

THE MILITARY

I so well remember December 7, 1941, a Sunday. I went to the movie and around 5:00 pm when I came home, my mother said Pearl Harbor had been attacked and destroyed. She said it meant war with the Japanese. She had tears in her eyes, and I knew what she was thinking.

As time passed and more and more of my friends were either drafted or volunteered, I felt that somehow I needed to go too. My mother and father were getting feeble, and they needed me, but this was war, I was single, and so in September, 1942, I went to Norfolk and joined the navy. I was sent home and told that I would be called within 90 days and that I would probably be sent to Great Lakes for naval training. On the 87th day I received a letter saying that a mistake had been made, that I was color blind, and that the navy could not accept me. I was told to go to Raleigh for a new examination and if the same problem still existed, I would be discharged. I went to Raleigh, was discharged, and I went across the hall and volunteered in the army. I was deeply worried because a color blind tobacco buyer would always be in trouble. My father was an optometrist and he did not know I was color blind. I felt that if Imperial Tobacco Company found it out, I would be in deep trouble there.

In volunteering in the army, I was sworn in, given a quick examination, told to go home and I would be called in a few days. Then I got a letter saying that volunteers would in the future go with the next group of draftees from my county. So on January 23, 1943, I got up at 5:00 AM, my mother gave me a breakfast of oatmeal, toast, eggs, and coffee. She was shedding bitter tears, and I felt tears running down my cheeks also. After breakfast, I told them goodbye, walked out of our home, never looked back, and walked to the postoffice, some three blocks away. We left for Fort Bragg shortly after 6:00 AM.

At Bragg, I was given my uniforms, took my various shots, was called out at 4:00 AM for duty while awaiting for an assignment to take basic training. I was automatically placed in an officer training group.

One night about 8:00 o'clock as I looked out the barracks, rain was coming

down in torrents. A military guard was standing out there in the rain, and his walk seemed very familiar. I thought I recognized that walk, so I went to the door and yelled "Rat", a nickname for a famous baseball player I had known well in years gone by. Sure enough, it was Burgess Whitehead, great second baseman for the old New York Giants. When he was relieved, he came to the barracks and we talked until the lights went out. The next morning, he was in charge of work details, and he called my name, gave me his room key, told me to go there and get some sleep. I was green and somewhat afraid to break rules, but I went to his room as I was told.

About a week later, four of us were given orders to report to Camp Croft, S.C. for basic training. In that group were Elmore (Honey) Hackney, all American football player at Duke University, Don Wilson, N.C. State fullback, and Charlie Harris, Tennessee end, and myself. We four became extremely close friends in basic training.

Don Wilson was stricken with an illness, and he called me during the night to say he was freezing. I took my blankets off and put them over him, then I called Hackney and we put his blankets on him also. It was Saturday night and we had Sunday off. Hackney and I went to the base hospital and told an officer that we had a sick soldier in the barracks. The officer made light of what we said, but we insisted that he was real sick, so an ambulance was dispatched to bring him to the hospital. About four hours later, a squad of soldiers descended upon our barracks to quarantine it--Don Wilson had spinal meningitis. Within two weeks about five others in the barracks fell out with the same illness. Finally, Hackney and I were ordered to the hospital for tests. We stayed there for 10 days, and in a conference, we were told that we were absolutely immune to spinal meningitis.

At the end of basic training, Hackney was suffering from varicose veins, and he was discharged. Don Wilson had fallen out of our company, but after the war he used to stop by the Daily News occasionally to see me. He was a sales-

man. I never knew what happened to Charlie Harris. I played baseball on the Camp Croft team. In July I was sent to Clemson college for a series~~xx~~ of exams, written and oral. Had I known what was to follow, I would have tried to get eliminated. Somehow out of some 2,000 in the original group, I was among the final 17 chosen to go to Harvard University for study. I thought it would be advanced French and military government, but it was Chinese. I was told quickly that a Southern boy could not learn Chinese because we spoke in monotonous. I said "Dr Chou, the decision is the army's, not mine."

The work was extremely hard, very accelerated, and almost more than a human being could bear.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

At Harvard the army had a rule that at holiday periods, if one lived more than 600 miles from home, he could not get leave. At Thanksgiving we had time off, but I had to remain at school along with three others in the 120 man school we were assigned. About 8:00 AM we were sleeping, and a knock came on the door. It was an army order directing the four of us to go to a certain hall in the Harvard Yard at 10:00 o'clock to help with some practice. Grudgingly, we went. But when the man in charge said to one of us "you represent vice President Truman," to another, "you represent Senator Salstonstall", to another "you represent General Marshall", and so on, I said to my fellow soldiers, you realize this is no chicken occasion that we are here to practice." So I went to the man in charge and asked him if we could attend the next day. He said "I'm real sorry..this place seats only 167 people, and everything is already worked out, but if I can figure a way for you to attend, I'll send you tickets." He took down our address, we left thinking it was all over. But next morning again about 8:00 o'clock a runner knocked on the door. We had a sealed military letter for me. I signed for it, and opened it carefully. There were four tickets inside with an engraved invitation which read "to award the degree of doctor of humanities to the right honorable Winston Soenser Churchill." The cere-

mony would take place at 10:00 o'clock. When we arrived at the ~~Harvard~~ Yard, there were thousands of people all around, but military guards would let no one inside without an invitation. We showed our invitations and we were passed immediately. The orders told us to whom to report, and we did. One of our four escorted Mrs. Churchill, two were in Mr. Churchill's honor guard, and I was assigned the task of escorting the daughter, Mary Churchill.

Mr. Churchill made one of his famous speeches. Coventry had just been destroyed before he arrived. Both Mrs Churchill and Mary cried most of the time while Mr. Churchill was speaking.

After the speaking and the ceremonies were over, we were told to bring Mrs. Churchill and Mary to the back of the small building and to wait for orders there. We did so, and Mr. Churchill shook hands with each of us. When he recognized my Southern accent, he asked me where I was from, and I said "North Carolina." He said his mother was from Virginia, and he knew just where my home state was located. He offered me one of his long cigars, but I told him that I was not man enough to smoke it. He laughed heartily. The Churchills and our four soldiers chatted for some 35 minutes while full security was being set for their departure. It was a great day for a country boy from the Old North State.

MANEUVERS

About the middle of March, 1944, all students who had been classified as fluent in French (I was so classified, but I was not fluent) were pulled out of the steam heated atmosphere of Harvard and sent to the mud, snow, and cold of Tennessee on maneuvers. I was assigned to Company K, 328th regiment, 26th division. Gene Alligood of Washington N.C. was commanding officer. After some three weeks there, we went to Fort Jackson in South Carolina for post maneuver training. In June we were shipped to Camp Shanks in New York where we boarded a Liberty ship for parts unknown. We were taken to Europe. As we approached land, we could see England on the left. But our ship veered to the right, cross the

channel, and we climbed down rope ladders into flat bottom boats and later waded ashore in Normandy. The battle area then was around St. Lo, but we stayed in Normandy until late August or September when we were ordered to the front lines.

We were ordered to remove all insignia on uniforms. As we marched through some little village, we could hear the continuous roar of artillery in the distance. And two small French boys were playing and one of them said "there goes the 26th division to the front." We truly went to the front. We relieved the Fifth Cavalry in the ^{Montecourt} ~~Kennelers~~ Forest. It had been virtually wiped out. We underwent severe artillery shelling just outside the wooded area. Inside we began to lose our men, and on an outpost with the Germans near enough so that they could be heard talking at times, we dug in. I dug in near a fire break. On that fire break was a German mine box. I crawled out to get it, and I covered my fox hole with the boards from the box, plus dirt and then leaves and brush. I left room enough to crawl out at the head. During the night, the Germans came upon us, killing or capturing several of my fellow soldiers. During the night a German soldier stood just at the edge of my fox hole and opened up with a machine gun. I could have grabbed the barrel, but I didn't. One more step and he would have been in the fox hole with me. Our boys began to throwing hand grenades toward my fox hole. Many of them were wounded and I could hear them screaming or groaning at times. The next morning just as it was getting light, I peeped out of my fox hole. There was a German sitting up about six feet away. I called to him in a whisper holding my gun on him all the time. He did not move, so I crawled out, pushed him with my gun, and he fell over. He had been killed during the night. I began looking around and I was the only living one there. The woods was thick, and I did not know which way my company was then. I crawled back into my fox hole not knowing what to do, but expecting to be killed or captured at any time. Later in the morning, I heard some brush breaking. A patrol from Company K had been sent out to see what had happened on that outpost. Several of our boys lay dead, and the patrol took me and as many weap-

ons back as possible.

On another occasion we were caught in an open field and a German flaye^{hit} opened up right behind my heel. Instead of freezing there like a tree, I ~~xxxx~~ the dirt and fortunately their machine gun fire missed me.

On another occasion on a patrol with a boy named George (I can't remember the last name) we were to check out a bridge and wait there until morning for our company to move up. George and I were standing by the phone when I was told that a German patrol was right on top of us. It was so dark that I told the one at the other end that I could not see the phone. A few minutes later I was told that the German patrol was right there with us. Again, we could see nor hear nothing. But in a few minutes a German shell came whistling over, a piece of the shell hit George and wounding him, a piece knocked off my steel helmet and hurt my neck. Then another shell came whistling toward us, landed just a few feet away, shook and simmered a bit but did not explode. I pulled George away. I could not see, but I thought George was badly wounded. I did not retrieve my ~~xxxxxx~~^{helmet} until it got light. I had no breakfast, but Gene Alligood gave me a chocolate army candy bar.

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In ~~xxxxxx~~ November Tony Pisano and I were sent back to see about more ammunition for our company. We were about a mile from the front, and we sat down to rest. We were about 30 feet apart then, and suddenly I noticed a car approaching with three stars on a plate in front. I knew that it was supposed to be a lieutenant general. At the time the Germans were sending men over to our side dressed in American uniforms. We had been carefully instructed to check out anyone stopping to question us. That car stopped directly in front of me as I sat on that ditchbank. I stood up saluted, and said "now general, sir, you know the rules. I am ordered to check you out thoroughly, so I am going to ask you some questions and I hope you give good answers." So I ~~xxx~~ asked him several purely American questions, and he gave good answers. Then he said "now I must ask you some questions. He did, and he asked me what state I

was from. When I said "North Carolina", he says "did you come through Fort Bragg when you entered the army." I told him I did, and he asked ~~me~~ when I came in. ~~He~~ said "when you entered Fort Bragg, I was the commanding general there." He then asked me how to get to the information center. Tony and I had just come by the center, but it was in a rather open area with German observation certain. I told him how to get there, but I said to him that "if you drive that car around there, you'll never make it..the best way to go is across this open field here." He told ~~me~~ to accompany him. I told him that there might be shots across the field, and if so, for him to hit the dirt fast. When we got close enough for him to see the center, he turned around, shook my hand, thanked me, and we parted company.

In December our company was going back for a week's rest and for some recruits to fill in the vacant spots. We were some distance from the front when suddenly we stopped. The wait turned into one of several hours, and we were told that there was a breakthrough some 50 miles up the line, and that we ~~would~~ would go up there to close it up and then go on our week's rest. At dark we climbed into trucks and drove about five miles per hour in sleet and snow and cold until about midnight, we were told "this is it." We had no blankets, no overcoats, and the ground was frozen. It would be a terrible night. The fog set in and it was extremely thick. In the morning some fellows had icicles on ~~their~~ their coats. We made a big log fire and thawed out. Suddenly a shell dropped some 200 yards away, then another 100 yards away. The Germans were doing what is known as "bracketing in" on us. Five of us jumped into a German fox hole shaped like an L. I was the second one in. The shells were busting all around us, and in between bursts one fellow could get out of the covered hole and run for safety across the field. Three had already made it and I moved around to be next. A shell either hit around the L or on the edge, blowing Dan Mahaney out of the hole, killing him instantly. I was dazed, but I made it across the field, I was later told. I was to go to the hospital where I would spend the

next four months.

The hospital at St. Cloud was a former home for French elderly citizens. About two weeks after I got there, casualties were coming in so fast that it was necessary to change over from a 600 bed hospital to one much larger. The hospital asked for volunteers among patients who could do light duty to stay there rather than going to England to recuperate. They promised us good treatment. I volunteered, and I was assigned to work in the Receiving & Disposition office. Being the only volunteer with a college education, I was lucky. I had to meet trains bringing the wounded in at stated times. St. Cloud is six miles from Paris. About once a week a train bringing wounded German prisoners would arrive. I had to meet these trains occasionally. It ended up with us having some 600 wounded Germans. We were treated well, and each day I would check the list of patients coming in to see about those from Company K of the 26th division. Several of my buddies came in, and I tried to look out for them.

At St. Cloud, Christmas, 1944, was a white one. I had made friends with several nurses, and on Christmas eve I volunteered to give out stockings on all beds of patients. The nurse in one ward handed me a bottle of wine which I slipped in my shirt just as the head hospital nurse, Major Flavin, walked in. She asked me what I had, but I turned around quickly and said "please don't bother me now..I'm busy." She looked at me and said "when you finish your duties, come to my office." It was late in the evening when I went to see her knowing that the nurse was in deep trouble who gave me that wine, and I was in trouble for not telling Major Flavin what I had put in my shirt. But when I entered her office, this 53 year old army nurse smiled, said "now I want you to enjoy Christmas..have a glass of egg nogg." I couldn't believe my eyes and my ears, but I sat there with a wonderfully dedicated nurse and drank egg nogg. I went to bed about midnight, but early on Christmas morning, a soldier awakened me and said "Ma Flavin wants to see you..she is in ward so and so, room so and so..she fell this morning and broke her leg in the snow." I hurried

to see her. She was in much pain, said she was hungry, and she said "you had better look out for me while I'm in this fix." That evening, she sent for me again. She said was was "hungry as a bear" and that the supper they had given her was totally inadequate. "You know those boys in the kitchen...you go and bring me back some food." Actually, for supper that night we had some real good steaks. I went to the kitchen and asked a friend to give me a steak for Major Flavin. He brought out a nice one, but we could find nothing in which to wrap it. Finally, I went to the rest room, took a roll of toilet paper, wrapped that steak well, carried it to Major Flavin, and she ate every mouthful of it. For some days, I had to bring extra food in to her.

Penecillin

While working in the Receiving & Disposition office one night, a French father came in. He seemed very sincere, was tearful as he told me that his little daughter was very sick, and the doctor says the only hope for her is to get some penecillin. I told him that a doctor would have to help him and that I would get in trouble if I tried. But he was so tearful and so pitiful that I finally went to a nearby refrigerator and picked up a vial of penecillin and gave it to him. I never heard anything about it, but had I been caught, I sure would have been in big trouble.

CIGARS

While in the hospital about the middle of February my Christmas packages began to arrive. In one package from Mr. Reed, president of Imperial Tobacco company, was a box of fine cigars. The price, ^{50 cents,} ~~50 cents,~~ was on the box. Now 50 cents in that day was a big price for a cigar, and cigars were very scarce in the hospital. My doctor had been complaining about cheap cigars, and when I showed him what I had and gave him a 50 cents cigar, he had a real fit. And as long as those cigars lasted, I got extra good treatment.

Salvation Army

For several weeks I had wanted to contact my fraternity brother and very

close friend, Snooky Tarrall, who was close to Paris. I had asked the Red Cross to contact him, but somehow he did not show up. Finally, the Salvation Army captain asked me if he could do anything for me. It was in the early morning, and I asked him to contact Tarrall. Around ~~xxx~~ one o'clock, Snooky Tarrall showed up bringing me all sorts of things such as warm socks, candy, a sweater, and he had a real bundle. He remained in touch by coming over about twice a week then. The Salvation Army had acted swiftly and successfully.

CHRISTMAS IN HOSPITAL

I'm sure Christmas holds a sameness over many parts of the world. At Christmas, 1944, I wanted to give some little gift to a couple of nurses who had been extremely kind to me. I found a Frenchman whose wife could make beautiful corsages, according to him. But they were made out of wild flowers and countryside greenery. But he made me ^{two} ~~xxxx~~ at five francs each or 50 cents in our money. They were neat, and I feel appreciated. But after all I had no money and no way to do any shopping.

In another hospital episode, on Christmas eve about 5:00 o'clock a singing group came to entertain the boys in the hospital. In my ward they came in and the first song was White Christmas. The boys began crying, the nurses were crying too, and then the entertainers began crying. And all those tears just naturally broke up the entertainment. They could not continue.

There were many happy moments in the hospital and many sad ones. I knew that I would be leaving for a center for reassignment. I didn't know where I might be sent, but back to the 26 division was a distinct possibility. So I went to the center, waited all day for my name to be called, and finally about dark I was the only one left. A soldier working in the center asked me who I was, and when I told him, he said "a friend of yours is in charge here; he is off duty today, but I remember now that he said to send you to his room and not to assign you today. I was taken to the room of Sgt. Nelson Stephenson of

Wilson N.C., a longtime friend. When he came back that evening, he said tomorrow we are sending out a few men to a fine outfit, Civil Censorship Division, and I think you'll like this one, so I have held out your card. This outfit is intelligence, and frankly, I'd like to be going with you. I was ~~real~~ grateful for his kindness, and he did send me to a great outfit. We referred to it as CCD. Now CCD was involved with postoffices, radio stations, newspapers, and wireless operations. I was assigned to the postal group. I was sent to a small town not too far from Paris where we went through captured German mail. Just about every letter to a German soldier had photos in it along with a stick ^{on} half a stick of chewing gum, or some other little item. We divided mail into four groups--business, personal, government, and packages. In going through the mail, this is how I acquired the German Iron Cross ^{along} ~~with~~ with the other medals. I was the first combat man in this outfit and for awhile my status seemed to be a curiosity. We were in small groups with perhaps 25 soldiers on a team along with foreigners who could read and write German. These girls read all the letters for any information which might help the allied cause. We lived in French estate homes, very large, and we were fed well.

In due time we moved up into Germany after ^{being} ~~being~~ assigned to several areas around Paris. We now were with the army fighting again except we did not sleep in foxholes, and we were not front line troops. We were treated well. In due time the war appeared to be winding down, so in June all old ball players were brought into headquarters at Pullach, Germany, near Munich. It was there that I was called into the Colonel's office for an interview for an editor of the newspaper. I had no journalistic experience, and I was sure I would not be tapped, but the next day, the colonel called me back and said "congratulations, you are the editor of the newspaper." I shook my head, looked at the colonel and finally I said "Colonel, we have just won this war and you have just lost the peace." He laughed, went over with me to the newspaper office where I had more help than one could shake a stick at. And therein began some of my great

newspaper experiences. I was fortunate enough to make the ball team, and we won the Third Army championship. On our post we had only 150 soldiers and around 1,600 women, ages 18 to 25, who were there to read every language in the world. I was assigned an SS German officer who would grab the ash tray each time a cigarette was put out, take the cigarette butt, wash the tray, and put it back.

Munich is at the foot of the Alps mountains which we could see in the distance. They were beautiful. Pullach was a village built for the SS officers, and the homes each had brass name plates indicating whose home it was. At first I lived in the home of General Hayms whom I never knew about. Later I moved to a dormitory adjacent to the newspaper office. That winter there was truly cold beginning about October 1. Heinrich Himmler's home, three stories above ground and three underground, a majestic mansion, was used as our headquarters.

Many wonderful experiences were gained there. Going to Bertessgarten, to Dachau, and to other places of interest were most meaningful.

CHARLES (CHUCK) KEPLER

One of the great characters I have ever known was Chuck Kehler. He was the shortstop on the ball team and I was the second baseman. We became fast friends, ran around together on our small base, ate together in the evening, and in general we were very close. In addition to being editor, I had several other duties such as Special Service Officer, Provost Marshall, and ball player. As special service officer, I was taken to task about not getting entertainment to our small post. It was those 1,600 girls who were protesting. It so happened that General Patton had absolutely forbidden fraternization with Germans, and that meant no dancing. But we had all those girls and on five successive Saturday nights we had Glen Miller's orchestra to play for us. And truly we were the only outfit in the Third Army that I knew about which could have such a dance.

During the evening while the dance was in progress, I noticed that during

several numbers Chuck Kehler would be playing some instrument and usually he would sing a song or two before the evening was over. But that really did not excite me. Chuck was such a talented young man in so many areas that I just accepted it.

One evening we were in my newspaper office talking and I asked ~~xxxxxx~~, "Chuck, what did you do in civilian life"? He said "you know, you have never asked me and I have wondered why." I said "well, I'm asking you now." He said "I am going to give you three guesses before I answer." So I said "you were with the FBI." He said "oh no, guess again." I said "you taught criminology in some college." He said "you are getting colder all the time..guess again." I said "you had charge of security for some corporation." He said "you are hopeless." I reminded him that I had made three guesses, so I said "just what did you do in civilian life"? He replied "I played the trombone in Les Brown's orchestra." I said "well, that's a coincidence..I knew about Les in college." He looked at me and said "did you go to Duke"? I replied "Chuck, you never asked me."

CHAMPIONSHIP GAMES

We played the army world series with the team from Offenbach, Germany, The first two games were at our place, the next three at ~~xxx~~ their home ground, and then we'd come back to Pullach or Munich. On that first game which we lost by a score of 1-0, we were told that at least \$75,000 were bet on the game. We won the second game, and then in Offenbach, we won all three games and the championship. We had our own bus in which we travelled and a German mechanic whom we called Hank was the chauffeur. He stayed on the bench and helped with whatever matters arose during a game. As I was waiting in the batter's box to to up for my turn at bat, I noticed Hank collecting money from some German

spectators. Now 15 minutes before game time, Germans were let in and they came from everywhere. I was puzzled by what Hank was doing collecting money. ~~xx~~ The batter had fouled off a ball over the backstop/ After my turn at bat, I asked Chuck how Hank was operating. Chuck said "he tells those Germans that

a batter has three chances to hit, and he bets them that the batter will hit the ball. I said "shucks, Jack fouled off the pitch and it went over the back-stop." Chuck says "it doesn't make any difference, fair or foul, if that ball is hit anywhere Hank collects his bets.2"

THE DOCTOR

We had a doctor on our post, and he seemed to lack common sense. One day he brought a list of 16 girls in to me on the newspaper and he said "these 16 girls have venereal disease, and I want you to publish the names in the newspaper so that we will not have the disease spread." I told him "you know I'm not going to publish any such list. He gave me a hard time, and he went to the colonel about my refusal. The colonel backed me up. In a few minutes I saw Chuck Kehler walking along the path by my office with one of those 16 girls. I called him but he pretended not to hear me. I went out, grabbed him by the neck, gave him a good swift kick in the rear, and brought him in my office and showed him the list. He was most grateful.

CUT DOWN TOO MUCH

On another occasion we received a story from a second lieutenant who had been given the bronze star. The story was about three pages long, and this reporter brought it to me. I said "cut it down..three pages are all out of reason." Well, he cut it down all right to about two or three lines. It read "Second Lt. M. Grassovich was awarded the bronze star for meritorious service while sitting at a desk in England." The bottom dropped out on me. That soldier was very mad and upset. I went to the colonel and said "colonel, you got me into this mess..now help me get out." He said "well, I think you gave him more space than he deserved..but you find some soldier who has had a real tough way to go in the army and play him up in tomorrow's paper and let's see what happens."

I found a buck private by the name of Simon. (I cannot recall his first

name) Now Simon was a college graduate, Duke University just as I was, and he had been in the army for three years. He was severely wounded in the Hurtgen Forest, lay out there for three days before they could get him out, and this young man had never received a promotion, nor any ~~medal~~ medal, not the purple heart ~~xx~~ nor the Good Conduct Medal. We played up the story, and it brought results. His papers said that he was to be given no duty which required him to stand on his feet. His feet were frozed in Hurtgen Forest.

About 40 minutes after the paper came out, I received a call from a general in Munich. He said "can you verify what you have in your story today"? I said "yes sir, general, every word of it." He then asked "where is Private Simon now"? I said "I can see him out my window..he's walking guard duty out there in the snow." The general said "my God, walking guard duty when he is not supposed to be on his feet..go get him off now." I said "general, when it comes to getting him off guard duty, you had better talk to someone else." He then said "well, I'll be out there within the hour." He came, met me at the office, went out and talked to Private Simon, came back and said to me "I just don't believe this can happen in the American army..this boy is a fine soldier and he deserves better." The next day he was made assistant manager of the divisional PX and given the rank of First Sergeant.

VISITORS

When visitors came to our post, they usually came by the newspaper office for information. We had several of them, and one day this very attractive lady came into my office. Now my office was was about 10 feet wide and 25 feet long. My desk was at the back with some chairs in front of the desk. This lady was sitting down in front of my desk facing me when a sergeant by the name of Koffenburger began motioning for me to come to the door. I did, and he said "I know that girl you are talking with, but I ~~xxx~~ can't think of her name.. I know I know her because I had a date with her when we were on Tennessee maneuvers..I

know her because she has the prettiest legs I ever saw on any woman."

I said "sergeant, come on in here and meet her again..she'll be glad to see you." So I sorta pushed him up front and I said "this sergeant says he had a date with you when he was on Tennessee maneuvers and he wants to renew your acquaintance...Miss Marlene Deitrich may I present Sergeant Koffenburder." Immediately the sergeant throw up his hands and said "my god, my god, Marlene Deitrich, and he tried to get out of the room, but her chair had him blocked. She got a big kick out of it, and the three of us had a nice conversation.

THE CHAPLAIN

We had an army chaplain assigned to us by the name of Duenow. He was a fine gentleman, and we all held him in high regard. In due time we were notified that we could get an alcohol rationing on our post. We had to send a truck out to get it, and an officer would have to be aboard. The colonel said "let Chaplain Duenow also be our liquor boss..send him each month to get our ration." So Chaplain Duenow readily agreed, and that settled the matter.

JAPAN SURRENDERS

When Japan surrendered, I thought we'd take a holiday on the newspaper, but the colonel felt differently. So we put together a newspaper, and I wrote a very short editorial. It so happened that it was judged the best editorial on V-J Day, and I was supposed to get a trip to Switzerland which I never took.

Later the colonel called me in and he said "I think you ought to go to Nuremburg for the trials of the Nazis, and I'll make arrangements for you." I wanted to go there, but I also kept hoping that my time would come to go home. And my time to go home came before the trials.

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~~BEACON MARKET~~

~~One day while I was taking a shower a sergeant came in to tell me that my~~

~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ IT IS RUMORED

On our little newspaper, daily I wrote a column entitled "It Is Rumored." Now most of what was said there was made up and too ridiculous to anyone to believe. But usually out of five or six rumors, one or two of them would have some substance to them.

It so happened that I had a close friend in headquarters in Munich. We cut the Third Army orders, and daily I would call him for any scoop that he might know.

In my column one day it read "it is rumored that General Patton will be relieved of his command of the Third Army." Sure enough he was relieved.

The next day the column said "it is rumored that General Lucius Clay will be named new Third Army Commander." And General Clay was named.

The next day the column said "the first order given by General Clay will be to abandon these doggone helmets and any leggings. Sure enough, it happened.

Nobody seemed to suspicion that my friend in Munich was supplying me with this information, but they were paying attention to that column. Then the colonel came in with a little statement. It read "anything appearing in the column 'It Is Rumored' should be taken as rumor only and not as fact."

LT. BROWN

A group of the girls on our post came into my office to jump on me because we had no tickets for the Rockets who were appearing in Munich. I did not even know where the special service office for the Third Army was located, so I called my friend in Munich and he told me that it was a Lt. Brown at some artillery unit the other side of Munich. So the next morning I set out to find Lt. Brown, and after a long search he was found. I told him that I would like to have some Rocket tickets, and he said "Rocket tickets...have you lost your mind...here you are bothering me about Rocket tickets and my colonel is slapping me hard about holding a dance Saturday night...now where in the hell can I get any women for a dance"?

I said to him "Lt. I'll get you a woman for every Rocket ticket you let

me have." He looked at me and said "ave you some kinda nut..will you tell my colonel just what you have told mxxx"? I said "certainly..how many tickets can you find"?

He took me in to his colonel and said to him "Colonel this fellow is either crazy or he's able to help us greatly." I then told the colonel of my proposition, a ~~xxx~~ girl for every Rocket ticket. I told him that we had 1,600 girls on our post and that they could not leave the post except with an armed soldier." That colonel looked ~~xxx~~ at the lieutenant and said "what the hell ave you standing there for,,get a move on you and get this man some Rocket tickets now." They called a group of men together, went around and in about an hour he came back with 53 Rockette tickets.

They wanted the 53 girls for Saturday night. I posted a notice outside the newspaper office and it said the first 53 signing up would go. In the meantime Lt. Brown came over to see our post, and from then on until I left, he ate supper with us about twice a week. When anything came along in Munich, he took good care of us. He even sent 1,500 pairs of skis to us once on a big truck. We just placed them outside for anyone who wanted a pair to pick them up. During the season snow ski trains ran each Sunday.

BLACK MARKET

While taking a shower in late November a sergeant came in to say that my orders to come home had come through and the colonel wanted to see me. I went over and he said "I'm going to arrange air transportation for you..you are the first one of us to be leaving." I really didn't want to fly home, but I could not afford to be ungrateful, so I thanked him. He said "I wish you would stay here a few days to get the newspaper turnover settled down. I agreed. Then he asked me "have you ever considered making the army your career"? He gave a little pitch about the advantages of the army career. I told him that I had been contacted about a job as a foreign correspondent, and it sounded good. But then I said "colonel, I want to be fair with you..if I were offered General

Eisenhower's job or the opportunity to go home and resume my life as a tobacco buyer, I'd take home." He smiled and said "you've answered every question in the book."

BLACK MARKET CONTINUED

It was agreed that I would leave for home on Sunday, December 1. On Friday, November 29, about 4:30 o'clock a runner came into my office and said "the colonel wants to see you immediately..he says come armed." I thought that he had given me the craziest order ~~is~~ I'd ever heard. But I had a little snub nosed pistol which I wore at times under my coat and it sort of fitted nicely under my arm. When I walked over the headquarters, two guards with bayonets fixed stopped me and asked "what is your business here"? I said "what the heck is this..you both know me..the colonel said for me to come over here." Then a guard said "he's asked you and about 50 others..go on down to room 033..the Colonel is there." I didn't even have my dogtags on, and as I walked into the colonel's office, he said "I know you're going home Sunday, but I knew you'd want to be in on this..I'm making youxx head of one patrol..we're doing something tonight about the black market..we must try to break it up." He showed me a map, said we were to go to an old German barracks out in a pine thicket, surround it, enter the front, turn right, run to the last door on the right, and there we should find a big black market operator in his sample room. He gave ~~me~~ eight men including two counter intelligence men. I said "Colonel, here I do want to get home safely and you're sending me on this now." We left, and we synchronized our watches. Each man was given a distinct assignment, and we stopped our vehicles about a quarter of a mile from the barrack and walked.

We came to the place and at exactly 8:00 o'clock a sergeant and I ran into the building, turned right, ran to the last door and it was locked. The big 240 pound sergeant knocked it down and in that room was a long German who said he had been in a concentration camp for six years. We told him to give us the

keys to the sample boxes surrounding the room. They looked like coffins standing up endways. He refused until the sergeant worked him over a bit. He then turned over the keys. In those 29 coffin like boxes were samples of all types of military clothing, American of course. One box had silk hose and women's undergarments, another had dental equipment, another shoes, another choice whiskies, another soap and perfume, and other articles which could not be bought at home. He told us that he had made \$50,000 per month for the past six months out of concentration camp. We radioed back to the colonel to send trucks to remove the sample boxes. He advised us to leave two men there to guard the room but to bring the prisoner back to him. He said he would dispatch the trucks immediately. When we arrived back the colonel was pleased, but he said "Ashley, one patrol has messed up and gone to the wrong place...you take your men and go to such and such a house in the area and bring the man there back here..he's a big operator too." I shook my head and said "colonel, waking up a fellow at one o'clock in the morning is not a happy thought. I hope he does not have one of those German burp guns." We went as ordered, brought back the man, and about 4:00 AM the colonel said "go get some sleep now" and he smiled. It was a welcome order. It was Saturday morning, my last full day with CCD.

LAST DAY & NIGHT WITH CCD

On Saturday morning things at the newspaper were quiet. I sat down and wrote a farewell message to the people with whom I had been associated. That evening a party was held with champagne, and my close friends were there. It is hard to say goodbye to fellows with whom you have stood side by side in war. It becomes ever harder when you realize that you'll never see most of them again. The tears began to flow. My teammates were there, and in a small way it was a touching affair.

The colonel had said he would have his jeep at my room at 5:00 AM to take me to the Munich Airport. At 5:00 AM the jeep was there, but snow was

coming down in sheets and there was at least six inches already on the ground. It was December 1, and my thoughts then were to get home by Christmas. The ~~taxi~~ driver took me to the airport and it was warm and comfortable inside. No planes were coming in or taking off. The snow was coming down as hard and fast as I had ever seen it. As the morning hours passed, more and more soldiers arrived but still no planes were in the air. About 1:00 PM over the loudspeaker system it was announced that "we shall try to get one plane out..we need a volunteer crew..a pilot, co-pilot, bombardier, and a navigator. Finally the four man crew had volunteered, and then came the announcement "any passengers wishing to volunteer to fly on this Paris flight, report to such and such a window." Only three of us reported out of several hundred soldiers in the building. We took off all right, got above the clouds, and it was a smooth flight to Paris. But over Paris we were stacked up at ~~Orly~~ Airport for an hour and a half. I was afraid that we would collide with another plane up there, but finally came our order to land. I was sitting there with the pilot on this C-47. He told me to look for the lights on the runway. The snow was still falling, and we were about 30 feet above the runway before I could see those lights. We landed, and we were told immediately that all flights were grounded. So I was stuck in Paris. The pilot took out his handkerchief, mopped his brow, and he said ~~xxxx~~ "that is the first time I have ever done that kind of landing." I asked him how old he was and how long he had been overseas. He said he was only 20 and he had just arrived in Munich three weeks before. I told him I was glad he did not tell me all that while we were stacked up over the airfield.

Having worked at the hospital and with the boys at the railroad station, I had made friends with several of them. I hit out for St. Lazarre station. Luckily, a friend was on duty. He said "there's a train going out to Camp Herbert Tawryton at 10:00 o'clock tonight. You know the secret passageway, so go to track 18, climb aboard and wait..we have at least 10,000 soldiers trying to get to some coast camp here." In the meantime I had run into a big tank man

hoping to get to Ft. Bragg also, so we went together through the secret passage way and then to track 18 and climbed aboard. At 10:00 o'clock when they let the chains down, I thought they would take that train off the tracks. But 600 were assigned to make that trip. The tank man and I made 602. The boys in the office had given me a chocolate bar. I divided it with my friend and with a colonel ~~we~~ who came into the compartment where we were. He thought we had been assigned to that car, so he did not question our presence.

When we arrived at the train station near the camp, we waited until the others had climbed aboard trucks. Then my friend and I got aboard the last truck. We told the driver we did not belong with that group and we asked him to help us. He was o.k. and he put us out at a point, told us to take that woods path until we came to some barracks. He said that was the casual area. We took that path, saw a light, followed it, came to the orderly room about 4:00 AM.

A sergeant was asleep there, but we woke him up. Instead of being mad, he seemed pleased, and he gave us blankets, took us to a small hut with about six empty beds. He said breakfast would be served until 8:00 AM. He said he would awaken

us at 7:45 so we could hurry and get breakfast. Truly, he went out of his way to help us. He came in at 7:45 to awaken us. We hurried to breakfast, and when we got back to the hut, he had made a fire for us. He said "now fellows, I have charge of placing casualties aboard departing ships. If you stick close by me, I'll have you on a ship within the week. I had already had all my shots, but I had nothing to prove it, so they made me take them again. Three days later about 5:00 PM over the loud speaker my name was called to report to the Orderly Room immediately ready to ship out. My friend and I were there in a hurry. At 5:50 o'clock I climbed aboard a Victory ship. At 6:00 o'clock we ate a good hearty meal. At 6:30 I lost that meal, and for the next eight days I was so seasick I could not eat. Finally we arrived at Boston harbor. A big ship came up beside ours with a big sign on the side which read "well done boys..welcome home." We left ship, entered a warehouse, were given two do-rats and a can of

coffee. We walked across that warehouse floor to the railroad tracks where a train was to carry us to Camp Miles ^{Standish} ~~xxxxxxxx~~ in Rhode Island. It was early morning still. It was sleeting outside, and a blanket of snow was on the ~~xxxxx~~ ground. Three days later we were given orders to board a train for Ft. Bragg. We boarded that train but in Washington D.C. we were told that we would be delayed for eight hours. But the the Tamiami was due, we found out, so my ~~xxxx~~ friend and I left the troop train, caught the Tamiami, were cursed out by the conductor because we had no tickets and no train orders to show him. But we talked back, told him we had just gotten back from overseas, that we were trying to get home for Christmas, and he did soften up right much. In fact, he seemed sorry for what he had said to us earlier.

About 2:00 AM we rode through Wilson N.C. and I saw a couple of policemen standing there whom I had known over the years. The train did not stop there. We arrived at Fayetteville and then to Ft. Bragg about 4:00 AM. We were given bunks and told that we'd have to wait our turn for discharge. I ran into Blinky Bullock in the same barracks, and we stayed together until discharge. My tank man had to go to another area for his discharge. Some six days later, my name was on the list for discharge. When I got to the assigned place, I was given a physical and told that my blood pressure was low and that I should go to a hospital for a few days. I protested strongly and told them it was low when they took me in. Part of my records were lost, but they apparently had some records there. The doctor came back and he said "you're right..it was low when you came in." Then at the desk I was told that it required 85 points for a discharge. Since my records were not all there, he said "you go home for a month's furlough, enjoy Christmas, and come back here on January 18." I asked him how many points it took for a discharge, and he said "55 points." I asked him how many could he figure with the partial records that I had. He figured ~~xx~~ awhile and he said "I don't believe it..you have 55 with only half your ~~xxxxxx~~ records." I said to him "please give me my discharge now and after I'm gone

you figure out the rest of the story." He smiled, and said "OK, if that is what you want." He wrote it out, gave it to me, and I was given the familiar ruptured duck. I made my way out of the post to the bus station. There was no bus going to Wilson until about 8:00 o'clock that night, No trains were going out either that I could catch. I decided to wait it out at the bus station. I reached Wilson about midnight, got a taxi to drive me home. There was a small light in the hall at home, the door was locked, but I knocked, and my mother came to the door. She knew I was home because she had heard it over radio, but she was unprepared for my arrival at midnight. She had a heart attack right there. She already had a very bad heart. She remained in bed the next day, but she was soon up again. She lived about two years. It was December 19, 1945, and I was home for Christmas. It was a happy day.

MY GREATEST ARMY STORY--DAN MAHANEY

A young soldier and I were talking as the sleet and rain beat down on us. It was just before the bombardment. Danny asked me if I ever prayed. I said "yes, Danny I pray often." He asked "what do you pray for"? Maybe I did not answer him directly, but I said "Danny, I've got to get through this war somehow. I've got to get back home; there's so much I want to do..I've just got to get home safely somehow."

He looked at me and said "me, I'm ready to go; I prayed all night that a shell would come and get me...I can't stand this any longer..I want to go, and I've prayed that it might happen." Within a matter of a few minutes, it did happen. Danny Mahaney was dead. A shell killed him instantly. Looking at that mutilated body, I knew his prayer had been answered.

SADDEST DAY

I guess the saddest day of my mother's life was the morning I left in WW II for Ft. Bragg and the army. As she prepared breakfast for me, oatmeal, orange juice, toast, and coffee, the tears were streaming down her eyes. And

my tears were plentiful too. She was in very poor health. As I was ready to leave for the postoffice, I went into the bedroom and kissed my nephew who lived with us, Jimmy Gainey who was asleep. My sister Agnes was up and I kissed her. Then I shook hands with my father. Then I gave my mother a good hug and kiss. I walked out the door and down the street. And I never looked back. I knew it would be harder on my mother if I looked back and waved and it would have been harder on me too. I guess it was my mother's saddest day.

REPEAT

Many years later Rachel and I would take our son, Ashley Brown Futrell Jr, (Brownie) to Duke University to enter there. We spent considerable time unpacking his belongings and carrying them to the room. We had him settled and we were ready to leave. I put my arm around him, hugged him, and said goodbye and walked down the hall--and I never looked back. I probably could not have seen very well anyway because of the tears. His college education had begun. Three years and nine months later his mother and I would go back for his graduation. We were extremely proud and he graduated with academic honors. And now he would come home to enter the family business with us.

Rachel and I were proud that we were financially able to send him to college. In my own day, I had to work, scrape, miss meals for lack of money, do without books, and in general "hang on" in a depression. In 1933 upon my own graduation, I was unable to get a job. Times were extremely critical.