944, we began to hear distant rumbling similar to a Thunder Storm or distant Tornado. About December 12 we could distinguish that A great amount of Military Equipment was moving, there were no airplanes flying, the weather was overcast with Light Rain and Heavy Fog, we could distinguish engines running and Tank Tracks squeaking. We GI's attempted to inform our Superiors that possibly the Germans were assembling lots of tanks and equipment within a few miles of our location. We were informed by our squad Sergeant that it could either Be American or German Movement, however it was not our place to worry, The War was basically over.

Anyway, the Brass knew what they were doing and that we would be told when and what to do. However in a few hours we were ordered to immediately get onto trucks and were driven to Winterspelt, unloaded and dispersed along a fence to the right of the road of a location known as Schnee Eifel We were under heavy rifle, mortar and Artillery fire immediately, I had no chance to dig in "I was a Designated Runner" We had no cover other than trying to stay just below the slope of the ridge in front of us.

In the Early Evening of December 16, in black darkness German Tanks followed by infantry started passing through the village, as ordered by our Squad Sergeant to fire at the tanks and Infantry. Our 40 Rounds of Ammunition were gone within a few minutes. Most of our Squad was killed within the first few minutes of the battle. Five survivors Including the Company Commander , Capt Cashion, slipped into a Root Cellar and spent

most of the night listening to a continuous line of German Tanks passing within a few feet of our location.

In the early hours of the morning Dec 17<sup>th</sup> Our Company Commander Capt. Cashion lunged outside with his arms waving over his head and yelled Officer, Officer, and surrendered to the Germans One of our comrades " John Barouch" understood German, He said our Captain told the Germans there were more Americans in the storm cellar, He was indeed a traitor to hopefully save his own skin. " I have since learned that I should not judge what a person, even yourself will do under life threatening circumstances." Captain Cashion's Actions probably had little or no Affect on the immediate results.

About daylight the Germans ordered us to come out or that a Tank would fire into the Root Cellar. Someone opened the door and there were several SS Troops and a Tank with the Muzzle pointed into the Root Cellar.

The four of us stepped outside the root Cellar and surrendered to the German SS Troops.

The SS Troops Searched us, The one that searched me was Polite. The first thing he did was to take two Cigarettes from a package of four in my coat pocket, he put one in his mouth and one in my mouth, he lit both our Cigarettes and put the remaining two Cigarettes in my pocket." I didn't habitually smoke at the time", He spoke good English, he told me to put my arms down that if I behaved, that I would not be harmed. I found the SS Troops to be very Professional Soldiers. They did not Blatantly mistreat us. Their rules became very simple, do exactly as they ordered you to do, or be Shot. They took the four of us to a big barn in the village, there were possibly twenty other GI's in the barn and several GI's wounded and lying down around the barn and nearby. By dark there were possibly a hundred GI prisoners held in the barn, We spent the night in the barn. A terrible battle continued in the area all through the night.

A few attempted to escape and were shot. December eighteenth many prisoners were assembled outside the barn, There were possibly 200 Americans down in the Barn Yard, Most of them Dead. The Germans went around the downed Americans probing with Bayonets and any and all that flinched or moved were shot in the head with pistols. It was extremely difficult to see and hear the young men, who were wounded and could not walk, beg for their lives, when approached by a German Soldier, with pistol drawn for the purpose of executing the young men simply because they could not walk and keep up with the other prisoners.

I mentally suffered for may years after the war by remembering those young men begging to be allowed to live. And yes most of them cried and called for their mothers.. The German Soldiers were very efficient at executions. possibly the Pistol shot was more available, as most German Soldiers wore a pistol, This was possible less expensive and possible more prestigious for the executioner than a rifle shot. I am sure that the German executioner may have not enjoyed performing this dirty task. The Germans were so efficient that they did not care to allow the wounded Americans to live and require transportation and medical attention. Instant death was a more efficient method. Possibly if any of the German executioners survived the war, they too must have lived with the cries of those executed young men in their ears every time they tried to rest. We were formed in a column of four and started walking, I assumed toward Germany. All wounded prisoners that became too tired or limp from fatigue or wounds were shot in the head.

We marched all day without food or water, they kept us overnight in a Big Barn. December nineteenth we again were marched all day, we were stopped three times during that day to be interrogated. The First Interrogating Officer was extremely polite at first, he explained as to how necessary it was for them to win the war quickly, to stop all the blood shed. He suggested that the German Troops at the front were without adequate clothing, he politely explained that he must therefore relieve me of my rain coat and Top Coat. Most of us GI's were dressed in Wool Pants and Shirts, Field Jackets, Top Coats, a rain Coat and Combat Boots. We were marched for a couple of hours and then interrogated again. This time the interrogating officer began very politely, asking for military information, he rapidly became furious, screaming at the top of his voice demanding that we "the useless ones" give up our Combat boots for his loyal troops at the front. About this time. Curdling screams were heard. I was told that if I did not comply with his orders that the next station of interrogation they would find methods that would make me gladly comply.

I now believe that the screaming was performed by a German just to scare the hell out of us and hopefully get more information from us. I gave up my Combat Boots and was supplied with wooden shoes. I was fortunate, most of the prisoners lost their boots and got no wooden shoes. Later when I was in Stalag 12A I was able to trade a silver Name Bracelet that I had in the crotch of my underwear for a pair of dilapidated Hob Nail Shoes.

We were marched again to another interrogation where remaining coats and shoes including watches and jewelry were confiscated. The Germans had prepared for a long war, they had dehydrated carrots including the tops intended for animal food, the dehydrated carrots looked like Alfalfa Hay, they also made bread consisting of some grain and mostly wood by products, each loaf was dated, the bread would last indefinitely, I have eaten bread that was 10 years old, this was now over three days and nights without food or water, The Germans gave us some green soup made from the dehydrated carrots and a half slice of bread. The Green soup had the same affect as the old fashioned "Black Drought" Used for total Bowl evacuation. We were marched to a train station and loaded fifty into each thirty foot Freight Car, the cars had no toilet facilities, food or drinking water. We were locked in the cars for three days and nights, unfortunately the green soup we ate before being loaded into the cars was not acceptable to our stomachs, we all came down with severe Dysentery. With standing room only, no toilet facilities, most of the GI's were down on the floor wallowing in the filth, at the end of three days and nights many were dead, the ones that were alive were very sick. We were removed from the Freight Cars and marched a short distance to a very large camp, the camp was an introduction center, interrogation, qualification and distribution center. **Stalag 12-A** At Limberg.

The Russians that had been prisoners for a long period of time, and were relatively established, the Russians made a kettle of soup from some unknown ingredients and were able to give each of us about half a cup of the concoction, After being without a scrap of food or water for over four days, This concoction was a life saving meal.

That evening the English prisoners were able to provide the new prisoners with a cup of tea. Before this time I had heard English Men speak Of "Having Tea". I as most G I's thought this was a near feminine thing to do. I take this opportunity to apologize to the English, They were formidable in Combat and having Tea is an eloquent thing to do. From this experience I learned to appreciate a hot cup of tea.

We were given a thin small blanket, the bunks were three tiers high running the length of the building with a one by six inch frame around the entire wood deck. The deck was about 5 ft wide. A 6 ft man could not lay straight out. We were fortunately stacked like sardines belly to back, very tight for the length of the bunk, fortunately there was some body heat generated. Unfortunately you could not avoid contact with the filth of Dysentery from others. By now most of the men had a bleeding dysentery. We would lay on one side or the other, very compact, when somebody could not tolerate the pain of bones against boards the word would be passed down the line and we would all do a sitting twist to turn over on the other side.

Some attempt was made to keep like nationals in like compounds,

The French nationals were treated very well, they had adequate warm clothing, lots of food, The Food was supplied by the American Red Cross, shipped to France from the U S then transported from France to the German compounds by French operated Red Cross American Lend Lease trucks. The Trucks were driven by Civilian French Men. The Americans were treated less fortunate, some Red Cross Food Parcels were delivered to the American compound, only to be confiscated by the Germans. Some small portions were issued to Americans who worked in the factories of war production.

The Russians were treated like Dogs, however the Russians were accustomed to a very rough and tough life in the Russian Military, they survived reasonably well. The English and Australians were similar to the Russians in their toughness, the Italians, Indians, Pakastanians, and Persians were totally treated as sub human. The French, Americans, English and Aussies were not often or purposely abused, the Italians, Indians, Pakastanians and Persians were continuously and repeatedly beat up, bayoneted and abused.

At this camp there was Guards from all elevations of Germans, The SS were Highly Professional, they rarely abused any body "Other than Kill you dead" If you obey the rules they treated you somewhat reasonable, you fracture the rules they simply and without expression shot you in the head. The German Youth were highly indoctrinated, hated all but Germans, enjoyed abusing any and all Nationals. There was the old Guard consisting of older or wounded military and Veterans of world War one, they had no stomach for the German Cause and some were very considerate of the prisoners. All the Stalogs that I was in there were no Jewish People, they had been sent directly to the Gas Chambers. Probable the best known cause for World War two was that Adolph Hitler hated Jewish People. "Fact" Six million Jews lost their lives during World War Two, "Fact" Sixty six million non Jews lost their lives in defense of the cause.

I have no Documentation of the names of the camps or proximity to a city. We knew the Camps more by Number than by Name. We were not interested in documentation, we did not expect that we would live to get out. Your life expectancy was possibly a week, the length of time that you could live with acute Dysentery, I was in the following camps for a few weeks each. Altenburg, Limberg am Main, **1A, 3A, 4A, 5A, 7A, 11A, 12A, 13A**. I was in a total of thirteen camps, I do not remember all the names.

I distinctly remember being in Limberg for a few weeks. The Camp was built Adjacent to the a large Electric Plant. Christmas Eve 1944 the English as I am informed probably an early or the first Night Raid attempted to bomb the Power Plant with 2000 LB bombs. The Stalag being Adjacent to the Power Plant and without Identification, more damage was

done to the Stalag than to the Power Plant. Many Prisoners were Killed. I remember the earth rolling from the concussion of The Big Bombs similar to Ground Swells on the Ocean, I was on the floor one second and seconds later was thrown against the ceiling.

Later I learned that the bombs did most damage to the Officers section of the camp and that Capt Cashion was Killed in that bombing raid.

While in camp we could see the Dog Fights airplanes in Combat The Germans had excellent fighter planes and had several Jet Fighter planes, The American bombers with their Fighter escorts would arrive in great numbers.

At this stage in the war, most of the German Pilots Were ACES due to having been in and surviving Many Dog fights. The German Jet planes were not efficient and could not carry enough fuel for a prolonged flight, however they would take off and fly through the American squadrons and have a turkey shoot in a very few minutes. Their German Jets would rip several American planes to shreds, the air would be littered with the American plane parts, parachutes and bodies of the American Crewmen. It took considerable time after the turkey shoot for all the Debris to fall to the ground, Much Debris would fall into the prison compound. On one occasion an American pilot parachuted and landed in our P O W Camp. It was very unfortunate for the Pilot however it was good news for us Prisoners, " how good it was to see a healthy well fed American". The Germans only gave us the news that they wanted us to have, Usually biased propoganda. The American Pilot enlightened us to the actual events of the war. The Germans had a field day when President Roosevelt Died. They told us Prisoners that Roosevelt was dead and that he, the only strong leader that the Americans had and that now that he is no longer leading the country that Germany with its great leader would now win the war for certain and quickly. By now most of the German war machinery and factories were bombed out and Roosevelt had ceased sending large squadrons of four engine bombers over Germany to avoid the loss of Civilian life and property not directly war related.

The Germans were very aware of Roosevelt's compassion for not bombing cities where civilians were likely to be killed, they were setting up factories and military Head quarters in beautiful resort cities I remember being on a work trip and walking through Zerpst, a most beautiful resort City. There were thousands of German Tanks and Other fighting equipment throughout the City.

Within two weeks after President Truman became President the sky was filled with very large squadrons of four engine bombers, They bombed each and every available target, and including Zerpst, There was not one building standing in Zerpst after a heavy bombardment. President Truman's attitude was that if we must fight, lets fight to win.

Also while in the prison camps every day we could see the V1 and V2 missiles flying to the west toward England. Also the long range rockets that were not known to us were fired toward the American lines in a contentious roar. With little news or twisted news we prisoners had no hope of Surviving and little hope of our country surviving the war. The Germans had better trained Military and equipment than the allies. The only reason we won the war was, our reason for fighting, and the dedication and courage of our young men. The Tactics of the Allies was that the Western Front would hold fast while the Eastern Front would Push, the purpose was to have the Germans moving their equipment to the east to stop the thrust. Getting them out in the open for the Allied Planes to Pick them off, exhausting their in-adequate fuel supply and wear and tear on their old

equipment, Then the allies reversed the procedure, going from West to East and cutting the Germans to pieces.

Unfortunately the Germans were moving most of us Prisoners away from the front to avoid having them recaptured. Therefore we were walking across Germany From East To West Then from West to East most of the time.

We would sometimes work on farms and be kept in barns or other out buildings. I was fortunate that most of the time I had guards that allowed you to pick up small potatoes and other farm produce to eat. Sometimes they allowed one or two prisoners to go outside the barn and make soup in the farmers wash kettle. We burned potatoes in open fire to make charcoal, we eat the charcoal to retard Dysentery. The ones that got Severe Dysentery and lay down usually died within three days. The ones who have courage enough to stay on their feet, exercise, eat some charcoal may sometimes live with the Condition.

In some of the Camps We built little Kreggie Burners, they were like small Forges, We built them out of mostly tin cans with a fan and a crank made from a Welding Rod or other Stiff Wire to turn the fan, you could boil a few potatoes or a little soup with a handful of wood chips. You could not survive on the vile food that the Germans issued to us, you had to be industrious enough to supplement you food with anything you could come up with and by any and all means.

I remember an occasion where a Russian Detail of men were sent out to a factory to perform some work. Apparently the Germans discovered that the a Russian from the work detail had stolen a tool from the jobsite. Early that evening the Germans turned a Search Dog loose in the Russian compound intending that the dog would find the guilty person. The dog was never seen again, the story is that the Russians butchered the dog and had a feast. There were no rats, cats or dogs in or around the compound, they were all considered a delicacy, the occupants were near death from starvation and would eat anything.

I have no use for thieves and liars, however I and most other prisoners were reduced to stealing anything we could use, when I was out on a work detail I stole anything useful that I could hide under my clothes and bring into Camp. I have at times came into Camp with potatoes in my pants legs. You learned which Guards would not perform a detailed search when you returned to camp and would take a bribe or turn their head and allow small harmless items to be brought in.

About a year before I was captured I was a Physical Specimen, I weighed 178 lb., 6' tall, 29" waist, 48" chest, Flawless teeth, extremely strong, never defeated in any and all styles of wrestling from College Rules to no rules full contact fighting. Due to my experience, and ability in the martial Arts, I was extensively trained in the Air force for special Commando services where courage and knowledge were required.

When I was liberated from stalag and transported to Rheims France and in a hospital for a month, I weighed 108 lb., had extreme Dysentery, Scurvy, Lice, Acute Arthritis, Bed Sores on shoulders hips and back, Considerable Tooth Decay and frost bitten Feet. I had survived only by Courage and determination. I was a wreck of a human being compared

to my former health. In prison I never had a Change of Clothes, a Tooth Brush or a bath for 5 months and 17 Days.

At Rheims France some of the American cooks actually cried at seeing the wretched condition of us ex prisoners, they had all the wonderful food to treat us in grand fashion, however they knew that our stomachs had shrunk and if given all the food we could eat, we would have foundered and killed ourselves.

They had to feed us a very little and increase the ration very slowly until we were capable of eating regularly. I wish to state that there has never been the Daring and compassion for a fellow man than under war conditions, Those young men on all occasions gave it all, to assist, help, or save a life of a countryman without considering his own danger. At the Hospital in Rheims France Just after our liberation from prison we would get two or three in each bed "As we were accustomed to cuddling while in prison to attempt to keep warm", Non of the camps were heated, the temperature was usually below zero. it appeared quite strange to the people who had not been prisoners.

A smaller soldier carrying a severely wounded man on his back was asked is he too heavy for you? The soldier replied he's not heavy he's my buddy." Nothing was too heavy or too dangerous when it came to Helping a wounded Buddy".

After a month in the Rheims Hospital I was standing in line for hours to board a Military Transport Plane to the U S. I became unstable and fell to the ground, I was placed back into the Hospital for a few days and then sent by truck to the coast of France and boarded an LST ship for a trip of 22 days back to New York.

The LST, a very small flat bottomed ship, was well supplied with food, We liberated prisoners enjoyed the food, keeping warm and the treatment and care of the crew of the ship was as if it had been a five star hotel.

At New York they gave us a Homecoming Dinner, any food we could think of, then sent us by bus, train etc. to our various locations. My Homecoming Dinner as I most desired was Steak, Ice Cream and Milk.

I was put on a train for a two day trip to Paragould Arkansas (closest Station To Home) Midway of the trip A Conductor from Cincinnati Ohio took me home with him to stay overnight with his family (rather than Sleep in the Train Station), I believe the conductor may have lost a son in the war that possible he enjoyed my stay at his house as much as I did. Than the Next Day I boarded a train to continue to Paragould Arkansas. Paragould was a few miles from my Home at Leachville, A neighbor that I knew before going into the Service (Hatley Robins) stopped to give me a ride, Hatley had been in Paragould overnight with his Mistress". Hatley Told me of his great achievements of eating enough aspirin to appear to have a Heart Murmur and beat the Draft.

Hatley eluded that he had made Lots of Money during the War by buying and selling Rationed Farm Equipment. Hatley dropped me off at my home.

MY Parents went into a state of shock and dis-belief, They had not yet received news of My release. The only news they received was from an English Girl I dated a few times while in London ( Alice Shine, 48 The Avenue, Musswell Hill, London, England) Alice knew how to get news from the war department and she learned that I was Missing In Action,

She wrote to my parents to tell them the bad news that I was Missing in action. They eventually received information that I was alive and was a P O W. With no further news, they had given up hope and assumed that I was Dead.

Seven days at home and then to the Army Navy Hospital in Hot Springs Ark for 30 days restoration, Discharged and went Home.

I wish to enlighten my friends that may read this document that all Germans were not bad, I have always believed that many Germans did not condone the actions of war, they were caught up in the circumstances simply because of they were born in Germany. I had more respect for the Germans than most other nationals in Europe. I had on more than one occasion myself and other prisoners were treated with all the kindness that circumstances afforded. The Germans had Fought a long hard war and had little for themselves much less having to share what they had with thousands of prisoners.

One time several of us prisoners had been walking constantly for several days. The Guards found a large barn on the outskirts of a small village, the Guards commandeered the barn and kept us prisoners overnight in the barn. The owner of the barn and a beautiful young Daughter probably eighteen years of age came into the barn to talk to us. We expected as usual a propaganda speech about how great the Germans were. The young lady mixed in the crowd and talked to individual prisoners with ease. She implied that they would soon have some food for us. In about two hours we were beckoned to come to the back of their house to eat. We found that they had made a very large kettle, wash Pot, of soup, we were invited to eat our fill. The soup was made with carrots, potatoes, turnips, barley and Horse Meat,. horse Meat was common in Germanly At the time I thought this was the best soup I had ever ate. They also had an abundance of good bread, Fruit preserves and Honey butter. a Honey butter was made from coal, it tasted like a mix of honey and real butter.

As it turned out the Man was the Burgermeister, "A Mayor" of the village. He had lived in St. Louis Mo. For many years, he had operated a well known Piano Store and was a successful Citizen in St. Louis. He was back in Germany when the war started to handle the title work of properties that was willed to him by his German parents, he could not leave Germany for the duration of the War.

Be aware that the finest young people were the first go into service, They were also the first to Die To save this most wonderful U. S. For all to appreciate and enjoy. They had the courage and guts To do the job. ( Their guts are still over There).

Who knows how many future geniuses that Had a productive future life were purposely snuffed out by a ten cent bullet.

I was for several years, angry for all the Americans here in the states that griped because they had to endure rationing of butter, sugar, meat and gasoline, while working at an over paid job that they would not have had except for the War". they should have seen and endured my conditions. Now all is forgiven. Possibly every person has in some way did something or said something that physically or mentally harmed another person.

The war did both mental and physical damage to all that was there, To survive, it was necessary to forget our past experiences and pick up the scraps of our lives and move ahead, I therefore have for many years, purposely tried to forget my war experiences.

The Scars have somewhat healed and now I think it is important to share my war experiences with friends and Family.

I have many times thought of the guts, courage and compassion of the many Military leaders "Admirals and Generals" that have had the duty, requirement and opportunity to commit a division of many thousands of young men to attack a known enemy position, knowing that all or most of the young men were being sacrificed as a diversion to enhance the chances of greater success of another action.

Consider the gravity of the decision of President Roosevelt, General Eisenhower, and Bernard Montgomery to commit thousands of young men to invade the coast of France, knowing that the majority of the young men were to be slaughtered for the preservation of the principles of this great country.

Unless you were there, it is not possible that you would understand how close and devoted we young men were, We depended upon each other for our very lives.

The most endearing friend and buddy that I ever knew "Dwight Stokes" was in all the conditions that occurred until I was Captured at the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, I lost contact with my buddy for over 58 years, We found each other and made contact in October 2002.

There are un intended omissions and errors in this document, I have wrote it from memory, I am getting more facts and dates from My Friend "Dwight Stokes".

Dwight continued in the battles until the end of the war, Dwight was a most courageous young man, and as myself he was Very fortunate to have survived the ordeal in one piece.

I gained much courage from Dwight, on an occasion before we went to Europe we were on our first forced march, meaning that we had a full back pack of more than 35 pounds plus a nine pound rifle, bayonet and full Combat gear. Dwight was born with a foot folded over. The problem was corrected however a small problem all his life. On this forced march we were to walk at a very fast pace for 28 miles in 5 .5 hours with all this weight on our backs. This was a test of courage that verified your courage and stamina. A march like this made weaklings out of all except those with great courage and stamina, I mentioned to Dwight that I was very tired. " I was Just Griping", Dwight, while limping on his sanative foot, and also being smaller in stature than myself, told me to lean on his shoulder for some rest and support. I could not accept Dwight's offer to lean on him, His offer gave me an extension of my own courage and a lesson in courage that I have not and will not ever forget. I hope that every American will watch the actual documentary of the battle of the Bulge. Only then will you really understand and appreciate the courage and comradeship of those courageous young men.

I will never understand how so called intelligent governments, Heads of State, Leaders and dictators can and do provoke a war and cause the death of millions of Human beings.

There has never been a war or military conflict of major proportions throughout documented history that was not totally or somewhat based on religious beliefs.

Every German Helmet was inscribed across the front "Got Mit Uns" God is with us.

Many times I have thought how un thoughtful I was for not recognizing the mental anguish of my parents who drove me off to the Bus station to catch the bus to go off to the war.

I must elate on my opinion of President Roosevelt, his cabinet and advisors.

The Japanese invaded China in 1932, The Germans invaded Poland in 1939. We could have been in the war since 1932 except our leaders had the tactical knowledge to buy time lest we become a part of the Nazi regime. Starting with the Pilots that volunteered to go to China and fight the Japanese in what eventually Became the Flying Tigers in 1932 we could have easily became in the war and being untrained without equipment we would have certainly been devoured by the Nazi's.

To buy time President Roosevelt and advisers sent Material and equipment to our allies in lieu of jumping into the war when we were out gunned.

The situation was like a 15 round fight, We let our allies fight and loose men for 13 rounds, while Japan and Germany were gradually being worn down from a long costly war, then when we were well prepared with machinery, guns, ships and trained men we stepped into the war as a big brother would and beat up on the Nazi's for the last rounds of a long and costly fight.

I have traveled and seen most of the War monuments in Washington D C and

western Europe, they are all very Somber and Peaceful. however I wish that we could build one last monument that would depict "Absolutely the last War Ever".

James D Forsythe



Page last revised  
James D. West  
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