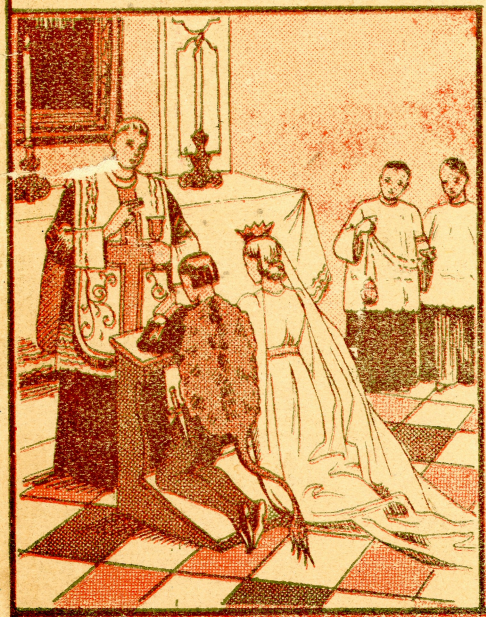
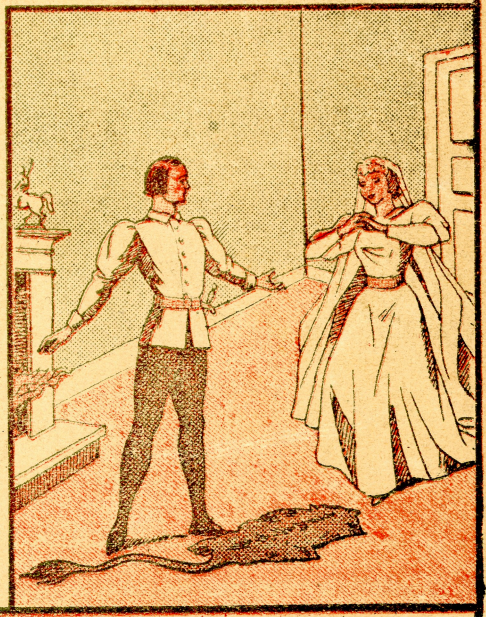
LT. H. M. VANDERHOOF.





QUADERNO di RETURN TO —

LT. H. M. VANDERHOOF, BTRY A 160th F.A. BN.

Salerno, Italy Sept. 20th 1943

This is a short summary of the events and activities in which my organization and I have participated in since May 24th 1943. On that date we left Camp Pickett, Virginia by train and moved to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, near Newport News, at the mouth of the James River.

We spent a little more than a week at C.P.H. The weather was extremely hot and the quarters crowded. Our time was spent in preparation for embarkation.

On June 3rd we entrained for Newport News, our Port of Embarkation. Upon arrival there we boarded the U.S.S. Leonard Wood and sailed to Hampton Roads to await the loading of the remainder of our convoy.

On June 8th our convoy having been completed we set sail for a destination unknown. The convoy itself was small consisting of twenty four transports, two light cruisers, twelve destroyers and a sea-going tug, but none the less it seemed large to me.

I was fortunate in having pretty fair quarters aboard, sharing a large stateroom with Maj. Wes. Jones, Capt. Albert Brown, 1st Verdi Patterson, 1st. Harry Lane, 1st. James Sherrick, 1st. Wm West, 1st. Herbert Fourt, and 1st. James Colton.

The men of our battery were quarted below decks, in the forwald part of the ship. Their conditions were far from ~~satisfactory~~ satisfactory because of the heat and lack of fresh water for bathing and shaving a condition which existed throughout the ship. Never-

the less all was taken in good grace and the trip as a whole was pleasant.

We officers spent most of our time reading and playing poker. Of course there were routine duties to perform by us, such as hold commanders, etc. Lt. Col. Stevenson of Okla. City. was in command of all the troops and we also had our artillery commander, Lt. Col. Jess Larson aboard. Some very ~~com~~ memorable times were had by all of us in the ward room at night as we sat around and drank coffee (Chocolate for me), and listened to tales of both the old National Guard and Coast Guard.

Our voyage itself was very uneventful. Several submarine alerts were sounded, which kept us on our toes and there was always the possibility of enemy planes bombing from the air. Our course was generally southeast which took us close to Bermuda. We changed directions many times for reasons which are obvious.

On approximately the fifteenth day out we sighted land which turned out to be Spanish Morrocco. The coastline was very rugged but certainly looked good. By this time rumors were floating around the latrine that we were going to land in No. africa, which were later confirmed.

It was only a few hours later that we entered the Straits of Gibralter and soon the "Rock" ~~the~~ itself was evident. The straits were very narrow and the convoy had to pass thru in a single file that extended for miles.

On the twenty fourth of June we entered the harbor at Mers-el-Kibir which is very close to Oran which we saw first.

We lay at anchor for three days with no one being allowed to leave the ship and on the night of June 27th we moved up the coast east about 60 miles and made a practice landing about 10 miles west of Mostaganem. We loaded into small boats about 2:00 AM the morning of July 28th. The water was rough and made debarking a risky and dangerous business with full packs. To my knowledge no one aboard was hurt.

We rendevouzed for a few hours and just as day was breaking, we headed for shore. The landing was a wet one due to sandbars which forced us to get out and walk for about 100 yards in the surf up to our middle! This was the first time in twenty one days I had my feet on land and then it had to be three feet under water!

We immediatly moved inland to a main ~~east~~ coastal road and then marched for 17 miles west to our camping area. Five days were spent on land. We spent most of our time in phases of basic training and foot marches.

Our camp was on a hill overlooking the Mediteranean Sea and was very scenic but the heat was terrific and the flies ferocious. You have never seen anything until you have witnessed an Arab

walking down the street with a pair of G.I. woolen underwear on or dressed in a blue barracks bag with his legs through holes cut in the bottom and the ropes over his shoulders as suspenders. The kids all wanted bum-bum (candy.)

On July 2nd we moved by truck overland back to Oran and boarded our ships. The 4th of July was very quiet and peaceful but we all knew we were soon to see more fireworks than any of us had ever seen before.

Early afternoon of July 7th saw us again underway but with no doubt in our minds as to where. July 10th was D-Day and our destination was the amphibous invasion of the island of Sicily. All plans and maps were laid out and studied. Our convoy had been joined by many others until our forces consisted of some 2,400 ships and 160,000 men.

July 9th found us within sight of the Island of Malta. The sight was most impressive because it represented the bases where most of our air support would come from. The worst weather we had yet encountered hit us that afternoon. The wind was blowing some 40 M.P.H. and the waves were running deck high and several of the boys were seasick. Our carefully laid plans look for a while as tho they might suffer some radical changes. PART OF PATTONS 5th Army. During the night of D-Day the sea calmed and about 5:30 A.M. July 10th I was climbing down the net into boat number 71 to launch my first Campaign overseas. While the earlier waves set out, we stood on deck and watched the heavy fire on the shore put there by the cruisers and destroyers. We also witnessed an aireal display when German planes came over to drop bombs on the convoy.

Upon landing we were forced to take positions on the beach some 20 ft from the water edge. After our exit from the beach was cleared of mines we moved inland and took a position some four miles west of Scogilitti. A Bty of the 160th F.A. Bn., my battery was the first to fire a round of ammumition in Sicily. This was verified by higher headquarters later.

The 179 R.C.T. captured Scogilitti and the Comiso Airport, both objectives being highly important to our subsequent capture of the island. On July 13th Pvt. Geo. Bell and Pvt. Gerry Boyles were killed in action on the beach. Italian grenades and mines were the cause. Both were buried near the beach in the first 45th Div. Cemetery.

After several days near Comiso and Biscari airfields, we moved overland to Gela and then northward. We had many positions both in the plains and in the mountains. We passed thru Caltanisetta, the seat of the Facist government in Sicily, Caltavatura, Castlebuno, Isnello, and finally took to the mountains in the drive on Messina. The route lead us thru San Marino and the last twenty miles took us over

nearly impassable roads. Many of these roads dated back to the 9th century and ours were the first vehicles they have ever seen in town. Leaving town we travelled some seven or eight miles on a road which was blasted and cleared from the side of the mountian. On this movement the Capts peep turned over and his driver Cpl. James Parks was injured. Both Capt Brown and his radio operator were uninjured.

On July 31st our division was relieved by the 3rd and we went to camp on the northern coast near Cefalu.

Notwithstanding the fact that this was the first time our Div. had been under fire, our troops did remarkably well. Many hundreds of prisoners, tanks and towns were captured. We travelled appropximately 130 miles and had spent 21 days on the front lines. The natives were quite a problem as they overran our positions but they were definitly our friends and were glad to see American and British troops in Sicily.

During our trek across the island many important and amusing incidents happened but are too numerous to be listed here. The battery ~~co~~ was given a good langh in our position near Xavier Station when Cpl. R.P. Sullens came herding in an Italian prisoner, and he had only a G.I shovel as a weapon.

We remained in our rest camp at Cefalu about twenty five days. During this time we spent our time cleaning equipment, swimming, playing volley ball and resting up generally. It was here that I came down with a slight case of malaria.

On Aug. 23rd the battle for Sicily was over. The Germans evacuated Messina and the Island was under complete Allied control.

Soon after we were moved to a new camps just west of Termini Imerse. We were further from the beach but it was taken care of by our ~~fe~~ frequent trips into Palermo. Most of our time was spent in replacement of equipment, basic training and foot marches. While in this area we had Bob Hope, Francis Langford and company for a U.S.O. show.

We soon learned of bigger things to come and all of our last efforts while in Sicily were spent in preparation for them.

Daily Schedule of Events
(With Gen. Mark Clarks 5th Army)

Sept. 5th. The 179th R.C.T. moved to Termini and loaded aboard L.S.T.'s and L.C.I.'s. The loading was completed in short order and by dark we were out in the harbor at anchor. Half our battery was loaded on one L.S.T. while the other half was another one. On L.S.T. # 437, Capt Brown and 1st. Court and myself rode while the other officers were aboard her sister ship. Capt. Brown was Commander of troops aboard and I was billeting and mess officer. I shared a room with Ensign Batchelder and he was a swell fellow from Conn. Approx. 350 men were aboard.

Sept. 6th An L.S.T. lying along side us was hit during the night by an enemy torpedo launched by a plane. There were no ~~Casualties~~ casualties and the ship made the beach O.K. Nothing of interest during the day.

Sept. 7th. At 0200 A.M. the convoy got under way. Destination unknown. The moral of all the men was very high and all seemed to enjoy the boat ride. About 1700 we sighted a small island on the port side but no one knew the name

Sept. 8th Smooth sailing all morning. About 1500, enemy planes were sighted and ack-ack fire started. It was ineffective due to the height of the planes. One bomb was dropped but no hit. During early evening we arrived in a transport area. It was here that we were given maps and learned that we were to make another amphibous landing but this time on the coast of Europe in Italy. Our landing was to be made about 30 miles south of Salerno. We also learned Italy had surrendered!

Sept 9th D-Day. Our forces landed and encountered heavy resistance from machine gun and artillery fire of the Germans. About 1600 we attempted to beach but were forced back because of an artillery barrage. We moved back out into the transport area to await further orders. Many shells could be seen bursting on and near the beach and we also saw our navy return the fire from off shore. About 1800 we had an Italian submarine, which had surrendered into allied hands, add to our group.

Sept. 10th At 2400 we were attacked by enemy bombers using flares to find us. Also at 0400 another attack but to my knowledge no damage was done. At 0700 we started toward the beach but hit a large sandbar about 500 yds off shore where we stayed for ten hours until the sea going tug freed us. While on the bar we were bombed but it missed us by 100 yds. No one hurt. We headed into the beach again and at 1500 we were going over a pontoon bridge to the beach. We landed at a point almost directly across from the Temple di Paistum. We immediatly moved into position on Highway 18.

Sgt Charles Chadick and Pvt. Grover Poole were hit by shrapnel but not seriously. At 0900 we learned that some of our troops had broken thru at Persano and the rest of our boys straggled in. Sure were a mess from crawling in ditches. Ammo came in at 1000 and so did food. A wonderful sight. At 1600, Capt Brown, all chief of sections and myself went on reconnaisance with Col Larson. Position selected on Highway 18, about five miles south of Battapaglia. L-6 S. and I remained to await the battery. Fierce fighting within a few hundred yards of battery position. Saw tanks and Inf units coming back down the highway. At one time we were forced to lay flat on ground for twenty minutes due to enemy machine gun fire. Had no way to warn Bn but turned out that Engineers forced Germans back and make occupation of position safe enough. Fired a good deal after registration that night.

SEPT. 13TH Position was dug in and we were prepared to defend the beach head at all costs. Only three guns available due to loss of fourth section on 11TH. Enemy artillery fire very thick. Finally slept all night long in my fox hole. Boy was I sleepy!

SEPT. 14TH Nothing unusual happened. Artillery fire coming in still very heavy. Morale of men high altho they were becoming tired. Saw four enemy planes shot down by beach Anti aircraft fire.

SEPT. 15TH A rest camp in rear area for the boys to get rested and cleaned up established. 25 men sent back to stay until late that night. Learned we were getting a new 105 mm. "B" Btry suffered some casualties due to shell hitting tree near gun position. Four men in Hdqs. Btry hit by shell fragments. Non serious.

SEPT. 16TH Beaches being bombed continously altho no reenforcements are landing to relieve us. The position was bombed by German M.E. 109's. Sgt. Howard Enslow of second section killed. A good soldier gone. Just missed death myself by two feet and a peep.

SEPT. 17TH We have been digging in constantly because of enemy shell fire. For the same reason we are living pretty close to our foxholes. Situation on the front remains about the ~~time~~ same. The 180TH R.C.T. has landed but as yet not in evidence. The Germans seem to be sending in more planes probably from above Rome. Our own Fortresses and medium Bombers as well as P-40's & P-51's have been going over constantly. We can see them overhead and the ground shakes ~~th~~ when they hit. A shell hit in Hdqs. Btry today and seriously wounded Sgt. Nash of 3rd "A" Btry.

SEPT 18TH Rumor has it that the British 8TH Army who landed in the "Toe of the Boot" have been contacted on our right. I have not seen any of their troops. The main body must be a good many miles away. Following previous orders we have been holding the beachhead regardless of costs and altho the Inf. has suffered a large number

of casualties, they are doing a swell job and not giving an inch. A tank outfit has an ammo and gas dump near our position. About dark one of the tanks returned with only the driver alive. They had been hit in the turret with a German 88. The two gunners and the tank commander were dead but the driver brought them back with the tank. Sure a brave fellow. About 2100 we learned that our rear echelon from Sicily had landed and is now in the rest area. The battery is now complete. Quiet night - no firing.

SEPT. 19TH S-2 information has it that our Inf. advanced over a mile into the Germans line. It seems evident that the Jerries have had enough for awhile and have withdrawn. The front line fighting has been continous and those that were in No Africa say there was no fighting there to compare to this. At 1000 Capt Brown and I go forward with the Cols. party on reconnaisance. The valley and roads are badly shelled and shot up. Many German tanks and vehicles can be seen everywhere. We went thru Battipaglia which has been completely demolished by our bombers. The Brothers British are already cleaning and removing the debris from the streets so they will be passable. German bombers hit the town about three minutes after we left. Our new position is about 4 miles east of Battipaglia. About 1600 the battery moves up. We were glad to move out of "Coffin Corner" because it seems obvious the Germans have spotted our positions. While in "Coffin Corner" we fired over 2000 rounds with three guns. We are now on the offensive again. New area well filled with bomb craters and railroad tracks in front are hit about every 100 yds. We registered but thats all.

SEPT. 20TH We have French fried potatoes till they come out of our ears. Sure a treat after so long. No firing today. Germans seem to be running clear out of range. Morale of men excellent.

SEPT. 21ST. Al + I went on recon. and then back and got battery. Moved thru Eboli and then S.E on Highway 91 to a rendevouz area for a couple of hours and then move into new position near Terziera. Outside of enemy shells falling near us, not much going on. We are in an old German gun position and they certainly made the Italian people dig them in well. Their camouflage is good but the area is most unsanitary. Italians seem very glad to see us. Germans are looting and burning their dead altho we have seen many graves.

SEPT. 22ND Position the same. Germans are fighting a fierce rear guard action with tanks and heavy weapons. All the country around here shows signs of terrific warfare. Houses bombed to the ground and many dead cattle as well as soldiers of both armies laying around unburied and create a horrible smell. Fired over 600 rounds during day and early evening. We are now up in the mountians and nights are getting cooler. Dust around on the roads is fierce. Went on recon with Al just before dark. Saw an old Roman road and travelled part way on it. No move tonite

SEPT. 23rd. Four German planes strafe near position but no one hurt. Go on recon again up near Oliveto to select new positions. Battery moves up about noon under heavy shell fire from Germans. A large number of dead on the road up - result of last nights battle. Heard we lost six tanks on the other side of town. Jim Sherrick and Herb Court up with line companies. Sgt. Chadick back from hospital as result of Persano. Cpl. Tommy Sanders up to have boys sign payroll. Quite excited when 88 dud hit a ways behind our position. No firing today.

SEPT. 24th Up on recon again with Al & Col. Go thru Oliveto and see several German tanks + trucks knocked out. Saw one of their kitchen trucks so we are even now. Our new position in a corn field about two miles south of Quagliette near the Sele River. Situation unusual. Towns on left and right not yet taken. Battery comes up around noon. I had breakfast in new position with Herb while Al brought up battery. No mishaps on way up but road + position shelled after we are in. Sgt Jack Bisemore hit in shoulder but not serious. One of the anti-aircraft boys hit also but not seriously. An Inf. Bn. was behind our position and they suffered about a dozen casualties. They seemed to be about 150 m.m but a lot of them were duds, thanks to the Chezs + Poles. The shelling continued all afternoon but quit about dark. We learn that Capt. J. J. Lyons of "B" Co was hit and had to be evacuated. Also that Capt. Goddard of "D" Co was killed by a mortar. Lt. Col. Stephenson was relieved of command and sent back to the states - ill health. Maj. O. Spradling took over command of the 1st Bn. Maj. Pete Donaldson transferred to Fifth Army. A swell fellow gone. The Germans are still on the run and we are hot after their tails.

SEPT. 25th. A quiet morning with only a few enemy planes overhead probably on recon. At 1400 Al + I go on recon and as usual the roads are being shelled. Several bridges blown out but the engineers have them well fixed. A hard working bunch and the best in the world. Lots of enemy materiel on the route knocked out. Had a mad race across a long ~~bad~~ bridge that was being shelled. No one hurt. The battery came up after dark and no mishaps. West + Sherrick with front line companies. No firing today.

SEPT. 26th Very quiet day. Learn we may be here for a long time. Good thing for our guns need cleaning and the trucks need some maintenance. I learned that Lt. Du Bois of "C" Btry was killed yesterday. I didn't know him as he just joined us. A P-51 just went over trailing black smoke - hope he makes home.

SEPT. 27th Still in same position. I took off and went back to our last position and had me a good bath in a cold mountian stream. Of course it had to rain at the same time. All the guns were cleaned by the sections. Al + I go on a long recon at 1400. I counted 28 German vehicles along the road while out. No move in sight.

SEPT. 28th Sgt. Doris Draper reported in today. He was in hospital when we left Sicily. Four new men fresh from

the states join the battery. Sgt. Parent took sick and went to hospital. No firing all day. Germans seem to have disappeared.

SEPT. 29th Al + I go on recon again up near Castelbuno. The road has taken a terrific bombing by Allies and several trucks are seen around this area. More rain but harder. German radio reports we are stopped dead in So. Italy but we still are chasing them. Men spend most of day drying out their clothes.

SEPT. 30th Payday! No place to spend it tho. I pay the men in Als absence. Talked to Capt. John Gossett of 1st Bn. and learn they weren't so badly hit as was expected.

Oct. 1st Battery moves to Castelbuno. Al + I on recon again. More rain - no firing.

Oct. 2nd We are taking a breather now and set up for defensive fires only. Al on recon all day.

Oct. 3rd Enemy planes strafe road in front of our position. Two Inf. boys killed. Nothing new, play beers with the boys most of the day.

Oct. 4th Go on recon early in morning and find a rendevous near Mattingradia where battery comes at noon. Lot of grapes around.

Oct 5th Still resting. Bill West makes 1st Sgt. effective Sept 22nd. Swell fellow. 2nd Lt. Woody Stokes joins battery. From Decatur Tex. Big event of the day. C.P. gang has turkey! Best food since the states. Getting all C rations now.

Oct. 6th Move to a rendevouz near Giorgia. Still in a rest area, but there is too much moving around to rest much.

Oct. 7th Rain all day again. Still resting.

Oct. 8th More rain. Al + I go on recon. We are going back on the line again. We pass thru Benevento, a large town almost completely in ruins. Worst I've seen yet. After dark battery moves up to position near Ponte on the Calore River. Big field and muddy as the devil. Two big bridges blown near our position. I spend the night in a jeep.

Oct. 9th We move again with firing a shot about four miles east where the Calore R. joins the Lorenzo R. Poor spot. Enemy shell all day. No casualties.

Oct. 10th More shelling. Pvt Bill Wyrick hit near the eye but stays with us. Lt. Joel Crain - "C" Btry hit in both wrists, and is evacuated. A shell hit near kitchen and blew out fires and thru mud into the mashed potatoes. First time we've had them in a long time. Learn that Capt Allen (Indian) Crain was killed on the 7th. Used to 1st Sgt of this battery way back. Col. Larson receives letter from Maj. Gen. Keyes praising the Bn and especially "A" Btry which he used to command. We all read the letter. More rain tonite. Capt Foster, Lt. Officer and Sgt Rue - reported missing since 0700. No. parties come in but Jim Sherrick goes back out.

Oct. 11th Move north and take positions about 2 miles

west of Guardia. Sgt. Ree was found dead with four holes in him. Foster must be a prisoner. We register but thats all.

Oct 12th Move again to new position near Cerreto. Expect lots of trouble as we are exposed to German observation. We register. German planes bomb ahead of us. They are increasing in number.

Oct. 13th Chow comes up from a rear area and we eat all our meal behind the position. No shelling in position as yet. Lt Joesbran go on recon and are under fire from a new weapon to us - rocket mortar. Neither hurt. Lt Fowt reports his party well shaken up by rocket mortar. Send out a new party using several new men. Fired a lot.

Oct. 14th Infantry took a beating today but accomplished missions. Looked over gun books and found we have fired over 1000 rounds here. Rained all day. I take #1 gun up to new position at Sorenzello to register before dark but we are forced to waste time pulling a Hdqs truck out of a detour. Reached area after dark. Battery came in later and 1st Sec. turned over gun O.D. out of commission. Bill West reported hit but not seriously altho evacuated. S/Sgt Burris carried on and did a swell job. German planes are bombing every day and growing in number.

Oct. 15th Sun shining today. 1st Gun section takes gun back and it is replaced with a new model. This makes two new type in the battery. About 1500 over thirty planes (ME-109's) bomb and strafe a town forward of our position.

Oct. 16th Our Inf. having tough sledding up near Facchio. All F.O. parties doing a swell job. Fired about 100 rounds.

Oct. 17th Learn that the 34th is relieving us so we get a few days rest finally. Spent the day cleaning up guns and personnel. We see enemy planes every day now but so far they haven't seen us. Learned that 33 men of 1st Bn. were killed in this last action.

Oct 18th Nothing new - Still resting. Washed in the river this P.M. with a few natives watching. Also washed my wools.

Oct. 19th S/Sgt. Sneed + T/5 Wailes report back from hospital. We learn that 13 nuns were killed in the bombing of Facchio by Germans. Go on recon to a new rest area.

Oct. 20th Move into new area about 3 miles N.W. of Facchio. Set up camp.

Oct. 21st Jim Sherrick bought a whole ~~ox~~ beef from a native and so we have steak for tomorrow. Most of our time spent in cleaning up ment equipment.

Oct. 22nd Had steak today. Tasted swell. Still resting.

Oct. 23rd Had a dental inspection today at 0800. Afterwards took a little ride down to San Salvador and had a meal with some natives. More French fried potatoes than I ever had before.

Oct. 24th Took a load of fellows into Benevento to ~~turn~~ change greenbacks into A.M.C. Had our picture taken and ate a lot of native candy. Took Frank Rosan (W.O.) and Gpl.

Tommy Sanders out to dinner. Chased all over but finally ended up in a joint where they gave us so poorly fried chicken, steak (goat in tomatoe sauce, pretty good) and some ham. Wanted $9.80 for the bill but we didn't think it was worth it so we left $5.00 + walked out. Bought a few post cards and then came home.

Oct. 25th Rain today. Another new officer assigned to us 2nd Lt. Joe Ansalmo from Brooklyn. Nothing new.

Oct. 26th Heard from Bill West in Africa. He expects to be back soon. Nothing else to do or report. Raintonite.

Oct. 27th. We plan on going to Naples but rain cancels the trip. You can tell by the sound that the front has moved up considerably.

Oct. 28th Sherrick, Towt, Colton, Ansalmo, Burris, Babcock, Goss, Ziemba and I go to Naples. Start right after breakfast and arrive about 10:00 and go to Pompeii first. Visit the ancient city and buy some junk for the family. Go into town of Naples and eat dinner. Pretty fair. Sherrick, Towt, Burris & I go off by ourselves and walk all over. Buy some stamps for Ruth H. Leave about 3:30 PM in the rain. Rained all the way home. Held up at the big bypass near camp where Cpl. Reynolds + Cpl Parks meet us. Parks not completly recovered. Swell day.

Oct. 29th All officers go to conference with Col. preparatory to going back on line. Jim Sherrick transfered to 1st Bn. Hdqrs. as Sn. Officer. 41

Oct. 30th Al & I go on recon at 1300 and select a position near Piedmonte. Rained while there and got my feet soaking. Battalion moved to rendezvous while we are out and we return about 19:00. Don Ferlando was waiting there when I got back and we talked for a couple of hours while Date. At 2200 we move up to new position. I sleep under two blankets and nearly freeze because of wet feet. American born Japanese troops are in the area (34th Div.)

Oct. 31st Circulation cut down because of German observation We register. Payday.

Nov 1st The front line has moved up and Al goes on recon. At 1000 German bombers bomb behind our position at a road intersection. Killed four men and injured 18. We move up to new position at 1600 but don't get in until 21:00 due to traffic. Our new position is on the east side of the Volturno overlooking the valley. We dig in good as there is terrific firing on our left. Third Division has its hands full.

Nov. 2nd Two year ago I was still a civilian and a year ago I was in Fitchburg with my wife. Oh happy days! Al + I go on recon and pick a position near the river and go back. I take a gun up to register before dark but have to stop short of position about a mile because Jerries shelled our position during the afternoon. Our left flank is wide open to enemy observation. Move in after dark and dig in.

Nov. 3rd Third year started now in Army. Enemy shells fall near position but no one hurt. We have fired a lot. Enemy planes bomb on the other side of hill from us where 34th is.

Nov. 4th Germans hold strong line on other side of river.

We shell continously to protect our Inf. who are trying to take the town of Venafro. They are pushed back twice but finally take it. This is a very important point in the German Winter Line. At 1600 we are strafed by a ~~Fath~~ Focke Wolfe but no one is hurt. Poor aim.

Nov. 5th Al goes on recon on other side of Venafro. Still a lot of firing going on over there. Battery gets ready to move about 1900 but we learn at 2400 that we will remain for another day.

Nov. 6th Fire a little and then prepare for night move to position Al picked out yesterday. Learn that Capt. Ray. Washam was killed along with 8 E.M. in Venafro last night. Good thing we didn't move. Move at 2100 and occupy position one mile north of Venafro on the side of mountian in an olive grove. We have crossed the Volturno! We hear enemy machine pistols up on the hill in front of us all night.

Nov. 7th Two platoons of "I" Co go up on hill to clean out Germans. Come back and tell of killing 5 and wounding several others. Didn't clean it off entirely because we still hear the machine pistol. Col. Larson receives cablegram that his wife has suffered a stroke and he is transferred to 5th Army and is on his way back to the States by plane. Maj John Embry takes over command. Fourth section hits an olive tree with an outgoing shell and Jesse + Modesti (Pvts) receive slight scratches but stay with us.

Nov. 8th Machine pistol still up on the hill. We all hope he will soon starve and come off of it. Maj. Franklin Gardner is assigned to Bn as Exec. We can see some of the 158 + 9 Bn getting counter battery fire in their position. The Germans are shooting heavy stuff. We have counted 48 prisoners brought back thru our position today; most of them Polish but some German.

Nov 9th M.P. still up on the hill. We are starting to hear artillery (enemy) going over our head. This is really a hot spot with the front line only a couple of hundred yards away. Our Inf. is having a real fight.

Nov. 10th Got a lot of shelling during the night but only two "B" Btry boys were hit. Big stuff. ME 109 + Focke-Wolfes bombed the 189th and killed 5 and wounded 18. We are lucky so far. The morale of the men is high altho there is an awful strain. This is really a hot spot.

Nov. 11th Armistice Day but no celebration here. Just keep on digging in and firing all the time. Germans are still on the hill in front of us altho they can't see us. Inf. is having a tough fight because the enemy has all the high ground. Long Toms are firing every night and the valley is full of them. Venafro is constantly being shelled and shelled. Two C.O. parties out all the time. Night firing by us all the time. Hard on sleep but

we'll bust that line yet.

Nov. 12th — Lt. Bill West reports back to battery after being in hospital in Bizerte. We learn that Pvt. John T. Anderson was killed at 1630 by an enemy mortar shell. He was a good man anywhere we used him. A good man lost. Cpl. Bird was seriously wounded at the same time. At 1730 a 150mm shell hits near our C.P. and cuts ignition wires on Poles truck. Lots of fire from over the hill comes in at night

Nov. 13th — Today another tradegy strikes Lt. Woody Stokes is killed by a direct hit on him while he was in his foxhole. He was forward on observation and none of the rest of the party scratched. We are still digging in and firing. An occasional shell hits near our position. This is really a hot spot.

Nov. 14th — Al + I go forward on recon and are under enemy fire the last half of the trip. It is raining cats + dogs all the while. We return to the battery. No move is contemplated. Shelling continues near battery position.

Nov. 15th — Rain all day. It keeps the planes away but I don't know which I'd rather have. The rain or the planes. The enemy shelling continues and seems to be getting closer. Rain has washed almost everything out. We are still dry. Foxholes are full of water.

Nov 16th — Rain! We learn that the 3rd Div. has been relieved by the 36th Div. Shell hit near position but still haven't got us yet. Men seem to be resigned to the rain.

Nov. 17th — A shell hits near Pooles truck and sent a hunk of shrapnel thru the truck bed. No one hurt. We learned at 1730 that Lt. Bill West was killed on his O.P. He had sent the rest of his party down to the bottom of the hill. His first time out since he came back from the hospital. A swell pal and buddy gone. Enemy shells hitting all around us.

Nov. 18th — Last night a shell Lt. Andrews (AA) jeep and demolished it. No one hurt but Andy moved quick. Sun came out this morning but rain came again this afternoon. A shell hit in headquarters and injured 8 men. Some may die. Al and Joe Serao were lucky last night when a shell hit 20 yds from their tent and filled it with holes. Jim Coltons tent and clothing were riddled. Luckily he was in town.

Nov. 19. — Learned this A.M. that a "B" boy was killed last night in worst night shelling so far. Nine from Hdqs. taken to field hospital and 9 2nd Bn boys killed just below us. Sun out all day but still muddy. We do not fire any.

Nov. 20th — Unusually quiet last night. Out of 35 enemy shells over the position, 27 were duds. We fire very little during the day. Rain off and on but still awful muddy. Lt. Verdi Patterson, Lt. Joel Crain, and Lt. Harry Lane promoted to Captains. Lt. Steve Whittman and Lt. Junior Kraft promoted to 1st Lovies. Sgt Ed Watson "C" Btry transferred to headquarters as Master Sgt. Lt. Sherick

returns to "A" Btry. Plan set up by Fifth Army for men to get six day furloughs in Naples. Start Thurs. Also learn that men are going to be exchanged and sent back to the states. Very few at a time tho, I don't expect I'll see the States until the end of the War. Christmas packages start arriving in Btry.

NOV. 21ST. Rather quiet last night compared to recent nights. Nothing new during day. Still in same position. Saw Capt J. Crain and he looks good. Capt. H Lane also returned to Bn. Fired well over 200 rounds today. Pvt. Harold Smith returns to Btry after being in hospital with flu.

NOV. 22ND Worst night barrage yet from the enemy. We fired all night as well. No one in A Btry hurt. Don't know about the others. Figured Ammunition today and found that we have fired over 6,000 rounds to date in Italy alone. Still in same position. No news. First complete day of sun. Did quite a bit of firing today. Boys who speak Italian went into Venafro to search houses for spies + radios.

NOV. 23RD Very quiet night last night and all day. Rain again. 3rd Bn, 179TH Inf. is going to occupy the hill in front of us tonite. About time.

NOV. 24TH We spent last night trading shells with the Dutchmen. Sun was out most of the day but it was cool. Herb Fourt got his 1st Lt. today and I'm sure glad. Missed being hit by a mortar shell by three minutes. Hit the spot I was getting my hair cut at just after I left. Pvt. Bochenski very near is quite shaken up by it. It must be Marians prayers. We fired 25 Newspaper shells during the day.

NOV. 25TH Thanksgiving and it rained all day long. Had turkey for dinner. No activity at all. Fired 120 rounds last night.

NOV. 26TH Bright sun all day long. Learned today that we have a new Division C.O. He is Maj. Gen. Eagles formerly Ass't Div. C.O. of the 3rd Div. Gen. Middleton was transferred to the states and made Commandant of General Staff School in Leavenworth, Kan. Maj. Embry was promoted to Lt. Col. in charge of 160TH FA Bn. so it looks like Col Larson will not rejoin us. Fired Battery three rounds for the Army Pictorial Service who took pictures from the air. About 1700, the third Section's camouflage net caught afire and threatned to set off their ammunition. Sgt. Anderson, Sgt Chadick Cpl Johnson and I managed to get the net and tarp away in spite of the possibility of the shells exploding We finally got water on the ammo and just avoided serious trouble. No one was hurt or burned.

NOV. 27TH Very quiet night and day. Sun shone for a second day in a row. Col. Embry took individual pictures of all officers with his new Xmas camera. Expect the Mrs. will receive a copy from Mrs. Embry.

NOV. 28TH Three days in a row of sun! A large barrage of enemy shells at noon and at dusk but all over. Very quiet otherwise. Fourt + Sherrick up with line Co. We fired about 250 rounds all day.

NOV. 29TH Day cloudy but no rain. Cpl Milner picked up a suspicious character in the battery position

and took him down to the C.I.P. in Venafro where they found that he was a spy for the Germans. Kitchen is now completely dug in. Spent all afternoon with Al + Joe Seran on recon. Fired another 250 rounds again today. Infantry is starting a push.

NOV. 30TH Up most of last night firing. We got out over four hundred rounds before down. German shells hit near the position this morning, killing two doughboys and wounding five. All our battery O.K. Payday! Remainder of the day very quiet. Survey crew went up to new position so looks like we will move soon. Sun all day.

DEC. 1ST Up again last night firing. Nothing new during day. Sun out all day.

DEC 2ND Up till 1:30 firing last night. Could use some more sleep. Perfect day for bombing and over 400 medium bombers went over our position to bomb. Didn't go far. Fired over 300 rounds these last two days. Ansalmo and Colton out with line companys.

DEC 3RD Fired until 11:30 last night. Rained all day so there was very little activity. Fourt up with line companies as well as other two.

DEC. 4TH No firing during last. Rain all day long. Left the tent for supper only. Fired only 200 rounds during day. Colton + Ansalmo back in.

DEC 5TH Rain all day. Nothing new to report. Sherrick up.

DEC. 6TH Day cloudy. Our area was visited by Maj. Gen. Sultan and his staff of the 8th Corps. Col. Embry and Col. Muldrow were along. He was very pleased with everything including chicken he got from kitchen. Shook hands with me and thanked me for my time. A very nice guy. Also expected a visit from some Russian Army officers in afternoon but they didn't come altho they were in the area. Fired 20 rounds of newspapers dated today. Jerry is getting the latest news. Infantry gained quite a bit of ground today. Must be the new replacements they got yesterday.

DEC. 7TH Spent all night last night firing up until 5:00 this morning. Sort of sleepy today. Learned today that a regiment of Italian soldiers are now fighting on our left flank. About time they started. Day very clear but brisk. No indication of moving.

DEC 8TH Slept quite some more tonite altho we fired off and on thruout the night. A Division of French troops have relieved the 34th on our right. This is finally getting to be an allied front. Several planes in the air all day ~~to~~ today. Germans are sure getting strafed. The name of the hill in front of us that has been dubbed "Graveyard Hill" and the river behind us (Volturno) is called "Bloody River". Both are very fitting names. Fired 5 rounds of propaganda shells today. Inf. reports that Germans who surrender are in poor physical shape due to

concussion. Day clear and fairly warm for Dec.

DEC 9th Fired over 100 rounds last night but didn't lose too much sleep. Today makes 40 days on the front lines. Hope we are out by Christmas. Fired over 100 rounds during the day. It was cool but not raining today. Plane activity all day long - all American. Haven't seen a Heinie plane for a long time. One of the boys coming back from up front said the Gen. (Div. C.O.) was up there shooting up the nine barrels just as fast as the doughboys took a house. The louse!

DEC. 10th Fired 180 rounds last night. Germans counter-attack one of the towns up ahead and we broke it up with fire from the Bn. Shot with Corps. this morning from 400 till 7:00. Really threw the stuff out there. Rain today. Huff said! Not much doing the rest of the day. Seven bags of mail in tonite. Christmas packages

DEC 11th Corps shoot again this morning at 6:00. Slept all night last night for a change. Sun out this A.M. but cloudy all afternoon. Still sit around in our shirt sleeves. ~~Had~~ Heard today (rumor) that the Germans were using Jap Zero planes in here too now. Read in the Stars & Stripes that the Spitfires are now "bombing" our doughboys with gas cans full of rations and clothing. Take almost a day to get to them in the mountains. German planes came over today and bombed in the valley. First time in a long time. Learned today that Bill West, Woody Stokes and John Anderson who were killed, have just been removed from the mountian. Lt. Henry Ford of "B" Btry. (new) was reported missing the first time he went out as F.O.

DEC. 12th No firing last night, first time in a long time. Learned this A.M. that we are going to move forward tonite so I spent the day in the new position digging gun pits. Our new position is just north of Filignano. There is a battery of French right behind us and the C.P. of the French 5th R.A.C. Reg. in the building next to our C.P. We moved at night with a full moon to aid us. We are within 2500 yds of the front lines.

DEC. 13th Registered this morning with charge 3 at a range of 3400 yds. Shot most of our problems today with charge 1, so you can see we are really up there close. Spent most of the day digging in and improving gun pits. Learned tonite from one of mothers letters that Dad died the 23rd of Nov.

DEC. 14th Fairly quiet day. German planes bombed the valley behind us but they haven't spotted us yet. German shells landed in Filignano with a few almost reaching us. A few fragments landed on our overhead cover. Learned tonite that the British 8th Army captured a Panzer Div. complete with equipment and a battalion of Inf. Good news. Corps is going to push off in the morning. Sherrick & Colton up with the Inf line Cos.

DEC. 15th Corp pushed off and we helped them with some 700 rounds before breakfast. Things got really hot up there and Colton was pinned down by artillery and mortar fire and just about quit but Col. Embry talked to him and cooled him down. About 800 A.M., the

town of Sagone fell after some four or five weeks fighting for it. The First Bn. (179th Inf.) took their objective around three o'clock and the 3rd Bn. was fighting near theirs. The French were pushed back. Sherrick and Colton are coming in tonite and Court + Anselmo are going out.

DEC. 16th Fired over 275 rounds last night but we broke up a counterattack so the loss of sleep was well worth while. The French took their objective and continued pushing. The 179th Inf. was relieved by the 180th about noon today but we continue as direct support. The 171st F.A.Bn. is in no position to support them while we are. Spent a good part of the afternoon talking with the French officer across the way and looking over their 105 M-3's. A neat little job. They have fired well over 2000 rounds today. Wish we could do that but can't for some reason. Their ammo train came in tonite, 12 truck loads. Heard the rocket mortar again today so I guess the poor old Inf. is catching it again.

DEC. 17th Third section fired 40 rounds of harrasing fire during last night. Very quiet during the day for us altho the French fired a lot. Day clear but cloudy.

DEC 18th We sent Sherrick, Colton, and Court out with parties early this A.M. Colton came back in around 3.30. He said all the large hills in front of us are covered with French and American troops. Also learned the counter-attack we broke up the other evening cost the Germans over 50 dead. They must be retreating fast not to take their dead with them. Not much firing during the day. Rained a little but felt more like snow.

DEC. 19th Bright + sunny Sunday. Today the French Cannon Co. moved out. Still a few trucks + men around. Very quiet day. Spent most of the morning with Col. Embry + gun section's discussing new fuse setters. Learned tonite when Jim Sherrick came in that a member of his party Pvt. Ed. Ziemba was killed by mortar fire. Caught him in the stomach as he was policing wire. A good man gone. Guess there must be a certain number to die before we quit.

DEC. 20th Cloudy day with rain in afternoon. French moved back in again to their old position. Fired 20 rounds of newspaper as well as over 200 rounds of other stuff. Today makes 51 days on the front without relief.

DEC. 21st Fired 80 rounds during the night. Day started out sunny but rained late in the afternoon. Fired over 460 rounds all day. Learned that our No 1 gun fired short and Inf. reported several causalties. Nothing new on relief.

DEC. 22nd Rained all day long. In spite of rain we fire over 150 rounds which is pretty good considering that we are no longer directly supporting the 180th Inf. The 171st F.A.Bn. has taken over direct support and we are re-enforcing. Most of the Bn officers are down at the house and by night most of them very tight. It sure makes it hard on the men who can't do the same

without fear of reproach. We took a typhoid + tetanus shot this P.M. Left arm sort of sore tonite.

DEC. 23rd We fired about 80 rounds during last night. Today was very quiet. All observers are now in with the battery.

DEC. 24th Fired again last night but did very little during the day. Spent most of the morning in the battery area with Col. Kinney and Col. Embry. Most of the afternoon spent with Al planning for tomorrow.

DEC. 25th Christmas! We started delivering Xmas presents to the Germans at 8oo last night and did so all day as well. We fired over 250 rounds so our Christmas was just another day at the front. It wasn't quite as bad as all that for we had a very good dinner with turkey and what little trimming were available. Two Red Cross girls were on hand to issue donuts and coffee. We bought candy with our PX fund so the boys all had a good time. I attended Church services in the afternoon out in the open. It was a clear day altho it got cloudy + cold in the late afternoon.

DEC. 27th Fired again last night but spent a very quiet day. Guess our being reenforcing fire only does cut us down a little. Col. Embry + Maj. Gardner thru the position. No rumors.

DEC. 28th No firing during the night for a change. Woke up to find snow all around us but not in the position. Growing colder all along. Learned today that I am to go to Naples with the next bunch on Dec 31st.

DEC. 29th Another quiet night but we fired 20 rounds at 2:00 AM + again at 6:30. Heard today that the 34th is relieving the 36th and that the 3rd is back on line. That makes twice the 36th has been relieved while we continue fighting. Some fun. Day cold but clear.

DEC. 30th Fired all night long but managed to get a little sleep. Learned early this A.M. that I am to go to Naples as a duty officer at the rest camps. The Army Pictorial Service took pictures of the battery in action which are to be incorporated in a feature picture "The Road to Rome." We are supposed to see it when we get back in the states. Day was quiet otherwise. Spent the night in the house with Al.

DEC. 31st Left for Naples at 8oo A.M. Spent 6 nights and 5 days there but I'll record the batteries activities in here. Rained all day long.

JAN 1st. 1944 The boys got their first snow + sleet storm and the wind blew all the camoflague nets downs as well as most of the tents. The sleet froze all the traversing mechanisms and they really had a mess. Fired quite a little during the day.

JAN. 2nd Enemy planes over the battery today and did a little strafing. No one hurt. No fire tonite. First time in a long time.

JAN. 3rd More planes over today. Enemy shells falling near position for first time since Venafro. French are moving up regularly now. We do not fire much.

JAN. 4th Day quiet. A few officers + E.M. from the 88th Div. are in our outfit to learn the ropes in combat. They are in Africa.

JAN. 5th I arrived back at battery around 4am after a swell time. There was plenty of snow on the ground and it was cold & windy. Nothing much doing as the French have almost completely taken over. Tomorrow we are supposed to be relieved

JAN. 6th We are officially relieved at noon and we move back to a rest area tomorrow. We clean up all day and are going to spend the night in the houses down below. It is a cold windy day but clear.

JAN. 7th A very heavy frost last night. Move out at 9am and it is cold. We are going way back to San Salvadore which is further back than where we started from. We will really be back. We arrive at rest area for a good 30 days and there are tents (wall) for all the boys and all of the officers are in a house. We have a stove set up so we will be warm. We set a new record of 78 days on the front line without relief. I hope we don't have to break our own record.

JAN. 8th Warm Sunny day in the rest area where we got the camp in shape. Nothing much else.

JAN. 9th Cloudy Sunday. Went to Telese where the barracks bags were stored and brought them back. Went to church in the open this afternoon and to a movie tonite.

JAN. 10th Went out to see if I could get some charcoal for the stoves in the battery. Went as far north as Piedmonte but only saw one charcoal pile and that belonged to the 34th Div. Finally ended up sneaking in the back way and stealing a truck load. Day warm and bright.

JAN. 11th Suppose to start training schedule but didn't because of an Ord. Inspection. All this time fighting and they want us to train!

JAN. 12th Spent the morning cleaning guns and the boys had the afternoon off. I stayed in the area as the only officer in the battery.

JAN. 13th Had a short session with the gun sections today and ironed out a few things they have been doing wrong. Went to San Salvadore this evening and saw "Keeper of the Flame". Good picture but too much propaganda.

JAN. 14th Learned this A.M. that we were to have a night occupation of position (training). As tho we need to know how after 4 months of it. Outlined the thing to the boys and had the afternoon off. All went off smooth tonite but still a waste of good time. Colton goes to Headquarters as Survey Officer.

JAN. 15th Beautiful day but did nothing. Had Chicken for dinner. Sure wish I were busy.

JAN. 16th Same thing again today. Went to San Sal. this afternoon but didn't see Humphrey Bogart who was to be there in person.

JAN. 17th Went to 700th Ord. this A.M. to see about having 3rd section gun repaired and stayed for dinner. Ran into Piedmonte but did nothing. Went to a show tonite, after which we (Al, Jim, Herb & I) put a jig saw puzzle together. 2nd Lt. Phil Pierce attached.

JAN. 18th We have final show down inspection & draw replacement equipment. Learned today that we are going on another amphibious operation. Where we don't know yet but it will be soon. A couple

more days here and then to a staging area. All sorts of rumors flying around. I sit on a court martial tomorrow. Only our combat team is going.

JAN. 19TH Spent the day in court. We tried 10 cases and convicted only one. At dinner time I learned that one of the boys in the battery was fooling with a hand grenade and it went off killing Pvt. Harry Barr and seriously wounding Pvt. Sam DeCristEspharo as well as nicking Pvt. Hemphill in the forehead. It is a hell of a way for a man to die if he must. Learned tonite that we are going to hit a little town of Anzio just south of Rome. Spent the night getting everything packed.

JAN. 20TH. Cleaned up area for movement and were ready to go at 2 00 but don't move until 6 00 P.M. We go thru Naples & then swing north thru Bagnoli to a staging ~~area~~ area out of reach of everything. We arrived at area at 1830 after getting lost in Naples. Bedded down by fire for the nite.

JAN. 21ST Another anniversary. Our area is in the bottom of an extint volcano with fog all day except between 12 noon & 2 00 P.M. when we see the sun. We have called this Pneumonia Valley. It is a hunting ground of the Kings. I think he must have spent his time hunting his way out. Only one entrance & exit. We start to make camps. Tomorrow we begin waterproofing the vehicles.

JAN 22ND. Started thru ~~can~~ channels to get a pass to Naples to go to the dentist. Finally got one at 12 00 noon. Herb Jones & I went in and I had my teeth looked at at 1 00 and the doc said I had a good set of teeth but he ground some of my back teeth down to make the ache go away. Herb & I went to the show & saw "Madame Curie" Swell show. After a little shopping for Parks, we went to a house where we had supper. We both ate eight fried eggs & some Italian sausage. Got back to Pneu. Valley at 8 00 P.M. and Herb was sick from the eggs. Orders came down to spend the rest of the night in waterproofing.

JAN. 23RD. 3rd Division landed today with no opposition and we are to load up tonite. Left Staging area at 4 00 and with the P.B.S. running things we had a big mess up but finally loaded aboard L.S.T. 415 at 12:30. We left Pozoulli at night and were on the sea before going to sleep. Everything is ~~Both~~ British.

JAN. 24TH Spent all day sailing. Rough weather and majority aboard were sick but not me. We arrived in the harbor of Anzio at 4 00 P.M. and are uncertain as to the future. We hope to be able to land at the docks but may have to hit the beach. There are three cruisers firing inland but outside of that no other

signs of activity. We are planning on spending the night aboard ship.

JAN. 25 We are awakened at 400 AM and told that we will hit the docks soon. Enemy planes came over last night and dropped flares + bombs. Hit nearby but didn't destroy anything. We unload in the dark during a bombing attack but they don't come near the docks. The sky is full of light both from the flares and tracers. We go thru Anzio and Nettuno northward to a rendezous area which we hit at daylight. After a quick meal, Al, Harry Lane + I go on reconnaisance, me driving, which Col Johnson (1st Bn. 179th Inf.) Capt. McLain, + 1st Brinker. Get back around noon after picking out positions. I take the C.O.'s to see the positions after lunch. About dusk we go on another recon with Col. Embry and we move in that night to another position and relieve the 10th F.A. Bn. (3rd Div.) + support the 3rd Ranger Bn. Position good but we hang up three gun trucks on stumps. Bed down at 3:30 A.M.

JAN. 26th Awake with rain + hail in our faces but it clears up and we are able to dry our blankets. We fire a little. Sherrick + Doust out front. We move up to gun positions the 10th vacated this A.M. Tonite a fleet of JU88's come over for the harbor just before dark and the ack ack get four of them. They drop a lot of bombs. For the first time in this war I've seen their rocket bomb which is released by rockets and guided to the target by radio. Not too accurate but it does enough damage. We have between 12 and 36 planes (fighters) over us all day long. A real umbrella.

JAN. 27 We go on recon this morning bypassing about nine miles and pick out good positions in the flat open. We can see for miles + probably Jerry can see us. In the afternoon I take the Chief of Sections + a working party up to build some bridges. We return about 4:00 and get mixed up with the First Armored Div. who is landing. At 900 P.M. we move out and after a ~~series~~ series of mishaps (broken axle, flats, hang up on rocks) we hit solid pavement just as an air raid is in progress. Plenty of flares but fortunately they don't see us. Run into the 1st A.D. which slows things up but we finally get to positions to learn that it is impossible to go in our original choice because mud bogs down trucks. We just pull off the road and we bog down but finally get the guns in by 4:30 A.M. I don't go to

bed because it is too late and there is a lot to do in daylight.

JAN 28TH Start the day off watching a bombing raid by ME 109's. Our planes knock down five of them. One of them explodes in mid air. I also see a German battery fire before most of the boys are up. Measure compass & short base them in and report to S-2. We fire on them later and knock them out. Beautiful day with bright sun. Another attack on the harbor & the Jerries lose three more planes. We fired over 200 rounds before I go to bed at 3:00 P.M.

JAN. 29TH We fire over 100 rounds this A.M. Al goes on recon. We move out in the afternoon for a change and go all the back thru Anzio & Nettuno which have been badly hit during recent bombings. 106 AA is now back with us. Spitfires & P51's continue to bomb Hwy. 7 just short of the mountains. More dog fights all day and we count 11 more German planes shot down. 1ST A.D. moves up today as we are on the road. Go into positions which are good but still close to Jerries. We are in direct support of the 179 Inf. who have a defense line along the Mussolini Canal. No observers out as the 1ST Bn is in reserve. Tonite we have a big bombing attack. A few land to our left rear while the rest are on the beach. Looks like they got a hit on a boat.

JAN. 30TH Take Andy Anderson back to the rear area to get a new gun. His trails are cracked & the gun has been condemned. On the way back we pick up a couple of 3rd Div. boys who tell us that one of their platoons was wiped out last nite while holding bridge #7. While in the rear I talk to Col Kinney & Gen McSpain at Div. Arty. Hdqts. Learn that the Div is now all in. Learn that the bomb that hit to our rear got the 158TH Bn. C.B. Btry and killed 8 men, wounded 39 and destroyed 6 trucks. A tough break. They were caught by flares while moving into position. The General gave me the Corp plan for the Div to take back to Col Embry. Our mission (45TH) is to hold the beachhead with the 179TH R.C.T. on the southeast coast with the 171 FA Bn reenforcing our fires and the 157TH R.C.T. & 189TH FA Bn. up on the N.W. beach. We get Andys gun and go back. See two liberty ships in the harbor that had been hit the night before. We learn on our return that the 84TH Chem. Bn who are in reserve behind us lost 400 men on an L.S.T. when it hit a mine. Another tough blow. Day dark &

cloudy so no enemy planes came over. We can hear the old machine pistol of the Germans up ahead of us. A "C" Btry. F.O. party was trapped while up front but the Inf drove thru and got them.

JAN. 31st Another cloudy cold day. Sun came up around noon. We learned today that two Bns. of the 3rd Ranger Regt. are trapped and all communication with them is broken. This was due to the 3rd Div. being pushed back. No planes over from Germany today but ours are up as usual. We fired harassing fire last night. (80 rds)

Feb. 1st Yesterday was supposed to be pay day but no soap then or today. There were supposed to be five Germans in our gun position last night and an Inf. squad spent half the night searching. Never found them altho a doughboy fired some 10 rounds that went right over our heads. Three shells from a Jerry tank that broke thru hit 100 yards in front of #4 gun. No one hurt. No enemy planes over again today. The boys found an Italian 20 mm Breda ackack gun + ammo and have it set up in the position. Still no word about the Rangers. Fired about 200 rounds today. Rumor came in that the British are only 18 miles from Rome. Hope so.

Feb. 2nd Awakened six different times during the night to fire on an enemy counter attack. Several shells landed in area from a tank but no one hurt. Funny thing, when you're in bed and it's dark, you have no idea how far off they land. They sure sound close but the closest one last night was 300 yards away. They have started again tonite but seem to be after the long Toms in our rear. We learned definitely today that the Rangers lost 900 men captured. Some one will probably lose command for that. They should. Not much air activity any more except our planes. They bombed Hwy 7 twice today. Day cloudy but warm. No mail for second day in a row. 179th Inf. has been relieved of defensive position and the 36th C.E. are up there. Same bunch that did so well at Salerno. Read in Daily News that the 5th Army has bypassed Cassino and are now well north of it. Hope they reach us soon. Herman Goering Div. is again opposing us up here. Thought they learned their lesson in Sicily but guess not. 1st Bn. (179th Inf.) on night problem tonite. Must be to train all the new replacements.

Feb 3rd Nothing much to report today. Shells kept hitting behind us all night from that tank out front. It can't be too far out there either. Day cloudy + nasty all day long. We did very little firing today. Learned that two men have been killed in the rear area from 90 mm flak. Both from Service Btry.

Feb 4th A cold rainy day spent inside our tent. Fired only 33 rounds all day. Most of the fight seems to be due north of here. There has been constant shelling from both sides for 24 hours steady now and doesn't seem to be letting up. The B.C. ~~ate~~ went on recon today but was so crocked when he came back he couldn't tell me much about anything. Some day —

Feb. 5th We fired harassing fires up till 3:00 AM and then fired to break up a counter attack at 5:15 A.M. The day was clear as a bell but a cold wind blew all day. We fired about 150 rounds today. Jerry long toms put some shells near our position around noon, one boy

from the AA. was hit but not seriously. We learned today that the Eng. have strung barbed wire behind us. Sure is cheery thought. Hope we don't need to use it.

Feb 6th Big night for German bombers last night. Busy right up to 600 AM this morning. Hit near us enough to jar us a little but not to hurt anything. Learned this AM that Maj. Neals outfit. (45 6th Para 78 Bn) had their Bn. C.P. hit yesterday afternoon killing 4 officers and wounding 8 men. Maj. Neal was not there but Maj. John Cooper was. Lucky I didn't go to visit him yesterday as I planned. German counter attack broke thru the 3rd this morning with four tanks who ran back & forth over the road but did no damage & got back thru the line which they (3rd) closed up again. Learned that a German counter attack up at ~~Cap~~ Campoleone cut off two British Bns. but with a counter counter attack the British got thru to them. They captured some 100 Germans and killed a lot more. We can expect counter attacks every day. St. Andrews & the 106th AA Boys came back to us tonite. Sure are a swell bunch and am glad to see them again. We didn't fire but 50 rounds today. Expect quite a bit of bombing tonite as ME 109's were over today very low. One was shot down but the rest could see all they wanted to. Hope they stay away from here.

Feb 7th Fired 108 rounds of harrassing fire last night. We were all up at 0400 AM today on an ~~alert~~ alert for a counter attack but none came. Good. It was a very cold morning and stayed that way until around 0930 when the sun shone. Considerable enemy air activity today but they had to stay so high that they didn't do much damage. Received word today that Aunt Grace died Jan. 17th. Ill miss her when I go back. We are firing harrassing fire tonite as I write.

Feb 8th There were at least four bombings last night down by the Anzio harbor. They shook the ground way up here about 10 miles away. So far as we know nothing much was hurt in the way of military objectives. The daylight brought more bombings. One around 0930 AM. hit a field hospital, but one of the German pilots shot down said that they had dropped their personnel bombs before they saw the Red Cross. They hung on to the 100 lb bombs and had to go back with them. It was not all one sided for we saw from one position 49 B-25's hit the highway on this side of the mountain with some good sized ones. Not much artillery activity. We shot only 78 rounds. The day was clear but clouded up late and it is raining as I write this.

Feb 9th Another night of bombing and counter attacking. The Jerries dropped some personnel bombs about 100 yds from us but no casualties. The day was dark & windy with sun coming out about noon. There was plenty of snow up on the mountains this morning. We learned that a shell last nite hit the 160th air O.P. and ruined a plane as well as killed S/Sgt. Bloom of Hdqs Btry. and caused 2nd Lt. Bush of Hdqs. to ~~lose~~ lose one of his legs. The day was again quiet as far as artillery was concerned. The boys on guard last night said that there was an artillery battle due north of here (3rd Div) which was heavier than any they had ever heard. The British were pushed back a few miles in one sector where they were projecting into German

territory. It now straightens out their defensive line.

Feb. 10th Last night was a big night. We started out with a preparation fire for the Inf to attack. It lasted from 8:15 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. Supposedly at 8:30 the US troops were to attack. But the Germans are no dummies and at the end of our fire they attack. We had to fire again to repel them, then a five minute prep. fire after which our own troops went thru. But there was a strong German force and they chased our troops back + followed them. Once again we had to fire to send them back. Then at four A.M. until 6:00 A.M. we were busy again with self propelled 88 mm's and all told during the night we fired over 300 rounds. Of Course, Jerrie came over to bomb and for the first time in a long time, he lost two bombers at night. We were supposed to move to a new position last night but didn't. This morning found a thick frost on the ground and a clear sky but not for long. We received C.S.M.O. and while getting ready we were treated to an aerial parade of Liberators and Flying Forts as well as a sky full of fighter planes. There were well over 175 bombers and we saw two go down. A beautiful sight to see all of those bombers and we would probably have seen more if it had not clouded up and rained. It started to rain about 11:00 A.M. and it is still going as hard as possible right now. I don't ever remember feeling as miserable. To top things off we moved to the first position we occupied on this beachhead. We learned tonite that we will fire early tomorrow A.M. for Inf-attack. Hope that the rain quits!

Feb. 11th Rain stayed on until noon today. We have fired quite a little today as the 179th Inf. jumped off on an attack. So far as we know they reached their objective but it was plenty hot. No air activity on either side. Shells are falling near us as I write tonite.

Feb. 12th A little harassing fire last night. Learned this A.M. that the Germans threw a strong counter attack last nite and pushed the 179th back where they started from. We just don't have enough troops here to do anything in the way of offensive fighting. We fired quite a lot during the day which was clear. Enemy planes over a few times but the worst of it is the 90 mm ack ack bursting overhead and falling in the position. Court + Sherrick go out tonite and Anselmo + Peirce come in from F.A. Al called about 8:00 P.M. and told me Herb Court was hit in the back. He doesn't know how seriously. A bad break and a big loss to the battery.

Feb. 13 Just after finishing the above we had a bombing raid that lasted for over an hour + a half. The ground shook everytime a load hit and brother don't let anyone tell you that a man can go thru one of those without being scared. Not yellow, just scared. The last load that they dropped was near Headquarters Btry. It killed Pvt.

Cook, and Pvt. Alexander is not expected to live. Several of the boys were scratched. The liasion section of the 189th F.A. was in Hdqs. Btry. and two of them were killed and two seriously wounded. The next day was clear but cold. We fired about 150 rounds all day. The F.O. section told a few of the front line stories and I will put them down here for future use. The 1st Bn. (179th Inf) attacked their objective three different times, attained it, and then because of lack of coordination, were forced to withdraw. The first time our tanks were to support the attack but they were an hour late and as a result were shelling the objective while one company was already there and two more companies were 300 & five hundred yards from it. Next time, the British were to protect the flanks and they too were late and the Germans rushed our Inf. after the objective was theirs. The third time after having lived in mud and water for over 5 days, the boys were ordered forward and the report is that about 75% of their arms were so muddy & rusty that they could not fire. I don't know who is running the show but it sure could have been improved upon on several occasions. Capt Dobbins, one of the best Company C.O.'s was killed. It was his first offensive after coming out of the Hospital. Capt Carpenter and Lt. Valentine were both captured. Al visited Herb at the 56th Evac. and learned that he'll be ok in about a month. They hadn't operated as yet but expected to soon.

Feb 14th Again last night the Germans came over and instead of the last load near us, it was the first this time. We retired to our underground tunnel but it was very cold down there but with a candle & stove lit we spent a fair hour & a half. It's a good thing we lined the bottom with shell cases for there was about four inches of water down in the bottom. Today was a bright clear day and we learned that no one in the battalion was hurt last nite although a lot of tents were full of holes. I went to Ordnance today and also stopped in the 56th to see Herb. He is the same old Herb and says he feels pretty good except for his shoulder where he still has a piece of shrapnel in. He expects to be evacuated to Naples tomorrow afternoon. We saw the Inf. digging in on our left flank today and when we asked what for they informed us this was the second line of defense. Barbed wire goes up tomorrow. Some fun!

Feb. 15th No bombs last night but enemy planes were overhead for quite some time. Capt John Boosa called from F.D.C. and reported he saw three German Para. troopers drop just north of our position but outside of his report, we heard nothing more about them. Day was very quiet with little activity. A bunch of about 25 German Jock Wulfs were over our position getting ready to hit the harbor but Andys crew fired at them and they turned tail and we never

did see them again. Pearce went down to see Herb this morning but he had already been evacuated. The Infantry had prepared several long trenches on our left flank as a secondary line. Sure hope they never have to use them. We fired very little during the day.

Feb. 16th How to start writing this day up is past me. It has been full of action since 7:25 P.M. last night when the German bombers came over. About 1100 I went to sleep but they were still in the air overhead. They were around all nite up until about 600 A.M. but so far as I know the only thing they hit near us was an AA Halftrack which was destroyed. At 615 A.M. after being awake since 300 A.M., all hell broke loose. The Germans counterattack on the entire front and we have been firing constantly since then until now (700 P.M.) Tanks broke thru and were in the area we just left which was a good two miles from the canal and that was behind the front lines. Our particular Inf (179) had the 2nd Bn. on the line with the 3rd in reserve but had to throw the 3rd in and bring up half the 1st Bn who just came off the line as the reserve. Even they were alerted about 300 P.M. Early this A.M. we were subjected to some heavy shellfire (210 mm) but only one fellow was hit and he not seriously. Cpl. Charlie Reynolds. He stayed with us the saddest part of the day was when I learned that Lt. Don Knowlton was seriously wounded when the building he was in was hit and the Inf. was forced to leave him. His party was ordered to go with the Inf. so Don was left. The last I heard was just a few minutes ago when they reported that he was unconscious when his party left. I hope that either the Germans captured him and treated him or that one of our parties can go in to me and get him. ~~Doubt~~ Preferably the latter. He was one of the best. Capt Joel Crain was hit in the hand but is still up there working. Fighter-bombers were over often but Andys crew drove them off before they could go into their dive. Some 150 light bombers of ours passed over to visit Jerrys. All told today we fired some 1160 rounds so you can see we've been busy. I sure hope we can have a quiet night for all the boys are tired. Don't know tho, the planes have been over already. They can drop a load almost anywhere and hit something.

Feb. 17th No bombs in our area last night. In fact it was almost a quiet night in the air. Just before going to bed I learned that Don Knowlton was found by a patrol - dead. I sure hated to hear that but madder when I found out just why he was out there. [redacted]

We fired almost continuily all night and all day but either they were spaced just far enough last night so I couldn't get to sleep or they keep us on the phone all day. I guess I had about 3 hours sleep last night. We counted ~~the~~ over 350 Liberator and Fortresses going over today to deal out some misery. We saw four fall - two of each. The first one fell in such a way that the crew were able to get out. But sad to relate none of them reached the ground. Two 'chutes caught afire as they opened and the rest of them were killed by German ack-ack which was fired at them deliberately. Dirty — ! Learned that Lt. Shaw of "B" Btry and his party were captured this A.M. Lt. "Junior" Kraft and his pilot were shot down in their Piper Cub. Haven't

heard about Kraft except that he was suffering from severe shock when they found him. His pilot lost his right eye and other injuries which we haven't heard about yet. Lt. Jim Sherrick and S/Sgt. Burton Burris took out their parties tonite. Saw Lt. Brinker (Cannon Co, 179th Inf) tonite. He was back looking for a position. It is rumored that the front line after tonite may be the road right in front of the position we were in on Jan. 27th. It is by far a better defensive line but it means giving up a good bit of ground. Today has been an artillery battle with guns going off all day long all over the place. We fired over 700 rounds. Thus ends today with the first plane of the night just coming over. Boy. I'm sleepy.

Feb. 18th I finally got a good night's sleep last night with only one interruption at 11:30 when we had a fire mission and after the first rounds were out, a bombing but was one short. We learned this A.M. that Lt. Shaw got away from the Germans and was back to our lines. Also learned that Lt. Block (B Btry) was hit in the leg last night and had to be evacuated. The front lines stayed pretty much the same last night but began to move back today. We shot Charge 7 most of the day with the elevations dropping gradually and ending up with Charge 6 this P.M. We received word this A.M. that Jim Sherrick was pinned down on the front lines. He was last heard from at 10:00 A.M and his whereabouts was a puzzle and series of rumors all day and it wasn't 'til tonite that we got the complete story so far. It seems that he was conducting fire from a house early this A.M. and found that the Germans had infiltered during the night and were on three sides of him. He immediatly sent two of his party back to the main line with the radio and said he would remain with the Inf. up there and try to adjust fire and get out. P-vt. Ed. Barker was to stay with him but at his own request. Lt Worf (A Co 179th Inf) was with Jim and when the Jerries shelled the house the stairs were knocked out and both of them came down by rope. Worf and a few other doughs went back while they could while Jim stayed to continue firing. The Co C.O. of A Co. and a good part of the Co were still with Jim. At 1:00 A.M Jim phoned Harry Lane and said things didn't look too good but that he had burned all his codes and smashed his field glasses and just before the end he would smash his remote control telephone. He continued firing for awhile and then said that there were well over a hundred Germans approaching him from the front. Last info. came from Worf who said that the Co Co. was seen waving a white handkerchief on a stick out the window. From this we can only surmise that most of A Co as well as Jim were taken prisoner. At least we know Jim is alive. Nothing further on Don Knowlton. That makes two of the best F.O.'s in the Division gone in two days. Sure hate to see Jim go but glad to know he is alive. I hope he will be able to pull a Shaw and get back but have my doubts. We started firing about six this A.M. and we are still at it now at 5:00 P.M. with no break. We have fired well over 1500 rounds today. Word comes that something big in the way of a surprise

for Jerry is in store tonite. I do know the 6th Inf. (2nd A.D.) is going up tonite. The Germans got six of our tanks today and were using them against us for awhile. Spits dive-bombed them but as yet we don't know the results. Tonite there are several Beaufighters up and I've heard only one Jerry so far. The front lines are lighted up all over the bridge head tonite with flares both air + ground. Why I don't know, nor do I know whose flares they are. I sure wish something would break for us. What we really need is reinforcements but the boys are still as chipper as ever around the battery. I seem to have lost the scared feeling now but still lay very quiet when the bombers are over. Tomorrow is a new day and I hope a big day for us.

Feb 19th This has been a day of good news for today we learned that a patrol from K. "C" went in and got Don Knowlton the same night he was hit and he was evacuated and his wound while it was in the head was not fatal. Sure was glad to hear that. No further news concerning Jim Sherrick as yet, but everyone seems to be sure he was captured. We fired steady all last night from 500 PM to 300 PM today expending well over 2200 rounds. Our big surprise was to have been a big push to jump off at 600 AM but the Germans beat us to it and counter attack at 400 A.M. As for sleeping last night - I didn't get any! There were no planes over but we fired all night. During breakfast a couple of Jerry tanks came up to within 1000 yards and fired on the position. S/Sgt Sneeds tent suffered a direct hit but he was not in it at the P.F.C. B. Blackburn (medic) was. Due to the ~~sandbacks~~ sandbags on top and his being dug in, he was not even scratched altho almost everything in the tent was chewed up. I don't know how he missed it but it's just one of those miracles of war. The tanks were finally driven out but there were minutes! The doughboys are really in there and if we think we have it tough - ask them. Men pretty tired today but still in there fighting. Heard rumors tonite that Monte Cassino has fallen - I sure hope so. The other British Div. in here is the 58th. Hope to get some sleep tonite.

Feb 20th Things were quiet last night as far as I was concerned for I went to sleep at 800 PM and didn't wake up until 400 AM when we started firing. The Capt. told me that we were hit heavier by bombers last night than ever before but I didn't hear a thing. Sure shows how dead tired a guy can get. Today has been very quiet except in the late afternoon when Jerry tried a small counter attack. Guess everyone was just too tired to fight today. Several bombers went over mostly "Forts" and all returned safely. Sure are a beautiful sight. We fired considerably before supper but have quit as I write. Hope we don't fire all night.

Feb 21st We didn't fire last night but there were a few bombers over dropping personnel bombs. None in the position. The day was fairly quiet even tho

even tho we fired 1000 rounds thoughout the day. Spent most of the day digging in a new home. Pearce is back + Anselmo + Presley are up Roing. Things are still very hot up there but I don't look for any change for quite some time. What will happen tonite is doubtful. We learned that the Krauts have at least six divisions up on the front to our five. Today make 1½ years of married life.

Feb. 22nd Bombers were over again last night and did quite a job on the surrounding territory but again our luck held and there were not in our position. We saw three just before dark and they are two motored DO-217's. We fired some during the night but didn't lose too much sleep. Today has been a fairly quiet day with only 300 rounds fired. Learned today that Lt. Col. Johnson (1st Bn. 179th) was hit by a shell and suffered two broken legs while Capt McClain (1st Bn.) was killed. 2nd Lt. Hood was assigned to the battery today. He was from OCS class 47 and is from Philly. We could stand another officer yet. Spent most of the day on our new home. Air activity as usual but only a few big bombers (Forts) Its very quiet tonite. Maybe the calm before the storm. Salfa up to Ft.

Feb. 23rd A few bombers over early last night but it began to rain so air activity cease. We fired some during the night. Just enough so we couldn't get a good nights rest. Rain all day long. We moved into our new home. Salfa in again tonite. Cpl. Herb. Milner back from Hospital. Don Knowlton was awarded the D.S.C. this A.M. Understand that plans are afoot to get Jim Merrick + Barker the same thing. We fired about 400 rounds today. Maj. Jones called and said that the artillery support which our Bn. gave was credited with saving the beachhead. Makes the boys feel good.

Brought Forward from Notebook

Feb. 24th The bombers visited us again last nite but did not hit our position altho one large one hit in the battalion area. No one hurt. The 90 mm were firing but they might just as well have been German guns because they fired so low. The day was clear but we did very little firing. We fired only 400 rounds for the day. Things seem to have quieted down lately. No planes over tonite yet.

Feb. 25th The night was very quiet with no planes. We fired harrassing fire. Saw Tyson this A.M. and he said when Mark Clark decorated Don, he told Gen. McClain we were doing a swell job but firing too much on unobserved missions. As a result our ammo has been cut down. We fired only 300 rounds today. Pearce to Hood up tonite for his first mission under fire. It rained most of the afternoon and looks

like we are in for a night of it.

Feb. 26th Rain all night and all day long, so we were not bothered with aircraft. Our guns were fairly quiet as were the front lines. We learned that the Germans now have 10 Divisions opposing us. Latest rumor is that we are to stay here until the Invasion occurs to hold all their extra troops in combat. Rain again tonite.

Feb. 27th Rain off & on during the night and today. We fired during the night but only harrassing fire. Found out today that Gen. McJain was decorated with the D.S.C. the same Don was. We had steak today from a tough old cow that wandered too near our kitchen. It was a welcome change from C rations however. We get harrassing fire again for tonite.

Feb. 28th Germans kept us wondering last night for they too had some harrassing fire but in the form of tanks who came up to the lines and

lobbed them in on us. No one was hurt but it was only because of Gods protection and good foxholes. Rained off & on all day with very little firing on either side. Spent all day in writing flowers orders for the boys for Easter. We again had harrassing fire tonite.

Feb 24th about 6:00 last night we were again greeted with fire from those tanks. Some of the boys who were able to watch said that they expected our little C.P. to go sky high any minute but underground we only knew they were close when a piece of the shell sailed in the door. We broke up a counter attack this A.M. with 480 rounds at 4:30. Cleared up today for a change. Today was pay day but no pay for the second month in a row. We have'nt anything to spend it on so what's the differen