

MY MOST INTERESTING EXPERIENCE

SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE 160TH  
FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION AT THE END  
OF WW II. COL JOHN EMBRY, BATTALION  
COMMANDER ARRANGED FOR THEIR PUBLICATION



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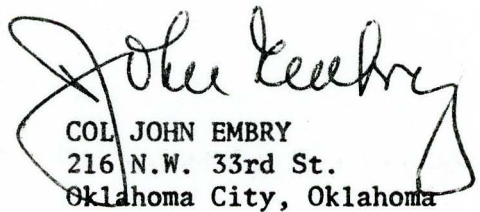
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## PREFACE

These letters were solicited, through the Battery Commanders, from personnel of the 160th Field Artillery Battalion after the end of combat in 1945. They were delivered to LTC John Embry, the last Combat Battalion Commander in World War II, who preserved them. They were transcribed from the original documents of the author by Mrs. Bonnie Poe (Route 5, Box 681, Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044), and grateful acknowledgement is made for her voluntary work without which this publication would not have been possible.

LTC Frank J. Nosan, (5001 N. Utah, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73112) who was the Personnel Officer of the 160th FA Bn during World War II and COL Embry, originated the project to publish and distribute these letters to their authors and their use for information and historical purposes.



COL JOHN EMBRY  
216 N.W. 33rd St.  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Since being with Battery "B", 160th Field Artillery, in the early part of February, 1942, I've had many experiences and it is difficult to choose which was the most interesting.

In my opinion, my most interesting experience occurred when we brok out of Anzio and entered Rome, Italy.

While there I was able to see, personally, such sights as the Coliseum, St. Peter's Cathedral, and many other things of a historical value, including an audience with the Pope himself, and the gifts I received from him.

During the week or so there I saw things that I would have never seen, had it not been for the fact that I was a member of the Division that helped free Rome.

s/S/Sgt. Arthur J. Allen



On the night of 11-12 May 1943 on the Salerno Beachhead the 2nd Battalion of the 179th Infantry was ordered to make a night attack in an area that was totally unreconnoitered. I was at that time the artillery liaison officer with that battalion. The battalion moved into an assembly area about four miles to the rear of the proposed line of departure and were completely assembled there at about 2130. Here final orders were received and the process of fitting overlays to maps and rereading the orders began.

Maj. W. G. Johnson, our artillery S-3, came back to check with me to insure that I had the latest plans and that myself and my observers had all the equipment that we needed. Our battalion was to launch an attack to the north between Highway 18 and the mainline railroad that ran from Paestum to Salerno. Our objective was to secure the ground that lay unoccupied between two other friendly units who had been fighting a bitter defensive action against strong and determined enemy panzer and panzergrenadier units trying to move southwest to split the Salerno Beachhead into two parts.

At about 2230 everything was ready and the troops began to move out up the highway toward the line of departure. The FO's had packed their radios and other equipment on packboards and my LO section had done likewise very close to the company CP's to facilitate his control of the action. I sent the FO vehicles

and my vehicles to the batteries since the 160th positions were on the line of departure and I decided that it would be easy enough to have them sent forward the next morning.

Everything went along smoothly enough up to the line of departure but from then on everything really became SNAFU. The scouts of the leading companies got off course and the companies wandered around all over the area between the highway and the railroad. The command group got completely lost and didn't know where they were or where the troops were. Capt. Sturdevant of "H" Company was in command of the group that contained the bulk of my LO section, and he decided to hold up until he could locate Col. Wiegand and the rest of the command group. While he sent out patrols to locate Col. Wiegand I checked my section and found that they were all present.

While waiting I decided to locate myself by going to the highway and going along it until I found the left flank of "G" Company, that was supposed to be guiding on the highway. As I walked away from Capt. Sturdevant's group, S/Sgt. Prickett, the battalion sergeant-major, came over and asked where I was going and when I told him he said that he would come along. Together, we set out in a northwesterly direction that would cause us to intersect the highway near where the "G" Company left flank should be. We walked for about thirty minutes having

to go around many different obstacles such as swamps, ditches, and hedgerows. We finally reached the highway but found no trace of the left company. Deciding that we must have come out some distance behind the company, we started walking on up the highway in the direction that we assumed them to have gone. We had gone about 500 yards along the highway when something occurred that gave us both some gray hairs.

Sgt. Prickett and myself were walking up the highway at the double alert with arms ready for immediate action due to the fact that the night was so dark and terribly still and we were expecting momentarily to run into one of two groups - - either "G" Company or the enemy and if we ran into the Krauts - - we certainly wanted to see them first, and to have our guns ready. What we did bump into was neither of the aforementioned groups and probably gave us a worse scare than the Krauts themselves would have.

We were really 'pussy-footing' it along the side of the road pretending that we were all eyes and ears. As we came to the point where a side road entered the main road from the west, we slowed our pace (if it could have been slowed more than it already was). I stopped and tried to look down the side road



but the night was too dark to see more than a foot or two. As I stepped forward to cross the side road entrance the most immense man on earth appeared from nowhere and very effectively immobilized us by merely putting in his appearance.

His darkly looming and menacing bulk instantaneously convinced me of the futility of either resistance or flight and as I mentally began the transformation to one of 'Smiling Albert's POWs" this terrifying figure of a man spoke saying:

"I say chaps, have you seen the bloody Yanks around here?"

Needless to say the silence of the night was broken by two sighs of relief from Sgt. Prickett and myself. I am sure that the sighs sounded similar to a four ton engineer truck having its airbrakes applied suddenly and with great vigor . . . When I found the facility of speech returning, I ventured to ask this huge bloke who in the hell he was, and what in the hell was he doing out on dark roads scaring the hell out of people who were already scared to beat hell. He replied that he was the CO of an armored recon patrol that the British had sent down the beach to contact our forces.

After I had given him what information that I could I asked him about the locations of his forces and got this typically British answer about the town of Battapaglia:

"I don't really know who has it now. The Hun had it and we had it for a bit. In fact, we have been in and out of it four or five times today. Tis really a bit of a bloody scrap."

After this bit of conversation I gave him directions as to how to reach regiment and he went back down the side road to bring up his armored cars. As he disappeared into the darkness I began to gather together in my mind the details of his personal appearance as much as the dark had allowed me to see. He was undoubtedly six feet four or five and had a magnificent beard and mustache. He was Scottish and was dressed in British Desert Battle Dress complete with the tin saucer on his head. He was not only tall, but he was also huge. His weight certainly must have been no less than 250 pounds. For a chance meeting in the dark in "no-man's land" he certainly had all the psychological factors in his favor, and an immediate and paralyzing effect upon anyone that he bumped into.

The anticlimax of this action is that when daylight arrived Sgt. Prickett and I were still looking for our troops and as it was we discovered that the lead companies had set down 500 yards from the LD and we had been no less than 1500 yards in front of them for about three hours. Fortunately, for us the Jerry was 500 yards farther on from us. We finally located the battalion CP in a clump of trees about 300 yards from the LD and gave Col. Wiegand the location of his troops. He promptly ordered the companies to move up to their previously reported locations.

s/Capt. Daniel B. Allen

Munchen, Germany

May 17, 1945

I have been with Battery "A", 160th Field Artillery Battalion since September 16, 1940, and I'm very proud to be one of the men that has made it a great Battalion.

I saw some very interesting things, but there is one above all the others that I'll always remember. It occurred at Anzio, the 26th day of May, 1944.

After living like moles from January 2, 1944, we were bombed and shelled day and night. Enough to run a person nuts, but on the 26th day of May, 1944, we started a drive out from Anzio, known in my mind and a lot of others as hell.

We knew we still had a long way to go, but today as I write this, I (was) thinking of the officers and men we left there.

We have paid a great price for peace.

So to me it was very interesting to know we were leaving Anzio forever. So I salute the officers and men of the 160th Field Artillery Battalion.

Sgt. Winfred Andy Anderson  
20832240

Box 109  
Wewoka, Oklahoma



The most interesting thing I have seen is the marvelous sights of Rome. St. Peter's Cathedral. It was so large and impressive, and truly magnificent, that when I first entered into the huge portals, I realized how much labor, pain and loving care had entered into the making and building of this large cathedral. It also gave me the impression of how insignificant one small person was in the large machinery of life.

s/PFC Charlie Babcock

My most unforgettable experience happened the night of the Rhine crossing.

After driving all day long, arranging for this, and those things that are needed for a river crossing, we made ready for bed. We were with the 179th Forward Observation right on the banks of the river. Everything seemed peaceful enough so the radio operator and myself decided to sleep in a bed on the second floor of the house.

I was sleeping soundly until around three o'clock in the morning when I heard a crash and saw a flash. Being a heavy sleeper I thought nothing of it until the radio operator shook me and said, "Come on, get up, we're being shelled!"

I was fully convinced of that fact when I put my arms above my head to stretch and found rocks and dirt on my pillow. After our mad rush for the alley, I found out that a German AP had entered our room . . after we were able to move again without shaking our knees off, we made bed beside a brick wall; but sleep the rest of that morning was not to be had.

s/ Gordon Albert Baker PFC 31290694  
Mill St., Harrisville, Rhode Island

I believe my most thrilling experience was the night of July 9th, 1943. The suspense of waiting to go ashore without knowing what was in store for us. The sea was the roughest water I'd ever seen, and the lights and flashes from both ship and shore were fascinating.

Everyone on board ship was very anxious to get ashore; but we were all scared too. I saw my first airplane shot down then too. It happened so fast that it was unbelievable.

Climbing down the cargo net and into the L. C. P. and circling around until our turn to hit the beach was another instance that I believe was thrilling as all get out.

s/Cpl. Leland J. Baldwin

The night that I remember most was our second night at Anzio. German bombers came over our area at sundown, but could be easily seen. The ack ack opened up and several were downed. Most of the 179th Infantry were across the road and cheered as each plane was hit, (It) was more like a hometown ballgame than a war.

/M/Sgt. C. R. Banketon



While with the 160th F.A. Bn., my most thrilling experience was my first trip on an F.O. party, which was near Venafro, Italy. After just arriving from the U.S. to a new kind of life, I was under a two-hour mortar barrage. After it had stopped, the officer in charge of the party lost his self-control and had to be relieved, leaving me there with the radio. Being new at the game, I didn't know what to do next.

s/ PFC. Shelby Barber

My most thrilling day of life with the 45th was the D-Day we swarmed the beach in Sicily. It was our first day of combat and our first amphibious landing. German planes were overhead trying to knock us out of the sea, and the Germans on shore with '88's firing at us, coming in to land; and all our big ships firing to knock out the shore guns.

It was like the world had come to an end, for it was one of the biggest displays of fireworks I hope to ever see again in my life time, When we left our landing boats we had to wade ashore with the waves from the sea knocking us down.

We were trying to get some ammo ashore. The waves knocked one of the boys down; he went under and I thought that was the last of him; but he came up cursing the damn so and so, he said. He lost all of his equipment.

Well, things happened so fast you didn't have time to think of what could happen to you, so you just go trying to find out what is going on. That's the way she goes.

I think your first amphibious landing is more of a thrill than any other thing we did our combat time, and we did four of them.

s/PFC Eugene H. Bartlett

One of my most exciting experiences overseas was during the second battle for Wingen, France. The Infantry had retaken about one half of the village and the American and German stations were in the liberated section. There were a lot of casualties on both sides, so all ambulances available were sent in convoy to evacuate the wounded. The ambulance I was driving was the lead vehicle, and as we entered the town one of the ambulances hit a mine, but no one was hurt. T D and tanks were firing in some of the buildings about 100 yards ahead of the aid station . . infantry was crawling up the sides of the streets, firing as they went. There was to be no firing on the ambulances of aid stations but once in awhile a strzy would sing overhead. The wounded were quickly loaded and sent to the hospitals that were available. The town was a shamble of burning wrecked buildings and equipment and was littered with dead.

s/Sgt. Kenneth H. Barton 20831980

M.D. 160th F.A. Bn.

The most thrilling time for me while in combat, came on the morning of February 15, 1944, in a farmhouse on the Anzio Beach head. Things were very active with our bombers doing a little job about 500 to 800 yards in front of us, when all of a sudden, one could hear the sound of a bomb coming in! Being on the second floor, I jumped under a table . . didn't really know what was going to happen to the house.

After the excitement, the bomb landed about thirty feet from the house. To find this was from our own planes made me feel there wouldn't be much chance for this to happen again.

s/Sgt. Roy Bassett



Our first few days of combat were to me the most interesting.

When they were shelling and bombing the beaches of Sicily, the morning before we went in.

s/PFC Kenneth Beaty  
Serv. Btry.

On the 23rd of May, we started our push out of Anzio. This is one of my many battle experiences. The battle started at four o'clock in the morning...with the Air Force, with waves of many airplanes. Then, about five of the artillery started to lay down the barrage.

Our doughboys then shoved off. We moves a few times when we came to a place we thought was a good one. But we soon found out it was pretty well observed by German F.O. men. Then things started to pop! The place was on an old railroad, with a few box cars on it; so we went into position behind them, and started to fire back at them. We finally got the best of them and they took off. Our push then was successful. We took Rome.

s/Hank Belanger  
Btry. A, 160th FA Bn.

My most exciting experience that I have had was when I first landed at Salerno, Italy. The first day, we were bombed all day on a L.S.T. on a sand bar. After we got on land, we thought it would be a lot better. Instead, we got surrounded by Germans on all sides. I thought a lot of times how the Germans were going to treat us after they captured us. We were lucky that help got to us as soon as it did. We were out of food and ammunition.

s/Wesley E. Bell  
Gladys, Virginia

I've had many interesting experiences, and I believe that the most exciting was when the radio proclaimed the unconditional surrender of the Nazi Army, Navy and Air Forces, on the unforgettable May 8th, 1945. A day I'll never forget.

s/Warren W. Benkurst  
#32827062



THE MOST EXCITING MOMENT  
WHILE IN COMBAT  
WITH THE 160th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

This is sort of a hard subject to write on, for all our days in combat with the Division were exciting.

I believe the one that stands out most in my mind is when we were pulling into the assault area off the Coast of Anzio. Everything seemed peaceful as could be, and one would hardly know there was a war on, as we drew near to the shores preparatory to embarking.

Then, all of a sudden, all hell broke loose! It seemed as if, at a given signal, all the ships in the area opened up with their guns. What was so unusual about this was that instead of firing at the shore or hostile airplanes, they were shooting in the water, and at a horizontal angle. I guess everybody on the boat I was on had a different idea of what was happening, but to me it seemed like we must have run into the whole German Navy.

It not being very safe on the deck, we crawled in under the truck and proceeded to watch the fireworks from there. We asked a sailor who joined us what it was all about, and he told us that there were E-boats in the vicinity, and also Torpedo planes.

No sooner had he spoken those words than a plane (Torpedo) crossed our bow and let go a torpedo. It just missed the bow of our ship, and went on by into the darkness. No explosion was heard, so it must have passed on harmlessly . . . much to our relief.

Seemed to me that our ships were shooting at each other but I guess it was just their zone (where) they were to fire in case there was a torpedo or E-boat attack. After about half an hour it quieted down, and the rest of the night was fairly quiet, except for a few nuisance raiders. This was my first and only time to see such action on the water, so that is why I consider it my greatest experience and thrill.

The rest I shall never forget though, and the 160th Field Artillery(Battalion)will always be remembered for them.

s/Sgt. Leland O. Berg

My most interesting experience was at the time we were cut off at Salerno. I was riding the last truck to get through, and had no idea that the last trucks had been fired on, although we heard machine gun fire to our rear.

We went into position, and fired almost all of our ammo the first day, and then had to save what was left in case of an attack on our Battery position. We 'sweated it out' for another 18 hours until we were able to pull out to another position further back toward the beach.

S/Sgt. Robert Biggs

Battery A, 160th F.A. Bn.

Very often this war has been impersonal, in that we often had fire missions without knowing the nature of the target at which we fired.

This fact alone made one of our last firing positions all the more interesting. We were moving south on the autoban, toward Munich, when we went into position on high ground, at the edge of the plain on which Munich lies.

We were able to observe the targets and the effect of our fire upon them from a vantage point in front of the pieces. This panorama of the battle as it approached Munich is one . . if not the most interesting spectacles that I've witnessed since being with this Division.

Another interesting factor of this position was that we fired on various targets including grounded aircraft.

s/Cpl. James R. Bird



The most exciting days I have had while with the 45th was at Meximeux, France. For about thirty-six hours our time was spent keeping Krauts out of the 179th Regiment Command Post, and disposing of any souvenirs we had picked up.' It seems that a part of an armored division had ideas about going to the Fatherland, but the 179th and 160th had different ideas about where they were going. A lot of things took place during the short fight at Meximeux and I am sure that everyone that was around close will agree that it was at least one of the most exciting times of their combat days.

s/Cpl. John P. Bixby 37662400

Hudson, Iowa

From the beach to the leaving of Salerno was a new and great experience. It was on the beaches that I saw a great number of soldiers who had fallen in fighting for the cause we all represent. That made an impression upon me, as it was the first time I saw any number of casualties at one time.

It also made me feel odd, as it was supposed to be a surrendered country we were going into, and that type of battle took place. It was also the place where we saw the happy go lucky Sicilian campaigners turn to serious grown men. It was here that we first ran into an enemy that was looking down your throat . . . looking down upon you everywhere one moved.

It was all going good, and as expected, when making a landing . . . until we made our move into position from our first position across the blown-out bridge . . . across the river. It was here that some did not make it, as there was a hidden reception party waiting. The first half of the battery went by without encountering much trouble and then they opened up on us. They got several of our vehicles, and a gun, but thanks to good old luck, all men came out safe. It was here that we saw what it is to be under small arms fire and not being able to detect just where it came from. It was also here when we saw what fine qualities of leadership Lt. Sherrick had. He got all of the boys under control and took the situation in

hand and did a wonderful job of getting artillery fire on the area we were getting fire from. All the time he was exposing himself to enemy fire while doing it. Saved a couple of jeeps by starting and then having them driven out of the enemy's line of fire.

Also Grover Pool and James Ellick, under fire, tried to get their vehicle

It all sums up to it being here that we encountered our first hardships of which many later followed. It was also the first time we were fired upon by machine guns and anti tank guns.

It was also the first time we used our rifles to combat the enemy. It was here that we encountered those airplane raids with their loads of (popcorn) personal bombs. Also here we got our first constant shelling for a limited period everyday. Here we learned fast how to dig in and put on a cover that would give needed protection and a feeling of some safety. Here we had given a name to a constantly shelled crossroads as "Coffin Corner".

So one can see why it stands so in my memory as it was here that we had our first education under conditions where the enemy was looking down on us and us fighting an uphill battle.

s/Sgt. John Bodak

My battle experience took place on Anzio. We landed there January 25th, 1944. The place was still hot with Jerry planes. We then moved into a place referred to as Stumpy Hollow. After fighting there some time, we moved to Mussolini's Canal.

We then ran into one of Jerry's hot receptions, with airplanes, shells, etc., the place wasn't at all a bit comfortable. After fighting there until things quieted down, we moved back to Stumpy Hollow. Then the Germans tried to push us into the icy blue sea. But with the line of steel we had, they were brought to a standstill.

The fight was evenly matched for some time, and after four months we took off and captured the objective . . . Rome.

s/PFC Lowell Brooke  
Btry. A, 160th FA Bn.  
#37553304



My most thrilling experience was on the Anzio Beach-head. We were firing at a German counter-attack, when we heard the drone of Jerry's planes, then ninety milometers ack ack started bursting right over our heads. I crawled under the gun between the wheels, ack ack kept bursting not over fifty feet overhead, then all of a sudden it stopped, and I saw two big streaks of flame coming down, and then the explosion when the planes hit the ground, and that was two more German planes that bit the dust.

s/Cpl. Leonard Brookhart

One of the most interesting experiences that I remember at this time was the push off from the beach at Salerno. I was in the forward F.O.C. group, and we were on our way to the two forward batteries when we ran into several knocked-out vehicles. Jerry had surrounded the two batteries, and the road ahead of us was cut by M.G. fire and tank fire.

Maj. Johnson who was in charge of our party, tried to get through in a half track, but found this impossible. Several TD's tried to get through and could not. We could see the bullets from the Jerry M.G. skip across the field, but could not locate the guns. There was nothing that we could do.

About this time, we received a report that Jerry tanks were approaching us. And at the same time, Jerry artillery picked us up. So there was nothing to do but pull out.

We returned to the other battery, and set up a F.O.C. there and did all we could for the two trapped batteries. The next day they were able to pull out of the trap that they had gotten in.

s/T/4 Lewis M. Brown

The most interesting thing I can remember distinctly in combat was a thing that happened on Anzio Beach head.

The Germans always raided about breakfast time. One morning, while we were eating, the Krauts came over. Our air cover which was made up of P-40's carrying auxillary gas tanks . . . when they spotted the Krauts, they began to drop their spare tanks.

One of our boys who is very short thought they (the P-40's) were dropping bombs. One of the tanks was dropping directly on our position. The kitchen had a garbage pit dug at the side of the kitchen. They were burning the pit out that morning.

The short fellow made a dive for the garbage pit. He came out of the pit with his eyelashes, eyebrows and hair all singed. He was so funny looking that despite the flak and roaring plane motors, we all had a good laugh out of it.

s/Rex Brown

My most interesting experience happened soon after the 160th Field Artillery Battalion hit the beaches of Salerno, Italy. The reason I choose this as being my most interesting experience is because it was my first one in combat and scared me the most. It was then that I became acquainted with shell fire and machine gun fire, which is the reason why I can remember this so clear, I guess.

About the second day the battalion was cut off by the Germans at Persano, Italy; and soon was in desperate need of ammunition and other supplies. All the roads leading to the Firing Batteries were under observation and shells were dropping on them constantly; therefore, it was unwise to travel on them with any vehicles.

It wasn't long and I received orders to take a truck loaded with ammunition and rations to the Firing Batteries. In addition to having to pass through a mine field I was told that I would encounter sniper fire and shell fire. As we (the driver, machine gunner, and myself) approached the danger zone, still about three miles from our destination, German shells commenced to drop all around us. We could hear the rat-tat-tat of the machine guns in the distance and that didn't sound very good. We were told to wait at the bridge, crossing the river Sealy before proceeding further.



Just about that time, Lt. Tyson returned from his reconnaissance and says, "We will have to make a run for it". My stomach started to feel funny on the inside and my heart had stopped beating but I replied "We're ready, Sir"; and took off with a prayer on my lips.

During that hectic ride, shells dropped nearby but we kept on going. The mine field was passed but nobody knows how we ever missed running over a mine because it wasn't much later that a vehicle from the Infantry Regiment was blown sky-high by a mine at a place we passed through.

As we drew nearer the battery positions, shell fire increased and our spirits decreased, but we managed to get there in one piece. We met a happy bunch of boys; and smiles were plentiful when they saw us coming with ammunition and rations. The guns were down to 8 rounds, so we received a warm welcome from the boys who knew what the score was. Anyhow, it didn't take long for us to get the truck unloaded because we knew that wasn't a comfortable place to linger.

I felt quite relieved when we started back though I knew there was danger in the air. We returned to our own battery area and I felt 20 years older and that much wiser. Nevertheless, I was glad it was over and that I was still able to talk about it.



In fact, I even laughed at myself for being so scared, but  
I thanked the Dear Lord for helping me out of that predicament.

It is true that I have had many other experiences but  
this one stands out as the most interesting in my mind.

s/PFC Leo J. Budwick

Serv. Battery, 160th F.A. Bn.

The most exciting days of my army life took shape on the Anzio beachhead, during the bombing and shelling attacks the Germans threw at us. It was a nightly routine, as far as the air planes were concerned, but the shelling happened off and on for 24 hours a day. As soon as darkness came the planes would show up. The first thing we could hear were the 90 mm; then the sky would fill up with tracer bullets from smaller guns. Then in a few seconds, we could hear the German planes coming. The mortar would sound a lot like a maytag washing machine. He would circle several times over our area, each time he circled we knew he would start shoveling out coal (as some of the boys called it). Because to me they would sound like a coal shoot at work. Sure enough the next circle he made he turned them loose. When personal bombs go off they sound like a bunch of boy's firecrackers on the 4th of July. If a man knew any prayers he would start saying them. I know I did. One night they dropped them on the supply tent and tore it to shreds. My foxhole was nearby and one burst on top of it . . . thank goodness for a good hole and a good top on it. Day and night we could hear the big R.R. gun they had up in the hills. We called it the "Anzio Express". Most of its shells fell into the ocean. I guess those four months were the roughest and most exciting of my life.

One of my most exciting days was in Germany. We had been moving along a road with a company of T. D. s, and a company of Infantry. It was late afternoon and we were just topping a hill when we spotted a column of German guns moving through a valley.

The T. D. s moved out on the hillsides and started firing. Then our guns started to fire, and an air observer was also firing. When the smoke and dust cleared, there were two German guns and six or seven trucks knocked out.

Two days later, we came back to see at close range just how good our firing was. The two guns had direct hits, and one truck, but the rest of the truckshad shell holes all around them. And there were a number of Germans in the woods, at the side of the road . . who had taken direct hit.

s/PFC Daniel J. Carey

My most interesting experience was the invasion of Salerno. We came ashore with the idea of meeting little opposition. We were told that Italy had surrendered. It did not take us long to realize that the surrender of Italy did not mean very much, for we were met by strong enemy forces.

The first night on the beach we were bombed heavily. Two of our batteries moved inland. We felt that everything was going good until we were told that A and C Battery was in a trap and out of ammunition.

We began to try to get to them with the much needed supplies. Finally, after a period of time, we got through to them. I was at Battery C when the enemy started shelling us. That was my first time to be under shell fire and I will never forget the scream of those 88's! They did not stop us from doing our job. We supplied the two batteries with ammunition and supplies.

That night Battery C and A moved back out of the trap. The enemy attacked us and tryed to drive us from the beach. We day and night hauling ammunition to the guns. It took us five days to break through the enemy and during those five days I believe our guns never cooled off until they retreated out of range.

s/PFC Charles W. Carleton  
Serv. Battery 160 F.A.

As a member of the 160th Field Artillery I find that the most interesting event occurred at Anzio, with the big push that sent the victorious 45th Division into Rome and what made the experience so effective was that the 160th Field Artillery played a very important part in making a large dent in the Nazi regime.

Our gun roared night and day and those observers that observed that fire along with myself, will never forget the beating that we handed the Germans on Anzio.

s/PFC Michael R. Carr



One night here in Germany, while on guard with my friend, Wilmarth, the hours were 12 to 2 in the morning.

While walking over our post we heard some foot - steps and we jumped directly in front of six Germans. When we yelled "Halt" "who goes there?", all of a sudden one of them fired right at us. Thank God, he missed. I heard the bullets whiz by us then I fired back while Willie ran for help. I stood there keeping them covered. They ran in the barn, then Willie came back with First Sgt. Cale, and the Germans tried to make a break for it. I fired 14 more rounds and finally we captured all but two of them. This was witnessed by our Battery Commander, Lt. Eugene Roberts.

s/PFC Frank Cassillo  
Serv. Battery 160th F.A.

A.P.O. N.Y., N.Y. 32023731

It all began on September 10, 1943. When we landed at Salerno, Italy. I believe it was the most interesting landing I have ever seen.

We moved inland the first day. Everything was pretty quiet. On the second day, we were moving up and ran into a trap at about 07:30 that morning on the 11th day of September.

We were driving up the road and the enemy threw a couple of rounds of artillery in front of my truck. There was a short burst from a machine gun.

We left the truck. We waited a couple of minutes. Then we decided to move on for the rest of the convoy was out of sight. We attempted to move the truck and gun, and were forced to take cover again.

This time the machine gun was very, very heavy. Then we lay in a very shallow ditch for awhile. Then Sgt. Saffa crawled to the side of his peep and called for artillery fire. But it didn't do any good. Then he radioed for some tanks. Three tanks were sent up to see if they could wipe out the machine guns.

While the tanks were trying to knock out the machine guns we decided to try to get the truck out. We had hardly gotten in the truck until they opened up with their machine guns again.

and we were forced to leave it. But all the morning they had set fire to several vehicles.

The tanks fired all their ammo and didn't do any good. We lay there until about 15:30 and decided to try and make a run for it.

Lt. Colton said I was to see that the boys ran across a field to some woods, which was about 100 yards away, and for them to try to make it back across the river which was about a mile away.

I believe that was the hardest job I have ever had in the Army. It hurt like hell to set there and tell them to get up and run across that field, when you didn't know if they were going to make it or not, for there was machine gun fire covering that field too.

But it was a light one. The men would have to run a short way and then fall. I hated to send them across the field, in ones and twos, but that was the only way out. I think the Lord Almighty was with us all that day.

There were only two of us with very slight wounds. One was my driver, who was Gover T. Poole (who is in the states now) and the other was myself. Somehow, we all made it back safe.

The next day, we could get through to the battery.  
I believe that was the happiest moment of my life . .  
to get up where the battery was. For they had been cut  
off for about 36 hours. Then the two batteries withdrew  
that evening to Coffin Corner.

s/S/Sgt. Charles A. Chadick

A.S.N. 20832166

Not the most dangerous experience, ~~nor~~ the most exciting experience, but probably the most interesting one I've Had with the 160th F.A. was the rat race to Rome. One of the most interesting things . . to me . . was the breakthru.

For about 4 1/2 months we were imprisoned on a hunk of Pontine marsh, with the sea to our backs and mountains (big, beautiful "high ground" mountains) to the north, and the enemy surrounding us like a horseshoe. They had every military advantage and could easily even shoot across our beachhead from every position. All we had was good, stubborn infantry, a wealth of artillery, and control of the air. Without any one of these things we could not have lasted. Though their luftwaft and artillery dealt us misery, we blasted back a hundred fold in like manner.

Finally came the coordinated effort which, while well controlled, gave for the first time slack rein to free thinking for new ideas for efficiently dealing with an old enemy with active, fiendish minds.

All sorts of contraptions and devices evolved. Some good and some bad. This weird procession went into action on \_\_\_\_\_ One I'll remember for a long time. A medium tank pushing ahead of it a huge cylindrical roller to which were attached lengths of chain by one end, flailing the ground.



Finally, the bold effort broke through the encircling rings of men, guns and mines. I'll never forget the sensation that early June morning when my vehicle crept along in convoy in the half light of dawn, following precisely the vehicle just ahead. There was white engineering tape marking the narrow passage through the mine fields. Here and there by the wayside were vehicles and men torn up, some beyond recognition, which served as stark reminders of what happens to those who overstep the bounds marked by that little white tape.

But there I was riding in a vehicle across that same flat ground that I'd watched the enemy on for more than four months. Plenty of good American blood was spilled to make this possible.

I know how an enemy barrage affects me. How could those bastards stand the shelling we'd dished out? That's what I wanted to find out most of all. The answer was simple in theory and good in practice: Dig in, and camouflage. Labor was cheap for them, and thousands of man hours at the pick and shovel made it possible.

One village perched on a mountain top fascinated me, so I took a trip, complete with driver and rifleman, up the winding road leading uncertainly up the steep slope. I'd watched two days of unmerciful artillery work up and down that same mountain side. Through the B.C. scope it looked like a plague of locust had worked

on it; it looked like hardly a lizard could have lasted through those barrages. As we approached, we could see from a closer view point the utter destruction wrought by our artillery. However, the Krauts had even dug in and camouflaged the road, and it was still passable though rough in spots.

Finally, we gained the crest. The town of Lanuvis was in rubble, but the church steeple was still standing (but in a state of unstable equilibrium). As we walked down the street, we saw a doorway intact, so we pushed the door open. It was dark inside, but we had flashlights, so we went in. There were steps. They seemed to go down about 20 steps and stop; however, when we got to the bottom, we found that there were 3 more flights of steps going down. Soon, all earthly light was cut off from above by the winding nature of the stairway. This underground place had been hewn out by blackish semi-rock substance which absorbed nearly every particle of light. In fact, the flashlight seemed to dwindle out in that inky blackness. Soon we had picked up a lamp, and started to investigate. The steps led into a huge chamber, and tunnels took off in all directions from it. They were all furnished and (had) beds, tables and other items of comfort, including a large kitchen. Soon we noticed a ladder leading upwards into a hole about 3 ft. in circumference near the ceiling. Cautiously we ascended, entered the hole and flashed the light around. There was another apartment with huge wine casks in orderly rows, all empty!

We followed the corridor and after climbing innumerable steps we emerged into the blinding light of day. The exit we'd found was across the street from the entrance we'd used. The capacity of this underground garrison was about that of two battalions comfortably. I estimate that the main chamber was more than 100 feet below the surface.

Fooling around more, we went over to the reverse slope of the crest. There, under the shade of trees were the remains of meals and other remnants suggesting that those damned Krauts were living in comfort and safety, while those on duty were giving us hell.

A trip to the tower was all I needed to convince me that I'd been under almost continual observation for the two previous days, and the only reason I hadn't been shot at was probably that I didn't present a profitable enough target.

s/ H. Chalstrom, Jr., Capt. MC

One of the experiences I'll long remember happened in Sicily, just a few hours off the invasion beach. Three of us were moving up with Major Jones, on recon, and as seems to be the habit in fast-moving situations we were a few hundred yards ahead of the infantry. Almost before we realized it, we were under Jerry machine gun fire, and as we dove from the vehicle to the protecting cover of a stone fence, I witnessed my first and most unforgettable scene of the doughboy going into action.

One minute we were along . . and the next, a machine gun was chattering at our side while riflemen deployed at a dead run to flank the troublemaker. The whole incident lasted no longer than three or four minutes, but I've never forgotten the teamwork I saw displayed there . . the so smooth machine-like precision with which each man did his job, and the cool aggressive spirit denoting a squad well trained.

S/Sgt. Chaplin



I believe my most interesting experience in the 45th Division was our rush through Southern France where there wasn't very much war, and was an abundance of beautiful women that were completely out of our reach because we were moving too fast to even become acquainted with them.

After Italy it was a vast relief to see how well the homes were taken care of and how neat they were kept in comparison to Italy and they were pushed around just as much, but they had a little ambition regardless of the conditions under which they were living.

s/ PFC David G. Chase

Battery "A" 160th F.A., Bn.

A.P.O. 45 c/o P.M. N.Y., N.Y.



My most exciting experience was back in a village by the name of Charnwau, France. I was a Ln. driver on a wire jeep. Sgt. C. Hall, Cpl. W. Squier, Pvt. D. Miller and myself were laying a line from Ln. to Bn. H.Q. when the Jerries opened up with some anti-tank guns on the road we were on. I never heard the shells come in, but happened to be looking off to my right and saw them explode.

I never stop to turn the ignition off my jeep, but fell out on the road, in hitting the ground I broke my wrist watch which was in my shirt pocket, the jeep run into the ditch and stopped. I crawled to the ditch which was about 14" wide and about 20" deep, it seemed like I couldn't get low enough.

The Jerries threw in 20 rounds and the shrapnel was flying over and around us, so when it did quiet down we ran for a culvert then to a house about 100 yards down the road, just as we got to the house about 4 or 5 rounds came in and hit in the exact spot where we had been laying in the ditch at the culvert. That was a pretty close call.

We finally got the wire laid to the battalion but we laid it 20 miles an hour, until we got away from that area. I guess

I will always remember that spot as the most exciting;  
and I have never been as afraid, nor had such as close a call  
as that.

s/PFC Joseph E. Cherry

ASN 20831793

17 East Archer St.

Tulsa, Oklahoma

It all happened at Salerno, Italy. We had made a twenty-one mile forced march in the night evidently to keep the Germans from splitting the beachhead. Early the next morning our guns went into position and were registered in.

About nine o'clock our party was called forward. All day we were fired on and around four o'clock in the afternoon, we found out our batteries were getting low on ammunition. Our leader was taken sick and we were called in. At the battery we found out the seriousness of the situation. We were completely surrounded and you could see German tanks moving to our rear. Attempts were made to get ammunition to our batteries, but all failed. We were told in case of a break through to blow up all equipment and cross the river and make for a friendly unit. Very little sleep was gotten by anyone. The next day we thought we were really lost unless some one could get to us. I had just made a trip to battalion and on my way back there was General McLain riding toward us leading his convey. We drove to the battery. Soon two truck loads of ammunition came. Everyone in the outfit jumped forward to help unload; it was the same feeling you get when you have been sweating it out for days and finally are relieved.

s/Pvt. George E. Clark

The most exciting and interesting experience, in this war, was when we hit Sicily . . . when the Germans were bombing the Beach, and we were getting ready to land. Although we have been in a lot tougher places, such as Salerno when we were cut off with only thirty rounds of ammo left.

T/5 Virgil C. Claypool

Btry. C, 160th F.A. Bn.

My most interesting experience happened during the drive in Southern France. May 20, 1945.

The battalion had moved up near the town of Barjols, France. I was with Service Battery Recon moving with the battalion. After the position was picked, Capt. Turner looked at the map to see where we were located. As it was getting late he decided he would try a shorter route back to Service Battery. After we had went down the road a few miles I began to notice there was no K ration boxes or wire along the ditches, so I began to wonder if there were any soldiers around. Pretty soon we came to a town so I was kinda relieved.

The people all started to running out offering wine etc. We stopped and drank with them for awhile and then took off for the battery. Just as we turned a corner at the outskirts of town a motorized infantry patrol and some F.F.I. stopped our vehicle and asked what the scare was. After telling them they said the town was their objective and there were a hundred Germans reported in town. So then we left the town for the patrol.

s/ Sgt. Troy Cole



My most exciting experience since I came overseas was Southern France.

I visited a town that had never seen an American. The people were scared of us at first, but after they found out who we were they said we were the first ones in.

We didn't know what to do at first. They gave us all kinds of drink and food and we were lucky that time because we were all hungry from our long move.

s/Ernest B. Colson, Jr.  
Savannah, Ga.

My experience happened on the Anzio Beachhead in Italy.

February 17, 1944. I was driving up Highway 6 with Capt. Joel Crain when the jerries opened up with machine guns. After we got through this hot spot, we arrived at the 179th Inf. Regl. C.P. and they were throwing in armored so we turned around and headed for our unit. We run into M.G. fire again and it was so hot this time we took off across country and we weren't out there long before artillery had us pinned down.

After about 30 minutes we were able to get off the ground and head for home. I place this as my most exciting experience.

s/Donnie E. Cook

A.S.N. 35162908

General Del.

Scottsville, Ky.

My most exciting experience since I have been in the 160th happened at Anzio, where I suppose most everyone had some of the most unusual experiences of their combat days.

I especially recall the incident which occurred sometime in May, 1944, just before we pushed out toward Rome.

One of the Jerry's Anzio Express shells landed short of our dugout only about 8 feet. Two or three other boys and myself were in it and after the explosion we discovered the entrance was almost closed up, but luckily we didn't get a scratch. Other incidents that I got a good laugh out of was when the boys jumped in the creek when some Kraut planes came over. And now what I'm looking for most is a trip to the states and to know more combat experience.

s/PFC Clifford E. Copenhaver  
Btry. A, 160th F.A. Bn.

May 20, 1945.

My most unforgettable experience was in the attack on Newsburg. We had just taken a small town by the name of Lauf, and we stopped there for a while. Then the Infantry Officer said "Get ready . . we're attacking Newsburg!"

So we took off up the super highway with machine guns mounted on jeeps spraying our flanks to keep enemy troops down while we went on as far as we could go . . also machine guns on our tanks spraying our flanks.

When we got just on the outskirts of Newsburg, tanks opened up with direct fire, down the super highway on us. Jerry flak wagons and machine guns, also snipers. The Jerries had plenty of strength. There were quite a few casualties that evening with German tanks, artillery, flak wagons, machine guns and snipers all laying fire on us at once, blazing away with everything they had! But we kept on going, and took one end of Newsburg.

We got us an observation place, and started to lay artillery on the retreating krauts. I was in a window with my carbine and saw three krauts start to run. I hollered for them to surrender, but they kept on going, so I opened up on them. Then out of the cellar of the house came a civilian with a pistol, and opened up on me. He got me once through the arm, and once in \_\_\_\_\_ (paper torn) and wounded my two other buddies pretty bad.

Then the civilian ran out and threw two grenades in our jeep and ran off. We never got him. One of my buddies who was still able to maneuver, although he had been hit three times, tried to shoot the guy, but his carbine jammed.

I was then loaded in an ambulance and on my way to the hospital and on the way back, a Kraut machine gun opened up and shot the heck out of a six by six in front of us. However, I got to the hospital and am now back with the battery, and that is one experience I will never forget.

s/Charles Creek



## SALERNO

The RCT pushed in, across the S. River. The Germans let the Infantry go there, also "A" and "C" batteries. Part of HQ Battery and the MACBEA'S were on the other side of the S. River waiting until things cleared up.

Major Jones had reported a small arms fire on a bypass. While we were waiting, a tank came back across the river, and asked us to help him and one of his men who was so badly wounded that he could not move him.

We took our jeep. Capt. Crosby, Sgt. Stricken and myself, Lt. Whitman and Lt. Craft came along with us in their jeep. We crossed the S. River and proceeded up this road. Our tanks and TA'S were in on both sides of the road where they had fallen back to take up defensive positions.

We drove for a mile or so, without seeing anything or anyone except a few trucks that were knocked out lay along the road. We were within four or five hundred yards of the wounded tanker when this 20 mm opened up on us from a concealed position. Thank God he was not the best marksman in the German Army; but he wasn't the worst. He was throwing lead all around us and plenty close.

We saw that we could not make it to the wounded man. That we would have to turn back and hope the German medics would take care of this tanker. In turning around, Lt. Whitman killed his motor, and he was having one hell of a time trying to get it started again.

Lt. Craft told him to leave it, and "Let's get out" while we could, but he stayed with it and finally got it running. (It)seemed like hours to me, but it could not have been over five minutes at the most when both jeeps were headed back toward the S. River. I must say, we made that trip back in record time, and sure did feel better when I got back on the other side of that river.

s/T-3 W. R. Criss

I was very thrilled at the time we made the push out of the Anzio Beach head. Peculiar sights and sounds of the War were heard.

Later, after Rome had fallen, I visited St. Peter's Cathedral, and I truly found it was one of the most magnificent and impressive sights I have ever seen. Also the other sights (in Rome) were very impressive.

s/ Clifton Crow

The most exciting day since I've been in the 160th F.A. Bn. was the morning of July 10th, 1943. It was quite a suspense, waiting for our boat number to be called, and the water was the roughest I'd ever seen. We were all green and scared, for no one knew what we'd run up against when we hit shore.

I'll never forget climbing down the cargo net into the L. C. P. and the circling around, waiting for our time to hit the Beach. I was soaking wet when we got on the beach. I'd hit the ground so many times the sand had my tommy gun jammed, and I was afraid to stop and clean it, and was expecting to have to use it at anytime. I saw my first airplane shot down.

s/Cpl. Barton G. Cunningham

It's a long way from Scagletti to Munich. The two years required to complete this journey have been so full of interesting experiences it is hard to single out any one incident. To each G.I., the thing he had a personal part in, to him, seems the most interesting.

You may remember Maximieux . . I do, even if I cannot spell it.

At the time, I was on an F.O. party with George Clark in charge. It was Labor Day, 1944; before the day was over we had all the labor we could handle.

It started out as a pleasant enough clambake, nothing harder than flushing quails required our attention during the first hour. That was the last pleasant thing that happened that day, for immediately afterward we heard German tanks were having a field day in Maximieux.

Just how they did get in the town behind us I'll never know. I never did try to find out, for I was much more interested in their going than their coming. The presence of a few panzer divisions didn't seem to bother Clark, and I sometimes think nothing does.

A lot of things happened between the time the German



tanks entered town and the time they were driven off. I do remember our deadly serious game of hide and seek with these tanks. The Infantry riding T.D.'s, seeking the hiding place of the tanks.

George E. Clark venturing out in front of the Infantry to locate the tanks and self-propelled guns, so near, yet so cleverly placed and camouflaged that they were very hard to observe.

The story has a happy ending, as all such stories should have. After the fighting was over, we took off to the small nearby town of Perouges. Here we were wined and dined like kings for we were the first Americans the inhabitants had seen. Our dinner the largest and only hotel in town was a fitting end of what amounted to an interesting story, but could well have turned out to be a horror story.

s/PFC George M. Davis

My most exciting thirty minutes in the 160th F.A. Battalion was on October 27, 1944, at 5:45 p.m. when Company "F", 179th Infantry was jumping off on an attack.

Lt. Davis, Ed Smith, Brodrick and myself were up as an F.O. Party. The company had been digging in, and had placed heavy machine guns in the front and flanks.

At the time the C.O. walked through the machine guns the Jerries stepped in the holes with the machine guns and took over from there turning the machine guns around and shooting them at us.

Being on the right flank, with the radio set up, while trying to take the radio down I saw the rest of the company pass in review to my rear. Thinking there was some more above me. But I sent Smith back to the company C.P. and then I looked through the woods and saw Jerry coming, so I sent Brodrick back and stayed a little longer to get the radio. But they got too close and after firing all the ammo from my carbine I was forced to withdraw. So, while I was running, crawling, ducking, rolling away from the Jerries, they were shooting not only with their own guns, but with a machine gun that belonged to "F" Company.

Getting back to the C.P. I found out that Lt. Davis had

captured along with the company's C.O., and eighty-five of the men from the company, and that thirty minutes was enough for me.

s/ Robert V. Davis

THE MOST INTERESTING AND EXCITING  
MOMENTS OF MY COMBAT TIME

The morning of July 10, 1943; when the Division hit Sicily.

I was in an assault boat when the Navy started firing at the Jerry planes (that) came over and skipped bombed the Convoy of ships and also fired at the searchlights that were on the beaches.

They seemed to be firing over our heads and I thought they were firing at us until we were told different.

I think that was my most scared and exciting moment since being overseas.

I have been operating Radio on most all of the reconnaissance made in the Battalion, (and) they were plenty exciting; and now that it is over I enjoyed every one of them.

s/Norwood F. Deibler

33076044

(801 State Street

Millersburg, Penna.)

My biggest scare was at Anzio, when the Krauts  
threw a shell right smack through the kitchen tent, and  
my hole was only a couple of feet away from it! That was  
the one that I knew for sure had my number on it.

s/Cecil Denton



I've been asked to write an interesting experience I've encountered.

Well, whether interesting or not as the case may be I don't relish talking about death. It will bring back memories.

In my first day of combat as I hit the shores of Sicily I encountered many Italian prisoners, who were friendly. Several of the fellows, including myself gave them cigarettes and altogether were too friendly with them.

An officer came along, gave us hell, and told us to go down the beach and see some of our buddies who were cut down by these Dagos. I've never forgotten that to this day.

s/PFC Harry F. Dingenthal

While with the 160th F.A. Bn., coming through Europe I had a very thrilling experience. I was asked by a lady to bring her some flowers, so early one morning between 5 and 6 o'clock I picked the flowers near the house. I was very careful in that I got the best for her. As I knocked on her door, she told me to come in. There she was in bed. With the covers about halfway turned back and in the nude. I started to hand her the flowers, but she grabbed me, flowers and all in her arms. Having a strong will-power, I was forced to resist.

s/PFC. Ray A. Dinkle

My most exciting experience was September 11, 1943, when we were in a trap. The Germans had hit the rear of our convoy. They told us that we were surrounded, but we did not believe it. But after we got to thinking about it, and found out it was the truth, we had to start saving our ammunition. We did not know how long we would be there and whether any of us would come out alive or not. They shelled all around us.

s/PFC Dale J. Dorl  
A.S.N. 20830857  
Btry. A, 160th F.A. Bn.

The most thrilling experience of my Army career was when we first landed in Sicily. It was my first taste of combat.

The shelling of the beaches, and later on, the air raids, were something that I'll never forget.

s/PFC John Dreyer

As First Sgt. of Battery "A", 160th Field Artillery Battalion my most interesting experience was near St. Maxine, on the morning of August 15, 0950H when Southern France was being invaded. The experience being, the manner in which the men of "A" Battery were obedient to orders prior to leaving ship; and the orders were carried out.

I really expected to lose time in assembling the men, once off the boat. But they were all in order, which made us arrive to the assembly area in less than ten minutes. To me this was (an) (exciting) experience.

Sgt. Drigo



The most interesting experience I recall was the morning the Infantry and our artillery finished the town of Wingen last January.

With Capt. Crane directing artillery fire . . and after he gave the town the once over, he gave the Infantry close artillery support.

Being on a hillside just west of town and between fire missions, and the foxhole I dug, it was interesting and I was glad to get back to the battery late that afternoon.

s/A. Dulude

My most exciting period of combat against the Germans was at Anzio, Italy. We were under artillery fire and constant air raids at all times, (during) the five months we were there.

We had the sea behind us and the Jerrys in front of us. We all lived underground, sweating it out, not knowing when the next shell was coming or where it might land, and it was a great relief when the big push started and we broke through.

s/Cpl. Joe T. Durick

A.S.N. 20832186

Rt. 3, Box 276

Ada, Oklahoma

In December, 1943, I had the opportunity of visiting the old, excavated city of Pompei, Italy. There were about twenty in our group, with a civilian guide to show us the points of interest.

There was a wall around the city, which had watchtowers at each corner. The guide took us through the narrow streets to part of the city that was damaged very little. There were paintings on the walls of each room. They were of people and of odd animals. The paintings were the original paintings, painted in 29 B.C. The famous Pompei Red which was used in the paintings has never been duplicated.

We went from there to the old arena where perhaps centuries ago men and wild animals were turned loose in the arena and fought a life and death battle. From there we went to a part of the city that even in those days they had . . the red light district of Pompei. The first house we came to had a red ball painted over the door. Inside were built in stone beds, and over each door were paintings showing different positions.

Out in the street pointing to the other house was an obvious part of a man. The guide said that the city was destroyed because it was so wicked. What few people escaped did so by the sea. Mt. Vesuvius has since erupted again.

s/PFC Wyatt M. Earles  
Battery B, 160th F.A. Bn.

My most interesting experience in combat was on Anzio. I was a forward switchboard operator. Things were getting pretty hot when the Jerries hit us with three big counterattacks. All my lines in the switchboard were shot out by enemy artillery fire.

At this time the Jerries were getting pretty close to our board, so we loaded our boards on the peep and withdrew about six hundred yards. There we dug in and set our switchboards up, and stayed there for about a month. It was pretty miserable, as it was raining everyday and the water started to come in our hole.

At night, Jerry's planes would come and harass us with personal bombs. It was that way every night. Artillery was also heavy. Again, we had to displace. In this place we had a good hole, with a strong top on it. Jerry's artillery was still heavy and one round came in our entrance of our hole which killed two of my buddies, and wounded one. I was lucky because I just had been relieved from the board a few minutes before, and was in a different hole cooking my breakfast.

Again, we had to move, in different place. Here it wasn't as bad except for the planes at night. Then when the big push started to Rome, things broke up. Thank God. I never got a scratch all through this war and now waiting maybe I will be one of the lucky boys to go home.

T/5 Adolph J. Ebertowski  
HQ Battery, 160th F.A. Bn.

Salerno Valley was the toughest place I have ever been in, since I have been in the Army.

I think it was September 11th that most of us did a lot of sweating. That was the toughest job I ever had since I've been in Ol' White Horse Battery (in the) 160th Field Artillery.

They had a hard time stopping Ol' White Horse Battery that V day.

s/PFC James C. Ellick



## MY MOST EXCITING EXPERIENCE

It happened the night our F.O. Party was being relieved.

The group consisted of the driver, Lt., radio operator and two line men.

Lt. Bennett was in charge of the party, and remained behind to instruct the group who relieved us. The trip took us by a cross road that had been under enemy fire all that day. Every half hour the Germans would throw in a barrage of artillery. So we timed our travel so we would get to the cross road after our barrage and be away from there by the time the next one came in. Luck was against us. For a while we took the wrong road and ran into a barbed wire entanglement. The vehicle was stuck so there we were.

One of the boys named Junior Spalding took off across the field after a R.L. 27, which is a spindle used on a reel of wire. The rest of us including Red Hontan, driver, Albert Franko, radio operator and myself, started cutting wire. The only tools we had were small wire pliers and it was pretty fast going. At any moment we expected to hear the whine and explosion of enemy artillery. But luck was with us as she was against us. The enemy had decided to quit. It was a tense moment for everyone concerned. Everyone did a lot of sweating.

s/Cpl. Ray Erickson

Place: Anzio

On the 3rd of January, 1945, in one of  
the greatest battles got under way when 500 S. S. Troops broke  
through our lines and got some of the buildings. Then the 160th  
F. A. shot day and night at a very close range.

s/ Clarence Fields  
Red Rock, Oklahoma

In October, 1945, near Grand Quevilly Le, France  
I attached to company A, of the 179th Infantry as forward  
observer. Just before dark, having finished the day on the O. P.  
I was returning to my quarters which were nearby. On my way  
down from the O. P. I was met by the L. O. officer who immediately informed me that the company was being counter attacked  
and that I should return immediately to the company C. P.

This I did and informed the Company commander that  
I was on hand, should he need me, and returned to my fox hole.  
In the meantime, I heard a tank, but didn't know who's it was.  
Before long one of our light tanks came out of the woods  
and went down the road about forty miles an hour. The crew  
was yelling something, but I didn't understand what they said  
because of the noise. Shortly after, I heard another tank coming  
from the same direction. It sounded very much like ours.  
Soon, I saw some infantry boys running back through the woods.  
I stopped one and asked him what was wrong and he said a German  
tank was coming this way. I asked him if he saw it and he said  
"No.". Pretting soon, the tank had come out of the woods and  
parked nearby. I was rather curious to see who's tank it was, as  
it sounded like ours and in the dark it looked like ours. So, with  
two other infantry boys, I made my way through the woods and  
came within 30 yards of the tank. Just then, one of the boys saw  
the gun in the tank and yelled "Look at that gun. You can't tell

me that's not a German tank", and took off through the woods. I was still uncertain, as I didn't see the gun on the tank. So, the other boy and I ventured closer until we got to within twenty yards of the tank, and still we couldn't distinguish who's tank it was. Finally, I took out my glasses and looked through them. Just then, the lid on the turret of the tank opened, and two heads popped out, and I knew they were Germans. I left in a hurry. Later on, the infantry knocked out the tank with a bazooka.

2nd Lt. Peter Figler

My most exciting moment happened on November 30, 1944, while on an attack with B Company, 179th Infantry. We came to the jumping off point and started to move across the open ground when Lyle Smith and I saw some Jerries running along the ridge. We stopped and set up the radio and called for fire.

We received the fire and ran the Jerries off. Then we saw a tank we thought was our own. We were told that we had tanks in that area. We mentioned it to the Infantry boys, but they said that it was ours. We suddenly were to find out different, for at that moment there was a great explosion, and then the report of the tank. The shell landed not more than 20 feet away. There was not a hole in sight. Smith said, "Let's get out of here. That is looking down the tube at us". So we parteed to a road ditch. There were six Infantry boys with us when we started. Five were wounded before we reached defolade. There were eight rounds fired at us and about twenty in the town. We were very luck to come out with no wounds.

s/Cpl. Dow W. Fisher



The most thrilling experience of my life in combat was the time when I was taking an officer on Recon, we were going down a dirt road through the woods when I spied a Jerry crouched alongside the road with a machine pistol, I jumped out of the peep, and ran toward him with my pistol shouting for him to give up.

He was undecided because he started bringing the machine pistol up, then at the last minute threw it down. He had a potato masher grenade in his belt, so I halted him about 20 feet away and motioned for him to throw it over his shoulder which he did.

After taking him prisoner he was searched and turned over to the M.P.'s

Later, I found out that the M-1 the officer had pointed at the Jerry had no ammo in it. . . that added to the excitement after it was all over.

s/Norman H. Fischer

PFC 35024860  
2025 W. 52nd St.  
Cleveland, Ohio

The most exciting experience I had was when we were at Anzio, Italy. One day when I was hauling rations to the battery; I got caught in a terrific artillery barrage. I didn't think I was ever going to get out of it alive.

Cpl. Frank Mayans came to "A" Battery that day as a replacement. He asked if it was like that every day.

And the most thrilling experience I had was when we landed in Southern France without any trouble. When I expected we would have a big fight on our hands; and (then) seeing how the French people were glad to see us. The help the marquis and F.F.I.'s gave us.

s/Gilman S. Flanyan  
Pekin, No. Dakota  
Battery A, 160th Field Artillery Bn.

In my adventures and contentious experiences with the 160th F.A. Bn., I have encountered experiences of incidents undesirable for print; but I can relate my Salerno episodes with ecstasy that I am thankful of its completion and demol . . . . The hardships infavored by each man is hereby related in my story.

We left a port in Sicily to be designated as a floating reserve. We arrived at Salerno finding a confused and unordinary situation than what was anticipated by news of Italy's capitulation. At Salerno we didn't find our expectations too authentic, but we discovered our orders were to aid alongside the 36th Division in establishing a beachhead sufficient to accommodate enough supplies for our push inland. The resistance was furious and there for we found realism to the enemy's strategic efficiency. The enemy allowed our troops to pass into a trap that they had pre-arranged prior to our landing.

They were effective intheir plans, because our artillery was cut off from its supply and soon ammunition and food was exhausted. We had one supporting Battery ("B") to support us from our rear. This battery shelled the enemy with unceasing intensity. Soon they opened our supply lines and

we were supplied with the necessities to continue our drive. There was eight days of intense ferocity of artillery duals and we were assured of retaining our beachhead. The efficiency of our organization was now being realized and if we hadn't the training and efficient men there we would have been the victim of superior forces.

I believe we would have surely been beaten and thrown back costing us our bridgehead, along with out comrades, that were lost there.

After the long, hard struggle at Anzio even I still select this battle as one of our hardest, short battles. I am sure it will never be forgotten. It will go down in history as will many of the numerous other battles the 160th F.A. Bn. took part in.

LONG LIVE the 160th F.A. Bn! "Toujours en Avant".

s/Shirley K. Flatt  
2nd Lt. F.A.

Salerno is the most exciting experience in all of my overseas time. We didn't have so much trouble in landing with the exception of getting stuck on a sand bar for a few hours. Had a raid by Jerry airplanes and two bombs barely missed the L.C.T. I was on.

When we landed we went into rendezvous for the night. And next day the fireworks started. We started for our gun positions and got caught by the Germans. They shelled the road and hit the kitchen trailer which was full of rations and 105 mm. ammo. We all hit the ground and stayed down while the trailerload of ammo was burning. Darn near got hit by a couple of cans of C ration stew and beans and then an 88 mm. hit the truck and we got back and crossed the river out of range.

s/T/5 George Floyd



The Rhine River crossing contributed towards my most interesting experience in combat.

Our liaison section actually had to cross it three times before we could settle down and call it our home.

On our first attempt, the motor on our assault craft conked out on us in mid-stream, and we had to paddle our way back.

The second attempt brought us a little more excitement, as we pulled away from the shore our attention was drawn to an overturned craft; we proceeded to fish the boys out and continued on our merry way. But upon landing lo and behold if that Coxwain didn't land us on wrong beach. I now figured situation was normal "all - - - - - up". While on beach we were subjected to a heavy German artillery concentration which landed too close for comfort.

Lt. Brian, after wandering around decided it would be better for us to go back across and start anew.

We hailed a passing craft and asked him if he knew where Red Beach was. He said he did, so he proceeded to dump us off on right beach but a bit behind schedule.

While all this was going on our friendly shore was under heavy artillery fire.

s/Cpl. Leon E. Fontaine 31074999  
17 Lafayette St.  
Lowell, Mass.

How well I remember that cold and rainy morning when we were fighting in the Vosges Mountains. I was on an F.O. party with "Fox" Company, who were spearheading the attack at 10:00 a.m. We had two light and one heavy tanks with us. Our artillery was preparing to lay a ten minute barrage on enemy troops before we started the attack. About ten minutes before our barrage was to start, the Germans layed a barrage in on us, wounding two from "Fox" Company. The barrage didn't last too long. Then our artillery opened up and also the three tanks with us. Then all at once things were quiet. I heard someone say "Heads up". Our infantry and tanks were pushing off. We advanced some 500 yards under small arm fire. Then we ran into two enemy tanks supporting a company of enemy infantry. Our F.O. party then laid fire on the tanks knocking them out, disorganizing and killing the enemy troops forcing them to retreat. The attack and many others made by our infantry and artillery working together has brought the enemy where he is today.

s/PFC Luther M. Gaillard

My most interesting experience was on Anzio when they shelled day and night and planes came over day and night, but I got a big kick out of shooting at the planes with my 50 on my truck. Late one evening a German bomber came over and the gunner saw me and shot at me. He hit the truck next to mine in a front tire and blowed it up. We found part of the in the tire when we fixed it. The bomber went down, but I don't know who shot him down and I was sure glad when we pushed off Anzio.

s/Cpl. Lawrence O. Gann

Battery C 160th F.A. Bn.

## SOME OF MY INTERESTING EXPERIENCES

I was one of those lucky guys that got to stay back in Sicily when the landing was made at Salerno. But about 12 days later I was with the C Battery again.

We made 2 or 3 moves and that's where Coleman and I got the devil shook out of us by two shells that hit about five feet from us.

But the worst of all . . . the shells threw about one-half of a cup of dirt right in the spuds we were mashing for dinner. So we didn't have spuds for dinner.

But I can say for both of us and all the rest, we have the Lord to thank for looking after us and guiding those shells just close, instead of too close, like many of our close friends had to go.

One of the old boys.  
c/Sgt. Francis J. Gates

My most exciting experience was my first day of combat off the Coast of Sicily, July 10, 1943.

I was watching all the fireworks from the ship, and the bombs were dropping all around.

Then I realized what was to come later. I'll never forget that day.

s/PFC J. Vaughn Gilbert  
ASN 34337645

Route One

Fyfee, Alabama



One of the many exciting incidents of my twenty-three months overseas was on the Anzio Beachhead where we had air raids and shelling day and night.

On one particular night when the Germans were over and the sky was full of tracers, I saw three planes shot down within a few minutes of each other.

From my foxhole, one of them seemed to be coming straight down at me, in flames. He crashed into a S.P. gun which was in position about 200 yards away, and didn't hurt any of the gun crew which was dug in a few feet away.

At the same time, Germans were shelling our area. I hope I never have that kind of a feeling again.

s/Edward L. Gleason

1119 Windring Way Road

Nashville, Tenn.

I became a member of Battery A, 160th F.A., Bn., at Camp Barkley, Texas, January 31st, 1942 and trained with them until June the 8th, 1943. Then we sailed overseas. The invasion at Sicily was a picnic for us.

On September the 11th, 1943, we hit Salerno, Italy. We had one night's sleep, then we were ordered to move forward. We moved approximately four miles. Went in to position and an hour or so later, we were informed that we were surrounded by the Jerries.

Later in the evening our food, water and ammo was low. So we thought that (would be) the finish for us. The next morning at dawn our tanks broke through to us and ammo and food was brought to us. That evening we retreated back and reorganized to give them hell.

I am thankful that I was in Battery A, 160th F.A. Bn. with my buddies.

s/Cpl. Olen Good

Lick Creek, Kentucky

The most interesting and exciting moment in this war for me was the liberation of Southern France.

Such speed and co-operation has never been, nor will ever be, equalled.

s/T-5 Jack S. Goodridge  
Btry. C, 160th F.A. Bn.

In September, 1943, we were on L.S.T.'s heading for the mainland of Italy. It was to be our second amphibious landing in as many months. The sea was very calm. The calm before the storm, so to speak. During daylight hours we were often attacked by enemy aircraft, so they knew we were coming, but did they know just where we were going to strike.

At dusk on September 8th, we heard some very good news over the radio. Italy had surrendered unconditionally. A loud cheer went up from everyone. The war was practically over . . or so we thought.

In the early morning hours of September 9th, the first assault waves went toward the beaches, just south of Salerno, without the help of the usual Naval Barrage preceding a landing.

We were to remain a floating reserve until ordered ashore. We didn't know that morning just what was happening on those beaches. We watched with our field glasses the Naval fire which the Shore fire control was directing on targets. The shells seemed to be bursting close to the water's edge . . too close we thought.

A ship was hit by enemy fire and was listing badly. Destroyed and damaged landing craft lined the shore. We knew then that the landings were not a surprise, and that the Germans were there waiting. They had been tipped off.

On the morning of September 10, we were ordered ashore. While unloading, we were again attacked by enemy dive bombers. The

terrific anti aircraft barrage prevented their aiming well, so that the bombs missed their target.

After landing, we went into rendezvous and waited, finally moving into a cotton patch near the Sele River where we set up for business.

On September 11 we were to draw and deliver rations to the different batteries. After going to two of the batteries, we found that A and C batteries were cut off and couldn't be reached. The situation was bad, they told us, so there was nothing to do but go back to Service Battery and wait.

On the morning of September 12, it was decided to make a run to the trapped batteries with supplies and ammunition. Two ammo trucks made the run and came back. We then started with the rations and gasoline. Every truck making the run was fired on by enemy artillery. Luckily, we weren't hit and although we had to hit the dirt a couple of times, we made the trip without casualty.

That night A and C Batteries were able to withdraw and the battalion went into position on a crossroads which was later to be nicknamed "Coffin Corner". The Germans threw everything they had at that spot, as they were trying to cut our forces in two. It looked bad. Nearly everytime we delivered supplies we were subjected



to artillery fire. All this time, our Navy was pouring shells over on to the enemy, while our bombers were pattern bombing just in front of us . . until at last Jerry had had enough and withdrew to the North. We had won a tough and important battle.

s/Cpl. Clyde E. Gordon

Service Battery, 160th F.A. Bn.

45th Inf. Div.

My most exciting combat experience happened just after the battalion crossed the river, Sealy, on the Salerno Beachhead, near Battypaglia, Italy. This was my most exciting experience, not because it was my worst experience, but because of it being my first real combat experience.

The battalion was trapped and in desperate need of ammunition and other supplies. Major Johnson (then Captain) was to lead us through to our battery positions. Tanks were rumbling around through the trees and there was the occasional sound of machine gun fire. Most of us green heads went down and sat on the culvert at the crossroads to watch the show. It was then that I got my first close-up view of a bursting shell.

We waited there for hours until Colonel Larson said we were to come on through . . then, finally, with a trailer full of gasoline, a truck loaded with rations and ammunition, we took off . . not knowing what dangers lay ahead. All during the time we were in the firing battery area there was shell fire and machine gun fire. I was never so scared or excited in all my life. We would throw a few rounds off the vehicle then jump under it. To get 40 rounds unloaded it took us 45 minutes; so you can see we must have been pretty excited.

On our way back to the dump, Sgt. Budnick who was in the other truck, and I, met some more of the Service Battery trucks. We felt pretty good being the first ones of that battery to take a GMC through. Not only ammunition but the Supply Section job too. We continued to feel good until the commendations and bronze stars were awarded the other persons for what we did.

s/PFD Oscar R. Gordon

Serv. Battery 160th F.A. Bn.

APO 45 N.Y. N.Y.

My most interesting and exciting experience since being in the 160th F.A. Bn. happened about the third night we were on the Anzio Beachhead.

We were all sitting around listening to the radio. When all of a sudden the planes began to dive and drop flares. We all hit the ground, and were trying to get out of the tent to our holes. Of course there wasn't any of us had very good holes.

My hole was only about a foot deep, and when I hit it I was laying on my back staring at the sky. The whole area was lit up like day, and the planes were diving to drop their load. Each time one of them dove it made a very weird noise, and the bursting of ack ack added to the noise. The tracers going through the sky looked like one solid sheet of flame. Each time I heard a bomb whistling down I thought sure it would hit in the hole with me.

Luck was with us and none of the bombs fell in our area, but we were all plenty scared all during the raid.

s/Sgt. Lloyd Gray

Serv. Btry. 160th F.A. Bn.

I think my "closest" time was the time at Anzio from the 16th to the 19th of February, 1944. The time I could see the white of their eyes. Boy! I just hope I never get in that kind of place anymore!

The morning of the 16th at 0:600 they began shooting and their tanks (those big ones) (Mark IV's) look like a moving house coming down the road, and they would shoot and then come running into our lines, and we would mow them down. Then they would start shooting again. They would shoot at one man with a tank. I saw them do just that. One man left the house, he was trying to get back to the ditch, and when he got about half-way, they shot a round at him. It looked as if it hit him and as I left the house, they cut loose at me with an M. G. and I hit the dirt. By that time, our lines were pretty thin. They had pulled back about 350 yds. trying to hold, but we had taken such a loss that we could not hold, so we had to get away if we could.

That, I believe, was and is the nearest thing to Hell that any man on this earth will ever go through.

s/Harold P. Greene



Being a member of the Medical Corp, United States Army I imagine it appropriate to write of my most harrowing experience, as an aid man in the 160th Field Artillery Battalion. It was the night of our landing on the Anzio Beach in Italy.

It was total blackout in the lower hold where I was mounted on my truck, ready to hit the beach, when all at once two rifle shots rang out and then a call for Medics. I hastened to the scene and found two soldiers wounded. One shot through the abdomen, the other through the hand. I treated these two patients and then turned them over to the Navy for further treatment and evacuation.

After all this excitement ceased, we made one exit from the L.C.I. and rode on to one area further inland. Not thinking it was going to be too dangerous, I sprawled out (above ground) around four in the morning. There came about an air raid deluxe. It didn't take me long to get digging then. These air raids continued daily and nightly (well, we all know how often) especially the first two weeks on the beachhead. Next day one of my buddies was critically wounded during an air raid while manning his truck mounted fifty calibre gun. He was hit in the abdomen and thigh by falling unexploded ack-ack shell. I treated and evacuated him and the course of taking him to the hospital from the place of occurrence was no longer than fifteen minutes.

As Anzio grew rougher our homes grew stronger and better. At first, I had but a measly foxhole. A few days later it became a regular underground home and a very good one considering the place, surroundings and circumstances that prevailed. It was an affair about six foot deep and four feet wide made of ammunition cases.

There were many many more soldierly experiences on Anzio and elsewhere, but we all know and shared them together, and if I should begin to mention them, we would all join in and give our views as we know these things and have done them together. Anzio was my greatest of soldierly experiences, one I shall never forget. There have been many many more, but none so outstanding as Anzio!!

s/PFC L. W. Gregory

Med. Det. 160th F.A. Bn.

We landed on the beach of Sicily. We were all new at the job, and didn't know which way to turn. When we landed on the beach, half of our trucks were stuck in the sand. There was no road off the beach, so we had to wait around on the beach a few hours and the Jerry planes were overhead, giving us plenty of trouble.

Finally, we got underway, and moved inland for three or four miles and went into gun position. I will never forget my first sleep in combat. I laid my head on the steering wheel of the truck, and when I woke up, boy was my neck stiff. Soon there came the days at Anzio. I spent better than three months in the same foxhold getting shelled and bombed every day and night, and it sure was a good foxhole to stand all the close hits that came around it.

Ah yes . . . I'll never forget that foxhole, but one day the Jerries got a hit on it and blew it up. I guess the Master just didn't want me to be in the hole when it all happened, for I left it about five minutes before it got hit.

s/T/5th James Griffin

What I believe to be my most interesting experience was at Wingen sur modes Alsace. I was on a L.O. section at the time, and was at a town named Wimenau.

We had orders to move to Wingen. It was a move to keep our supply route open. They expected the Krauts to cut off the main road and seal off Wimenau.

The night we moved, we had radio watch. Everything was going along smoothly. Krauts downstairs were all pretty well awake. About then, the Lt. and I went to the window and looked out. There was another burst of M.G. It hit above our head. It sounded so close I thought he was shooting and I thought he shot until we looked at the wall above our heads. We were pretty shaken up. At first, my peep was down below the window. They shot in the motor through the dash. All that was hurt was the manifold. We heard them talking to the civilians downstairs, but for some reason they never came upstairs.

That morning there was nothing we could do. There were six of us and a couple hundred of them . . . SS troops. So we watched out the window at them, keeping hidden. We laid around the room all morning watching them take prisoners and shooting things up. They had a lot of automatic



weapons, while we had 6 carbines and 1 pistol. So we stood guard at the doors. It was useless. They were all around the house in great numbers. We had no escape route so it was no use firing. So we decided to set and await developments. That afternoon, we were resting. We heard heavy footsteps coming upstairs, so we said . . .this is it. Soon, the door opened. There were three of our own medics. We let out a big sigh of relief. They were going around looking for wounded.

We told them not to say anything, and they left; so we decided then to move. We took our bedrolls up to the attic and stayed there that night, watching our troops firing in the town and Krauts firing back, and shells coming.. (that sounded like they were taking the roof off over our heads).

While we were lying there, there were bullets popping through the tile, and we could hear tanks. We figures they were going to take the town back. They would sound close and soon they would die away. You could imagine how we felt. So we catnapped that night, and the next morning I was looking out the side window, and saw the roof of the house next door disappear. All you could see was dust. One of our mortars, or shells had hit it. We were in more danger of our own bullets,



shells and mortars than we were of the Krauts downstairs. After that, we thought it wasn't safe there anymore and went through the trap door downstairs, and into the side attic . . all but three of us, who stayed to look for an escape route. We were going to try and make it that night to our own lines. Soon, a stray bullet went through the tile, and got one of our boys that stayed up there. The other 2 came down. We stayed in the side attic all that day, listening to the Krauts hollering and talking outside. We couldn't see them, but we could tell when one got hit. He would holler like a new borne baby.

So, that night it got dark . . the Lt. was leading us . . we left the house. One at a time. We had to cross the main road, which was 50 yards from the house, and down a bank, and across an open field, about 800 yards or more; and not one shot was fired at us. That was about the most exciting thing that happened. We all got back, but one. A fine fellow.

s/PFC F. Griffith  
HQ Btry. 160th F.A. Bn.

My most thrilling experience was at Maximeaux.

Early, the morning of August 31st we crossed the Rhine and moved into position on the other side of the river. We were in position "firing" for about two to three hours and then the next morning which was September 1st, the Krauts blew the bridge out behind us which was our only way of escape across the Rhine River. Then the Germans came in from the left flank of Maximeau in to the town; they called back some of our Infantry and we turned two guns to the rear of us and two to the front, firing both ways.

Then our artillery officer called down and said "Shoot sixteen rounds and be ready to make a break for it" and we were ready, but we stayed and fired for a little while longer. We then got C.S.M.O. and moved into position right with the Infantry under mortar and sniper fire, there was Infantry and F.F.I. maneuvering all through our position. Mortars were hitting just in front of us,

burp gun snipers harassing us. Nightfall had come and was pretty dark. We even had a little rain. I was on guard when airplanes came over dropping out parachutes and I thought they were Jerry paratroops. I woke everybody up. We kept a darn good watch for about three hours. Everybody was up, and then they called down and said that it was our planes dropping supplies, to the French so they could give us a little help.

The next morning at daybreak the fighting really broke out. Machine guns tattering away, mortars and artillery bursting, flak wagons blazing away and riflemen letting go with everything they had. The fighting lasted for about three hours. Hard, bitter, bloody fighting, with machine gun fire coming into our position. Then everything got very quiet. It was the end of that trap. Our road was open again and that was the Battle of Maximeau which will never be forgotten by any man in B Battery of the 160th Field.

s/Edwin C. Grimmett

The most exciting moment that has happened to me while overseas occurred during the Anzio campaign.

Sgt. Parsons and I each had a machine gun, and for many a day we fired at enemy aircraft. One afternoon about the third month there, we had an alert. We ran to our guns and in a few minutes, in came a tree top high. We continued to fire at it, and in came another very low. Why they never strafed us I will never figure out. After it was all over we surely were shaking.

s/Cpl. Ed Grugel  
Sr. Btry. 160th F.A. Bn.

One of the most exciting times of the 23 months

I served overseas was at Gum

France,

when I had to light the candle that was burning in the cellar.

I was in three times with

and I had about a 20 foot

wire line strung from one cellar to another. Had to lay there

the same length of time.

s/Cannon Hall

Rt. #1

Ripley, Miss.



My most interesting experience, or at least my narrowest escape from receiving a purple heart, was at Anzio.

I had been on guard the night before, and was sleeping rather late the morning of February 18. The jerries picked that morning to pull one of their largest bombing raids. I heard the ack ack open up on them, and was thinking how lucky I was to be sleeping in my fox hole, when suddenly I felt as though somebody had hit me on the head with a hammer. Some-time later, I opened my eyes and discovered my pup tent had caved in on me and was riddled by shrapnel. Then I sat up and reached for the shoes that I had put at the foot of my bed, only to find out that they had received a direct hit from one of our 40MM shells.

s/PFC Silas C. Hanson

My most interesting experience while in combat was on the night of July 10, 1943. We were out on top deck of our ship watching the battle ships shelling the beaches and out of no place an enemy plane dived down on us and dropped a couple of bombs which didn't miss us far. After that, I was ready to hit the beach and find a hole.

s/Sgt. Floyd Hardesty

My best experience with "A" Battery was when we crossed the Rhine, and saw the Germans surrender by the thousands, knowing that they were disorganized, and that the war couldn't last much longer.

PFC Marion Hart  
Battery "A", 160th F.A. Bn.  
APO #45

Marion Hart  
114 North St.  
Conyers, Georgia

One of my most unusual and interesting combat experiences was while initiating reconnaissance for the town of Grossenhain. On return to our former C. P. location, we were stopped by German small arms' fire coming from the Convent in the suburb. Finally, we found ourselves completely surrounded . . . also outnumbered . . . 4 to 1, and the action developed into a small fire fight which lasted 20 minutes.

We had one 57 M.M. A. T. gun which knocked out one troop carrier, transporting 20 men.

I had a sniping position in a barn which was close by, covering the main inlet to our position. I was making sure no Krauts entered there. However, two did try. So . . . "Zwi soldaten Kabout".

We did the job well, as usual. Those who participated in the action were Col. John Embry; Capt. Monroe Little, Sgt. Diebler, Cpl. Dunn and myself.

s/Cpl. John J. Heinefelt  
#33062470

We landed at Salerno September 10, 1943. Everything seemed to be going okay, until the following day, as we moved to a new position, things started to happen.

We lost the fourth sec. gun. Then we soon found out we were trapped. The Germans made a complete circle around us. With little ammo and food, things looked bad. We did some firing. The thing that scared me was the elevation was low and the Infantry was called back with us, and they set up their mortars beside our guns. The next day the Germans threw in a heavy artillery barrage and with the aid of a few tanks we made our way out to another position where we got the ammo and equipment to start the advance out of Salerno.

s/Coy Hemphill

Battery A, 160th F.A.



My most interesting experience of the war was the sudden collapse of the Seigfried line. I had read how well fortified the line was so I dreaded to see the time that my unit reached it.

After being off the line for a few weeks, we went back in action a few miles of the German boundary. We fired many missions the first few days and then the push started. We passed many pill boxes and road blocks with dead German soldiers laying near. About the third day the Germans started to run and many surrendered. I saw German soldiers marching in without a guard. It was just a few days until we received news that some of our units had reached the Rhine River. Then I knew that line I thought would be a tough job was finished.

s/PFC Earl G. Henry #34170719

Route 3, Carthage, N.C.

On the early morning of July 10, 1943, we were floating off the coast of Sicily waiting to hit the shore. The water was very rough and the noise of the gun fire was anything but silent. I was very tired of being on the ship, but that last mile on the ship I couldn't rest for I was excited as I didn't know what was waiting and I was expecting the worst, and when the Jerries search light began to sweep the water in search of us and the big guns started talking, I just knew my doom was near. The many guns soon turned out the Jerries search light, and by daylight everything was getting quiet again. Soon after wading ashore a couple of planes came over and every calibre of gun started firing at it from every angle, and then we got an order from our C.O. to hit the dirt and we didn't hesitate. The engineers blew a up a mine and everybody thought that a Jerry artillery shell had hit close by. The first night ashore a couple of boys crawled a hundred yards to the aming stakes to put lights on them, and then crawled back to the gun and the rest of the crew. Everyone was on the alert and keeping close guard. When the CO was coming down the dim road to the gun position, and one of the boys was so nervous that he pressed harder on the trigger than he thought he was and the gun went off. I don't know how close the bullet came to the C.O. but it scared him plenty as he thought there was a sniper in the area, or that some one was taking a pot shot at him on purpose.

There have been many more exciting and interesting times and places in my stay with the 160th Field Artillery Battalion, for instance the landing at Salerno and our stay there. Then Anzio and Southern France as well as being in the trap at Meximeau, France, but the landing at Sicily was my first experience.

s/Cpl. Robert A Henry

My most exciting period of our combat was the time we spent at Anzio, where we had a very small beachhead and the Jerries could shell any part of it, and they had good observation of all our movements. Their planes bombed and strafed us all hours of the night and day.

It was a great relief when the big push started, as when we broke through.

s/PFC Roley N. Henshaw

Box 134

Seminole, Oklahoma

Anzio . . the later part of May, 1944, during an all out push for Rome.

I was with a forward observation party. Our OP was upstairs in a shelled and torn-up brick house. The roof was completely gone. I was on the second floor, and it was the highest point between us and the ground. All day and night the enemy artillery came over . . just clearing the house that we were in, and landing on the road a hundred yards in the back of the house. With each shell the walls would shake as if they were going to fall in on us. We were always sweating out a direct hit on the house itself, which somehow never did come. But a mortar shell hit the base of the building late in the evening; but caused no harm to any of us there. We had good observation through a hole in the side of the building. It was where we did all of our firing on the enemy. Our artillery and bomber were over all the time, giving the enemy positions trouble, and when the dust and smoke would clear, it was hard to see how any living thing had lived through it all. Our tanks were out there firing direct fire in on most of the enemy targets. At one time, we counted fourteen tanks burning, and most of them were the enemy's. Casualties were numerous that way. Ambulances were on the go all the time, through the shelling and bombing of the enemy. All day long it was a constant bombing and shelling of the enemy's positions and a full day's work with the forward observation party.



My greatest experience in the 160th Field Artillery  
Battalion was on July 10, 1943, when I awoke to find that  
the Battle of Sicily was on. It was my first combat.

s/Sgt. Richard G. Hill

In the dark hours before dawn on July 10th, 1943, I experienced what will probably be my most unforgettable experience. It was the hours before our first taste of combat - - the Sicilian invasion - - and I, as well as all the others, was wondering what lie ahead in the next few fateful hours. On the deck of the ship where I was standing, too excited to sleep all was dark and quiet. Suddenly searchlights from the enemy shores threw their beams back and forth across the water, and immediately tracers from boats in closer to shore opened up toward the searchlights. Soon shells from cruisers and battleships could be seen coming in volleys from out behind us, cutting an eerie path through the skies on their way to beach installations. I shall never forget those hours before dawn.

s/Sgt. James M. Holt

My most exciting experience began the morning after we landed at Salerno.

It was September 11, 1943, a very warm and beautiful morning. We were moving up the road, when all of a sudden we heard machine gun fire to our rear. The enemy had hit HQ and C Artillery had opened fire on A battery. The first three guns made it through Okay, the 4th Section, Kit., ammo. and maintenance sections were cut off. We pulled off the road into a tree line, our mortars were 75 yards from #1 gun. They were firing and we could see them landing (tanks were in our rear and we had one gun turned around in case they attacked us. After a day and (out) night, we found our selves with/ammunition, except for 10 rounds per gun. We were saving for the tanks. Shells were landing fairly close. T.D. had made several attempts to break through but had failed. We were making plans to render the gun useless and try to slip through the lines that night, when help broke through and we saw S & A trucks coming with ammunition and rations. It was quite a relief!

c/ Cpl. Marion K. Hooper

While waiting on the ship, just off the beaches of Sicily (this) proved to be my most interesting experience.

As the assault began in the wee hours of morning, we paced the deck watching and waiting . . everyone had thousands of thoughts racing through their minds. A division new to combat. One wondered about the numerous little things . . checking this and that . . many rumors came back concerning the first waves . . some good . . some bad. It seemed to me that we would never get away from our ship.

Shortly after break of day, enemy planes came in at low level, dropping bombs which fell into the water fairly close to our ship. Yours truly aged considerably during the first (few) minutes of actual combat. A.A. guns barked everywhere, filling the sky with tracers . . men, soldiers and sailors alike scrambled for cover. Anything, just a piece of canvas seemed to help ones nerves.

The day wore on and during the afternoon Yours Truly boarded a landing craft and hit the beach of Sicily with a sigh of relief as we learned definitely that the situation was well in hand.

s/ S.Sgt. J. H. Hudson

S O Battery, 160th F.A., Bn.

For the last sixteen months I have been overseas, and have spent the past thirteen with "C" Battery, 160th F.A. Bn. The one day and night I will never forget is when I arrived at Anzio, Italy. That place was well known by many and I dreaded the trip up there. I left Naples on a boat loaded with gas and oil that I didn't like at all. I landed at Anzio around noon, scared to death, and expecting anything to happen. Well, I got off the boat, and went to Service Battery of the 160th F.A. Bn.

From there I was carried up to the Battery, and got shelled all the way up there. I had never heard an enemy shell before and I could not realize what it was all about, and just how dangerous it really was. When I got to the Battery, I met the officers and the boys, and found them all to be very nice and friendly.

All the boys had to tell me how rough it was there, and I believed every word of it, because I had already seen plenty. I was lucky and had a hole already dug and a good top on it for me to use while in that position. I ate supper and decided to go to bed, because I was tired and sleepy after a busy night, and day of excitement. I crawled in my hole but could not go to sleep because "Jerry" had gotten in a new load of ammo and was really throwing it at us. It got so hot I could not stand it there by myself so I got up and went to another hole



where two of my new friends were. I talked to them awhile and they convinced me that I would be pretty safe if I stayed below the surface of the ground. I did that. I stayed in their hole the rest of the night and slept some. The beachhead was just an impact area for the Germans and it is interesting to know a person can learn so much more and faster by having the experience. This whole war has been interesting, but one is a plenty for any human.

s/Sgt. Leo C. Huffins

Gibsonville, N.C.

A.S.N. 34110867

One of the most thrilling and exciting experiences which I can recall while serving with this unit, the 160th F.A. Bn. occurred at Salerno. It happened shortly after we arrived. The battalion was moving forward to a position some twelve or more kilometers from the beach. In making this move, we could give our infantry the best possible support.

While in convoy moving forward to this new position, the Germans executed a beautiful sneak play which cut our column in half, and dividing the battalion. Able Battery, of which I was a member, and also Charlie Battery continued forward to the reconnoiter positions. The remainder of the battalion returned to other positions. They now could help in breaking the trap in which we now so unluckily found ourselves.

The Germans kept us in this predicament for about thirty-six hours. During this time, Able and Charlie Batteries were under continual artillery and small arms fire. Also during this time we were threatened by tank attacks from front and rear. The 105 howitzers were placed in anti-tank positions and ready to fire direct at a moment's notice. What men that could be spared from duties on the cannons were placed on outposts in front of the cannons manned with rifles, machine guns and bazookas. Toward the end of our stay, ammunition, food and water were

running extremely low. Our supplies, though, had been controlled very well, and no results of disastrous natures occurred from the lack of supplies.

Casualties were suffered, but all in all, not too great considering the precarious and hazardous position which we were in.

This was indeed a thrilling experience and all that were present can be thankful and proud that they were members of a well-trained fighting artillery battalion.

s/Sgt. Walter E. Hunkler

Med. Det. 160th F.A.

One of the most tragic sights I've seen over here was when a couple of Kraut Jets swooped in on a formation of American bombers and shot three of them down before they even had time to know what was going on.

s/Wayne Hutzel

An interesting experience encountered in my being attached to the 160th F.A. Bn. was encountered on or about the night of September 11, 1943. This day, early, the Infantry moved out from the beaches of Salerno toward the mountains. Two batteries of artillery moved out in support of them early in the morning.

"C" Battery had proceeded ahead with "A" following and crossed a few open sports crossing a river with a bridge still onfire, and proceeded on up the road, and about two miles from the river we stopped and heard at the rear of us artillery fire as well as small arms fire.

We were led off into a field along a tree-lined bank behind us, and a small ditch with lumber and tie-piles across it. Since the gun I was on was the last to go in and the first gun on the right we did the registering for the battery. During the day we received news that our rear had been cut off and we were surrounded and without water and food.

Our ammunition was limited but put to good use.

We were instructed to hold out a few rounds for last tank defense. During the day we did a great deal of good shooting, with a lot of damage to enemy guns, as reported, knocking out some 7 of them.



Before nightfall, we who were shorthanded started to dig in on the rear side of the bank for tank defense as three enemy panther divisions were reported surrounding us.

We worked until late, with most of the men exhausted and so leaving a guard, laid down for a short rest. While I was on guard I saw a shadow come across the field and so I halted same and was surprised to see Commanding Officers of the Battalion approaching whom I recognized. He stopped and talked quite some time, telling us the situation as it was.

September 12th. Infantry came and dug in just in front and to the rear of us with mortars sealing up our flanks, doing a lot of shooting. To our right and left there was plenty of shooting going on from a lot of guns outside of the encirclement. Later in the day we received good news which enlightened our worries for another team of the division had broken through with aid of tanks to open route to us, bringing in much needed food and ammunition which we put to a good use inflicting much damage on the enemy. Late that evening we loaded trucks as heavy as we could as the gun crew had returned but had lost gun and truck, plus kitchen. We moved to another position having to go back and around.

This episode I consider one of the many interesting experiences I have had with the 160th F.A. Bn. for it was my first combat days.

s/Cpl. Joseph D. Jamison

ASN 37353395

Home address:           614 North Spruce St.  
Colorado Springs, Colo.

## MY FIRST DAY OF COMBAT

When the 45th left Africa for Sicily, they were fresh from the states and knew hardly anything of what a frightening war was like. I was on the "Shane Fire Control". Our mission was to direct Naval fire for the launching forces. We landed in the third wave, which was only about twenty minutes behind the first wave. The sea was a bit rough that morning, and by the time we reached the beach, all of us looked as if we had taken a bath with our clothes on. We were expecting it to be plenty rough on the beach, but after a day without a shot being fired on me I was "pretty much surprised". I was with the Fire Control party for three days and I will have to say that I enjoyed most of it, and being (as) it was my first day's combat it was a thrilling experience for me.

s/Carroll L. Jessee

Route 1

Cleveland, Virginia

Perhaps the most outstanding and remembered incident to me, in my association with the 160th F. A. Bn., was the dark, unforgettable hours before dawn of D-Day in Sicily, when . . . excited by the unknown I was soon to face . . . I nervously watched the pyro-technical display of tracer-bullets, flares, and search-lights, which wierdly patterned the ebony-black sky.

I shall, as long as I live, remember vividly, in my mind's eye, that picture, and never forget the "butter-flies" skipping around in my stomach.

s/Cpl. Bill E. Johnson

July 10, 1943, was the most interesting day I've experienced since being in the 160th F.A. Bn. That was my first day of combat and sweating her out on that ship before we went in (it) was quite a feeling . . not knowing what lay in store for you when you did get on land, but figuring it was bound to be something ungood. I was quite surprised when I did get ashore and things were not at all as I expected.

s/ Joe Johnson



My most interesting experience was on the ship's platoon when we made the landing in Sicily. The ship U.S.S. Aleyone was heavily loaded with ammo and gasoline as well as all types of motor vehicles. Our duty was to unload the ship as quick as possible starting on D day July 10th. We worked day and night unloading. I worked in the hole with other soldiers and the sailors duty was to operate the winches. The days were hot. The Cooks helped by sending us cold lemonade and other drinks to the men on duty. When the ships crews saw that the ship could not be unloaded by the time other ships around us would be ready to leave the cooks and other members of the ship's company worked in the holes during their off hours from other duty, so they would be able to leave with the convoy in which they were a part.

That was a time when there was no argument and no one had to be asked to do a little more than his share. The sailors wanted to go back in their convoy and I wanted to get my feet on dry land even though it was on the beach of Sicily near Scoglitti.

This was a job well done with the Navy and the Army working together and not as a group thinking their branch of the service was the best.

s/Roy E. Johnson  
Service Battery

My most exciting battle experience occurred during a fire mission near Wingen, when a 105 shell exploded in my arms with only first degree burns inflicted on my leg and forearm. Faith was on my side. Otherwise, I would not be here to tell about it.

S/ PFC Louis Juske

Battery A, 160th F.A.

45th Division

The most interesting and exciting moment in this War (for me) was when we landed in Southern France.

I saw a lot of things before that day, but nothing made me feel the way that did. I knew I was going into my first combat and I had always heard how rough it was, so I was really excited.

Then, on up through Southern France, I saw lots of interesting things and some time's exciting.

Another exciting time was when we crossed the Rhine River. It was nothing like I though it would be.

I have had lots of interesting experiences in this war, but they cannot be put into words, and explained, and I don't guess there is a man ever walked that can.

s/PFC Thomas L. Kee  
Btry. C 160th F.A.

I have been in "C" Battery, 160th F.A., almost 4 years. I have seen quite a bit of excitement. The most exciting thing that I saw happen was after the initial landing at Salerno.

The 160th F.A. made a night move . . . across a river, through a small town. We went into position at day-break, and then all Hell broke loose. We had a tank attack.

We had(already)fired almost all of our ammunition and then to wake up with the Germans all around us . . . they had us surrounded on all sides. That's when everyone got excited! Guys were running here and there.

Col. Larsen, our Bn. C.O. at the time, was a great man. I admire him for his coolness. His work of getting us out okay. Without his leadership, it is possible that most of the Bn. might have been captured.

We lost our C.O. in this trap, which everyone knew as a just man. He was a swell C.O. in his work with this battery.

With the help of our Great Master, and the leadership of superior officers, we covered a lot of territory and have made the name of the 45th Division go down in history.

I'm glad to say that I have enjoyed being in the 45th Division, for the time I have been in the U. S. Army, it has made history which will never be forgotten by the men of this Division or by the families of these men. (I'm glad) that at some time (I) had a part in this outfit.

c/Cpl. Emory C. Keith  
#34140934



July 10, 1943

When the 45th Infantry Division made the landing on Sicily, was the most exciting moment since we have been overseas. It was the next day, on July 11, that the Infantry was closing in on the Commiso Air Port, when a sniper took a shot at the load of markers which I was going forward with, to mark the route for the 160th Field Artillery Battalion to move forward.

We dismounted, and took cover. I fired a round or two from my rifle. An infantry boy got the sniper, then we turned back, placed our markers, and the Battalion moved forward.

S/Sgt. Cletus D. Kelley

Route One

Roff, Oklahoma

## MY MOST INTERESTING COMBAT EXPERIENCE

My most interesting combat experience occurred during a barrage of enemy 105's atop a high ridge in Italy. From a slit trench I listened to the scream of shell after shell. Some near, some at a distance.

Then I heard one coming that I knew was mine. The thoughts that passed through my mind . . like lightening . . between the time I first heard this one and its impact . . I will never forget. During these few seconds my entire life passed in review. And yet, I had time to pray as never before.

The period during which I listened to shells scream was the longest in my experience. The sound of its approach grew progressively louder until it hit with an impact that shook the ground, and covered me with dirt and rock.

I waited an eternity for it to explode. Finally, I raised my head and looked. There it was. A dud. Not three feet from my face.

s/PFC John B. Kenshick

Waynesboro, Georgia

Our artillery impressed me most at Anzio. Our OP was only about 150 yards from 88 corner. Our target was a small grove of trees about six hundred yards to the left of a house that the Germans were using for a hospital Jerry had been firing from the position and we picked up the flashes of his artillery pieces in the afternoon. With only three adjusting rounds the area was ready for bracket firing. Our battalion must have fired close to 100 rounds in this area, starting several fires and to the best of my knowledge silenced the Jerry artillery in this area for all time.

s/Myron C. Keyer

2128 Pershing Blvd.

Dayton, Ohio

Battery "A", 160th F.A. Bn.

The day Corporal Frank Mayans came into "A" Battery as a replacement was perhaps the most exciting time for me in the 160th.

We were at Anzio and Frank came strolling into the rear echelon and presented himself. He inquired about Anzio, etc. He had been at the Cassino front.

We informed him that there was quite a lot of shell fire on the roads we had to travel to and from "A" Battery. Immediately, he began worrying about a steel helmet, which he didn't have. I couldn't give him one because we didn't have any on hand at the time.

However, we told him not to worry, we probably wouldn't encounter any shell fire in the afternoon. The time came for us to make our run to the Battery. Everything was running smoothly, with Frank sitting on top of the rations, when all at once shells began hitting all around us. We finally had to leave the truck and try to find some cover. All during this episode, Frank was still worrying about a helmet, my mind was far from his helmet. I had enough trouble of my own.

The shelling stopped and we proceeded on to the Battery. We passed through Headquarters Battery. Major Jones was standing along the road and Frank made a plea to him for a helmet. We finally fixed Frank up with a helmet, but couldn't arrange a trip back to Cassino which he suggested very earnestly.

s/Sgt. T. H. Kopp

Battery A, 160th F.A.

92 Center Avenue

Lynbrook, L.I., N.Y.



Preparing for and making a beachhead is the most interesting and thrilling experience during my past few years with the 160th F.A. Battalion.

On the morning of July 10, 1943, our first such experience occurred. A cool, damp morning and the sea was rough and full of play. All of us were very much excited, not knowing what was ahead of us . . . thinking of a great many things and also our past training and what we had learned about such warfare. We were very much alert and a bit scared and on the deck of our Transport (ship) watching the large Battleships and Destroyers, etc., shell the shore installations .

A very beautiful sight, but at that time to us it meant something much different than ever before. At daylight the Air Corps had sent their help which was working farther inland on communication lines, etc. , and such targets as those, that the Naval guns could not reach.

We could see things were starting to happen. The large Transports were unloading troops and equipment and moving them to shore by the smaller boats. L.C.V. L.C.P., etc. Then, of course, all were waiting for the first reports from the shore on how things were going. Soon came the answer. All was going great and soon we were in there supporting the Infantry. Yes, giving and receiving.

By nightfall, the Beachhead had been made and very substantial. Before too long, Sicily had fallen to the Allies. A short time for preparing, then came the invasion of Italy. (Salerno) The Italians had surrendered but Jerry was waiting for us at Salerno. A very rough and tough battle . . very much different than Sicily, but our lessons in Sicily helped a lot. For six days and nights we sweated the Jerries pushing us into the sea, but finally they gave and so it was another battle won!

Then came Anzio. A very quiet landing was made, but after a few days Jerry tightened his ring and had us between him and the sea, which wasn't far between.

After 5 months of Air and Land Forces pounding them, they gave (in) once more. Then came the Fall of Rome. Then Southern France which was very much a surprise to us all. Our invasion was fairly easy . . had very few casualties. Soon Jerry became disorganized and mile after mile we swept through France . . then Germany, across rivers . . our last gun position near Munich, and here we are as yet . . and the war ended.

The 160th F.A. Bn. to my estimation is one of the best, and I am proud of being in it. Luck was with us all through our invasions etc. from Sicily on through. We thank God for such and His guiding and protecting Us from our enemies at all times.

The most exciting moment I had while in combat with the 45th Infantry Division took place at dusk on July 10th, 1943, at the approach of Scogletti, Sicily. This being my entry into what later proved a successful career against the Nazi demon . . the skip bombing of German messerschmidt's and the terrific ack ack barrage sent up against the enemy gave me the greatest scare of my entire five hundred days in combat with a division I have been glad to be associated with.

s/Myer M.Kreisler 33136100

229 Hickory St.

Scranton, Pennsylvania

## MY MOST INTERESTING EXPERIENCE

Salerno, September 10, 1943: We hit the beach and that afternoon we shot up an enemy motor park. Later we received orders to move up under the cover of darkness. Morning found us in position to fire, I went out in front of the guns to watch the observer direct the fire from our guns at enemy troops, tanks, guns and armed cars. But somehow, the enemy saw me and started shooting and kept me pinned down for six hours.

Later, crawling back to safety and to my battery, I learned of the death of our Battery Commander, and that our supply lines were cut off by the enemy and the guns were down to their last few shells; and, that the enemy tanks were coming at us from our rear.

Then I and all of us knew it was time to man our small arms for the real battle. After 48 hours of sweating it out along came the ammo trucks from the rear, our supply line was open again. Then we received orders while under enemy shell fire to maneuver our guns into a more secure position, "Coffin Corner". There the enemy started to feel the weight of our artillery.

s/Pvt. A Krust #32197493

"C" Battery 160 F.A. Bn.



There have been many exciting moments during the time that I have been overseas. The experience I am going to write about here is the one that comes to my mind first whenever I start reminiscing.

At the time this exciting incident happened to me I was helping haul water to the battalion. To make a clearer picture of the happenings I should like to give you a few lines as to our locations at that time. The battalion was located east of Wingen; the water point we used was located in Ingweler, and there was a small town of Wimeneau we had to pass through to get to our battalion. Our service battery was located at Hattmat.

The time of this happening was approximately the 20th of January, 1944. We were loaded with water and on our way to the battalion. About a mile from Wimeneau Jerry started slinging 88's in our direction. There was a convoy of half-tracks going in the opposite direction. The first shell hit to the right of the road and about 200 yards short. What really made it something to sweat out was that each shell came closer to the road. At this particular point there was no cover to speak of and the only thing to do was keep going and hope that none would hit the truck. We could



tell their target was the strip of road where we had to go past. This strip of road was slightly upgrade and with the heavy load of water we couldn't go fast. We sweated it out through and got on into town where we had some protection behind the buildings. Then we breathed easy again.

About an hour later we had to return over this same road, but this time things had quieted down. Jerry had succeeded in landing about a half a dozen shells directly on the road where we had passed previously. They hit the road I know as there were no marks when we passed earlier. All I can say is that it was my lucky day.

s/PFC William A. Kumpe  
38023529  
Sv. 160th F.A. Bn.

Anzio Beachhead. Italy. 12 May 1944.

Today on the beachhead was a little more of an outstanding one.

This morning early somewhere around 0830 our guns on the beachhead had opened up and set down a very heavy concentration of artillery fire on the German stronghold positions. This barrage had lasted for about half an hour. A short time later enemy artillery fire started to hit in our Battalion area. Our well dug-in positions and foxholes resulted in no damage done, at the time.

The situation for the next few hours seemed to have been very quiet; smoke screen had blocked out all enemy observation on our rear areas and the Anzio harbor installations throughout the day. Early afternoon, German artillery had again opened up and shelled our positions, then a call came in to our battalion aid station, that a Sgt. of "B" Battery was wounded by enemy shell fire. In a hurry Cpl. Barton and I took off with the ambulance down the road to Baker Battery, which was still under enemy artillery fire, and observations. We made our way down to the wounded Sgt. of a gun section . . . had treated his severe wound in the upper part of his arm . .

just then another shell hit in by the gun, and I was hit in the right side by a piece of shell fragment. As it was nothing serious we loaded up the Sgt. in our ambulance for a trip back to the CP station near the beach. During the night another big artillery duel broke out. Enemy shells had hit in our position again. Resulted in no damage done, and enemy planes were over the beachhead area in strength on their regular bombing mission.

Enter military service June 20, 1941 at Camp Grant, Illinois. Hometown: Oak Park, Ill.

s/Cpl. Joe H. LaBello  
160th F.A. Bn.

It's difficult to define a "most interesting experience" in combat. I've found that combat does one of three things: thrills you; scares you; or bores you to death.

In line with the above statement, the most thrilling experience in my combat career came at Meximieux, France, Sept. 1, 1944. My thrill came not from my own experiences, which were really common place, but from a terrific pride in the way this battery operated under extreme pressure showing that training discipline and morale were of the highest standards.

On that day remnants of the German 11th Panzer Division attempted to break out through a road not controlled by the 179th Infantry. A terrific, small scale battle broke out, involving tanks, tank destroyers, artillery and infantry. This battery was cut off and tanks came within two hundred yards of the battalion C.P. Despite this pressure, however, all installations functioned normally. One radio truck managed to get through to the rear and vital information was relayed through it to higher headquarters. Although the C.P. was cut off and wire was impossible, radio communication was maintained and effective fire delivered on tanks and self-propelled guns. The battery established outpost defenses and provided for its own security.

Lt. Albert C. Thomas, Assistant Command Officer earned the Silver Star medal by his heroic rescue of three men wounded by direct tank fire.

Lt. Eddie Watson, the motor officer, who was killed that day received the Silver Star for his work as Forward Observer after volunteering and forming his own party. One other man in the party (T-5 Arnold Eldridge) was wounded.

For me that day at Meximieux was one of supervision, but it seemed that supervision was not necessary. Everyone was willing to do any job required. When the chips were down the unit was at its best.

That was my biggest thrill in combat.

s/Capt. Harry C. Lane

0-451690

2265 S. St. Louis Ave.

Tulsa, Okla.



We had crossed the Atlantic and had landed or arrived at Oran, in North Africa, and everything was fine. We even made a practice amphibious landing near Oran and had no trouble at all but it was July 6th, 1943, now and we loaded back on our ship, the Dorthea L. Dix, to make ready for the real thing, an amphibious invasion of Sicily. Again everything went smooth until July 9th. This was the day before we were to land and even the Navy said they had never seen the Mediterranean as rough. Our ship was taking them over the bow, and we knew it would be suicide to land in the small landing craft. It was nine o'clock at night now and the sea was still terribly rough, and we were nearing our destination. One could see the big navy guns firing and red tracers from the anti-aircraft guns. It was a beautiful sight, just like the 4th of July back home. However, the sea was just as rough as ever to do our job and we must make that amphibious landing so I prayed as I've never done before and at 12 o'clock midnight the sea began to quiet down. It was like a miracle and in a few hours the first small boats were lowered from the side of our ship and were on their way for Sicily. I went in at daylight and had no trouble at all. It was wonderful to be on land again even if it was Sicily. That was where the fighting began for us and today we are near Munich, Germany, and the war is over!

My most interesting experience was the landing made invading Sicily on July 10, 1943. At that time, we were inexperienced as far as combat was concerned. Everyone on board ship was nervous. While H hour approached, many of the boys passed the time away playing cards or reading books. The big guns of the Navy opened up and threw salvo after salvo against the beach installations. It was some sight to see, and every soldier on board ship knew that he now was playing a great part in freeing the world of Nazi domination. In not knowing what to expect made this landing the most interesting experience I have ever had.

s/PFC Jack Lapides

#365 11670

Battery A, 160th F.A.

## A COMBAT EXPERIENCE

German 80 mm mortar shells were whistling into the little valley village of Althorn at the rate of approximately 20 rounds an hour. Our wire communications went out about 1900 hours on that January 28, 1945. Although my wire men reestablished communications, the constant mortar barrages which had been coming in for several days from 1900 to 0200 hours knocked it to pieces again.

After sweating out that night the next morning I went up to take a look from our infantry's position which my battalion the 160th Field Artillery, of 105's was supporting. Our infantry line was set up along the forward slope along a large long mountain facing Jerries on the opposite mountain several hundred yards away. I noticed a large rambling house tucked away up the valley about 1000 yards from our infantry. German personnel could be seen occasionally moving around outside the house. Suspecting this to be the German mortar position I called for artillery fire with our radio and soon was hammering the house and area. Two more units were registered on this house . . then, a distant rumbling, like a barrel coming through the air whined over our heads into Althorn. Soon Jerries

medium artillery was coming around and over us into Althorn. We fired on the enemy mortar position and Jerry fired his artillery at us.

After completing our firing of some 1 1/2 hours duration and Jerry had ceased his harassing around 1745 hours; we worked out way back to Althorn and found the village almost 1/3 wrecked by the shelling. Although our infantry had personnel in the village only one casualty resulted.

We were no longer troubled with Jerry's mortars except for occasional rounds from other positions which were later dealt with.

s/1st Lt. Woodrow W. Leaf  
Battery C, 160th F.A. Bn.  
Forward Observer

My most exciting experience was D-Day at the Sicily invasion. This was something new to me and to all men. Something you can't explain in words, just how you felt about the whole deal. I can say for damn sure it was the most exciting thing in my life.

s/T/4 William A. Leoptrol



The most interesting experience that I have had since serving with Battery "A" 160th Field Artillery Battalion was on the Anzio Beachhead.

After sweating out four continuous months of shelling by German artillery during the daytime, and by shuttle bombing of personal bombs at night; and living in dugouts like moles . . . the day finally came that all allied soldiers on the beachhead had been waiting for, that day around the 22nd of May, 1944, we broke the German ring of steel around the small perimeter which held the allied soldiers and started the march on Rome. To me and to thousands of others, who fought there, that day will remain with us as one of the greatest events of this war.

s/Carroll T. Little

P.O. Box 1278

Wewoka, Oklahoma

May 18, 1945.

My most exciting moment in combat was at St. Maxine France. Tanks had infiltrated past the Infantry, and had our battery covered from the front, while to our rear was a river with no possible escape route across it.

All available artillery was pounding away at these tanks with some effect, but some continued to advance.

The critical point came when the Long Toms near our position had to cease firing, because they were down to minimum elevation on flat terrain.

s/William D. Lively

HQ 160th F.A.

During my days of combat, my most interesting experience happened while our battalion was near the tiny village of Viminie. At that time, I was assistant driver of the ambulance and we got a hurry call for the ambulance from "Baker" Battery. It was nearly time for supper and fast approaching darkness. Boston (the ambulance driver) and myself started out for the battery not knowing what to expect. When we got to the battery, Gall, the aid man was there and gave us the lowdown. It happened that two of the men ran into a mine field. One of the boys was a medic (Jones) and the other was from a gun section (Bailey). The third man in the part escaped injury and he directed us back to where the men stepped on the mine. He was somewhat bewildered from the shock of the mine explosion and had a time directing the rescue party back. It was in a dense wooded area, honey-combed with old logging roads. We came upon many road blocks being as careful as possible to be alert for mines. We saw many dead Germans lying on the road and in the brush, and evidence (blood soaked bandages and clothing ) of where our boys exploded mines. We walked for what seemed many miles (it was a few, anyway) along with the worry of stepping on a mine . . darkness was creeping upon us. Well, we finally got to the place and then had to pick our way through the mines. We could not do anything for Jones. He was beyond any medical aid. We got Bailey, who was mortally wounded, on a litter and started out. We only took a few steps when one of the litter bearers stepped on a mine.

The good Lord was with us, because only the detonator exploded. I believe I aged ten years from that moment . . . waited for the mine to jump out of the earth and explode. We had to carry the wounded man about two miles and from the scare we got, no one had very much energy left. I sure will be happy when I can get back in the states and walk on good safe ground, where people are civilized.

I guess this could be termed a thrilling (experience). But I don't want anymore of this nature.

s/Cpl. William R. Long

Med. Det. 160th F.A., Bn.

Being left in a fox-hole by yourself is one of the worst things I know of, especially during a shelling. This brought about one of my worst experiences.

They were throwing a big one at us at Anzio, and my roommate and I were sweating it out together when he got the idea that he didn't like this particular hole, so off he goes and leaves me by myself. I'd have done likewise only I believe that being in a fox-hole by yourself is better than being out of it.

s/Fred Lowman



## SICILY LANDING

July 10, 1943

When we were on our way into the beaches, we were strafed and bombed by three F.W.'s.

One of them strafed the deck and the other two laid eggs...just off of the right rear and left front.

The ships crew tried to run us below deck, but no one would go below, for this was better than a ringside seat at the County Fair.

s/Sgt. Foster F. Magness

A.S.N. 34083452

(Route 2

Decatur, Georgia)

The most thrilling experience I ever had was when I went on a bombing mission with an A-20 Gp. near Rome. The flak was pretty thick, but I made it back okay. It was my first ride in an airplane.

s/Sgt. Louis Marlow

During the hectic campaign in Southern France, an established line was a rarity. Task Forces and Road Blocks were our main duties. I, an officer, and two other men, comprised the F.O. party that was to provide artillery fire for one such road block in late August. We set out from the company C.P. to find an Observation Post. The best vantage point seemed to be from the high ground near the town of St. Michel which was situated two miles in from the infantry machine gun outpost. Most Germans had retreated from the area so we decided to chance it. Slowly we drove toward the town. As we drove in to the edge, we were set upon by hundreds of men, women and children, carrying bottles of wine, flowers, fruit, flags . . anything they thought "Le Americaines" would like. We were the first Allied Soldiers in the town. They gave us a joyous welcome. We explained our duty there and promised to be back in town as soon as darkness prevented further observation.

After dusk, we returned to town, to find a sumptuous feast had been prepared for us at the only hotel. War-rationed housewives had each contributed some thing. Roast beef, omelettes, soup, french fried potatoes, cheese, apple pie and cases of Champagne. That night there was a gay dance in the streets, and inter-allied relations were tremendously improved.

About midnight, American tanks came through town. The war had passed us, but for a while at least this portion of France had been ours. "C'est La Guerre".

It would be indeed difficult to decide what was my most interesting experience in these past campaigns, as I have had so very many, but perhaps a little story of the last battle fought by the 179th Infantry, wherein I participated, would serve as example of one of many interesting times. It was on April 29 that our party (forward observation) moved up to relieve Sgt. Parent. At the moment of relief, everyone conducted themselves in the manner as to show clearly that the war was about over, and anything more would be merely a pleasure trip . . . strictly so.

Our route took us directly down the "Autobahn", and so off we went, with the reconnaissance element, four armored cars, four light tanks and a few peeps. We were halted about a thousand yards outside of GARCHING by direct fire from three eighty-eight guns, standing before the town. Three recon cars and four peeps were knocked out just like that, BAM. BAM. BAM. We were lucky. Our driver got our peep out to safety...brave man indeed. Then we were stuck there twelve men with one BAR and four carbines, no communication. The tanks took off, left us to fare for ourselves, as did the remaining recon personnel. The artillery and infantry stayed as befits true soldiers.



Presently, sixty SS Infantry marched out from the town, up to about a hundred yards from us, stopped and walked over and got in holes. Our hearts were in our throats. Finally, a Lieutenant of the Infantry and I went back. He got the rifle company, I got the radio (arty) brought forward, we commenced firing, smothered the German line and the area wherefrom came the antitank fire with battalion and several battalion concentrations. The activity immediately ceased. We moved up under a culvert, all of us. The enemy opened up now with heavy volumes of rifle fire from all quarters. I fired on troops, the town, a house. I had a duel with the men in the house. I would get "on the way" poke my head up to observe, and CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, zing, zing, zing etc. would come the rifle bullets from front and back. They were hitting quite close. Enemy in and in front of town opened up on our position with rifle fire then, and so we answered them, silencing them. Enemy tanks were sighted, reported in town, so we tore down the town. Then another company got fifteen men in one house, on the extreme edge, finally. Tanks with them fled when they heard of Jerry tanks in town. I fired three missions at one time, and several times fired two missions. None of the batteries were registered, and all batteries were firing at the same time, initial rounds hit two



thousand yards apart, firing at identical coordinates, also five other units, including cannon, and mortars were also adjusting in same area at same time. But all came out well.

Soon, Capt. Crain, Battalion S-2 came along. He's an old FO man and delights in firing artillery, so he conducted several missions on his own. Shortly after his arrival the Jerries threw an air and percussion burst barrage of 300 rounds on us in about a minute's time. This was at same time that 27 men, a platoon, started across the open field toward the town, firing rifles as they went. Three came back, crawling, later, and greatly shaken up. The Jerries let loose on them with everything. We had our culvert and that helped. One round hit the culvert right over our heads. Accurate rifle fire and M!G! . . firing on our infantry hurt them also. The Jerry barrage was probably fired by several battalions of 88 and heavier anti-aircraft guns. We were the target, and we were in the center of impact. This was the second time Jerry got close. At the beginning of encounter in recon stage, the Jerry threw a direct fire round about five feet from me, as I was in a ditch by the side of the road at that time, and this hit on the road near. Capt. Crain decided the town needed another TOT, so another

was fired. The several buildings already burning turned into twice as many on fire. Capt. Crain then returned to the Battalion.

I called for time fire on enemy troops in open foxholes, but unfortunately batteries were out of time range. Time would have been excellent, percussion would have to make direct hit on foxhole, but harassing, but definitely! Then a Jerry M!G opened up on our ditch where the remainder of the company, about forty men, were (including us).

We located her, and put the bee to her, zone fire.

We didn't hear a peep out of her anymore. She had thrown accurate fire for about fifteen minutes just a few inches above the ditch to keep us pinned down, but who is a machine gun to argue with 105 MM at uff? Remainder of company was supposed to make assault, but then, called off. We were all sweating out another barrage. It came, but not so heavy as the first barrage, fortunately. One of our shells from my previous fire had blown down a shed behind which an 88 MM anti-aircraft gun revealed itself. There it was, big grey familiar piece of hated machinery. All units plastered the area, including the mortars. We got within I would say five or six feet of it with 155 MM shells and did plenty of damage, but no direct hits. In fact, no one, not even

the mortars, got a direct hit, but all hit very close. The gun was definitely put out of action.

Next morning, the Jerries were gone. They had departed during the night, after heavy harassing and sniper fire from all quarters. They shot a bullet right under the culvert, wounded a fellow right beside me. We got 7 Jerry PW's, all SS men, with camouflage suits. All wore the SS insignia. They informed us that there were 180 men in front of the town, more in, several 88 anti-aircraft guns firing as anti-tank guns, and tanks. Plenty of stuff. We got several, which I observed as I walked into the town. One concentration with 155 MM on the red hall highway was especially good. That hit right on a concentration of them.

People in town informed me the SS there were in the cellars shaking like a reed in a thunderstorm, scared to death by the Artillery. That pleased me no end. I saw that there had been 3 88 ack ack guns in position before the town, one withdrawn, two destroyed, probably by demolition, I think. Hits all around them . . and they had to shut up after their initial rounds for fear of being observed. That they were magnificently dug in and camouflaged, best I ever saw. So went the SS last stand, same line as along the canal to the barracks, and to Dachau. But we did our share. That was the first, and a successful, battle. We made them quit, thank God! s/Sgt. John W. McCan



My most exciting experience was the day the Division landed on the beaches of Sicily. At Scoglity on the day of July 10th of forty three. The thing that made it most exciting to me was the thing that I had never experienced before "Combat". As we were nearing the beaches of Sicily just before "H" hour I was standing on the deck of the ship. The Germans turned on their search lights and seemed to pick up every ship in the convoy. We all wondered what was coming next. It wasn't too long before we found out as the first divebombers came in for the attack.

The Navy had shot out the searchlights and then had to go below the decks and didn't know much of what was going on until the next morning. By the next morning the sea was calm and gentle as could be. It hadn't got daylight hardly, before the enemy planes came in in force. All that day they came. I had to stay on the boat the most of that day because there wasn't room for everyone to land at once, so we had to wait our turn. All the time they were bombing, strafing the ships and shore. We were all wondering if they were going to hit our ship next. Finally, we got to the shore and hadn't went fifty yards before an enemy plane came in strafing and dropped a bomb about fifty

feet off to our left. That probably would have been our fatal day, if it hadn't been for the deep sand on the beach. We were held up until about ten o'clock that night until we could get off the beach. So we sweated them out. When we finally got to our battery we sure felt a lot better.

s/Cpl. Auti McCullar 20832057

Route One

Ada, Oklahoma



My most interesting experience was when we landed on the beaches of Southern France, the 15th of Aug., 1944. I landed about 1800. Operation was going fine. Our objective was taken in due time and we moved up through France.

Things began to look better. We were moving quite a few miles a day. It sure was interesting to move into a town and see the way the French people welcomed the American soldiers. The streets were always lined for blocks, two and three deep. They would pitch flowers at the convoy and if it stopped a minute or two, they would give the boys wine, apples and things they had. I think that was the most interesting experience in combat fighting up through France.

s/Sgt. James R. McDonald

During the time I've been assigned to Battery "B", 160th Field Artillery Battalion, I've had many pleasant experiences. In the states, we traveled through many different states, all of which had some place of interest.

While in Texas, I went to Carlsbad Caverns, then from Texas to Massachusetts, via Chicago, Illinois. While in Massachusetts, I saw such as Bunker Hill and the Army/Navy Football Game.

Overseas, I've seen such places at Mt. Vesuvius, Naples, Rome, the Riviera, the Alps, mountains in France, Nuremburg and Munich in Germany. These were all very interesting and I am glad that I've seen them.

But with all of that said and done, nothing compares with the compliments received from other Divisions, Corps, Armies etc., including commendations for being a good outfit. I'm more than glad to be just a small part of such an organization.

s/Cpl. Hoyt W. McDaniel

The most interesting and exciting experience that I have encountered overseas with the 160th F. A. Bn. occurred shortly after we landed at Salerno Beachhead in Italy.

We rolled into a gun position around 5:00 o'clock in the morning of September 11, 1943, with plenty of Jerries on three sides of us, so we had plenty of targets. We fired up most of our ammunition that day and night . . . knocking out several tanks and armored cars, also some personnel . . . causing Jerry plenty of trouble and headaches.

The next morning when supplies and ammunition tried to get through to us they found that we were now cut off from the rear. There we sat in the trap, with only 33 rounds of ammo left for our 105s, expecting any minute for Jerry to walk in and take us with no trouble.

We sweated it out for two days and nights, when finally, a tank column broke through to us, opening our supply lines; also a way for us to withdraw to a better position from which we fired plenty of ammo in the next four days.

We were, in my opinion, one of the main factors in saving the Salerno Beachhead, and giving our troops a place to land and advance successfully on through Italy.

s/T-4 E. F. McDowell  
Btry. C, 160th F. A. Bn.  
45th Division

It was the first day in combat. We were in Italy.

It was about November 1, 1943. I was detailed to cook supper.

I was cooking potatoes when I heard some airplanes. Not thinking, I kept right on working. Pretty soon one zipped by me. I looked around and there wasn't anybody to be seen.

About that time, one zipped by again, and I saw this one!

It had a big black cross on it. It dropped a gas tank and everybody thought it was a bomb. The fellows were running in every direction. Then I started to run. I don't know what happened after that, for I didn't wait to see.

s/PFC Clair V. McIntyre

During my assignment with the 160th F.A. Bn. there has been several occasions (where) trivial hardships were encountered by my (along with) outstanding experiences (and they) all coincide. Crossing the Rhine was the step to more definite certainty of complete defeat of Germany.

Entering Nuremburg, crossing the Danube and (entering) Munich, all marked the way for historical events. I think my outstanding experience was the move with the 160th F.A. Bn.

When we moved into the outskirts of Munich the battery was on the flank, waiting for fire directions for a fire mission when several of the men observing activities on our left flank noticed the enemy convoys and troops on a road about 1,000 yards from our position. Then we turned our guns on them and fired on them. We could observe our own fire. The troops were moving with confusion and uncertainty. The enemy didn't have any idea of our next move, or where we would strike from next. Here, at this time, was the complete episode of our long continuous combat activities coming to a close. The long march was being completed with an efficient and successful conclusion. Therefore, I believe the most historical and probably the perfect ending was here, after the fall of Munich, not just my rendition;



but participating in the final stroke was an adventure for all  
in the 160th F.A. Bn.

Machine gun fire, snipers, incoming artillery and straffing  
from enemy planes are routine expectations of combat, but the  
completion of an objective such as Munich is quite an accom-  
plishment.

s/1st Sgt. J.N. McMurry

and

s/S/Sgt. Thomas Bona.

I hadn't been in the Battery very long when I was told that I was to go out on forward observation. That was alright with me, for I didn't know what it was all about. But it didn't take long to find out, after I was up there a few hours.

I was on S/Sgt. Short's party, and we were with Company "F" of the 179th Infantry. The first night everything went along okay . . until the infantry company told us to move out on the other side of the slope, and when daybreak came so did the Jerries artillery, and everything else they had.

I stayed in my foxhole for 36 hours without getting out once for anything. If anyone got out, it would bring artillery fire from everywhere in the German lines, so I didn't move for two days.

When Company "F" went back for a rest, I sure was glad of that, because we went back with them, and I was sure glad to get back off of that hill, which the infantry called "Testicle Ridge".

s/PFC Harvey S. Meadows

My most interesting experience was late one evening while working with a F.O. party. We were nearing a small town with C Company which the enemy was trying to defend with two 88 mm. guns, one flakwagon and about fifty (maybe more) men.

One of our T.D.'s spotted one of the 88 mm. and knocked it out with two shots, but they never did spot the other one. We called for artillery fire and within a few minutes the town was on fire and the enemy had withdrawn and C Company moved in and took about twenty five prisoners.

s/Sgt. Bob Meirs

Following our infantry company during our recent attack across the Danube River was one of my most interesting experiences as a Forward Observer.

Two companies were to make the initial crossing. We had observed enemy movement across the river all day long. We expected to meet hard resistance on our crossing.

The first assault boats got underway and made it across without being fired upon. Our party landed six minutes after the first wave. We moved along the bank of the river, and slowly advanced to the town. We came across a German prisoner who could speak English very well. He said that he didn't want to fight and if we would leave him go back he would bring back more of his comrades.

We granted his wish and sure enough he came back with thirty-five of his supermen. They had well dug in positions and were waiting for us to cross. The reason they didn't fire on us was that they were tired of fighting and wanted to go home.

s/ Cpl. Dennis Mello

My most interesting experience happened the very first day of combat . . . the Sicilian landing we made.

I was to carry three mortar shells ashore from the landing craft. When I stepped off the ramp, I was waist deep in water. Just then, a 2 or 3 foot wave gave me a push and I tried to keep the ammunition, or shells, above water but they went to the bottom, along with my helmet and rifle.

When I got to shore, I looked a lot like a scared rabbit in the water. Anyway someone did have an extra rifle and that was a relief, for I thought that the main thing in combat was that rifle.

s/Sgt. Alvin Messer



The most exciting experience I had since I was in combat was the last day Munich fell.

I was on a F.O. party. We started to go in a small village, but we had to go through an open field. When I saw the tanks spreading out, and started firing, and the Jerries sending incoming mail, I thought they had us.

Four of us were riding in a Jeep. We zigzagged across that field, and I couldn't see how those Jerries missed us. We lost two or three tanks.

When we got settled in that village, two rounds went through the building, and missed the peep by a couple of feet. That is about the most exciting thing I saw.

s/PFC John H. Michetech

Like most boys that went through the E.T.O., I've had many exciting moments, but I do think my most exciting one was while at Anzio. We had been there for sometime. I was keeping busy delivering ammunition to the batteries.

The enemy had been shelling the dumps most of the time. This time, I had just pulled in to load up. Sgt. Bassett was with me, plus the Italians who helped to load. We were almost loaded when in comes some 88's and 149's and hit about 50 to 100 yds. from us. We had no holes, so we just laid on the ground.

After about 10 rounds, they ceased firing. So, back to work we went. Only faster . . hoping to get done and out before anymore came. But soon in came some more, in almost the same place. After that was over we got the truck completely loaded, and started out as fast as we could go. For we had to go by where these had hit on our way out.

We were almost out of the dump when in they came. I looked back, and all I could see was smoke and fire. They had set it on fire. I had to go back the long way 'round. I'm sure no one ever was so glad to get away from a place as I was from there.

The most interesting time I have had overseas was the first night of Sicily when the airplanes started to come over and the sky was full of ack-ack. I was then on my truck which had a machine gun, and after several months of training on it, I was too excited to even as much as know how to pull the trigger on it.

s/Cpl. Jack Moyes

Serv. Btry. 160th F.A.

I believe my most interesting experience to be my work as a TQM in preparing for the invasion of Sicily. The very nature of this work was interesting, but the tension and doubt which built up as our plans progressed . . the actual loading and relief when it became apparent that our plans would work, and the satisfaction it gave to watch the unloading proceed so smoothly and according to plan for the Sicilian operation, all combined to make this my most interesting experience.

s/ Curtis D. Nash  
WOJG, AUS

Service Battery  
160th F.A. Bn.

20 May

The most interesting (or better . . . amusing) experience that I recall happened in the Anzio Beachhead. There were some peasants living in the same area, and to all outward appearances they were friendly. However, when some of the boys started to take some logs from a pile in the yard, to cover their holes, we ran into trouble.

The old lady started to cry and carry on at a great rate. We couldn't figure out why she was so angry, but we left the logs alone, and after that our relations with the peasants were fairly cordial.

From time to time we got a bottle of vino from the old man but finally his supply ran out, so he told us, and we had to go elsewhere. Shortly after this, our peasant friends were notified that they were to be evacuated and that was when we found out why the old lady was so worried about the pile of logs, beneath the ground was a barrel of vino which the peasants had been hoarding all this time. We were so happy at discovering this cache that we didn't hold any ill will against the peasant for his deception.

There were shell holes and bomb craters all over the area but that barrel of vino came through unscathed and certainly boosted our morale at a critical time.

s/Pvt. Philip Norris,  
HQ Btry. 160th F. A. Bn.



I joined Battery "C", 160th Field Artillery on January 8th, 1942, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Of course, I was fresh from the Training Center, and had never even been on an overnight problem.

The Battery went on an overnight problem the 10th, to fire for Officers School, and I believe I came as near freezing that night as I ever have. Of course, the orders were "No fires" and I thought I had surely joined the worst outfit I could have got in. But, as the time went by and I got to know the fellows, I was really glad that I was sent to the 45th Division. It seemed that the fellows were all one happy family, and were always ready to help each other out.

When the time finally came for us to go into combat, everyone really seemed anxious, rather than scared or disappointed. When we left the ship and headed for the shores of Sicily, it seemed like another dry run until we got almost to the beach and a half track hit a mine. I thought sure we were being shelled. Then I woke up to the fact that I was a little nervous.

After Sicily came Salerno. That I guess was the most uncomfortable position that I've ever been in and I must say I was more scared that we had seen our last of the good old U. S. A. than any other time.

## MY MOST EXCITING MOMENT OVERSEAS

The most exciting thing that happened to me is now a most funny story. At the time, I could see nothing funny about it.

It took place the first night on the line after the rest area at the last part of October, 1943. It, I might add was my first time on the line.

I was placed on outpost guard. My partner was a very excitable fellow, full of illusions. A guard. My partner insisted on telling me what might happen. For three hours he told me longwinded tales of combat. I figured at least one fire fight per night and got one more gray hair for every minute on guard. Dawn took longer coming up that morning than the stock market. I was a very happy boy when I went to wake up the cooks. It was not until the next day I found out that my partner was famous for his tall stories. After that I enjoyed going on guard with him. He had a keen sense of humor. A large number of men were very sorry to see him leave when a new TO went into effect because not many could make dull days go as fast as he could.

s/PFC William G. O'Conner  
12190778 Battery "A"

Everything that I had ever done that was wrong was brought to mind. I'm sure that only by the Lord's will were we able to get out of the trap without losing more men than we did. And that was my worst experience of the War.

s/T-4 Wilbur H. Ooby

The most exciting thing that happened to me is the night that I went up to the 171 gun battery and stayed all night with my brother. We hadn't got to bed until they started to raiding the place and they dropped shells all around the area that lasted until about 10:30 p.m.

We finally got to sleep, then they came back about 4:00 a.m. and woke us again, and that lasted about 30 minutes. We went back to sleep. We got up the next morning and the tarp over the hole we slept in had holes all through it. I ate breakfast and told my brother to come by and see me.

s/Kenneth Osborn

I have been with HQ Battery almost three years now, and enjoyed my stay very much, the biggest part of the time. I have seen some very exciting moments. On our drive from Anzio to Rome I went forward to deliver some supplies to G-2 and Germans shot at me while I was driving down the road. But luck was with me.

When I got to my destination, they were shooting artillery at us and six of our boys got killed laying right along side of me. I think that was about the worst thing I have witnessed during the whole time I was in combat.

Now that the war is over, and most of the boys are still here . . I think that's something to be very thankful for. I hope to stay with the 160th F.A. until my discharge from the service.

s/ Pfc. Edwin T. Pashelk



## MY MOST INTERESTING EXPERIENCE

May 19, 1945

Germany

My most interesting experience was driving through the Siegfried line fortifications after breaking the line, with a very heavy and concentrated artillery and Air Force bombardment. I really thought that I would see more fortifications than I did, although if the forts that I observed had been properly manned, we would have had a lot harder job of breaching the line than we did with the terrain as a big feature, it being mountainous . . . which we found in a number of places is a big advantage to the Army on the defensive.

s/Cpl. H. L. Paulsen

Plainfield, Iowa

My most interesting experience in combat was when the battalion landed on the beach of Sicily. The operation started about 0200, the 10th of July, 1943. At that time of the morning it was very dark. The Navy guns started shooting . . very interesting . . it being my first combat.

Everything seemed to be going smooth until a Jerry plane came over and dropped several flares. All AAA guns were shooting, and making so much noise you couldn't tell what was going to happen next. About that time, the flares started burning good. A plane came in and dropped several bombs, but didn't do any damage.

After that, things seemed to go smoothly again. When it came my time to leave the ship I was driving a machine gun truck with some of our C.P. equipment on it. After reaching the beach, we were caught in an air raid. The plane did a lot of straffing. By that time it was getting more exciting than interesting.

s/Guy Payne

ASN 34350 561

Homer, Ga.

To me the most interesting experience that I have known since I joined the Battalion was on the 13th day of February when the First Battalion, 179th Infantry attacked the "Factory" at Anzio.

I registered in the screening mission prior to the attack and when the attack hour came began firing it. What happened from there on is just like stories of going "over the top" in the last War, the doughboys come out of their foxholes and trenches and charged the objective on a dead run. The wind was blowing the smoke beautifully in their path and the courageous way the men kept going . . some were hit and they would stagger a little then straighten up and go until they collapsed. Part of the factory was taken and about 40 prisoners also. To me it was a very typical example of the courageous men and the fighting outfit of which they are a part.

s/Philip Pearce

My exciting experience with Battery A of the 160th F.A. Battalion happened on the Anzio Beachhead, at our gun position known to the boys as "Stumpy Hollow". One evening before dusk the Germans threw in a few shells, among them a smoke shell, which caught some grass on fire, and gave out gray smoke. It gave out an odor that of new mown hay, which is better known as "Phosgene Gas". Thinking it was gas, we were all alerted to put on our gas masks, until it was checked. It was checked pretty fast and then we were told that it was only grass burning. It sure was an exciting few minutes.

s/PFC Leo A Pedone 31135047

The most interesting thing in my experience of combat has been quite a good many . . and none of them have been what I can call interesting. The winning of the War has been very hard and disagreeable. It is very interesting to know we have won, and are about to crush another very hard enemy.

s/PFC Ira A. Pope  
#38039781



The night that we crossed the Rhine is a night that will live forever in my memory, not because of the crossing itself, which was in the nature of an anti-climax, but because of the nervous tension involved in "sweating out" "H" hour.

At about five o'clock that evening we were mounted on trucks and taken to a little town about two or three miles short of the river. There we dismounted and started on foot to complete the rest of the journey. I should point out here that we were with B company of the 1st Battalion.

The walk was uneventful, except for an unusual amount of enemy air activity. That in itself was enough to make us nervous, as it seemed to indicate that the enemy expected something unusual that night. About eleven o'clock we reached an apple orchard some three hundred yards short of the river and there we lay down to rest and catch a few hours sleep before the jump-off, which was scheduled for 2:15.

I don't believe that there was much sleeping done in those next three hours. Enemy air-activity became heavier and heavier as the night wore on and at about twelve his artillery began to warm up, not on us, luckily, but on a crossroads about two hundred yards to our rear. After that, all was quiet for awhile until the 3rd Division artillery on our left began to open up with

its preliminary barrage, for they were supposed to cross over the same time as we. All this seemed to dispel our last chance to catch Jerry by surprise. All of us were certain that every enemy soldier within 50 miles must have been alerted by that tremendous barrage. And now it was two o'clock and the word came down, "All right. Get ready. Its time to get started!" H hour had arrived and on all sides men were buckling on packs and packboards silently, nervously. Then we were on our way, the various boat-teams moving off in their tight little groups. The assault boats had been brought to the riverbank earlier that night by the engineers and left there for us and there they were now, in two long, silent rows, barely distinguishable in the surrounding gloom. As yet, no sound had come from the opposite bank, but no sooner had we started to drag the boats the few remaining feet to the water's edge, than a shot rang out, and was followed almost immediately by a whole fusillade.

Luckily, our machine guns were already emplaced, so as to afford us covering fire and they were able to silence the enemy riflemen temporarily. Oddly enough, after that first exchange there was very little more fire from the Jerry infantrymen. Even more fortunate was the fact that, due to faulty communications, he was unable to get immediate artillery fire on the first assault wave

in which we were. Although the later waves received some extremely heavy fire.

Once the crossing itself was accomplished there was very little more to recount. A few enemy riflemen, dug in on the far bank, attempted to hold out for a while but they soon saw the error of their ways, and joined the millions of their ex-comrades in the P.W. enclosures.

As we advanced further inland, we met the weirdest assortment of troops imaginable, but all with the same thought - - surrender. Everyone knows the story from there. Jerry was never able to reorganize his scattered forces and the breakthrough rolled through the Fatherland to Nuremberg, Munich the Alps and the end of the war.

s/PFC Jerome Powell

A.S.N. 13101760

My most exciting experience was my first day in combat. Everything was alright til we pulled in position; and then all night long the 88's came in around our area.

Then the first thing in the morning the Germans threw a barrage at us and just then I started to realize what combat was like.

s/ PFC Frank C. Praysner  
A.S.N. 33439264



A most unusual experience happened to me on November 6, 1943, near Venafro, Italy. At that time I was doing F.O. work and was with my Sun Ray.

We were waiting at the base of a small hill, for further orders in the attack. The Captain sent two men up to the top of the hill for local security, as the hill was reported clear of the enemy. I went with them to see if better observation could be obtained. Being anxious to get to the top as quick as possible, I took the lead going up. All went well until about fifty yards from the top.

As we had been told that the hill had been cleared of the enemy, we wasted little time in getting to the top. Some fifty yards from the skyline I stood up on a rocky ledge. The hill was the type that had ledges from top to bottom, and staring me in the face was a German machine gun. Almost at the same time I heard the enemy soldiers talking, and within the same time . . . they observed me, and commanded me to halt. I did. I swung my rifle around and fired; one soldier fell. Thinking my infantry commander would finish the other off I turned my rifle on the machine gun, and fired two rapid shots into it. The barrel was about all I could see of it. After firing into the gun position, looking back at the other enemy soldier and seeing that he was advancing toward his gun position for a chance to finish me off, and seeing that my Commander hadn't killed him,



I took good aim, pulled the trigger . . . only to hear the sharp click. My heart almost stopped on me.

These ledges are some ten feet wide, and from five to ten foot high. The ledge he was on was about seven foot high. He started pitching rocks at me, and at the same time, I was trying to reload. I caught several of his big rocks and threw them back at him. Finally, he threw a heavy one at me. I threw my hands in front of my face to ward off the sharp blow of the rock and to prevent it from hitting me in the face. The force of the rock numbed my hands beyond use.

Looking to my left and a few yards behind me . . . my friends were reloading also. They were shooting at more enemy soldiers at our left flank. I mentioned moving back, and we turned and ran down the hill ledge hopping.

The second ledge was a high one, and as I came down my knee hit a rock, and as a result, my knee cap was fractured. Just as I cleared the ledge, the enemy sprayed the ledge with machine gun fire. Rolling and jumping <sup>(we went)</sup> the rest of the way to the bottom of the hill where our unit was waiting for us.

We told the story of our trouble and shortly afterward, with more men, the hill was cleared. I spent the next six months in the hospital with the knee, and it was an experience never to be forgotten.

s/PFC. James O. Pridgen

We entered Germany through Alsace, after several counter-attacks by the Germans. The country there was very mountainous and cold, so we had to stop and push, and dig in.

We stayed in this section a few days, after telling that it would be our defense line. About the third day, we withdrew our position to the rear, which was near a saw mill (which was about four miles from our former position.)

At the mill, one could get all the lumber that he could to build himself a nice dugout. There, I saw some of the best dugouts I have seen in the war.

After staying in this position, we withdrew to another position which was more substantial.

After all the trouble that we went through to dig in our position, we were finally taken off the line for a few weeks rest and after the rest we went back in the line, facing the Seigfried line, in a different sector. What interests me most, is how quick the line collapsed after a few artillery attacks and bombing raids. It went down in no time at all.

s/PFC Edwin Rayunlls

#36645769

The most exciting moment I had while in combat was the night of the Rhine crossing. I had decided to get a few winks of sleep when the Germans decided to serenade us with a tune using their 88's as instruments.

Three shells hit the house I was sleeping in! When I got out of bed and saw one of them was a dud . . laying at the foot of my bed . . that was the most exciting time of my army career!

s/Daniel A. Ream 33083427

935 Franklin Street

Johnstown, Pennsylvania

I believe that my most exciting experience with "A" Battery, 160th F.A. was on Anzio. For two days after we landed, it was very quiet, but after that things started to bust loose. Then Jerrys shelled us day and night. Most every night, the Jerry planes would come over and drop bombs. They got pretty close at times. The flares they dropped out . . you could read a newspaper by! It wasn't so funny then, but it is now.

s/PFC Richard E. Richardson  
Btry. A, 160th F.A. Bn.

We landed at Salerno September 10, 1943. Every thing seemed to be going okay until the following day; as we moved to a new position, things started to happen.

We lost the fourth Section gun. Then we soon found out we were trapped. The Germans made a complete circle around us. With little ammo and food, we went into position.

We could see the Germans in front of us. We fired all our ammo but 10 rounds per gun. ( to be used for our last stand.)

Our Infantry was just a few yards away from us. My morale was low. But thank God nothing happened during the night. Great news arrived at the break of day. Some of our tanks broke through; followed by supplies. This is one of my many battle experiences.

s/PFC Mario Riva

Battery 160 F.A. Bn.



Now that it is all over I will say the day of September 11, 1943, was one of my most exciting days I've spent in combat with A Battery of the 160th F.A. Bn. The place was near Salerno, Italy.

There were four of us, Lannie Farmer, Richard Tystead Lt. Calton and myself. We were making our way out of a what I will call trap. That so-called trap was plenty exciting but not my story now.

We were crawling down a ditch, which we hoped would lead us away from the enemy that had caught us in an ambush and destroyed several of our trucks and their equipment. Lt. Calton and myself were out in front, when we came upon a deserted peep along the road near the ditch we were using for cover. We all were thirsty and hungry as we hadn't had a drop of water or food since the night before. It was then, about three o'clock in the afternoon; so we decided to risk exposure to get at the can of water the jeep was carrying. We had no sooner got the water can off, when three things happened almost as one. Which came first, I cannot say, but the radio aerial disappeared, there was (the) swish of a bullet and a crack of a rifle. Someone had shot at us and we didn't stay to find out who, where or why. I guess we knew who and why and didn't care to find out the where. The bullet passed very close to us as we both were standing next to the aerial. After much more crawling

we made it back to another unit safely, where we stayed that night. The next morning we returned to our own outfit and to another hotspot.

I have always considered that as a real experience, because I know that whoever fired that shot was trying his damnest to leave one of us there by the jeep.

s/Allen Roberts

160th Med. Det.

The landing of the 45th Division on D-Day in Sicily was to me the most interesting experience which I have observed. After the long period of training which my Battalion and the whole of the 45th Division had received before the operation, and in having a general knowledge of what the whole operation consisted of . . . then to have watched this operation progress from the initial landings to final occupation of Sicily, to me, seems to be my most interesting experience.

s/Eugene J. Roberts

1st Lt., 160th F.A. Bn.

May 19, 1945

The most thrilling time I had here in Europe was in a little cemetery between the town of Venfros and Liligimering. The only building in the place was the morgue. A very dead place in person.

The first night there was a misty one, while drops of rain played a merry tune on the tombstone.

O yes, the accompaniment was the Jerry Artillery Band . . it sounded beautiful, as I stood there at two on guard.

s/John A. Robylski

9390 Carten Ave.

Detroit, Michigan

My most interesting and unforgettable experience came one night on the Anzio Beachhead. It all happened three or four days after we had returned to our old position. It was from this position that we had advanced five days before we returned, but the Jerries were pretty strong so we had to come back.

Well in all this time up to this certain night the Germans didn't give us too much trouble, so we thought nothing of sleeping on top of the ground instead of a hole. Then it happened all of a sudden on this night I speak of. As far as I can remember this was the first night the Germans bombed our ground positions for they had bombed just the harbor before that.

Well to get back as I said before we were sleeping on the ground not in a hole (a mistake that I never again made on this great beachhead). All I can recall from this interesting night is being awakened by a buddy who slept next to me and who was shouting medic a dozen or more times. I became fully awake in a moment and it was then that I understood what happened. In this moment this buddy of mine had told me that a bomb had landed pretty close, and that he thought someone was hurt. From the shouting outside of our tent I knew someone was hurt. I grabbed my kits and ran out. The Germans were still shelling all around our position, and planes were still buzzing overhead.



I hardly paid much attention to this for all I could think of was some buddy of mine was hurt, and I had to get to him. When I reached his tent I saw that it was all torn up just like ours was. I thought at first he was hurt real bad but it turned out he was just hit in the arm and not too serious. While I was working on him I told another fellow to see if anyone else was hurt, and to wake up those who were still asleep. He returned with another fellow and it was then that the shock came. He told me that one of the other boys got hit, but he said I couldn't do much for him for half of his head was torn off. I went anyway to make sure. It was all just the way he said and so I asked this other boy if he was hit, and he said no. He was sleeping next to the one who got killed.

All this happened so fast that we hadn't time to think of anything else. Then I told the boys to scatter in case the Germans got too close. We all looked around for the bomb hole, and when we found it we all thanked our lucky stars we didn't get scratched. It had landed about thirty yards from the tent the boy that got killed in was sleeping. The one who was wounded was sleeping the farthest from it. About seventy-five yards. My tent and the fellows who slept with me was fifty yards away. All our tents were torn pretty badly and this is why I think its my unforgettable night for we all pulled through it okay. Next day we found out

that the bomb almost set off a truck load of ammo very close by.

That's one experience I'll never forget for not only was I glad to get through it, my best friend was the one who got killed.

s/James A. Rocha

Medical Detachment

160th F.A. Battalion

After moving off the beach at Salerno it had began to get late. So we had to go into defense there for the night.

Early the next morning we were ordered to move out and go forward. We had moved about 4 miles when we came to a small river. After we crossed the river we were cut off and pinned down by 88mm and 20mm and 50 cal. fire for about 6 to 8 hours.

Most of the battery had gotten through before they pinned us down. We were then cut off from the rest of the battery. I was scared very much for it was the first time that I had been shot at with direct fire.

We lay in the small ditch for quite some time, then they started shooting 88's at us. They destroyed one of our 105 M.M.H. and two of our trucks 6x6. One of the trucks was the kitchen truck. We lost all of the battery rations as they were destroyed with the truck. The 88's and 20 mm.'s were landing all around us, so we decided to work our way back across the river. We finally made it back across the river without a scratch.

We then stayed overnight where it was still and quiet. We were worried about the rest of the battery. We hadn't gotten word from them, and we didn't know what had happened to them.

The next morning we still hadn't heard, so we started out to find them. We had had it pretty lucky, . . there were a few T.D.'s moving up, so we caught us rides on them, and other vehicles.

We hadn't moved far when they started shooting 88's at us again. We were sweating them out when we got word that the battery was surrounded. That worried us more then. We didn't know what to do. Finally, we got good news that the T.D. had broken through and the road was open and they were okay.

We finally made it to the battery and I sure felt better then. But they were still shooting 88's at us.

We stayed there until dark and then the battery moved back to a better position. Everything was okay then.

This is my most exciting experience of the war.

s/T/H Sgt. Elmer L. Rose

Battery A, 160th F.A., Bn.

My most interesting combat experience as a member of the 160th F.A. Battalion covers the five day period of hard fighting at Salerno. This fighting was the first good battle in combat and it was a test and it did prove who could take it and who couldn't.

Here, everyone thought that he would be captured or killed. It was a situation where everyone expected almost anything to happen. It was interesting to note the reaction of men when they felt that there was no hope and to me it was a great experience. To expect everything to happen, and feeling lost and in the end to come out without even a scratch.

s/1st Sgt. John C. Ross

Service Battery

160th F.A., Bn.



Well guys . . . \* \* I know that you have all thought  
being the Bn. messenger was a snap, . . . well yes and no.

I realize many of you had much rougher jobs.

You know, there's something about carrying a field order  
or any message of importance that I always liked. It seems that  
there is nothing that can stop you from getting to the C. P. with it.  
That's wrong, though there are many things.

One night back in Italy, I was 28 miles from my Bn. and  
that night I made three trips through fifteen bypasses. This one  
bypass I had a long way around and I found my self going in the  
wrong direction. I was really quite sleepy after driving over  
a hundred miles alone and dark as hell. I was seeing many things  
but you know you don't stop at every shadow or object at night.  
Anyway, there was a dark shadow like in the road ahead . . . very  
large too. Finally, I realized I must stop. So I started skidding  
and finally stopped. I had woke up a little by now, and there in front  
of me was a bridge the Germans had blown up, and no one had put  
any kind of an object up to warn you or to stop you from going over.  
This bridge was about 75 feet straight down, and ended in a canyon of  
rock. I had room to walk in front of my jeep from where I stopped  
but you had to be or else! This is one of many instances,  
but I never was so wide awake and so scared before. Can you imagine.

s/Cpl. Frank Rowles #36246719  
HQ Btry. 160th F.A. Bn.  
222

My greatest experience in combat was September 11th and 12th when our regimental combat team moved up one night to take and hold a vital bridge. We traveled all night and when it started to turn daylight we pulled into position and registered.

We fired all that day. Later we were told the Germans had cut the road behind us.

Lots of our equipment was captured, especially radios. And when a fire mission would come down they'd give different shifts, hoping we would fire on our own troops.

The next evening Col. Larsen came around, and told us to fire only on necessary targets, for we only had ten rounds of ammunition left per gun. About that time, word came down that we had a tank attack from the rear, so we turned two guns to the rear and left the others to cover the front.

We sweated 88's out the remainder of the day, and heard tanks at night. Bright and early in the morning of the 13th, General McClain came to our rescue. To my estimation, that's my greatest experience in combat.

s/PFC Karl Rudolph

HQ Battery, 160th F.A. Bn.

My most interesting experience happened on the very first night of the invasion of Sicily. I happened to be one of the unfortunate Privates picked to stay and help unload the ammunition off the ship. Things were going along rather smoothly when all of a sudden the General Quarters Alarm was sounded on the ship. A signal announcing that enemy planes were on the way.

This was my first experience of this sort and I found myself in a terrible predicament because at the very moment I was situated in the bottom hole, with thousand rounds of high explosive ammunition. I tried to think what might happen to me if one of those now approaching planes suddenly dropped an egg (bomb) and it hit the ship. After realizing the seriousness of all this I became terriried . . and I do mean terrified!

Just at that very moment I heard our own ack-ack guns go into action and a distant drone of approaching motors telling me that the enemy planes had arrived. It seemed like all hell had broke loose and I found myself helpless as a clay pigeon. All that I could do was stand and shake with fright and pray that nothing might hit that load of ammunition. It didn't take long before I could hear the screaming of the falling bombs

and could feel the jar as they burst in the ocean . . only a few hundred feet away from the ship.

This air-raid lasted for approximately thirty minutes and all during that time perspiration was pouring from the top of my forehead. I honestly believed that I was a "goner". It was a wonderful feeling to hear that "All Clear" signal.

This experience stands out as most interesting and exciting in my memory because it was my first taste of war and acquainted me with the Luftwaffe. I feared him all through the rest of my combat days and am very happy to know it is all over "over here".

c/Coy Ruery

Service Battery

160th F.A. Bn.



It happened while I was driving a jeep on a forward observation party. I came in off the O.P. one evening, and after having eaten and done a couple other things I went to bed. I was called early the next morning and told that one of the other boys had been in an accident and I was to take my jeep out of the O.P. and trade with him. I started down the road alone about six o'clock, entirely unaware of the fact that the German soldiers had entered the town during the night and were having a fierce battle in the town. The road I was traveling led straight through town. As I neared the town I noticed the sound of small arms fire but after being on an O.P. for a few days, it didn't bother me much. I paid little attention to it and drove on into town. Just as I entered about the second block, a Captain waved me down. I stopped and he asked me if I knew where I was going. I told him I did, and asked if anything was wrong. He told me what was going on and just then about four rifle bullets crashed into the wall of the house next to us. I ran into the doorway, out of sight, but nothing more happened so I got in my jeep and tried to see how fast I could turn it around and get out of there. I assure you it was plenty fast. A couple of our boys were captured that morning, but were released later. I talked to them and they told me that they had seen me that morning.



They were already prisoners at the time and couldn't warn me.  
As it all happened, I came out of it without a scratch, but it  
was rather exciting for a little while.

s/PFC Walter L. Runkle

33255727

Howard, Pennsylvania RFD 2

## ONE OF MY BATTLE EXPERIENCES

May 20, 1945

Germany

One pleasant afternoon everybody was enjoying a happy time playing several games with cards, to pass the long hours while waiting for commands to fire on enemy targets whenever necessary . . when suddenly the quiet, peaceful time was broken with the distant rumble of artillery pieces and whine of the shells going overhead, and everybody scrambled for the small underground cover we had for protection from air bursts and personal bombs, and also used for a safe place to make coffee in while changing guard during the cold nights.

When all was quiet, we came out to find plenty of shrapnel around the area and one shell had come through the net over the Third Section Gun Pit missing the gun and the place where the gun crew was, only to make a small hole in the ground, as it was a dud. Thank God...which saved lives of the men and damage to the gun (if it had exploded).

s/A.      Saunders

Battery "A" 160th F.A. Bn.

They told me to write of an exciting experience. Can you imagine that? And me an artilleryman. And I can't even get a T.S. slip. As one can easily see, it would be much easier for a man in the infantry or perhaps tank outfit to write such an account, mainly because of the many experiences they would have to choose from. Whereas ours are limited and not too exciting at that. But now to the experience.

First, to get located I shall try to give the location of my story as well as I can remember it. As you will recall, the campaign in Southern France moved fast, faster than anything we had encountered up until that time. A little more than a week after the landing, we were approaching Lyons, a fairly large city on the Rhone river. But instead of going toward the city as we expected, we flanked it on the right, and another division entered it.

We were in position southeast of the city when things began to pop. First, we got a report that there was a Jerry tank column somewhere in the vicinity of our rear. Then we had to turn our guns completely around, and fire in exactly the opposite direction from our original line of fire. In other words, we were firing almost into the spot from which we had just come. As you can imagine, that didn't help our peace of mind any. Then, that

evening the captain came back from battalion with the orders for our next move in this little game. The infantry was splitting up into battalions which would operate as task forces, in other words, their supporting units, such as artillery, engineers, etc. would go with them. The Germans were well scattered and we could cover more ground in this method.

The following morning we were to pull out with our battalion which was going to spearhead the operation. The right flank of the spearhead was protected by another regiment, and the left by the Free French who, supposedly had 500 men and weapons blocking each road running perpendicular to our line of advance. To reach our final objective, we had to cross two rivers. My story takes place at the second river. The first we crossed by going upstream to a bridge that was not blown. When we crossed the bridge over the second, the infantry had a guard and road block on it. After crossing the bridge, we went through the small town of Maximeux, turned left, and went into position about five hundred yards from the river. We were sleeping in pup tents at that time, and that night in itself was memorable. All night long it poured down, rain, hail, sleet and snow. And all night long we had fire missions. By morning practically everyone was soaked through. And then we got the order to move before daylight!



While we were rolling up slopping wet bed rolls, and splashing around in the mud and water, and cussing everyone and everything, there was a terrific explosion behind us and to the right. Naturally, we all had an idea of what it was. Some said the engineers were working on something and others that it was a battery of Long Toms which had moved in behind us. Then, in the rush of moving, we forgot all about it. But we were to remember it later.

Our move took us back through Maximeux, to the left, and into a position about three miles from the town. Then we found out what the explosion had been. The bridge had been blown! We were cut off from the other regiment by the river, and the Germans had broken through the French road block and surrounded us on the other three sides. They had about thirty tanks, mostly the giant Tigers, and a large force of infantry. We had hardly gone through the town when the German tanks began to come in. While we were going into position, we heard a lot of shells which had a very peculiar sound. We found out later that it was 88 shells which were ricocheting off of the buildings. A few minutes later Cannon Company moved into position with us. Between their guns and ours, we were shooting in every direction. Two of us were shooting ahead and the other two back into the town which we had come through



a few minutes before. By that time we were beginning to wonder just what the score was, and I don't mean perhaps.

But we soon found out.

Within an hour we got the order by radio to move again, and by that time, the Germans were laying in a terrific mortar barrage but the greater part of it was in front of our position and only a few rounds fell close to us. But we were so jumpy by that time that they couldn't have done any more to make us jittery if they had come in on us.

Then things really began to happen. First, about a hundred or so Frenchmen came back through us carrying their wounded and apparently with no intentions of stopping. By this time, the fighting was really getting fierce, down in the town, which was just over a slight hill from us, and the tracers were flying over our heads often enough so that they couldn't very well be ignored. "Get out your incinderary grenades", was the next order we received.

And then they came thick and fast. "Place the grenades where you can get them in a hurry" . . "Assign certain men to the destruction of the gun and truck" . . "Make sure all of the men know which direction to head for if it comes to every man for himself". Yep, it was gettin' hot.

The infantry had backed up and established a line about three hundred yards in front of our gun. Then came some good news, even if it was only a hope, and it traveled swiftly from mouth to mouth so that everyone knew before long that the third regiment was going to try to break through to us. But that didn't ease the situation any because they said that they couldn't possibly reach us before the next morning. We still had another night to sweat out.

By dark we all had a hole dug in which we would sleep, if that was possible. There was a moon part of the time, which helped the guards considerably. So, after arranging a double guard, and getting everything set, we finally got to bed, but not for long. Someone yelled "Paratroopers!", and everybody was out of his bed with his carbine in his hand in about twenty seconds. And to top that off, the guard who was pretty excitable said "This is it, men". . . just like they do in books. It doesn't take a great amount of imagination to see us at that time. Even after two or three hours in which nothing had happened, most of us were still up. I can assure you that the next guard had plenty of company. But the rest of the night passed quietly.

Daylight. The rain was pouring down, but no one seemed to mind too much. The main thing was the fact that most of the shooting had stopped. That fact was supplemented at chow time

by the news that the regiment which had been coming toward us had broken through and things looked okay all around. The parachutes which were seen during the night were guns and ammunition dropped by one of our big bombers to the French.

That night we moved back through the town once more. It was a wreck. Knocked out tanks were everywhere. The attempt had cost the Germans almost every tank they had mustered. Artillery had knocked out the majority of them, but bazookas had accounted for their share.

Exciting? I don't know, but I do know that it won't be forgotten by anyone for a long time to come.

s/ Elmer Schlut

My most exciting experience was the Anzio Beachhead.

I was a wire line man. One day two lines went out from Jerries shelling, so my buddy (a boy named Henry Fischer) and I went out to fix them.

The road had just been shelled by Jerries artillery and we had to go there to fix our wire lines. We got there. They hadn't shelled for ten minutes or so, (and) as soon as we got there the Jerries started to shell the road with 88's . . and the nearest hole was 200 yards away!

We started to run for the hole, but had to hit the ground every time a shell was about to hit. We would get up again and run. We finally made the hole, just in time, when an 88 hit right beside the hole!

The shelling finally stopped and we got out of the hole and fixed the line, and went home... (what we call home: Our dug out shell proof).

s/Cpl. Jacob R. Seid  
A.S.N. 32175319

530 West 46th Street  
New York, New York



My most interesting experience was at Pollet, France, near Lyon, and was in the attack on the latter city.

We were sent up as an F.O. party to support a road block consisting of an anti-tank gun, a platoon of infantry, and four guns out of the "Cannon" Company.

The first thing upon arriving, we saw there could be no observation except from a church tower in a small town a thousand yards to the front of the dug in road block. From the church tower defensive fires were shot in on the approaching roads and some vehicles in the distance were taken under fire.

The next morning we received a warning that tanks were approaching but no information came on where from.

A few minutes later, four or five shells went past the steeple and exploded in the field behind the town. In the meantime, we saw a huge convoy of tanks, trucks loaded with troops, and towed guns heading off to our right . . . probably toward Meximieux. We shot at these all of the time they were in sight. Unfortunately, while we were shooting the cannon company at this target our attention was drawn from the woods to the front and left which covered a depression and reached almost to the town. For some reason I looked that direction, and there staring me in the face, in plain sight to the naked eye were four German tanks coming along the edge of the woods and the leading one had just left the woods for the town. The Marquis who were guarding



that approach were streaming across the field to our left.

We immediately sent a call to the infantry to warn them, but the telephone was unreadable. We tried everyone on the radio, but could contact no one.

The tank was almost to the other end of town by then.

We clipped our telephone wires, loaded our equipment and took off not a minute too soon because when we turned down the side street the tank came in the other end of town. On a road parallel to ours off to what then was our right, we could see another tank going the same direction as we were. He evidently had his mind on the Marquis and so didn't see our peep. When we outdistanced him we stopped on a little knoll where there was a watch tower and tried again to fire. The Marquis who were in the tower already said there had been enemy infantry in the woods behind the tanks, and there were five tanks in all.

In the meantime the tank which had gone into town had gone completely through and was seen by the anti-tank gunners. They got it and it caught on fire. When the two tanks behind this one saw the hit they started for the gun and the crew withdrew.

We moved again trying to get contact with someone and came across the cannon company. We showed them the tank off to the left and they immediately CSMO'd and went back to the second town

behind us. The infantry had already begun to withdraw. We found a little knoll with a cemetery on top of it and by putting our radio on the highest part, we could get fair contact. We immediately fired on the tanks and infantry which were attacking the remnant of our road block. A number of the retreating men stopped by to watch us and when we had to move back again because one of the tanks began to shoot down the cemetery wall we were behind. They loaded on our jeep and rode with us into the town. We were the last to leave the place and the rest were already back to the second town. We got to the first town not a minute too soon because a minute later the tanks were in it and a half track loaded with infantry was hit by our anti-tank guns, ack-ack guns, and heavy weapons set up in the last town before the bridge. It had gone through the town just after we did.

During the time we were moving, we adjusted the fire in the direction the tanks had been moving which was across our front and to our right rear. We could not observe the fire but a couple of days later we went back to see the effects and there was some enemy equipment laying around and a few of the enemy also. The shell bursts had been among the tanks. All that was needed was more fire. During this time the armored observer had come up and talked to us but had not told us he was to relieve us.

s/E. R. Shaw

Battery A, 160th F.A. Bn.

The most interesting experience while in the 160th Field Artillery Battalion, was the day my F.O. party leader George Clark, and myself, walked up on a full company of Germans; and, without a shot, took them all prisoners . . . including two German Wacs.

I think the reason for such an easy haul was because they all were being issued their food rations for the next day, and as you know, the average G.I., German or American, thinks of his rations first of all.

To top this off, the C.O. of the Infantry company was wearing an M-1 rifle, with three bandoliers of 30 cal. ammunition, with his dog robber carrying a USA carbine.

Just to let you know it isn't all gravy, I had to walk the square heads three miles back to our outpost.

s/PFC Joseph L. Sheppard

My most thrilling experience since I have been in the Army was on Anzio Beachhead. It was awful still one morning and we were unloading ammunition. The truck was setting on the side of a hill. All at once there was a shell hit between our gun and B. Brys gun. We let all the ammunition go and it rolled out of the truck. They started throwing the shells in on our gun position, I ran for my foxhole and got in it and I just got in and laid down when shrapnel went through the front end and backend of my foxhole and I never got a scratch.

s/PFC Jack Sisemore

A Battery

I came to this outfit in Sicily and after fighting Arabs for three months in Africa I was really glad to get in a regular outfit. They were in rest then, plenty of good shade trees and a good place to go swimming. I thought "Boy, what a deal!"

But the most exciting thing since I have been over here, I think, was the landing at Salerno. It was my first days of real combat and I think they were pretty rough. (When we were cut off from supplies for a couple days).

But with the smart commanders of this outfit, they got us out of it alright. And we made it through.

So I am glad to be in such an outfit and be under such commanding officers. And I don't think you will find a better bunch of men any place than there is in the 160th F.A. Bn.

PFC. Harold D. Smith

A.S.N. 37543713

Btry A, 160th F.A. Bn.

May 20, 1945



While attacking with an Infantry Company, my radio operator and I saw a group of German Infantry to our right flank so we stopped, set up our radio and started directing fire on them. While doing this, an Infantry machine gunner drew our attention to a tank setting on a hill to our left.

The tank wasn't facing us and as we were reported to have TD's in that vicinity, we assumed it to be one of ours. As we repacked our radio to continue on, the tank turned its turret around, and there was no mistaking it then.

It was a German Mark VI, and we didn't even have a foxhole. It started shelling us and also using its machine guns. My operator and I laid down in a rut made by one of our tanks; and the Infantry boys were laying all around us. One of the shells hit by us and wounded a number of the Infantry; so we decided to try to make it across an open field to a steep bank where we would be safe. As we ran across the field we were fired at three times by the tanks 88 mm gun, but we were lucky, and weren't hit. It seemed to take hours to cross the field but we made it alright.

s/T/Sgt. Lyle Smith  
Service Battery

160th F.A. Bn. APO #45, N.Y.

My most exciting experience occurred on or about June 8th, 1944, near Anzio, Italy, when we were on a recon . . the only available vehicle was a three-quarter Ton which we learned later was a little too big.

While traveling down a rather dusty road, we were taken under fire by an anti-tank gun which started firing direct, and we had to retreat about a hundred and fifty yards across an open plain. Then, later, we had to go back and get the vehicle, being fired upon both times.

s/S. Sgt. Robert C. Sneed

Battery A, 160th F.A. Bn

A.S.N. 20832179

Address: 326 E 7th St., Wewoka, Okla.

On the night of January 1st, 1945, orders were given to the infantry and attachments to come out of our positions and prepare to move. Practically all that night, through bitter cold which caused us to ride in our sleeping bags, we moved toward a new position. About 9 o'clock the next morning, we arrived in the town of Gotzenbruck and unknown to us, were about to help stop the German breakthrough east and south of Bitche.

Shortly after arriving in the town, which was already occupied by two friendly units, the fireworks started. Small arms fire broke out from the houses on the east side of the main street and before long, machine guns and mortars had joined in. The Jerries had reached and cut us off. A reconnaissance along the road we had just come over proved disastrous. A German tank and half track had cut us off.

Realizing the necessity of obtaining communications and artillery, the L.O. and F.O's tried to get in contact by radio. Around 2 o'clock the efforts were successful and the defense of the town was complete. All this time the Jerries were using only small arms, but now heavy (120 mm) mortars and artillery started in and the town caught plenty!

Repeated efforts finally cleared our supply route after three days and the worst was over. We found out then that the Germans had penetrated to Wingen and caused the seriousness in our situation.

Subsequently, I had some experiences as an L.O. with the 14th Armored. This was both new and interesting. During the five days in town, the shelling included everything up to 150 mm shells.

Finally I was relieved, and, due to several periods of 24 hour radio watch, could hardly speak above a whisper. That was an experience I won't ever forget.

s/Lt. Stuart J. Sobelman

My most interesting experience was at Anzio. When we were holding back the German attacks.

The men in the battery worked hard delivering ammo and also firing the piece.

We all knew that if the fire didn't go out on time, we would be pushed back into the sea. We fired for several straight days. Our gun tubes were red hot. Finally, the Germans had to stop attacking because the 45th Division had destroyed several of Hitler's best fighting divisions.

When the Germans were attacking they threw in everything they had. Tanks, infantry, airforce and artillery. They had it over us because they had all the high ground and we were stuck out on the plains.

The Germans found out that they were fighting the best American Division when they attacked the Thunderbirds!

The 45th Thunderbird Division will long be remembered as the division that freed Europe of Slavery.

s/PFC D. Solovian

#32790460

Watertown, Conn.



The trap at Salerno was one of my most amazing experiences. After sweating out two days and nights without being able to get rations, or ammo, and Krauts on all sides of us, we were able to get back out of the trap.

To me . . and many more, that was one day that will always be remembered as long as I live.

Another great day is the day we pushed off from Anzio, after sweating out four months of plain hell.

s/Dee V. Spaulding

RFD #1, Box 206

Richmond, Kansas

Place: Anzio Beachhead near "The Daisy"

Time: Lt. W. Bennet's F.O. Party being relieved  
about 19:30 at night.

Persons

Involved: Lt. W. Bennet, the observer; Roy Horton,  
the driver; Leroy Spaulding, the radio operator;  
A. Franks and R. Erickson, telephone operators  
and linemen.

Subject: Before being relieved that night on F.O., we had  
been timing shells falling on the crossroads near "The Daisy"  
which we had to cross upon returning to the Battery. The shells  
were falling every half hour. After we were relieved, we had  
five minutes to go before the Jerries would supposedly shell  
the crossroads again.

Well, we started back to the Battery, but when we  
crossed the crossroads, we got our right front wheel caught in  
some barbed wire. We all jumped out of the "peep" to untangle  
the wire. It took a lot of hard pulling and bending before we  
got the "peep" loose. It took us about ten minutes to untangle  
the wire from the wheel. It was lucky for us that the Jerries  
decided not to fire on the crossroads that time. We were sure  
sweating those shells out.

After we got out of that mess and back to the Battery  
that night, I felt ten years younger.

s/Sgt. Leroy F. Spaulding  
Battery C, 160th F.A. Bn.  
45th Division

Anzio Beachhead in a dug out on the blacktop road twenty-eight miles from Rome.

One day sitting in my dug out and listening over the telephone to one of our fire missions on the enemy well dug in. The shells were beginning to drop all around our dug out. The enemy was laying down a barrage on us. Hearing a lot of commotion in the trench that leads to our dug out, I knew there were soldiers hitting the dirt to escape the shell fire. I told them to come on inside, when one soldier stuck his head in the hole and uttered some Kraut word.

There was so much confusion at the time, I unconsciously told him to come on inside. Right behind him were six other scared Krauts who took seats upon the floor.

Capt. Garber of New York, the Liaison officer, called over the telephone from the C.P. for a mop. I told him I was surrounded by Krauts.

When the shelling let up, two dough boys roused the Krauts out of the hole and took them on in. They had surrounded the Krauts and taken them by surprise. They were bringing them across the wide open field in broad daylight. The terrain was flat as a pool table, and you took your chances in walking around because the Krauts could see you from the hills.

The enemy opened up on their soldiers, rather than see them taken prisoners.

c/Walter W. Squier

One of my most thrilling experiences happened while I was on a forward observation party. We were attached to K Company which was to attack that morning. Everything ran off smoothly until we neared the outskirts of the town which was our objective. We were called up front to try and knock out a self-propelled gun and some pillboxes which were situated on the outskirts of that town.

We found an excellent position from which to direct fire and after radioing in the positions of the guns, we proceeded to fire on the enemy. Our fire was very effective and the infantry took the town. The Captain of K Company, that afternoon told us that without the help of the artillery that morning the casualties of his company would have been much higher than they were.

s/PFC Harry M. Srodon



One of the strange tricks of ironical fate worked on me the 22nd of April, 1945: I say ironical because it was about two weeks before the end of this war, and being a forward observer for almost two years, I have never before had such an unusual adventure, although there were others of lesser interest and numerous.

Our forward observation party consisted of four men: Lt. Stuart J. Sobelman, Cpl. Elmer C. Carlson, Pvt. Wilton D. Spayne and myself, a jeep driver. In the rolling hills with scattered sections of thick woods southeast of Nurnberg, Germany, was a town called Walting, which was the immediate objective of "F" Company of the 179th Infantry, with whom we were working. We proceeded toward our objective along a fairly good dirt road with the men riding the six "T.D.'s" and company vehicles until we reached a point where the men dismounted and were to go through the woods in a flanking movement. Lt. Sobelman then told Carlson that it would be a pack-boards from here on because no vehicle could follow the direct route of the infantry.

Taking the jeep along was against Lt. Sobelman's better judgment because he had lost a vehicle once before when he



watched two Krauts drive off in childish glee . . but that's another story. However, the Lieutenant suggested that we may take the jeep as far as it can possibly go and carry the radio from there, sending the vehicle back to stay with the company vehicles. He instructed that Carlson and Spayne later fall in with Headquarters platoon as he would be at the head of the column with the company commander. It took me twenty minutes to make the first hill, zig-zagging between the trees. The soggy topsoil in the sprinkling rain gave the wheels no traction. When we came to brooks or deep ditches, Carlson and Spayne would build them up by throwing in cordwood from nearby piles. I thought I would surely get stuck when I hit that section of marshland, but I kept her rolling and made it. It seems we had gone about two or three miles, this way somehow managing to keep up with the infantry. Ours was the only vehicle and I knew we were heading for trouble for the jeep had gone too far already. I could never make it back without assistance. We came to a hill that was almost vertical. For half an hour I tried to make it at different points but the wet leaves foiled me. In exasperation I finally put the chains on and made it, but by this time the infantry had long gone past.

We tried following their fresh trail and did fairly well for a while as I made detours through open fields. We came upon an old German civilian and a young Russian laborer near some shanties and they gave us the direction in which the company had gone. We found a little German trailer which we hooked onto the peep and continued our search. We were now riding along the edge of the woods on a large sloping, plowed field till we came to a point overlooking a small town. The footprints in the woods led towards it and we assumed that "F" Company was already in it. The peep could not go through the thick woods so we decided to zip into town across the fields. But there was a ditch at the bottom of our slope so we rode along parallel, looking for a place to cross. I stopped the peep and we all got out to look around. It was so peaceful and quiet we surely thought the town was ours. Didn't those two men tell us there were no Krauts around?

We were about twenty yards apart when bang! I turned to see Carlson get knocked down. I yelled and asked him if he was hit. He just looked at me and said nothing. Then another shot and another. In bewilderment we lay there looking about wondering where they came from. I ran back to the peep and unhooked the trailer and yelled to Carlson and Spayne that we should get the hell out of here, but they run down in the ditch towards the Krauts

and had defilade for the Krauts were on the rise before them. I thought the shots came out of the woods on the right, so I fired a couple of shots from my carbine but I was shooting at nothing, for I saw them off to the left in front of us, behind some little bushes. There were about five or six, and the way they exposed themselves I thought surely they must be our men of "F" Company looking for Krauts, so I didn't fire on them until they started to fire on me.

They couldn't see Carlson and Spayne anymore, so I was their object. I yelled to them that the Krauts were in front of them but I guess they knew it by this time also. I crouched behind the trailer and let go three rounds at them but my aim was poor. I saw the dirt kick up about fifty yards in front of them. Then crack! A bullet came through the trailer. I adjusted my long range sight and let go four or five rounds in rapid succession and ducked. But another bullet came through the trailer and one beneath. I took careful aim and let the rest of the clip go and then got behind the left rear wheel and loaded the empty clip with the loose rounds I had in my pocket. I kept calling to Carlson and Spayne to come back to the peep and we would make a break for it. I exposed myself six times doing this, and it was foolish for they could not have made it. We were like clay pigeons on a shelf. The best thing for them would be to come back along the ditch



which they proceeded to do, for the Krauts could not see them. Then I heard small arms fire in the woods off to the right and I knew it was "F" Company and that we were in the wrong sector.

The Krauts were shooting my vehicle full of holes and I was frankly worried as I saw the water pouring out of the radiator. I was hoping they wouldn't hit the tires. I was wondering what I should do after I would use up my other clip of ammo for I had no more. I knew I couldn't run back into the woods across 150 yards of plowed field without getting mowed down and I didn't want to leave the peep. All this time, our bed rolls and windshield are being riddled. I knew they would get me in time if I stayed there long enough, and I couldn't shoot it out with them, so I made up my mind to scram.

I got behind the trailer again and pumped out most of the clip to keep them ducking. Then I jumped in the peep, started the motor and began turning around. Then they really poured the lead on me, and started to adjust mortars. But I guess I was going faster than any bullet can travel. I drove back to the shanties and Carlson and Spayne came a few minutes later. The first bullet had gone through Carlson's jacket and grazed him along his back. The two men were still there and the old man volunteered to go with us to show us how to get to a friendly town and to one

of our own medics. The old man sat in front with Carlson and me while Spayne was sitting in front of the peep on the hood. We drove back in the general direction of our lines about three hundred yards along logging trails. As we rounded a turn in the thick woods, Spayne yelled, "Hold it!", and jumped off, shooting. There were at least five Krauts behind trees a few feet in front of us. I jumped out and started shooting.

The old civilian was killed instantly and I thought Carlson was also, but I saw him crawl out on my side. Spayne came running behind the peep, both arms hanging limp and covered with blood. He said he was hit and yelled for us to scram, so we all ran back about ten yards and put a tourniquet around one of his arms. Carlson's rifle was shattered in his hands, but he still held on to it. I had a good carbine, but no ammunition left. We went about ten yards more, and Spayne said for me to take his dogtags and leave him there for he could not make it. We would not listen to such talk, and helped him go on. We heard small arms from three directions and this confused us terribly for we knew not which way to go, but we had to go on to get Spayne to a medic. Carlson threw away his rifle, but I picked it up and gave it back to him even though perhaps it was useless. I don't know how many hours we stumbled through the wooded hills, but darkness was



not far off. We came out of the thick woods and walked along a road because pine needles were piercing Spayne's wounds. I insisted we get off the road so after scooping a helmet full of water from a ditch, we all drank and proceeded to walk along the edge of the pines. It's strange how a throat can get so dry when one is in such a predicament.

We walked along quietly and only I had a carbine with one or two bullets left . . . if any at all. I'm sure I used them all up. Then a Kraut steps out of the pines only fifteen feet in front of us. I raised my rifle. He did not see us. Another was behind him. I asked Carlson what we should do, and we agreed to surrender. The Krauts were really surprised when we called to them to come to us. We asked them if they had a medic with them to take care of Spayne. They said they had none. They gave us each a cigarette and we smoked and talked for a while. Carlson asked them if they would let us go back to our lines. They first talked between themselves and then consented. Carlson and Spayne started off and I called to them to wait. I thought the Krauts might want to surrender to us, so I told them it would be better if they did. The young one was highly insulted and said he would never surrender, and sparks flew out of his eyes. I didn't want to argue with him, so I quickly shook hands with both of them and said goodbye. I walked slowly away from them without turning around, expecting to get shot in the back. A few minutes later

we ran into the armored spearhead of "G" Company. They thought we were Krauts at first, and were just about to open up on us.

s/T/5 John Stackiewicz

## MY MOST INTERESTING COMBAT EXPERIENCE

The Officer I was driving for was taking the battalion to their new gun position, which the Battalion Commander had picked out for them. Our Battery "A" was the head battery. The Captain of our battery was behind us. We drove into the new position and waited for the vehicles to come in and let them know where to put them. While waiting he saw they all weren't there, so he told the Officer I was driving for to go back to see what the trouble was. So, we got part way back there and discovered that the Germans had cut the rest of the convoy off.

We got to an Italian Garrison, which was on some high ground, and the Officer I was driving for started firing artillery near the road where the Germans were. While doing that, the Germans started firing mortar back on the Italian Garrison where we were. Shrapnel was flying all around us and we also were getting small arms fire there.

There was some of the Infantry with us too, while we were there.

I got a bullet hole in the steering column. I am wondering if I was driving my Jeep when it happened, or if I had parked someplace. We could hear the small arms fire getting closer to us, so two six by six, one other Jeep besides my own, and a fellow with a motorcycle joined us, and we went off to the Battery across the fields. We finally made it.

s/ Ralph J. Stamm, PFC

35040111  
Route One  
Sandusky, Ohio

## MY MOST INTERESTING EXPERIENCE

One of the most interesting experiences that I have had would be when we crossed the Volturno . I was with an F.O. party consisting of four men with myself.

We were to be with "B" Company. Venafro had just fallen. We rode the peep just outside the town; but from there, it had to be on foot. So we started out in the dark. Not knowing too much about where we were going. After walking all over the hill for about two hours, we decided to bed down. Someone suggested having a guard; but we were all so tired that we pretended not to hear him.

Laperdies and myself slept together. We had one shelter half, and one blanket between us. We laid the shelter half down and covered with the blanket. About four o'clock in the morning I awoke. All Hell had broke loose. Small arms fire was coming from all over the hill, with artillery fire bursting around.

The other boys were asleep. So I turned over and went back to sleep myself (saying to myself if it gets me, it just gets me. That's all.) At dawn we all were up and on our way to find "B" Company C.P. After we got there, Capt. Dobbins said



that we had to go to the top of the hill in order to get good observation.

He said that he had had patrols all over the hill and that it was clear. But after getting to the top, we found different.

The Germans were forming for a counter-attack. We ran into about fifty of them up there. After a short fire fight, we had to withdraw down the hill. Later they had to send a whole company up to take the hill. I still don't know to this day how we got off that hill. The good Lord must have surely been with us.

s/PFC Jacob Stembridge

The most thrilling experience I've had, since I've been overseas, was when we landed on the Anzio Beachhead. The day we landed there everything was very quiet. We thought it was going to be a                      for us. Everything went well for the first couple of days. Then the Germans started to bring in reinforcements, which . . . in a few weeks . . . we had just about all the opposition we could handle.

Then the Germans started to lay a heavy artillery barrage on us, twenty-four hours a day. Then they would send over great formations of airplanes. We had to practically live underground. They delayed us from taking Rome, as planned.

After four months, we broke through to Rome with very little opposition.

s/PFC Daniel Stratz  
Battery C, 160th F.A.

Well it was in the Battery at Anzio one day when I was told that I was to go out on FO, so as soon as our party was ready we went forward to observe fire for the battery. When we reached our post it was raining pretty hard by this time. We bedded down the best we could. Later on the Lieutenant in charge said he was going down to the CP to see what he could find out about the lines. And that was the last I ever seen of him. We waited and waited for him but he never returned. While we were waiting for the dawn to come, Germans started to come up the hill at us, we waited until they got so close that we had to get out and run for it. I was the last one out of the hole, and when I did get out I didn't know which way the other men had gone, so I just started to run, later on to find out that it was in the wrong direction.

While I was making good time across the field, I was spotted by the enemy who started firing at me right away. I fell to the ground and just stayed there for I knew that I couldn't get away from them now. A few minutes later I could hear them coming closer. I froze there on the ground as if I were dead. One of the Germans walked over to me and kicked me with his foot, but I was dead to them for I hadn't moved all during their stay.

If I had moved just once it would have been my last, I'm sure. After a few minutes they went on by, but I just stayed where I was until the next morning. By then our men had come up and taken the ground back and was I happy to see them again! But to this day I haven't seen the Lieutenant who was in charge of our party. And it is an experience I shall never forget.

WRITER UNKNOWN

My most exciting and also saddest experience happened at Salerno Valley. We were moving down the road with the infantry, and the battery was following the infantry vehicles. At approximately 5:00 a.m. we heard a tank firing. Lt. Crane, now Captain, went forward to see if he could spot the tank. We came to the edge of a hill and also a curve in the road. Dan Straitz, our driver from Maryland, stopped the vehicle and Lt. Crane climbed a tree to establish his O.P. From this tree he gave his commands to Richard Shoumher, who relayed them to me. I sent them to F.O.C. by radio. It seemed like all hell broke loose when some anti-tank guns opened up and then there were machine guns from every direction chattering. These machine guns hit Capt. McCain. He died within two hours, and also Lt. Buckley, who was killed instantly. Lt. Crane came down to see if there was anything he could do to help, but upon seeing Capt. McCain, went immediately back, and said, "Now I really have some reason to get the so and sos". He layed the artillery out until F.O.C. ..told us we only had ten rounds left in each gun. We then called on the 36th Division, and fired them for about five hours. All of this time, the Germans were slowly closing in on us and were laying plenty of artillery on our position. Capt. McCain was buried here with a small ceremony.

WRITER UNKNOWN



In considering my most interesting experience, I believe that it will not really be one that I have had overseas . . . I have had several in the states . . . Yet, (my experiences in the states) would not necessarily be experiences where life and death were involved; although one does sometimes have such experiences.

It is hard to choose this incident or occasion, in my case, for I believe I may be one who didn't have any real outstanding thing happen to me; yet there are several instances which will long be remembered by me . . . even though they (may) be uninteresting to others.

However . . . I choose to select . . . after considering experiences at Salerno, Anzio, Venafro, France and Germany . . . the first day (D. Day) for me on July 10, 1943, in Southern Sicily. This day was outstanding to me for a number of reasons. One, perhaps, was following the old axiom that a first impression is a lasting one. That is . . . (it) was my first contact with the enemy that we had heard so much about. Then too, this day was so long, and every minute filled with something new and exciting, and I never quite knew what to expect. It started very early in the morning. (I hadn't slept any the night before). When the big Convoy was rolling in the rough Mediterranean

several miles off the shore of Southern Sicily. Fires started by previous bombings could be seen inland, and to climax it all the tremendous barrage of shells began pouring inland, with all colors of the rainbow represented.

This had an erie effect on me for I expected a like amount in return. But none came. That is, until suddenly the sky became lighted by several aerial flares, and aircraft warning came from the ship's alarms.

Suddenly, I realized we were like a duck on a pond. When a large bomb hit off our starboard stern, I felt the concussion in the ship, and knew I had been shot at.

Of course, climbing down the net, into the LCV wasn't new, but it was in a different atmosphere. A few light shells hit the water as we went in. Then we scraped bottom. The landing had been made. We now had a fight on dry land ahead of us. Our peep missed a **land** mine by inches...as the beach was covered with them.

The infantry flushed two Italians with a machine gun 20 yards behind us as we removed waterproofing from our peep. It was about now that aircraft returned to strafe the beach and knock down a hapless Navy Observer plane. While surveying

our first gun positions, M. P. 's marched the first German P. W. 's by. Here went the Super Race. (Yet, they were very impressive to me . . good physical condition and clean.) All day we saw more of these *straying* to the rear, but not many compared to the number a year or two later.

We could hear every tank fire falling a few thousand yards away, which isn't impressive to a Veteran . . but very much so to a Rookie in Combat.

It was this day that I fixed in my mind my classification of dangers in order of their strength: Artillery, Aircraft, Mines, Snipers and S & A for an Artilleryman.

I stuck to this conviction all the way through.

Somehow, through all the excitement, I managed to get an impressive view of the terrain and characteristics of Sicily that I'll always remember.

This . . my first day in Combat . . is my most interesting experience.

WRITER UNKNOWN