

May, 2004

Please consider this:

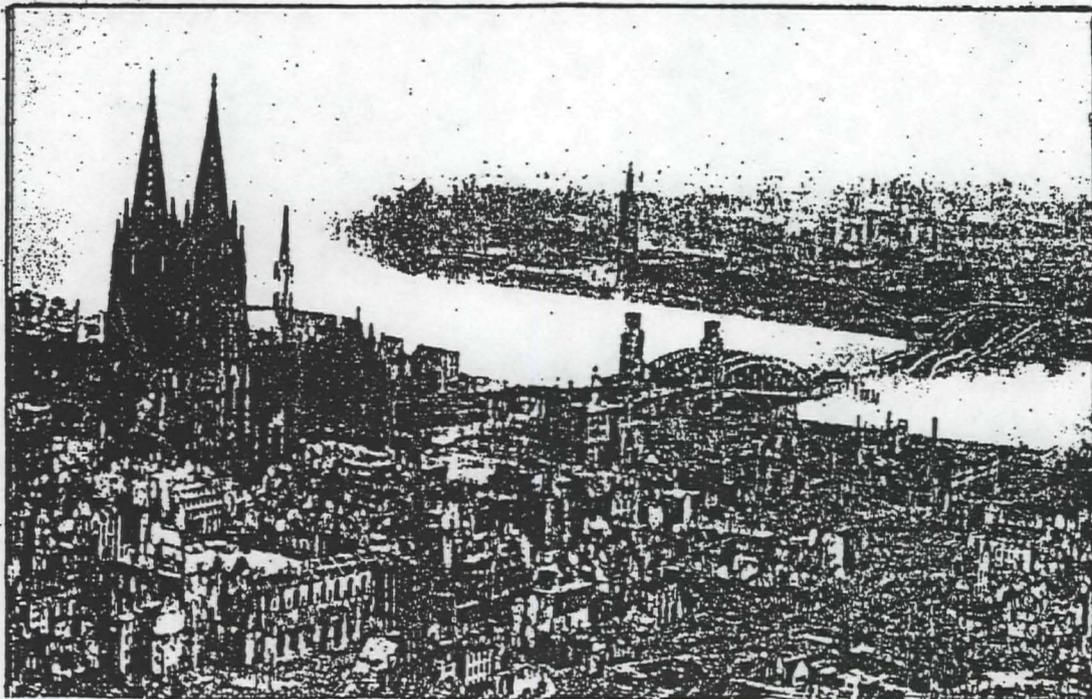
Steven Spielberg's huge box office success with "Saving Private Ryan" was basically about the BEGINNING (June 6, 1944) of America's war in France, Belgium, Holland and then Germany. Well, this story is about 120 U.S. GI soldiers (of whom I was one) who volunteered to go way behind the German lines and eventually bring about—in a sudden 24 hours—a crushing EXPLOSION on almost all of the remaining German Armies that swiftly resulted in the complete END of America's WWII in Europe on May 6, 1945.

We strongly believe this story about the END of our U.S. war in Europe should now follow Spielberg's 1998 movie about the actual BEGINNING of our U.S. war in central Europe.

In WWII, I (Jack O'Connell) was one of the 120 volunteer GIs in a special Army Signal Service Company that eventually went way behind the German lines. At least 10 to 20 of the 120 members of our secret company are still alive. I am in touch with them since a few years ago several of them asked me to write a WWII history of our company. So based on our company's records I made a 30-page report on our company's complete activities in Europe, including our arrival at Liverpool and then for months our secret training by British Intelligence about ENIGMA (their breakdown of all the German Armies' codes). So I know I can now organize 10 or 15 of our WWII buddies for every detail of our military triumph, along with some of their wives, sons and daughters (with dozens of photos of us in WWII).

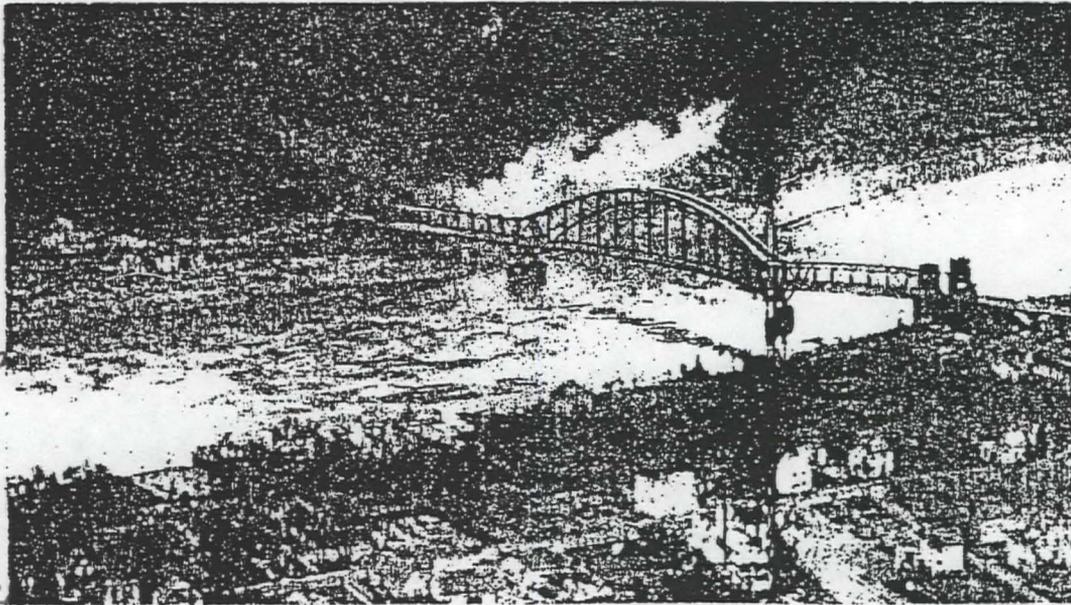
For six months after our Allied Armies had failed to be able to cross the Rhine River in Arnhem in the Netherlands in September, 1944, all our armies were frustrated as hell at not being able to cross the Rhine and fight Hitler's armies face-to-face.

On March 6, 1945, our First Sergeant Harry Weyher and I arrived at the top of the hill on the west side of Cologne, Germany. It was about 11 p.m. The Germans had just blown up their bridge that crossed the Rhine. So our armies were stuck again with the very same problem that had STOPPED them from driving deep into Germany for six long months since Arnhem: no bridge across the Rhine

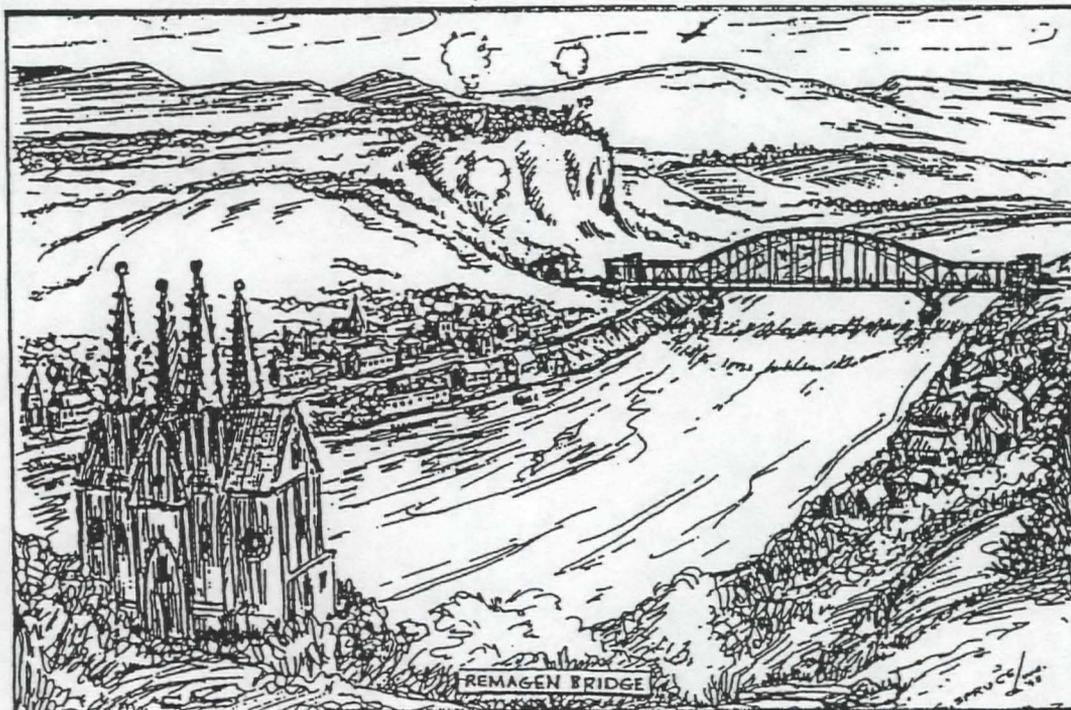


So our own small "independent" 120 GI company drove south about 30 miles. At about 3 a.m. on March 7, 1945, we arrived at a beaten up (from the air) small town, Remagen, Germany. The first thing the 120 of us had to do was swiftly sneak through the town to be sure there were no German people nor soldiers who would wipe us out in a minute. There were none, thank God. In fact, there were also no American soldiers there. Nobody. Just us. It was a dark, dark night but First Sergeant Harry Weyher and I suddenly spotted 500 yards south from us a small bridge across the Rhine still standing. I immediately suggested to Harry that we should right away flash this information back to our Commanding General, General Courtney Hodges. I then went into the nearest beaten-up small brownstone there and three of us GIs lay down on the floor and got a few hours sleep.

(*) Pick
 Add me
 Harry's
 first words
 when he
 saw the
 bridge were
 "Holy shit"



At dawn one of our GIs climbed the hill and swiftly drew this (below).



Almost 14 hours later (at 3:50 p.m.) the U.S. Army's 9th Armored Division of General Hodges 9th, 3rd (Patton) and 1st U.S. Armies started to arrive at Remagen and immediately attacked the couple of dozen German soldiers who were trying to blow up the bridge so that U.S. armies could not start to drive deep into Germany for the very first time, and begin to spread in a north and south encirclement of whatever German armies they could encounter.

Very swiftly in the skies above Remagen, German and American planes started fighting because the Germans were (too late) trying to blow up the bridge. But our planes beat them off pretty well. However, 10 days later, after most of our armies had crossed the Rhine, one of the German planes (plus the heavy weight of our U.S. tanks and trucks) finally knocked down the bridge. But our army by then had completed the building of two pontoon bridges across the Rhine so that all our soldiers were able to cross the Rhine and go right into the heart of Germany. We could no longer be stopped.

We 120 GIs crossed the Rhine and then slowly and quietly worked our way between and behind the various German military units we could detect (and completely avoid). After four weeks of slowly moving forward, on April 11, 1945, we found a tiny dirt road that took us to the top of a hill near the little town of Almert, Germany, four miles from Gleidorf and many miles behind the German lines. Our observation spot was about 2,500 feet high, looking (with telescopes and binoculars) directly across the plain to a town, 15 miles east from our position. Here our company, once and for all, did its most important work in WWII.

All by ourselves we had now moved, measured in a straight line, 60 miles into the very heart of Germany after we had crossed the Rhine at Remagen. Our observation place on the top of the hill remained as our observation base for the next eight days until we achieved what our years of training in the U.S. and in England had been all about.

Our most terrifying experience during those incredible eight days was one night when we were all sleeping outdoors in the trees. Captain McCannel and First Sergeant Weyher, one by one, passed on the information to each of us that about 900 German black-uniformed paratroopers would probably pass through us that night. They were hoping to be able to escape from the Ruhr Pocket. Our company had a choice to either fight them or let them pass through our company line. Since our intelligence had already informed us that those soldiers were probably the number one paratroopers remaining in the German Army and would probably each be armed with heavy carbines or submachine guns, outnumbering us eight to one (or sixteen to one), we had to decide to let them pass through us. Otherwise, though we might have been able to kill 10 or 20 of them, they would have killed us all.

This is exactly what Captain McCannel and First Sergeant Weyher instructed us to do, to let the Germans "secretly" pass through our company. So that night we pretended we were asleep in the rain under our ponchos lying flat down on our faces and quietly snoring, each with his own rifle or carbine fully loaded lying underneath his chest, with our helmets on with only two inches on the front of our helmets above the earth so that each of us could see the boots of these German soldiers as they approached us from the rear. But they could not see our eyes since, depending how crouched down each of us might be as each of them quietly passed by us, their

eyes were four to six feet higher than the eyes of each of us. So they were unable to see for sure if we were asleep or not.

At McCannel's and Weyher's instructions, the 120 of us stretched out as a single line of soldiers. Each of us had our two feet almost touching the feet of one of our buddies, one of us facing south and the other facing north, with a stretch of 15 to 20 feet between us face-to-face—a simple straight line of us about 1900 feet long stretched along the curve of the top of the hill. During that terrible rainy night, we quietly let those German paratroopers slowly, in complete silence, slip through our "line." By threes and fours, they were usually only four or five feet away from the head of each of us. It was one helluva night that none of us will ever forget—in which not one shot was heard. One shot would have resulted in all of us 120 GIs being killed. Neither side could take prisoners. Both we and the Germans must have been very aware of that, but they probably had no way of knowing if we Americans had hundreds or thousands of other American soldiers just a few yards away. But we were alone. Very alone. But we all got through alive.

On the next day from the top of this hill we were now able to break down immediately almost all the radio codes of the German troops in front of us. As our Army pincer slowly closed the entire Ruhr Pocket around them, more and more of them started to shout by voice to each other by radio. There was no longer any time for them to send messages by code. That made it possible for us to make a major intelligence decision.

We strongly believe that the last major German central ammunition pool for the hundreds of thousands of German soldiers remaining in front of us were all assembling gas, oil, ammunition, tanks, artillery and troops—probably in the suburb of Wetter, Germany. In our company, with our two very powerful telescopes each set up a couple of hundred feet apart from each other, our company interceptors were able to listen to the same German radio transmitters at the German ammunition HQ 15 miles away. By direct lines we drew a triangular cross on our army map that we felt was 10 to 100 yards from the very center of the German Armies' remaining assembly of very large German armies.

Captain McCannel and our top officers and sergeants knew that if we directly radioed that information to Gen. Hodges, the Germans would probably be able to locate us, and if there were any more German troops nearby, behind us, they would probably be heading toward us almost immediately. But we decided to take that chance. By direct message we immediately sent that information to Gen. Hodges, with the clear understanding that he might ignore it. Or utilize it. He decided to utilize it. Immediately.

SIS had told a few of the soldiers in our company that there was a special, small U.S. Intelligence Air Force company consisting of only 36 Allied planes painted completely gray and bearing only one white sign on the tail: Q15. It probably consisted of 24 U.S. pilots, six British, four Canadian and two French pilots who had been considered to be the very best 36 pilots in our entire Allied Air Force. So much so that for 24 hours a day every day these small bomber planes could jump to the air, execute a bomb mission and return immediately. Their land crews

immediately reloaded their planes and their next six most rested pilots would immediately hit the air for their next bombing mission. In and out of the skies fast.

They consistently flew at low levels at a speed of about 400 mph across the land, never more than 200 to 300 feet above the trees, so that no matter where they passed by overhead there was not enough time for the Germans to hear them coming in advance or be able to swing their guns around fast enough to be able to shoot at them accurately as they flew by at about 400 mph. Fast enough so that by the time their bombs, which they aimed right on their targets below, actually exploding four to six seconds later, their planes were already half a mile away.

So from the top of our hill we sent our conclusions to General Courtney Hodges: the biggest German armies were now being assembled about 15 miles in front of us. And by several angles from the top of the hill I was able to draw on our maps (within 20 yards of accuracy) exactly where this assembling of German armies was now taking place (in our estimation). And we sent that information to General Hodges.

Only one hour after we had flashed back our message to Gen. Hodges, six Q15 planes flashed by from the forests behind us right over our heads, not more than 50 feet above the trees in a one, two, three formation.



They then swung to their left no more than one to two degrees so that following the map lines we had signaled back to them they headed toward Wetter, Germany. With our telescopes and our binoculars we were able to follow them for at least 1 ½ more minutes before they were too far away for us to see them any longer. But by stopwatches our guess was that within about 2 ¼ minutes, from the second they flew directly above us, they would drop their bombs. As one of us started counting down nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, almost precisely on the nose we saw by telescope an enormous explosion 15 miles away. The cloud above the target slowly turned from gray to dark gray and expanded so high in the sky that our telescopes were no longer needed and within five minutes the dark gray cloud was so huge in the sky that even without binoculars all the soldiers in our 3259th could see it by eye 15 miles to the East—the biggest explosion anywhere (so far) in WWII—about 2/3rds as giant as the atomic bombs in Japan a few months later.

Our six special air pilots had blown up almost everything the German Armies had left. We literally cried with joy. The next day, since we were informed by radio that the remaining German soldiers in that part of the Ruhr Pocket had surrendered, we knew that this final major defeat of the entire German Army was now taking place. A complete defeat of German troops in the Ruhr Pocket. The very best that Germany had left killed or captured.

The next day our company got a direct message from one of our American armies that we should now go to the place where our 1st and 9th Armies had met in completion of their encirclement. So three of us in a jeep (I drove with Captain Harry McCannel and Sergeant

Weyher) worked our way through trees and bushes in front of us (not on any roads at first because there were possibly too many Germans in most areas).

When about an hour later we pulled up to the heads of our 1st and 9th Armies, one of the generals said something like this: "You guys did a helluva good job!" What an enormous sense of humor that general had! Their soldiers (not us, hiding in the woods almost all the way) had face-to-face fought all the German armies to survive (or be killed) and to now win the war! Not us. Their 1st and 9th Armies had completed their encirclement at Wetter, Germany, about 75 miles east from the bridge at Remagen and about 15 miles east from our place on that German hill.

General Omar N. Bradley, 12th Army Group Commander, soon reported that his 12th Group's 1st, 3rd (Patton), 9th and 15th Armies had taken 842,862 prisoners. In the nine weeks since we had discovered that bridge across the Rhine at Remagen, all our Allied Armies had finally helped crush all of Hitler's remaining armies and forced their complete surrender.

Our European WWII ended on May 9, 1945.

After that German surrender, our own company returned west, this time by roads, first to Remagen and we then drove south in Germany. For the first time we were "tourists" in Germany, not being welcome there but we were only shot at one more time. And our terrifying experience with 1,000 to 2,000 German ~~SS~~ Paratroopers has now long been "buried" in our memories.

We slowly (and carefully) drove hundreds of miles south through big and small cities and towns. And just before we arrived at Munchen we passed by Dachau and for the first time understood what the Germans had been doing to Jews (and others). And we then saw in big letters at the top of the arch when we drove into Munchen these words (in German): WE ARE ASHAMED TO BE GERMANS. The degree of truth in that we shall never know.

We drove right through Munchen and then southeast about 38 miles to Rosenheim and almost three miles from there, just along the main highway running east to Salzburg, we moved into an old German army camp (now deserted) and finally settled down for a few weeks where most of us could finally just relax, play softball, poker, etc. But it turned out to be an astonishing thrill for me. Here's why.

South from us were the Alps in all their stunning beauty. East from us, about 38 miles away, was Salzburg and a little farther south at about the same distance was Berchtesgaden, Hitler's vacation palace up in the mountains. The 101st Airborne had gone there to get Hitler if he was there. He wasn't.

So my brother Bob, a Lieutenant in the 101st Airborne, who had been wounded at Bastogne and was eventually flown to a hospital in Manchester, England, had apparently now fully recovered. So with no Hitler in hand, he borrowed a jeep and drove the 38 miles to our little camp! I was joyously stunned!



WOUNDED "EAGLE"—Lt. Robert F. O'Connell, paratrooper with the 151st Airborne Division, known as the Screaming Eagle, has been reported wounded during the combat action at Bastogne. He also took part in the invasion of Holland Sept. 17, was wounded and awarded the Purple Heart. Before entering the service he resided in Newton Highlands.



How Bob knew I was there is a clear point about what Army Intelligence (even 58 years ago!) can do. It's how Bob found out exactly where I (one of millions of American soldiers in Europe) was on that very day! He was only able to spend about an hour with us...but!

Our company spent about a month on that lovely farm area east from Rosenheim, slowly shipping home those who had been in the Army the longest—sending them slowly in the direction of returns by sea to our U.S.A.

But in late June the dozens of us still remaining packed up and drove west to France and then headed south to a town just north from Marseille. The advance information we had there was that we were going to be sent by sea to the Pacific and then be part of our invasion of Japan.

But then suddenly the Atom Bomb! The end of the war for all of us. A joy that all men and women who were in our U.S. military back then and are still alive today are still enjoying deeply within our souls. We in intelligence believe that the Japanese intelligence knew very well about our Atomic Bomb but decided to pay no attention to it. Even after the first Atomic Bomb! So...

We 120 GIs (currently about 20 to 30 of us are still alive) are damned proud for having been our little volunteer intelligence company (behind the German lines) that discovered THE bridge at Remagen that made it possible for our armies to swiftly rush deeply into Germany. And we then (as I've said) located from our hill the assembly of pretty much everything that Hitler's armies in the west had left—and we got them all blown up in one hour so that our armies could move forward and take complete control of all that Hitler had left.

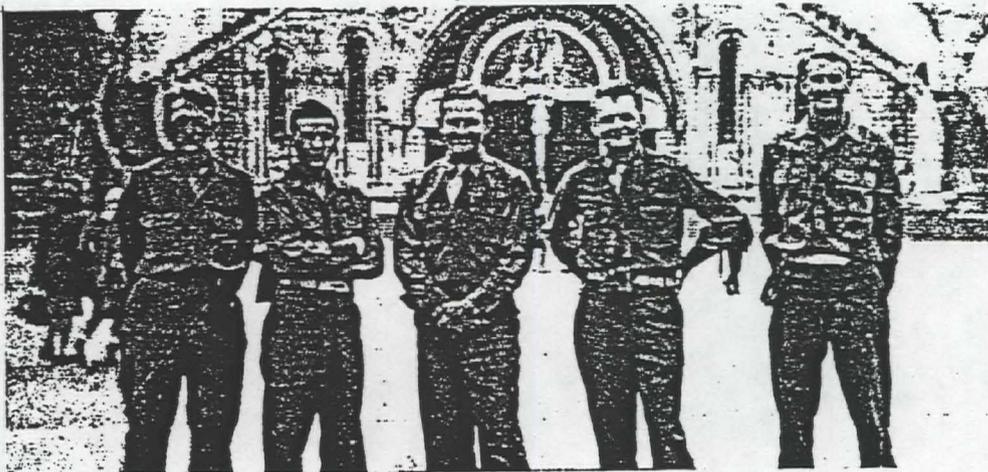
That is why we members (still alive) of our 3259th Signal Service Company can now help make a truly unique REAL movie for all Americans—and the rest of the world!

Former sergeant,

Jack Cornell

PS: Many of the men in our company took photos (like the next page), and they and their families still have most of their photos. So their photos can also become an element in our WWII story.

JO'C:kw



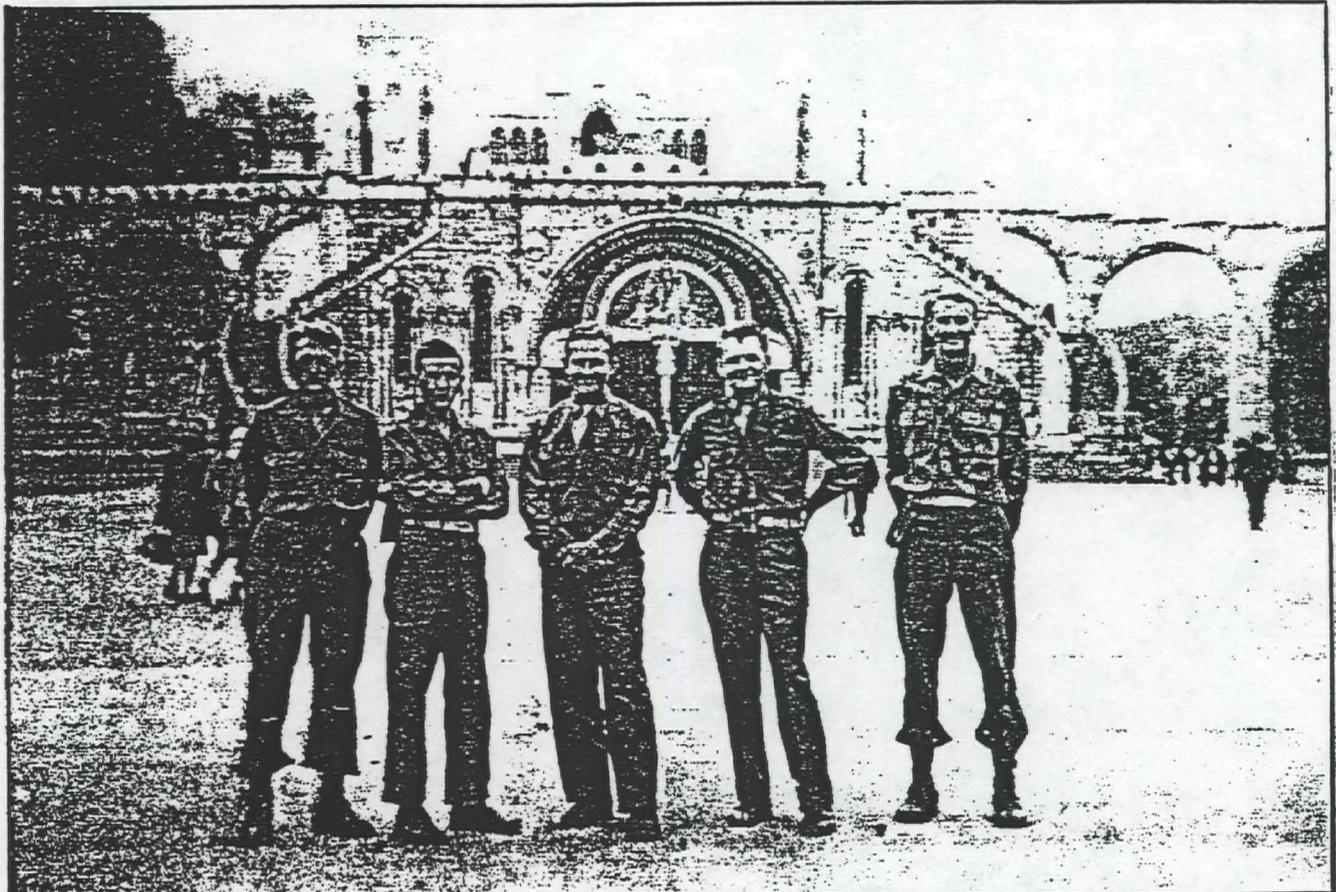
SEIZES BRIDGE AT REMAGEN.

Veterans of the United States First Army captured the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen and established a bridgehead across the Rhine in one of the war's great dramatic coups. The vital bridge was seized in the nick of time, just ten minutes before the Germans planned to blow it up. Immediately, American troops began to pour across the Rhine by the thousands.

July 1945

WWII: After Germany surrendered we drove to Marseille, France, getting ready to sail to the Pacific and then INVADE Japan!

Here we were visiting Lourdes, France ← and suddenly the ATOMIC BOMB! Hurrah!



All Sergeants by now.

Fred Hochschild	Jack O'Connell	Harry Weyher	Capt. McCannel	Dick McElroy
Wisconsin	Boston	N.C.	N.Y.	N.C.

First Sgt. Top
Officer

(KINSTON)

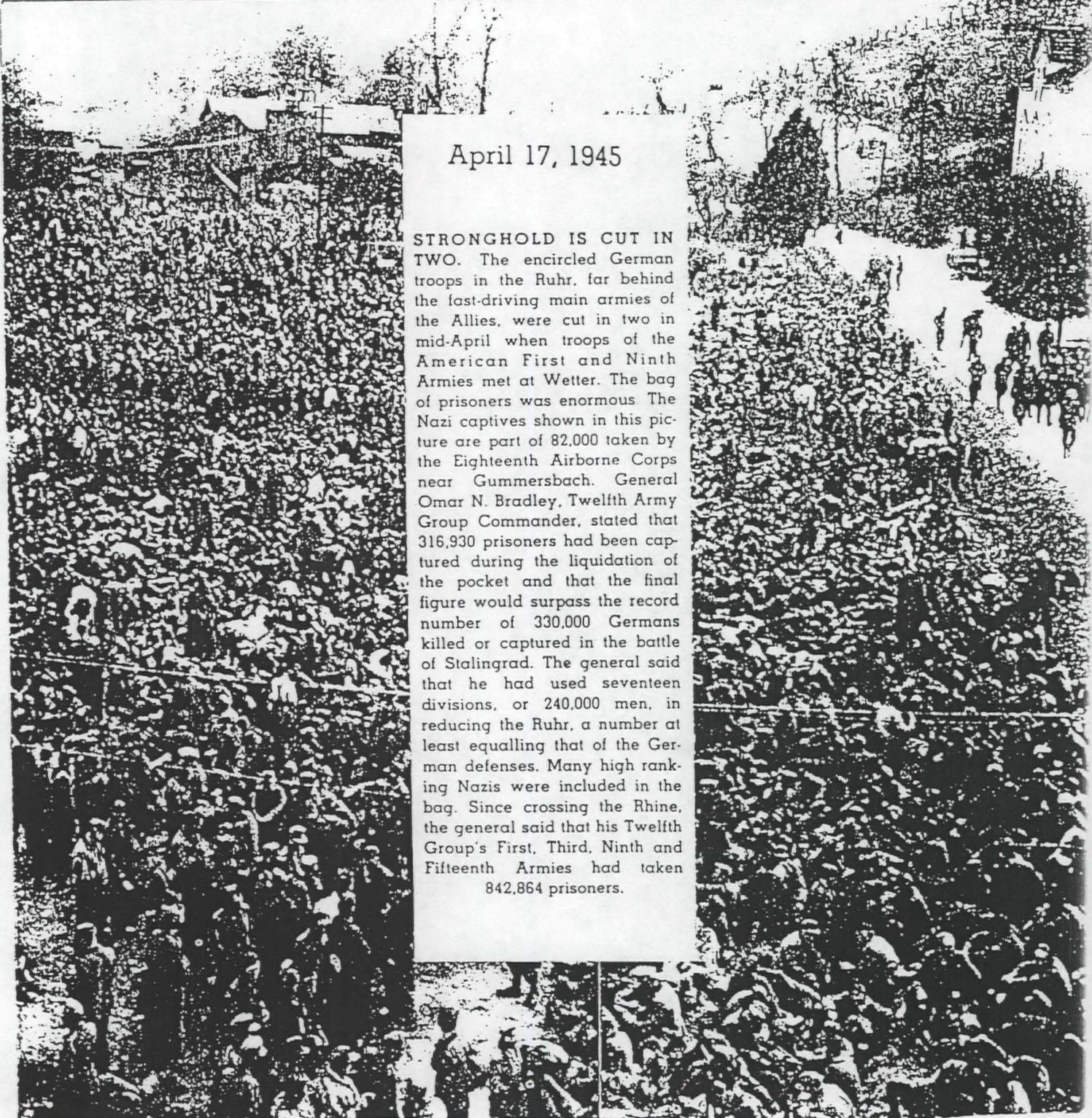
(WILSON)

And in 9 more months I'm back home in Newton Highlands, a suburb of Boston, I'm a veteran of WWII.

Both were fraternity brothers at UN.C. We joined the army together and went thru Basic together in '42-'43.

On May 2, 1945, the German forces in Berlin surrendered, and at Caserta, Italy, all the German forces in Italy and southern Austria surrendered. On May 4 all the German forces in Holland, Denmark and northern Germany surrendered and on May 5 the German Armies in Western Austria and Bavaria surrendered -- and shortly thereafter the German forces in Norway surrendered.

So on Sunday, May 6, 1945, at Reims, France, German Col. General Gustav Jodl and Adm. Hans von Friedburg signed a formal surrender for all German Armed Forces around the world.



April 17, 1945

STRONGHOLD IS CUT IN TWO. The encircled German troops in the Ruhr, far behind the fast-driving main armies of the Allies, were cut in two in mid-April when troops of the American First and Ninth Armies met at Wetter. The bag of prisoners was enormous. The Nazi captives shown in this picture are part of 82,000 taken by the Eighteenth Airborne Corps near Gummersbach. General Omar N. Bradley, Twelfth Army Group Commander, stated that 316,930 prisoners had been captured during the liquidation of the pocket and that the final figure would surpass the record number of 330,000 Germans killed or captured in the battle of Stalingrad. The general said that he had used seventeen divisions, or 240,000 men, in reducing the Ruhr, a number at least equalling that of the German defenses. Many high ranking Nazis were included in the bag. Since crossing the Rhine, the general said that his Twelfth Group's First, Third, Ninth and Fifteenth Armies had taken 842,864 prisoners.

FINAL DESTRUCTION of HITLER'S ARMIES

And How We Americans Did It!

A volunteer company of 120 U.S. GIs secretly-trained in England went (all alone) way behind the German lines and located the final assembly of the German armies and all their soldiers, tanks, artillery, ammunition and fuels that were being assembled so that a new German Army (drawing upon over 800,000 German soldiers) planned to cut through the smaller U.S. Armies and cross the Rhine and then go back into France and achieve (this time) what the German Armies had lost four months earlier in the final battles of the Bulge.

But this uniquely-trained 120 U.S. GIs signal intelligence company finally sent (from way behind the German lines) a secret message to their U.S. Commanding General exactly what the Germans were now preparing to do.

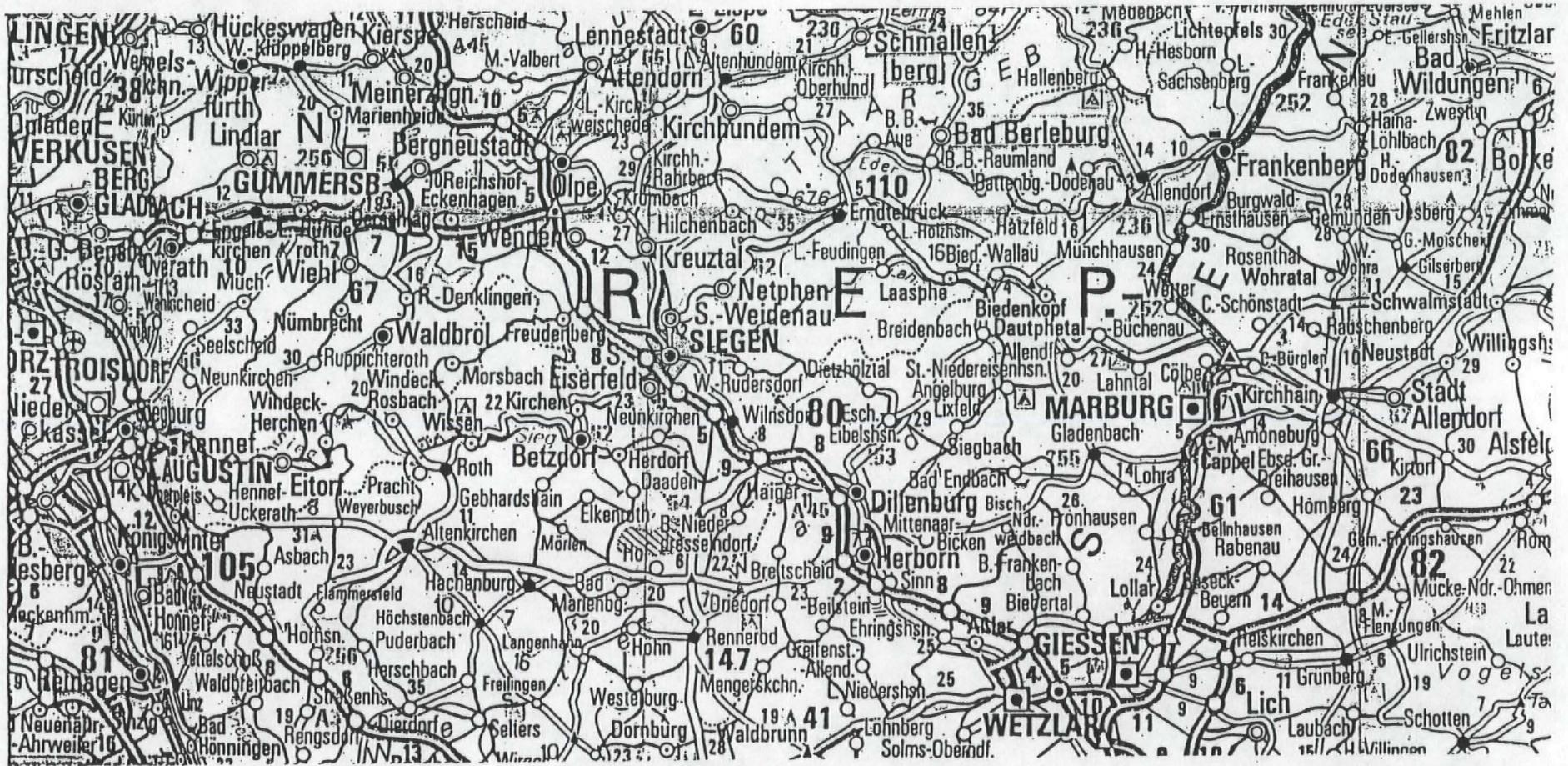
As a result this 120 U.S. GI secret company and six of the secret Q Allied planes were able in ONE HOUR to locate and BOMB completely the biggest German Army assembled in all time (before the atomic bombs in Japan) and made it possible for the American First and Ninth Armies to then complete their encirclement and force the surrender of Hitler's remaining armies within 24 hours!

That resulted in the complete German surrender within the next three weeks on May 9, 1945, and the final victories of America's Armies in our WWII in Europe.

WRITERS GUILD

OF AMERICA, EAST

Jack O'Connell



Feature Films:

The Hippie
REVOLUTION

Produced, directed, wrote and own this movie that is now ready for theaters, TV, cables and video sales. It is the only Yesterday/Today movie about that Hippie Phenomenon: what they were up to back then, and what the same people are up to now. With the Rock 'n' Roll music of Country Joe & The Fish, Quicksilver, Steve Miller and Mother Earth. At the 1991 Leningrad Film Festival by invitation.

CHRISTA (a.k.a.
Swedish FLYGIRLS)

Via AIP did over 6,500 theater bookies in the U.S. & Canada plus 22 other countries. Dubbed into French, German and Italian. Worldwide did over \$40,000,000 box-office business. I wrote, produced, directed and own it.

Original
REVOLUTION

Produced, directed and conceived this original feature on the Haight-Ashbury hippie world in San Francisco. Released by United Artists. Represented the U.S. by invitation at the Cannes, Locarno and Berlin Film Festivals.

GREENWICH
VILLAGE STORY

Wrote, produced, directed and own this feature released through Lion International. Represented the U.S. by invitation at the Venice Film Festival.

L'AVVENTURA

Assistant Director to Michelangelo Antonioni during five months of shooting and the final months of editing and scoring. Cannes Film Festival prize winner.

LA DOLCE VITA

Still photographer, observer, gopher and bottle washer for Federico Fellini during his last two months of shooting. Cannes Film Festival prize winner.

JULIE
THE REDHEAD

We translated and dubbed this French comedy (JULIE LA ROUSSE) into English. It stars Daniel Gelin and Pascal Petit.

THE LIARS

We translated and dubbed this French drama (LES MENTEURS) into English. It stars Claude Brasseur, Jean Servais and Dawn Addams.

Commercial Film
and Advertising
Experience

Ten years at McCann-Erickson and D'Arcy advertising agencies. A creative group head in all media for most products and also wrote, produced, supervised and/or shot over 500 one-minute TV commercials and institutionals for clients like Chrysler, Nabisco, Westinghouse, Pepsodent, LOOK Magazine, etc. Won five 24-sheet poster awards. Campaigns for EXXON when it was ESSO, for General Tire, Phillies cigars, several local beers, Seagram's, Kings Ransom, Old Kentucky Tavern, House of Lords, etc. Personally supervised creatively well over \$20 million dollars of advertising per year.

Harvard Business School:
Princeton University:

Master's Degree In Business Administration
Bachelor of Arts, cum laude, and The TRIANGLE Club