

We were here for Elmer Krou's Army Life moved to Saarlauten, Germany. We were stale mated. It had been bombed and everything was rubble. We lived in a bombed out house in 1 room and I was drafted Feb. 10, 1943 and was sent to Ft. McClellan, AL. I had basic training there for 13 weeks and was sent to Blacksburg, VA. 88 out the 800 men had an IQ over 115. Mine was 119. We went to VPI for 4 months and the Army Specialized Training Program was discontinued. (The men that were not sent to Blacksburg, were shipped to North Africa)

I then moved to Camp Kroft, S.C. Repo Depot Company. There I pulled stockade guard. I was there only a month and went to Camp Shelby, MISS. 65th Infantry Division on a training cadre. They trained men and shipped them out. I worked up thru the ranks and became a Staff sergeant. It was there I met a good friend, Oakie, a preacher's son, from CK. We advanced thru the non-coms together. We both went to Camp Shanks, N.J. to ship overseas. Oakie was in the 2nd Platoon and I was in the 3rd.

It was there at the front line I had to send 1/2 of my squad. It took 14 days to cross the ocean. Instead of water in the swimming pool, we had potatoes. There were 33 ships in the convoy - troop carriers, cargo, destroyers, air craft, etc. Our forwarding party was in England, but the Battle of the Bulge broke out, so they sent us to LeHarve, France. We lived on an air strip in six-man tents. With little water and fuel. We had only 1 helmet of coal for 6 men. Because it was so cold, we had to put guards on our tent as the other G.I.'s would steal your tent pegs for fuel. We were not to cut any trees, but I took my platoon out to the woods and left 1/2 to guard and the 1/2 cut down a tree. We took some of the wood into the Capt. and told him what we did and he said he hoped we didn't get caught. The next day the 1st Sgt. said there was a memo laying on his desk and he knew I would go check it. It said all Company Commanders would check their company area for fresh cut wood. They came in our tent checking. The Capt. stood in front of the stove and warmed his hands and could not find any fresh cut wood. I had it buried right in front of the stove, with ashes brushed over the fresh dirt. Two divisions were living on 1 Divisions rations. We ate at 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., 2 meals a day.

Everyone got dysentary. One guy ran in the Officers latrine and messed all over the seat. The Battalion Commander went down to the latrine and sat on it! The next day we had to use our drinking water to scrub the seats - all of them!

We sneaked off base at night and traded cigarettes for french bread, which was a no no, we were not to go off base! The USO truck would give us oil that they fried their donuts, and we would fry our bread. I bought a candy bar on the ship for 5¢ and sold it for \$5.00. I didn't want to sell it, but for \$5.00, I did it!

Elmer Krou's Army Life cont'd.

When we started to move out, my 3rd Squad leader, Osborne, thought the front door was booby trapped, so he went in thru the window, hitting the table, which was booby trapped and blew his leg off.

The artillery bombed the town before we took it. There were dead German soldiers lying beside the road and one of my men put his head of his helmet and stuck a cigarette in his mouth.

Got in one town and we could see German soldiers in an open field and took up billets at edge of the town. The house was just being built with no windows or doors that we stayed in. The Weapons Platoon leader set up a machine gun at the window opening and fired at the Germans on the ridge with tracers. He wanted to find out how far they were, so he could set up mortar fire and fire mortars at them. The Germans saw where the machine gun was being fired, so they started firing 88 artillery at our house. I called Company C.P. to ask for counter artillery fire. They asked me where they were coming from and I said, How the Hell do I know! rake the ridge and scare the hell out of them! The next day we moved where they had been and found where their "forward Observer" had been, as we could see where he sat and smoked cigarettes.

A shell went off outside the house and blew 1 side in. That is where I got set back on a hot skillet and never got burned as I got hit with shrapnel in the right side of my upper lip. There were 3 of us that had gotten hit, but all minor. We all jumped out the back window in a manure pile and crawled in a hog wallow underneath the house for protection to get away from the shelling. We stayed there for an hr. or so till the shelling quit.

Lane and I went back into the house to check of supplies and damage. As we looked out the front, there was a German soldier coming to the front door. There was also one about 200 yds. away. Lane and I each thought the other would shoot at the closest German, and each shot at the one farthest away. The one at the door came up missing and we never found him. He was a scared as we were.

The last objective that we took was Linz, Austria. The German soldiers marched back 2 abreast surrendering. They wanted to be American prisoners, rather than Russian prisoners. I was in charge of the wounded German soldiers at a hospital. That is where we heard over the radio that the Germans had Surrendered!

Had 3 week guard on a winery. An Italian told me that there was no wine, however, I tapped on the barrels and found them full. Each Squad spend one day on guard. Had 3 squads. One day on and 2 days off. They would bring back 8 bottles when they came off duty.

They transferred us to Friestadt, Germany, next to Russians, to pull guard on a Railroad Depot. We were there all summer. We had 10 in 1 Rations. I shared the Platoon C Rations with the Squad to supplement them and then we got fresh meat (hamburger) for Sunday dinner. We would barter with the civilians for eggs and potatoes with cigarettes or money. We took turns cooking. Somehow it turned out I always had to cook Sunday dinner. I would make meat loaf with pineapple rings on top. The ~~unit~~ would not even do a dish and

he never made anything over 2nd Lt. The Lt. complained about always having the samething to eat, but never helped. One Sunday , he was complaining about my cooking, and Stroup said, "God dammit if you don't like Sgt. Elmer's cooking, you don't have to eat it." He took the plate away and sat it behinbd and the Lt. didn't get anything for dinner. He didn't c omplain any more to me, nor did he help.

] went down to the underpass wahren 3rd. Squad was pulling guard duty at the campfire that nite. Wh en I came back at 10:00 p.m., I had no bed to sleep in. The Company Jeep jockey had run a couple of girls out for him and the Lt. I didn't even have a b lanket to sleep on the floor. I cussed a little and went to the 3rd Squard and spent the nite The next morning ] went back to the Platoon CP and got the eggs I had bartered for and Orval and I made pancakes for the 3rd squad. We were sitting there enjoying our coffee, when here came the Lt. and wanted to know what happened to the eggs at the Platoon C.P. I told him, "I used them to make pancakes." He asked me, "what he was suppose to feed Hilda?" I said, "You slept with her, you feed h er."

We got word fighting was over with Japan and they deactivated our Division in Germany and sent us to other Divisioins. I and the Lt. did NOT say goodbye to each other.

I got transferred with points to the 80th Div. to come home. They put out a bulletin that if we reinlisted, they would make our rating permanent in the Army and send us home for the Holiday for 30 days. Dad had had a stroke, so I reinlisted to come home. 2 days later at brkfst., the 1st Sgt. asked me if I was sober? I said, "sure, why?" He said, "I was drunk when I reinlisted and I explained why I did it. He told me he hadn't turned it in and it was still on his desk. I did not finish brkfst. I went to the Orderly Room and found it on his desk and tore it up.

I had enough points and was discharged the 15th of March, 1946.