

May 23, 1945
Czechoslovakia

Mr. Mother & Dad:

I suppose you are wondering why I haven't been writing, now that the war is over. Well the truth is we have been on the go all the time rounding up and herding together all the Germans that were left here in Czechoslovakia. We have them all now, or rather the Russians have, for we turned them over to them. So this war is now over for us. Incidentally, the Russians deported large numbers of the Germans to Siberia to work, which is good enough for them.

Well, most of the censorship rules have been relaxed, so now I can tell you a few interesting facts. I sailed from New York Harbor on the Queen Elizabeth. As you know, it is the largest ship in the world and I can well believe it. The trip itself was very uneventful. There was nothing for us to do all day every day except read & sleep. We ate twice a day (the meals were horrible) and we had one hour lifeboat drill from 12 to 1 every day. We zig-zagged our way across the Atlantic without convoy until one morning I came on deck, bright & early and there off on the horizon was a purple haze which I knew right away was land. It didn't take long for the land to sort of sneak up and surround us on all sides for before I knew it I was

gazing at the hills of Scotland. We were in the Firth of Clyde. As much as I hate to admit it (me being a good American) I have never in all my life seen such a beautiful country. The green rolling hills slope down right into the sea. Their sides are dotted with lone farm houses, little fishing villages, rich country estates, and even medieval castles. All in all it was a site which I shall never forget. We continued up the Firth of Clyde and dropped anchor at a small town called Glenoch, which is a suburb of Glasgow. There we were loaded on trains and went thru Glasgow, then Aberdeen, down the east coast of the British Isles to Portland which is just below Portsmouth. We got off the trains and there, staring at us in the face, was the wide open mouth of an L.S.T. (Landing Ship Tank). We marched from the train on to the boat and that was the end of our stay in England. We stayed that night in port, but on the following night under cover of darkness we made our dash across the channel. When the sun came up the next morning we could see the battle scarred City of Le Havre. The sea was too rough for us to land that day so we just stood off shore and got tossed around like a toothpick. About 90% of the boys got seasick. I think the fresh air helped me for I stayed on deck and wasn't bothered at all.

The next morning we landed and, after a few hours rest, were again loaded up on trains. Right there is the greatest crime of the war. They put 4 men in one of those little 4-w. 8 boxes which are about half the size of one of our freight cars back home. To be comfortable was impossible. You couldn't sit down without sitting on somebody, and it was better cold. We rode that way for 5 days & nights. We arrived at Thionville France, near the Luxembourg border. There, we were broken down and assigned to our different outfits. I drew the Fourth Armored Div. Gen. Patton's Finest. I was driven to my outfit in a truck. The company was then enjoying a rest period at the town of Steinsel in Luxembourg. We stayed there a few days. I spent those days wandering around town, toying out my French, and playing cards & chess. We then went up on the front which was then along the Our River, the border of Luxembourg & Germany. We took up a defensive position near Dickirch and lived in our foxholes there for 21 days. As for misery, that was the tops. It rained almost every day and we were continually cold & wet. As for danger, there was hardly any. We could see the Germans walking around their Siegfried lines and I imagine they could see us. We didn't bother them, they didn't bother us. Occasionally we would shoot a few shells at them and they would throw a few back. Every night we would look send out patrols, but that is about all the action there was.

After 21 days of that we went back for another rest. The rest lasted about 2 days. then the order came to move out.

Before I go any farther I think I should tell you something about an armored div. It is the armored div. job to spearhead the attack. It ranges out far in front of everything & everybody else. It cuts a path for the regular Infantry Divisions that come up and follow it. Its job is to keep going. It never goes near any large cities for there is not enough infantry in the division to take care of a large city. They bypassed the big cities and go around them. Leave them there for the infantry divisions to take care of. Whenever they meet real heavy resistance they just hold on, let the infantry come up and take over, and then withdraw.

Well anyway we loaded up on our half-tracks and started to ride. We rode again to the Star River and crossed it on a pontoon bridge. It was there I saw a sign which read, "you are now entering Germany. Be on the alert." We were following the last spearhead. The spearhead took Germany. On both sides of us was the wreckage of the Wehrmacht line. We passed those villages that were still burning from the battle. We knew we were not too far behind. We continued following the spearhead for a day or two.

we went up to the front of it ourselves.

The first few days of snow-bushes in Germany were easy. We would move on tanks up to the outskirts of a German village. Then we would sit around and wait for about a half an hour while the tanks shot the living bushes out of the place. Then we would move on with the tanks and simply get the Germans out of the place. It was as easy as that. I knew our luck couldn't last forever and sure enough. 3 days in a row we ran into more than we could handle and got shot up pretty badly. This took place near Bettberg, Germany. They brought us back to Poppauze. When this was accomplished we took off again. This time driving up to within a few miles of Götting and the Rhine. They brought us back and we crossed the Rhine River at the town of Carden. We then headed south to the city of Bad Kreuznach. We then swung north and crossed the Rhine near Worms on the night of Mar. 24. The next day we took Hungenstadt & Wilmstadt. At Hungenstadt I got me a nice German flag about seven feet long which I now have with my souvenirs. At Wilmstadt, which is the largest and best German city I saw (it was better because it was located level ground) we captured 200 German officers. There a German Captain surrendered to me his personal rifle. Boy! It's a beauty. That is also among my souvenirs I also got a German Tiger pistol.

from another officer there. From there we made a wild dash for the city of Gotha where Gen. Von Gusebrog had his HQ. It was during that dash that we went so fast they had to run airplanes out to find us. We almost caught Von Gusebrog at Gotha but he got out first before we took the place.

Then we started what proved to be our final drive of the war. We were told that we must drive in and meet the Russians somewhere between Chemnitz & Chemnitz. We took off again, and in no time at all we were sitting in the hills overlooking Chemnitz watching the German Army doing physical exercises in the hills below. They had no idea that we were within a hundred miles of them. We sat there for a few days until our Cavalry Division came up to take Chemnitz. We went back for a rest. After about a weeks rest the order came down to move out. We were going to take Barchtesweide! Just enough we headed down towards southern Germany, towards Nuremberg & Munich. General von G. was there they put us to work as policemen. That lasted for a few weeks, until word came that the patriots of Prague had asked for help. So off we went to E. Czechoslovakia. We were well on our way to Prague when the order came to "Call Living" and that was the end of it. Right now I am at the small village of Sutterbork which is near a large city, Pilsch & Strakonice. We expect to move another now back into Germany.

Now don't let what I am about to

say get your nose up. When we go back
to Germany we are going back as
occupational police. We have already been
assigned our area. However, we don't know
how long the situation will last. I may
be in the Pacific as fast as the next
guy. you never know what is going to
happen. As for home, you need 35 points. I
have 35.

Well, I guess that is enough for now. I
hope this letter makes up for not having
written. So long for now

Your loving son,
Ely.