

XVI: BATTLE OF THE BULGE (ARDENNES-LUXEMBOURG)

Early on the morning of December 9, while it was still dark out, we loaded on trucks, and after waiting about an hour, the trucks began roll. We were tremendously relieved to be leaving the hell of Huertgen Forest, and to be going to a place that promised to be a quiet front.

Atkocius wasn't with us--I didn't know until later that he had been wounded and evacuated. Oneyear and Slim were in the truck, as well as some new faces: Cicco, Ingfer, Fisher and others.

It began to get light out, and we rode on the trucks for a long time. It had gotten bitterly cold. We rode on a dirt, country road by large fields, and then--we went through a village with civilians, including children! It was great to see people not in uniform. We went through more villages and towns, and saw more civilians. Except for occasional shell damage to houses, it didn't look like a war was going on. We knew we had entered France when we saw signs in French instead of German. I never wanted to see Germany again.

We slept in the trucks that night, and on December 10 at about 3 P.M., we arrived in Lellig, Luxemburg for our long-awaited rest. We were within easy range of German artillery, (our truck ride had been slow and not direct), but it was strangely quiet, and it didn't appear that the town had been shelled at all.

The mortar section had a house all to itself. Although the house was unheated, it had single electric lights in each room, and also a real bed. In sheer joy, Oneyear, Griffith and I jumped on the bed with all our dirty, heavy clothes and boots on. We thought this was too good for us infantrymen! And it was. Five men from our section of ten men had to go out to stay in foxholes on high ground outside the town. The Sauer River runs between Luxemburg and Germany at that point, and the Germans were on the other side of the river, in the Siegfried Line.

I didn't have to go out on guard the first shift-- Oneyear and Slim went. I had the bed all to myself for a while, but I knew I would have to go out when they came back. It wouldn't be quite the rest we thought it would be. We had to pull two hours guard followed by four hours off--night and day--and our foxholes were in the snow, open, and cold.

December 11 and 12 were quiet. Things went pretty good in the houses and pulling guard in the outpost foxholes on the high banks of the river. From the outpost, sometimes we could see a few German soldiers across the river, and I'm sure they could see us. But we didn't fire at each other, as though by mutual understanding. Back in the house, we found some potatoes and lard, so we made continuous batches of French fries, in a large empty can. They tasted great.

On December 13 we were still in the same quiet positions, so I was allowed to go back to the Aid Station to get some eyeglasses. One of my lenses had been shattered some weeks before, and I had been going around with just one clear lens. At the Aid Station, the medical doctor sent me back in an ambulance about 50 miles to an optometrist. He was in a beautiful big building, heated, with lights--just like back in the States. I think it was in Luxemburg City. The optometrist was a major, in a nice clean uniform, in a warm office far from the front. Yet he made a comment implying that I had broken my glasses deliberately to get a day away from the front line. I had my rifle with me, and I have often thought I should have smashed him in the face with the rifle butt. I had nothing to lose by hitting him--but I couldn't have done it. I hope he was caught in the Battle of the Bulge a few days later.

The next day, December 14, I was back with Co. K, and on the 15th, we moved to the town of Hebron, which was about the same as Lellig. On the evening of the 15th everything was quiet, except for an occasional shell burst around the village. We had hot chow, played cards, ate French fries, and someone had gotten some "schnapps"; we were pretty happy.

But in the very early morning hours of December 16-- while it was still dark--something went wrong. There were shell explosions all over the village, which more than startled us--the Germans weren't supposed to do that. Soon an artillery shell hit the house we were in, knocking down part of the outside wall. We jumped out of bed--we slept with all our clothes on--and ran down cellar. We crouched in the darkness of the cellar; the electricity had gone off, but we wouldn't have turned the lights on anyway. We wondered what had gone wrong; I thought there was an understanding that the Germans wouldn't shell us so heavily. Someone said, facetiously, that the Germans must have just found out the 4th Division had occupied the town--and this was their welcome. At last dawn broke, and we were really getting worried. Very heavy shelling was still going on. In the growing light we could see that during the night a lot of the houses had been hit by the exploding shells.

Oneyear, Griffith, Perrata, Williams, Jake and I sat in the cellar, feeling and looking very frightened. Then we heard someone yell, "Put it on--get ready to move out"!! A jolt of fear hits you when you hear that order.

There was a lot of grumbling as we put on our equipment, and stood outside the house--the shelling had let up a bit-- waiting for the order to move out. Someone said moving out was just the "brass's" way to keep us on the ball.

Cpl. Raeder was standing near us. I had never seen him before; he had a large communication radio strapped to his back. I believe he was maintaining radio communications for the Battalion commander. He told us it was nothing to worry about. He said Co. I soldiers who were on guard at their outposts had reported seeing about 200 "Jerries" advancing toward their village. Raeder thought that was an exaggerated report. He said Lt. Col. Linder, our battalion commander, had gone to England for a few days rest, or something, and Maj. Rice, who was new and didn't know the score, panicked easily and had everyone running around. Raeder said that if Col. Linder had been there, we'd still be in the houses.

Eventually, we moved out and went at least a couple of miles on the road, and then into some small woods on high ground. From the edge of the woods on that high ground, we could see explosions in the town occupied by Co. I. Then, at some distance to our front/right, on lower ground, we saw 100 or more German soldiers coming out of the woods and entering the clearing, heading toward the town. Our mission was to get to the town and reinforce Co. I, but no one seemed to know what to do, except possibly Lt. Litwack, who was either our Platoon Leader or Co. Commander at that time.

We began to move in the general direction of the town, staying inside the edge of the woods for cover, when suddenly, "all hell broke loose", as artillery, "screaming meemies" and mortar shells exploded around us. One shell explosion killed Lt. Litwak and Raeder immediately. We all scattered, and after the confusion there were no officers in the area. T/Sgt. Dryden took charge, but we had no maps, no direction and no radio contact with anyone. We left the woods about the same way we had gone in, and went all the way back to Hebron. As we trudged back, no one talked. Now we knew this was not going to be a quiet front, and our spirits were very low. We arrived at Hebron in the dark about 8 P.M.

December 17-23, we were under nearly continuous shelling in Hebron. By that time, most of the houses were badly damaged, and we stayed on guard in the cellars of the damaged houses. We were still able to get hot chow occasionally. Once, Perrata had his chow in a porcelain dish he had taken from one of the houses, and was running back to his cellar when a shell exploded nearby. A piece of shrapnel hit his dish splattering it and scattering his food all over the place; but he didn't get hit.

We saw the "big picture" in the Stars and Stripes newspaper, and knew the Germans had made a major counter-attack involving a large part of the Western Front. We also heard that our 1st and 2nd Battalions had been virtually wiped out, Co. I and Co. L in our Battalion had been decimated, and most of the companies were isolated for at least a few days. It seemed that we in Co. K were the only ones who were not too badly hit. We were shelled quite often, but German infantry did not attack us, and we did not attack them.

I thought the Germans did not attack us during that time because we had a strong defense, and also because the German troops in front of us were a Volksgrenadier Division, made up of older men and young boys--not the fanatic S.S. troops. But more likely, it was because we were at the very southern end of the German breakthrough, and the Germans were satisfied to hold their positions on our front, and concentrate the main effort of their drive further north.

On December 24, the 22nd Regt. (of the 4th Div.) took over our positions, and we moved back from the front line to another town in Luxemburg called Mompach (?). We were billeted in a house still occupied by a civilian and his two sons. The civilian treated us very good, and the two boys, 7 and 11 years old, didn't seem to be afraid of us. Some of us had shaved, but we still looked pretty grubby and rough. Carrying our guns and ammunition, we must have looked kind of scary. The boys seemed to like to me, and stayed with me. I tried to teach them to count in English, and they tried to teach me to

count in German. It was Christmas Eve, and we, including the civilian and his two sons, sang Christmas songs. The two boys sat on my lap as we all sang. It was wonderful, as was the next day, Christmas, in the same house.

On December 26 and 27, Jake and I went to stay in a house with another family. Jake was growing a full beard and mustache. The people there were also very nice to us, and we spent a lot of time trying to talk with them in English and German. I received another package from home which I shared with everyone in the house. Among other things, the package had cookies and one or two oranges. The food went over big-- especially with the civilians who said they had not seen an orange for a long time.

The Germans made some big advances further north after December 16, with heavy losses on both sides. But after about a week, the weather cleared and our fighter planes were able to get up and strafe and bomb German supply lines and tanks. By the New Year, the German advance had been stopped. Because the "Bulge" had cut off the 4th Division from the rest of the 1st Army, we were assigned to Patton's 3rd Army for about a month.

On December 28, we moved out of the houses, and during the night relieved the 28th Div. We were directed to an isolated house where we went into the cellar, and the next morning dug positions for our mortars outside the house.

The skies had cleared, and on January 1 an American fighter plane zoomed low over our heads and dropped two bombs very close to us. The "bombs" didn't explode, and may have been faulty bombs or possibly discarded extra gasoline tanks.

We were in those positions until January 12, 1945, pulling guard, and going on some patrols. There was no enemy activity. There were also no civilians around, and once we went into the nearby town of Berdorf, and did some looting. All we found was junk jewelry, a loose stamp collection, some broken pocket watches. The houses had been badly shelled and probably looted several times before.

One night about this time, we had some fun in the vacated house we had occupied. There were no incoming artillery shells, and someone had found some schnapps. After a bit of drinking, some of the men got quite happy and silly. The owners of the house had left a few old civilian clothes (male and female) in the closet. Some men who were feeling pretty good put on the old clothes and began singing, laughing and jumping on the bed-- with their combat boots on and wearing the civilian clothes. Then they began arguing about who was rugged enough to run out of the house naked. It was 2:00 or 3:00 A.M., the temperature was probably near zero--there was a stretch of below zero weather about that time--and there were at least six inches of crisp snow on the ground. Two of the men ran outside and around the house naked, but they kept their combat boots on. (One of them, Francis Whitcomb, was killed on May 4, 1945, the last day we faced enemy action.)

On January 13, we were pulled back from the vicinity of Berdorf, and went to Cornsdorf-- still in Luxemburg. We were billeted in a nice heated house.

We were in Cornsdorf from January 13 to 17. While we were there, Grimes came back. He had been wounded for the 3rd or 4th time. I was very glad to see him back. Also while we were in Cornsdorf, we were each issued two 1/2 pound blocks of dynamite and instructed on how to explode them to help make foxholes in the frozen ground. Krause and I were able to go to Luxemburg City. There were no incoming German shells in the City, and we saw a lot of American artillery, tanks, motorized equipment and soldiers behind the front line. It was almost like being back in the States--some stores were open. Krause and I went to a photographer's studio and had our pictures taken. The man was very accommodating. We paid him and he said he would send us the pictures, but I didn't think he would. I must have told him to send them to my home in the States. He did send them, and I still have the pictures.

There was a rumor that we were going to stay in that area--behind the lines--for the rest of the war. But on January 14 we loaded on trucks, feeling pretty low because we were leaving a nice town and probably going to the front again. Instead, we went to another quiet town in Luxemburg. We stayed with another very nice family--a mother, father and their 14-year old daughter, Hilda. Jake, Nilges, Oneyear and I played cards most of the time we were there.

On January 21 we again got on trucks, rode for a while, then got off and walked a long way--a pretty sure sign we were headed for the front. We walked so far--with all our heavy equipment--that Jake couldn't keep up and fell behind. We, the mortar section, got lost following our new platoon leader Lt. Goglio. I don't know where Lt. Goglio came from, and I don't remember seeing him after that day. We finally stopped and dug in for the night.

On January 23, we moved out, then attacked through a field of snow. To our right we could see a town being hit by artillery shells. We kept going until we came to a river. Buban and I dug in together, and chopped some small trees for a roof, because German mortar shells were exploding around us. Late that night, while I was on guard, soldiers from the 5th Division came in and relieved us. We got our equipment on, then walked the rest of the night--until almost daybreak.

I was too tired to dig a foxhole, so Buban and I just brushed away some of the snow and fell on the ground to sleep. (Buban had been evacuated for "battle fatigue" in August, and recently "Returned to Duty"). Some men didn't even brush away the snow, but just lay on the snow and slept right on top of it. No enemy shells were coming in.

When we awoke it was daylight and we could see we were behind the front line--safe enough to build fires to try to keep warm. We blew our first foxholes with dynamite and then finished them with our shovels. Buban and I dug a real good foxhole--about 4' deep. Buban was very nervous and dug diligently.

January 25 was my birthday, and I got a package from home. It had chicken in a jar, cookies and other good things. Buban and I ate the chicken while we were on guard.

There was a rumor that permanent barracks were going to be built in this area, and we were going to stay there while "fresher" divisions finished the war. To support this rumor, two 10-man tents were set up, just like camps back in the States. Also, big logs were brought in, as though they were to be used for construction. I don't know what the tents and logs were for, but they were not for us. More than seven months had gone by since D-Day, and during that time, the Army had brought in a lot of men and equipment. While we were behind the lines, we saw many Sherman and Grant tanks, big artillery pieces, and huge pieces of equipment which I couldn't identify but looked like construction equipment. There was a lot of activity going on behind the lines.

Later in the day, Nilges and I rode in a jeep, back about 10 miles, to see a movie, "Maisy goes Reno". It was a good way to celebrate my birthday.

On January 26, we were cleaning the mortars when we got a bad rumor. We were going back to the 1st Army--back near the Huertgen Forest. We were "down" again--we felt we always had it hard with the 1st Army. Nilges got a fever and was evacuated.

The next day, we loaded on trucks again--hoping to go south or west--but we went north again, although not very far. We stopped in another Luxemburg town, and were sent to a house with German-speaking civilians in it. By then there was a lot of snow on the ground and it was very cold. Krause could speak German, and he arranged for them to have some chicken dinner for us.

Two days later, on January 29, we were on trucks--and headed north again. This time we unloaded from the trucks near the German border, in a Luxemburg town that had been demolished from either American or German shells. We were told the Germans had left just two days earlier, and there was quite a bit of German artillery and mortar shells exploding in the town.

XVII: BACK TO GERMANY (SIEGFRIED LINE AGAIN)

The next day we were ready to move out again--without the trucks. We were too close to the front line for trucks. We, in the mortar section, were told to go to a house where the Co. CP was. Then O'Connell, Krause and I were told to go to a barn, where we found some straw to sleep on. Shortly after we got there, O'Connell was evacuated with some problem, so Krause and I slept there alone.

On January 31, we "jumped off" into an attack through high snow drifts, but it was very hard walking in the deep snow with all our equipment on. The Germans hit us with heavy artillery fire; Nero and Gorelachek got hit. Some "dead" shrapnel hit me in the back, but did not penetrate through the heavy overcoat and other clothes I had on. Oneyear looked wild with fear--I think we all did. After a while, the shells stopped coming in and we continued advancing up the hill. Co. I was next to us, and suddenly they were hit with a heavy barrage of artillery shells and "screaming meemies". Some of their wounded came by us hollering and crying. Then the barrage began hitting us. Men ran around in confusion, and some headed to the rear. Nobody seemed to be in charge or know what to do, other than hit the ground or run. After a while, the shelling let up a bit, and Lt. Gould (another officer I hadn't seen before) yelled out to "dig in". Krause and I hurriedly scraped the snow, dug our foxhole, and "hugged the ground" in the foxhole. When the shelling stopped again, we ate snow--we were so thirsty. Krause and I talked about just staying in the foxhole if we were told to attack. In the dark, no one would know if we were still in our foxhole.

At about 10 P.M. that night, just as we had come off guard, we heard someone yell, "Queijo, Krause--we're moving out!" We remained very quiet for a minute. In that darkness, no one would know if we had "moved out" with the rest of them. They wouldn't look for us, but even if they did, they would never have found our foxhole in the dark, and in the morning we could say we were asleep and did not hear anyone call. But we got up, put on our equipment, and moved out. As we walked we scooped up handfuls of snow to eat. We covered about 1000 yards--up to a small river--and did not encounter any Germans. Nor were there any incoming German shells. Krause and I found a foxhole which had been vacated by the Germans; we jumped in and got a little sleep.

The next day, February 1, we were told we were going to attack across the river, after a heavy barrage by our artillery. Grimes told me we had another man for our platoon, and I was to go to the Company CP (about 200 yds. back) to bring him back to our foxhole. I got him at the CP, but coming back, about 20 or 30 ft. from our foxhole, one of our own artillery shells apparently fell short and shrapnel hit the new man in the stomach. I don't know if he lived or not.

Also about that time, Engfer was killed from a rifle shot through his heart. His last words were, "Oh...Fisher... I'm shot". (Fisher was his squad leader at that time). The rifle bullet went through Engfer's canteen and then his heart. It was extremely cold out, and to keep

our drinking water from freezing--if we had any water--we would keep our canteens next to our chests, under our heavy overcoats and a few layers of clothing. After Engfer got shot, I superstitiously never carried my canteen on my left side--by my heart again. (Trying to keep warm, we wore heavy woolen two-piece underwear, two pairs of trousers, heavy woolen shirt, woolen sweater, combat jacket, and over everything a heavy woolen overcoat--and on top of all that we carried our equipment. We also wore woolen caps under our helmet-liners, steel helmets, woolen gloves, two pair of woolen sox, and combat boots--its a wonder we could move at all!)

We walked across the river. It was frozen and safe to walk on, although there were a few holes through the ice where shells had exploded. On the other side of the river, Grimes, Williams and I dug a 3-man foxhole to try to keep warm.

On February 2, our 2nd Battalion went through our positions, and we went about 200 yards to a small German village. Grimes and I went first. Then I went back and brought the rest of the platoon. We saw a lot of wrecked and abandoned German vehicles in the village street. I also saw a tiny church--the smallest I've ever seen. A dead German was lying on narrow railroad tracks approaching the village. John Haray (from Bridgeport, CN) wanted to "roll him" for his watch. The dead German was a young boy, and I wouldn't do it, but Haray did--took his watch and searched his wallet. Another earlier time--Haray, myself and some others were squatting with our equipment on waiting to move out. One of the men appeared to be resting on one knee and not saying anything. Someone touched his shoulder, and he rolled over and down--he was dead. Then Haray said, "I might as well take his watch, if I don't some rear echelon guy will", and he took it. I don't know where the dead man had been hit, but he was squatting there waiting for a medic to help him.

On February 7, we moved out again near some pillboxes on the Siegfried Line, about the same place we (the 4th Div.) were in September--over four months ago. Grimes and I dug our foxhole together. Giberson and Kulp were evacuated--I don't know why.

On February 8, we moved out again; there were some artillery or mortar shells exploding in the area, as we passed a damaged and abandoned German tank and a large German cannon. We also passed a dead German with his legs mangled. We kept advancing up a hill, where there were more and more air bursts. Finally, we got to the men in the 2nd Battalion that we were to relieve; we took over their foxholes. After that, I had to go back to our Company CP to get our K- rations. The CP was in an abandoned German pillbox, and was very safe from any shells. Capt. Lapoza was our company commander at that time. I had never heard of him; he was sick, and I never saw or heard of him again after that day. I went back to Co. K, and at about 3 P.M., we had to attack again. We moved out of the woods to an open field sloping down to a stream with a small bridge across it. We ran singly down the slope and across the bridge. The Germans had a machine gun zeroed in on the bridge, but it was far away and not very accurate at that distance. As I ran across the bridge, I could see the bullets "pinging" off the water and banks of the stream, but I don't think any of us were hit. On the other side, we ran up the slope to another woods. There, we were pinned down by artillery shells. T/Sgt. Mullen

(not the Mullen from the Huertgen Forest who was killed earlier) was acting as platoon leader; I don't think we had an officer platoon leader at that time. In fact, we seldom saw any officers anyway--and I never saw an officer above captain's rank on the front line.

On February 10, we attacked again. We were just outside Neider Prum. We were hit hard by mortar shells and lost a few men. That night we started to go into Nieder Prum. One of our squads went into a small German house, when one of our own artillery shells hit it, killing the entire squad, including S/Sgt. Kycznyski. T/Sgt. Mullen was also killed about that time.

We were then ordered to pull back, and we slept on the snow without digging foxholes. Sgt. Grimes had either lost or discarded his sleeping bag, and slept between Oneyear and me for a little warmth.

On February 11 we were pulled further back to a small village, where we went into a vacant house. Grimes, Oneyear and I slept on a real bed that night.

XVIII: HOSPITAL IN METZ (FRANCE)

I had a bad cough and chest pains, and on February 12, I awoke with chills. I knew I was sick, but those things usually wore off--but this time the chills "knocked me out". We had hot chow. I tried writing letters, but under the circumstances it was very difficult. I went to the Battalion Aid Station, expecting to get some pills for the chills. I was very happy when the doctor said I had a temperature of 102 and would be evacuated!

I was taken by ambulance back to St. Hubert, France--it was so good to be in France again. I stayed there one night, and then taken to a convalescent hospital in Metz, France.

It was great being back in the hospital, where there wasn't even the faint sound of incoming or outgoing artillery shells. The hospital was in a large brick building, and there must have been a thousand wounded or sick soldiers there. All those I met were infantrymen, and they made no secret that they would have done just about anything to keep from going back to the front line.

Amongst all those soldiers, amazingly, I saw my old buddy, Jake. He had disappeared from the front line--I'm not sure when. He had a full heavy beard now. He looked at me with a sly smile, and said he was getting away with something on the doctors. He said that back in the States he got in a bar-room brawl and was slashed in the eye with a broken beer bottle. It bothered him occasionally, but not too badly. But now he was taking advantage of it--he kept deliberately irritating his eye, and the doctors did not know what to make of it. Jake said he was going to keep irritating the eye as long as the war lasted--even if he lost sight in that eye.

I never saw Jake again. I knew he was from Chicago, so in 1962 when I was in Chicago on business, I looked up his name in the phone book, and called the number. An elderly woman who answered the phone seemed amused when I told her why I called, but said her husband, named Alvin Jacobson, was much too old to have been in World War II. She did not know any other Alvin Jacobson.

On February 28, I and a few others in my ward, were very despondent when we were marked "R.T.D."--Return to Duty.

XIX: BACK TO THE FRONT LINE

On March 3, on the way back to Co. K, I was taken to 12th Regt. Hdq. There were some good rumors going around. They said two armored divisions, the 6th and the 12th were going to go "through" us. In fact, elements of the 6th Div. were going down the road at that time.

March 4, I arrived back at Co. K and got a big welcome from Oneyear, Grimes, Slim, Giberson and the rest of the boys. Nilges was also back, and we had a new platoon leader, Lt. Russell. They said there had been practically no enemy action in the two weeks I had been gone, and they were still in the same positions.

On March 6, we moved out, and met no enemy action as we took a few small villages.

The next day, we attacked up a hill that had a lot of big rocks; Lt. Denny and a few other men were killed by artillery shells, but we kept moving. When we did stop, Oneyear and I dug in on the side of the hill--then about 10 minutes later, we moved out again. Finally we stopped and slept by the side of the road. It was dark, and we could see tracer bullets being fired into the town.

March 8, we went into the village we had approached the previous night, and went into one of the vacant houses. I heated some instant coffee from my breakfast K-ration, then we were told to set up our mortars and fire them into the next village, which was close by. The village we were in got hit by a heavy barrage of artillery, and Capt. Finley, our new Co. commander, was among those killed. Later that afternoon, during a lull in the shelling, we attacked out of that village, around a hill, and took the other village from the side, then returned to the village we had been in.

On March 9 we moved out to take another village. There was no German opposition, but some dead German civilians were lying by the side of the road. Oneyear, Tate, Verble and I stayed in a house with an old German civilian who reminded me of Zeke. He was very nice to us. We stayed there two nights and got some hot chow; also our mail caught up with us.

While in that village, Oneyear and I met two Russians who said they had been German prisoners-of-war. They had some vodka which they shared with us. They didn't speak English, but one of them let us know that they wanted us to go with them to take something from the German civilians. Oneyear and I would not go with them, and they said we were too easy on the Germans.

Later, Oneyear found or stole a ham some place, and we shared it with the other men in the mortar section. There had been no enemy activity, and we weren't doing much, so the Company had us do close order drill that afternoon. There were good rumors going around about the war ending, or us staying in the rear.

XX: REST AREA: LUNEVILLE, FRANCE

On March 13, we loaded on trucks again, which took us back to Prum. There we unloaded from the trucks, and waited by a railroad track junction. Soon, "40 & 8s" were hauled in on the tracks and we clambered in. The "40 & 8s" are railroad freight cars, originally intended to haul 40 men or 8 horses. The freight cars were empty, and of course had nothing to sit on. We squatted on the rough board floor, and were able to look out the open side doors to see the country scenery going by. We rode through Luxemburg City, but the train did not stop, and we slept in the freight cars all night.

On March 14 we were still in the freight cars, and saw quite a bit of France. Finally, at about 3 P.M., we arrived at Luneville, France where we unloaded off the "40 & 8s".

This was to be our first real rest, and it was great. We had traveled south; the weather had warmed considerably; the country looked green; and most importantly, there were no sounds of war. We were in that rest area for about 5 days. One of the first things we did, was go "hunting for eggs". We learned that if we asked, the French people would give us eggs. We would fry them--some times with french fries, and we loved them. One time, Griffith ate an entire dozen eggs by himself. I never ate a dozen, but I could eat 4 or 5 eggs easily. We didn't do much those days other than rest and eat.

The rest-period had to end, and on March 21, when we came back from some egg-hunting, we were told to get ready to load on trucks--which we did around 9 P.M.

We slept on the trucks, and on March 22 arrived at a town near Hagenot, France, where the people spoke German. We stayed there through the 26th, and were treated very good.

During this time, we would sometimes be hit by artillery when we were going between villages, but we weren't getting much German resistance or suffering many casualties.