

Recollections of my Army Life during World War II

Across **E**urope

In a **H**alf-**T**rack

by

FLOYD J. DEMMY

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Edited by David W. Demmy, Sr.



circa 1942

Route-Step, March!

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during World War II***

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Foreword:

The editor wishes to express the pleasure and enjoyment of editing and printing this story of my father's adventures, maneuvers, and combat encounters, during World War II.

Dad's description of the activities his family lived, day in and day out, during the WWII era, and how he weaved his family and himself into the historical events of '40s is presented here, not only your reading enjoyment, but as a history lesson for you and me.

To family and friends, enjoy this story of the activities of one soldier from his departure from Harrisburg, to the Deep South, and on to the warfront somewhere in Germany as the United States and its Allies pursue the Third Reich.

**-- Editor: David W. Demmy, Sr.,
Proud son of Floyd J. Demmy**

Additional research by editor, David W. Demmy, Sr.

**Many Graphics prepared by Floyd's grandson,
Dave W. Demmy, Jr., March 2002.**

Additional graphics were added in recent years.

World War II Begins



On Sunday, December 7, 1941, the Empire of Japan, attacked Pearl Harbor and that drew America into World War II. President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, declared this act of aggression as "The Day of Infamy".

***These recollections* are my most vivid memories of the events, sounds, tastes, smells, and personalities, too - of those cruel years of WWII.**

– Floyd J. Demmy

As America prepared for war, my brother, William G. Demmy, Jr., was drafted and entered the U.S. Army. This was new to my mother, Esther G. Demmy, as she had no one that had served during World War I. But now, she had a son in the Army and he was sent to the African Campaign. I tried to join a branch of the service; I fancied the Army Air Corps, but she wouldn't sign for me, and yet more of my friends were enlisting in the different branches of the armed services.

National scrap recycling collection was everywhere. One poster said:

**Turn in Scrap
Beat the Japs**

No cars were manufactured after 1942! Factories retooled for the War effort. Kids played army instead of cowboys and Indians.

The war continued and then came the day when I received my draft notice from the government to report for induction into the armed forces.

I was eighteen at the time and reported to the designated place downtown for my pre-induction physical. Having passed the exam I tried to get into the Marines, but they weren't taking any more recruits that day. I then asked about the Air Force and again they weren't taking any more recruits that day! So, I said, "Okay, make it the Army." I certainly didn't want the Navy, as there was just too much water to deal with. The powers to be stamped my papers "Army".

I was inducted into the Army on Wednesday, October 11, 1944 and had to report to New Cumberland Army Depot - just across the Susquehanna River from Harrisburg. While I was there, on Monday the 16th, my grandmother, Sallie (Kuntz) Koons Demmy [my Dad's mother] died. My Dad, William G. Demmy, Sr., had died in 1936 and Mother raised 7 of her surviving children alone. During the period we recruits were at New Cumberland, Gret Jacobs, who later became my wife, visited me several times. Her younger brother Donald accompanied her to see me at least once before I departed New Cumberland. The authorities gave us a card to send home. I sent the card to my Mother to let her know I would be shipping out the following morning. I still have the card as Mother kept all the cards and letters that my brother Bill and I sent to her. See image of the card in the appendix.

I recall one fellow with us at New Cumberland. He was from New Cumberland or Camp Hill and the reason I recall him is that he had one blue eye and one brown eye. I haven't seen him since those days at New Cumberland waiting for a train to take us away to training. Every now and then I think of him.

Most homes had a blue star in the window to indicate a son or daughter was serving in the armed forces. Mother now had **2 blue ★ stars** to display.

Off to Basic Training

The time came and we boarded a train and headed south. I could tell by the towns we passed and the signs along the way that we were continuing into Dixie that pulled the powerful engine and upon a curve in the down the entire train.



territory. The locomotive Pullman cars was a at times, when we came line, we could see up and That's when I knew how powerful that locomotive was and the black smoke would belch from the stack on even the slightest grade and the whistle was strong and deep.

I'm sure the fireman kept a full head of steam by making sure the coal was constantly pulled into the firebox by the stoker. As I thought along those lines, the whistle blew again because we were approaching a crossing. Sometimes there would be small children standing by the tracks, some were waving, some were holding their ears. To hear a train whistle at night is really a mournful sound especially when you are leaving for the unknown, not knowing when you'll return home again. I can almost hear that whistle now just thinking back to when that train carried me on a southern route. As the train carried us from one state and entered another southern state, ever traveling southward, I couldn't help but wonder just where we were bound.

After several days traveling on the train, it stopped at a railroad station, probably in South Carolina. That's when I noticed the signs for the restrooms. Some of the restroom signs indicated "white" and others indicated "colored". That was my first experience with the difference in the way people were treated. The time was 1944 in the Deep South.

I was getting restless sitting on the train and since I had worked on the Pennsylvania Railroad, I felt I could climb into the cab of that old Locomotive and ease the throttle out and send that train down the rails. The guys I was with probably thought I was just making that up, but I surely would have liked to have given it a try.

Eventually our train came upon a military installation and it finally stopped. It was dark out and very early in the morning and the barracks looked like big warehouses in the dark. We were told to go inside and grab a bunk until reveille was sounded. It seemed like we no more closed our eyes than the bugle sounded to get up and hit the deck. When we fell out on the quadrangle trying to look like we knew how to stand at attention, the sergeant yelled in his southern drawl, "When you hear your name called, answer cheer!" ('here'). Before I was drafted, I had joined a group that did some close order drilling and we used .45-70 rifles for drill training; also, we were in training to help forest rangers in case of fires. I think all this had come about because of so many older fellows having been taken into military service. Anyway, I had no problem with the Army training I was receiving.

In the beginning of training, we were issued clodhopper-like boots and leggings that covered the tops of the boots and the bottom of the trousers. You probably have seen parades, where drill teams wear white leggings. Before we graduated, the Army issued us high top brown combat boots with a fuzzy surface. The fuzzy, rough-like surface made it difficult to polish. Those of us that preferred to look sharper than the average G. I., burned the fuzzy stuff off of the boots, making the surface smooth for shoe polish and a little shine.

It was strange! You couldn't find anyone that spoke like we did, having come from Pennsylvania. Nearly everyone spoke with some kind of a southern accent. The guys from Texas would say, "Howdy" and the ones from most of the other southern states would say, "How you all!" Likewise, some of the northern boys might say, "How-r-yunz?" We now had our first look at Camp Wheeler, Georgia. I have a souvenir from Camp Wheeler; it's a book of matches with the Camp's name printed on it.

Training

From that time forward, it was training, training, and more training. First with close order drill, then marches, and often forced marches; next came our M-1 rifles and then additional training with bayonets.

At first with bayonets against targets that resembled a man, and then with scabbards on the steel, when we practiced against each other. Also, the firing range and hand grenades and mortars and machine guns, and crawling under barbed wire and many other dangers that we may encounter when we hit the real thing. You had to be good enough to put your weapon together, even in the dark, you never knew what you may run into when you may be confronted with the enemy. I have a small notebook with notes on compass reading, map reading, first aid, and other notes that I had written during training in 1944.

Other training consisted of probing for buried land mines and there we were on our hands and knees with a bayonet. When you felt your blade strike metal, you had to clear the mine, mark it, or raise it up. Sometimes the enemy may bury one on top of another mine, making it even more dangerous to deal with the mines. The training made you feel as if this was the real thing. Could I be so calm! Also, you better step in the same footprints retreating from the minefield.

In the squad I was assigned to, I was given an additional duty, to be the first scout, which was okay with me. Each time we were out on a maneuver on the training field, and we had to locate the enemy, I looked forward to the tactical maneuvers, to the responsibility of being a scout searching for the enemy. I felt like being in the movies like when Gary Cooper played the part of the scout checking out the Indian Camp and then reporting back to the main force, that was held in reserve. All those years of watching the Lone Range and Tonto paid off! I was on the outlook for any Krauts [derogatory nickname for our enemy, the German Soldiers]. I knew exactly how to use the terrain as cover.

As the days wore on, we found we could go to the town that was close to Camp, but most of the time we were just too bushed to do anything after chow in the evening and during weekends. But there were always those guys that goofed off and sat out the hikes and marches only to rejoin us on our return to Camp. Guess who the first ones was cleaned-up and ready for the bus to go to town; while the rest of us could hardly make it to the PX [a Post Exchange is a store for military personnel to purchase personal items like magazines, smokes, shaving cream, etc.]

Most evenings, some of us guys would go to the PX and drink a bottle of soft drink or near-beer (tasted like regular beer, but it didn't have the alcohol content). In other words, it would be difficult to become drunk on this near-beer, while we would sit by the jukebox and play our favorite songs. Some of the popular songs back then were, 'Cold, Cold Heart' by Hank Williams; 'Jealous Heart Stop Beating' by Tex Ritter; 'At Mail Call Today'; and 'Slipping Around', to name a few!

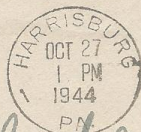
When I arrived at Camp Wheeler, the only music heard down South was country songs. My family always liked country music, so I fit in just fine when I hit Georgia. The southern guys all liked me because I knew the country songs as well as they did and maybe even better! They called me the Pennsylvania Rebel, which *sat-well* with me. The most popular country singers in the 40's were Hank Williams, Ernest Tubbs, Tex Ritter, Eddie Arnold, Hank Snow, Roy Acuff, Gene Autry, and Jimmy Davis!

Whenever I did have an opportunity to go to town, the black people seemed to walk on the part of the sidewalk closest to the curb, while the white folks walked mostly in the middle of the pavements. Again, that was something we didn't see back home in Pennsylvania.

Mai | Call

It surely was great when we had Mail Call and I received at least one letter or package from home. It seemed that was all we looked forward to, just to hear from home and, of course, to write to loved-ones at home, too.

M.E. Gilbert
2132 N 7th St
Harrisburg, Pa

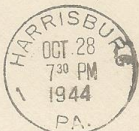


Pvt. Floyd J. Demmy #33878432

Co. A. 9th Bn.

Camp Wheeler,
Georgia

From:
Mrs. Esther Demmy,
2130 N. 7th St.
Harrisburg,
Pa.



Pvt. Floyd J. Demmy,
A.S.N. 33878432

Co. A - Plat. 1 9th Bn.

Camp Wheeler,
Georgia.

AFTER 5 DAYS, RETURN TO

Mrs. F. B. Beagum
7446 Elm St
Rushville Pa



Pvt. Floyd J. Demmy 33873432

Co. A. 9th Bn.

Camp Wheeler,
Georgia

VIA AIR MAIL

I wrote to Brother Bill, too, and let him know just how I was progressing in my military training.

After the war and we were home, I recall Bill relaying a story to me about one of his inspections while he was going through boot camp. Sometime shortly after one of their forced marches, Bill told me his training company had an inspection in the barracks. When the inspecting officer came to Bill's canteen, he unscrewed the cap and turned the canteen upside down. Unfortunately, some water rolled out and onto the floor, splashing the officer's highly spit-shined shoes. Brother Bill not only received a demerit for not emptying and drying his canteen, but he was given quite a lecture about *paying attention to detail*. Everything, and the Army means everything, should be squared away after a maneuver -- the soldier, his rifle, his gear, his uniform, everything. Failure to pay attention to detail could cost lives in combat. Bill didn't forget that incident and it served him well during his tour of Africa and Italy:

Bill was awarded a Division Citation for exceptionally meritorious conduct, while serving with the Fifth Army front in Italy with the service battery of the 151st Field Artillery Battalion of the 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division. 'While driving ammunition vehicle, Corporal Demmy observed ammunition burning and exploding in a nearby ammo dump as a result of enemy shellfire. He was leading his truck at the time, but despite the danger involved, he finished the job and delivered the ammunition to one of the batteries. On another occasion Corporal Demmy drove for 72 hours continuously, without an assistant driver, over a route being intermittently shelled by hostile artillery'.

Family away from Home

Within a few weeks, I learned that Gret's sister, Ruth's husband, Randall Blackburn, was stationed at Camp Wheeler, too. I went over to his training company several times to visit him before my cycle was completed. Years later, I learned that Teddy Berman was also stationed at Camp Wheeler.

Teddy is one of Gret's Aunt Rosie's sons. With all of the combat training that the Army was providing us with, I wondered, many times, what the future held for us, especially me! But that thought would soon be forgotten as we became familiar with one type of weapon, only to learn to use another weapon. We trained on Army carbine rifles and M-1 rifles.

The uniforms that we were issued were certainly not tailor made! Some guys' pants were too short in the legs or the coat or blouse was too big for that fellow and looked sloppy. Garrison belts were issued with blouses or coats when I was inducted, but they were discontinued by the time we were issued clothing at boot camp. Some guys looked like they slept in their uniforms. But as time marched on and we all learned to dress the proper Army way and shined our shoes correctly we began to take shape. The shoes we had were like clodhoppers and we had leggings that came halfway up the calf of our legs. We tucked our pant legs in the legging or bloused them with rubber bands or elastic, down over the leggings. Before we graduated from basic training, we really looked sharp! Once we were assigned to a regular unit or platoon or squad and we received a rank of PFC (Private First Class) and a unit patch on our left shoulder indicating what Division we were assigned to, our uniforms began to look like we were somebody.

Once I left my sideburns grow to the bottom of my ears – I got chewed out royally and was told to cut them short. I then cut them so short I had no sideburns at all – again I got chewed out (for looking different).

Army Chow Lines

When we were away from camp and had to eat in the field, we would line up at the cook's tent to be served our chow onto our mess gear. If it was raining, the rain would run down our necks and chill us to the bone, even before we had a chance to find a place to sit down.



There was generally a sign at the mess hall, “take all you can eat, but eat all you take”. I almost never grumbled about our meals! From little up we were glad to get whatever was prepared for us.



I recall one cold miserable morning in the forests of Germany. It was well before dawn. The only light was in the mess tent. Upon receiving the daily breakfast of eggs, I departed the tent to find a place to eat. Before I could even locate a tree to back up to for support, my eggs and toast were already cold. Back to the mess tent to scrub our mess gear, dip 'em into hot soapy water, risen 'em, and move onward. Another town, another conflict was just ahead as we continued to close in on the Third Reich!



Above is a typical set up of a kitchen on the road with us from town to fighting town!

[back home again] Before we completed basic, I got to know a fellow named George Cornell from the Bedford area, this side of Altoona. Basic training must have worked upon his nerves because one day while standing at attention outside the barracks just before the evening chow meal, he began to shake something awful. He was taken to sickbay and before long, he was sent home. I was able to see him a couple of times after I was discharged, once in White Hill and another time out in Bedford.

During the latter course of training, the authorities approached us and encouraged us to join the paratroopers. After a brief class on how to jump from an airplane and a military presentation about airborne training, I signed up to go to Jump School, whether it might be Fort Bragg, North Carolina, or Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon graduation from training at Camp Wheeler, those of us that had signed up for Jump School, were informed that the Army couldn't use us as future airborne troopers, because they would have to hold us over for several weeks before they would be able to start a new training group at one of the airborne schools.

Therefore, I was sent home on furlough prior to being sent to the ETO [Europe Theatre of Operations]. Boy, those seven days at home in Harrisburg flew by and I was onto Fort Meade, Maryland.

From Maryland to New York and across the Atlantic Ocean

After reporting in at Fort Meade, we boarded a train headed for Philadelphia on the way to Fort Hamilton, New York. We spent the night at that Fort.

The next day, we were trucked to Camp Shanks, New York, and our Port of Embarkation, to board a ship that would carry us to Europe. We boarded the 1913 mighty cruise ship named the *Aquatania*. I believe she may have been a sister ship to the *Luisitania*, that had been sunk a number of years earlier. I believe the same builders who constructed the ill-fated Titanic built them. Harland and Wolff Shipbuilders built the *Titanic* in Belfast, Ireland.

The size was of such importance that even though *Titanic* only required three smokestacks, a dummy (#4) would be added, since it was feared the public might perceive ships like Cunard's four stack ships *Mauritania* and *Lusitania* to be more powerful. Images of the *Aquatania* are provided in the appendix.

John Maxtone-Graham in "Liners to the Sun," recounts a funny story about *Aquatania's* first WWII crossing back to England. By the time WWII rolled around, *Aquatania* remained the sole four-funnel ship in the world.

At that time, the 1935 *Queen Mary* and 1940 *Queen Elizabeth* were the two largest cruise ships in the world. Then came the *Normandie*, which was French; however, the French people sank it in 1942, so that the Germans couldn't use it in their war machine. That made the nearly 25-year-old *Aquatania*, the 3rd largest ship on the seas.

We set sail, and as the Statue of Liberty faded from view, I wondered if we would ever see the United States again. It's very scary not knowing if you will ever return or see your loved ones again.

This ship had staterooms and showers and a beautiful ballroom and Cafeteria. It looked like the Hollywood movies about the *Titanic*, with wide staircases leading from the upper decks down to the ballroom or dance floor. But, of course, English cooks made the food and there was no coffee, only *tea*.

I spent nearly every day on the deck watching the ocean and wondered if a German U-boat [submarine] might attempt to sink us. Those

thoughts left me as I watched the water as it rushed by the side of the ship. It reminded me of when I watched my Mother wash clothes and I'd see the same-colored water swishing back and forth from the movement of the agitator. As the ship sliced through the ocean waters, I tried to imagine what it must be like in combat, as I formed lots of thoughts from war movies I'd seen growing up. Remember, that time in history was way before television and only Hollywood movies gave us visuals of war, and movies in those days were not as graphic as they have become 60+ years after WWII.

Land in Sight

Then the day came that land was sighted on the horizon and I knew we were somewhere in the area of Europe. We docked at Glasgow, Scotland and with everything we owned on our back and marching from the ship to the train station; we boarded a train at that point. The train coaches were like out of the movies we had seen back home, but yet they didn't seem real. They were more like streetcars and any minute I thought they would jump the track. We rode the train through the beautiful countryside with the many rolling hills and fields separated by countless stone walls. The quaint houses with thatched roofs upon many of them, the small towns, the people on bicycles, some walking, the sheep being led by sheep dogs from one field to another!

Finally, we reached South Hampton, England, and debarked from the train. I don't remember if we stayed over night at South Hampton on another ship to take us across the English Channel or if we immediately set sail. As we set sail, darkness fell around us, and later that night, I had to pull guard duty on that English ship. There I was, standing against the bulkhead in the dark and couldn't see anything, so what was the REASON for pulling guard duty in the middle of nowhere. [Just military harassment or perhaps it was one of those standard things that *everything* must be guarded when the sun goes down]. That night, while on guard duty, I didn't feel good in my stomach. I couldn't wait for the guy to relieve me! I high-tailed it to the latrine! Scratch one pair of long johns, which I left on that English ship.

The Mainland Ahead - Sprachige Deutsch?

The next day, as daylight broke, we saw the shores of France, and the houses that stood out from the deck of the ship were German pill boxes [bunkers] when we came ashore. There were still signs of "D-Day" though we hadn't seen any German soldiers. As we came onto the shore, I couldn't help but think that the Battle of the Bulge [Bastogne] had just ended and the Allies were fighting to get a foothold in Nazi Deutschland [Germany].

We were trucked across France on the way to Germany, our enemy. As I write these reflections of my days during WWII, I recall reading how my great-grandfather, David Demmy, a member of the 127th Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers Infantry, during America's War of the Rebellion [Civil War] had left Langley outside of Washington, D. C., and marched into Virginia, the land of the enemy, the Confederate Rebels. And the history of the 127th reveals they were "**approaching the country of the enemy.**" And there I was, in the back of an Army deuce and half truck, [2 ½ ton truck], "**approaching the country of the enemy.**" As we rode on towards Germany, see image in appendix the people we saw were like folks back home. They looked like hard-working people and their apparel was mostly plain, nothing fancy. We stopped at a repo depo [replacement depot center] and were issued weapons: a rifle, bayonet, and sidearm. I wondered at the time, if the M-1 rifle issued to me, was no longer needed by the prior owner. [A Garand M-1 rifle is displayed in the appendix].

Editor's note: U.S. Third Army commander, General George S. Patton, Jr., praised John Garland's M-1 rifle as the "best battle implement ever devised."

"The only way you can win a war is to attack and keep on attacking, and after you have done that, keep attacking some more."

- General George Smith Patton Jr., January 1945

G. I. Issued

'G.I.'! Wonder what that means. Many believe it was derived from the phrase "Government Issue". Here's a description about the gear we carried on our backs:

When it became apparent that we trainees would be going overseas, we had to get everything packed to take with us. Now this meant

everything we possessed. We had to roll our stockings, underwear, shirt and shorts, our winter pants and shirts, summer pants and shirts, handkerchiefs, everything issued to us, everything we owned. These items had to be rolled as tight as possible. Sweaters, long johns, caps, everything that we weren't wearing the day of departure were to be packed; we had been issued 3 of each item!



We had a haversack (half of a tent), two carrying bags, and one that was laced to the bottom of the other. We would fill one bag with everything we could squeeze into it, and then fill the other before lacing them together. The haversack half would be laid out on the ground or bunk. Next, we would spread our blankets on it. And laying in a row everything on the blankets or whatever wouldn't fit inside the bags.

We would then roll the haversack and blankets up in a tight roll. We would include our washcloths and towels in this roll that we bent, to look like a horseshoe. There were small pockets on the outside of the bags. These pockets were for small items like toiletries, cigarettes, Kaugummi, (chewing gum) writing paper, etc. We didn't have to worry about stamps. The government supplied a sheet for writing letters. The document folded up into an airmail envelope. See copy of one of those envelopes in the appendix.

Now we had 2 bags laced together with the roll on top and bent down both sides of the bags and laced tight with our raincoat rolled and laced to the top of the entire roll.

When we slung this onto our back and the straps hooked to our cartridge belt which acted like suspenders, it went from the nape of necks to the bottom of our spine and as wide as our shoulders. This equipment weighted approximately 60 pounds per man. Whatever else we owned was packed into our duffel bag. In addition, each soldier had a rifle and perhaps a sidearm and ammunition for each. Now the trick was to walk without falling down from the weight; hence, the command, route-step, March. **Route-Step, March** is the command for a relaxed – forward march.

The War Front



10TH ARMORED SHELLS TOWN AFTER TOWN

Then we entered into Germany and we saw what was left from the recent fighting. **The reality of the destruction of war far exceeded what Hollywood ever presented, to the movie-going public, in the comfort of a movie theatre!** As we made our way to the city of Trier, we saw POWs [prisoners of war]. They were cleaning up the aftermath from the bombing and shelling of the towns as the conflict took Americans deeper into the Rhineland.

Trier was considered Germany's oldest city and contains many more important Roman remains, than any other place in northern Europe. There is supposed to be piers and buttresses for the bridge over the Mosel and is said to be dated from 28 B.C.

Common Scene in many Villages

I was assigned as a rifleman on a **half-track** vehicle [see image in appendix] in Company B., of the 54th Armored Infantry Battalion, of the 10th Armored Division (Tiger), 3rd Army, ETO. I found out that our guys had to fight awfully hard to take **Trier**, some of those veterans "likened it to another Bastogne"). They stopped long enough to take on more supplies

and replacements such as myself. Our squad took over a house to stay in while taking a break from the fighting. These houses were lined up along one side of the street and in the backyard, there were ditches running from one yard to another. So, a Kraut could stay in the ditch and run the length of the row of houses without coming out of the ditch.



Sniper Search, Fohren, Germany Sig C 80-10

The cellar was the same way. There was a 2-foot hole in every cellar wall so that a sniper could leave one cellar and dart into the next. So how do you catch or stop a sniper, when he shoots at you from the windows of one house, and then disappears, only to pop up in another house and shoot at you again?



10TH ARMORED HALFTTRACK ON THE MOVE 10TH M4 – SHERMAN TANK LEADING WAY!

The following morning, we mounted up and headed southeast, before any more Krauts started firing and we would be sitting ducks as the area where we were traveling was *open country* and we had nowhere to hide. Just a week earlier, these guys I was assigned to were in the thick of

the fighting at Bastogne known as the Battle of the Bulge. The Battle of the Bulge which lasted from December 16, 1944 to January 28, 1945 was the largest land battle of World War II in which the United States participated.

More than a million men fought in this battle including some 600,000 Germans, 500,000 Americans, and 55,000 British.

A few days later, our half-track driver got the shakes and started crying. I guess the tension and the fighting got the best of him. They put him in the rear of the half-track and he covered himself with a woolen G. I. Blanket. He lay there and shook something awful. He was sent to the rear and probably to a hospital on his way back home. While we were sitting in the *open*, the guys that were manning the .30 caliber machine gun and the .50 caliber machine gun, were yelling for more ammo.



I reached over to the side of the half-track where we carried the extra ammo. That was when I saw the tracers floating over our heads. Now these tracers were a way of seeing where your bullets were hitting because they seemed to just float to the target.

I would write to my brother Bill from time to time and try to visualize just what he was doing at the time of my writing to him.



From that day forward, we hit resistance the whole way to the **Rhine River**. **Kaiserslautern** was next on our list. Upon leaving Kaiserslautern, we traveled on an autobahn. It was the first time I saw a divided highway. Every day we could expect some resistance from the enemy and the snipers were really nerve-racking!



It seemed every town we tried to take, the snipers would try to pick one of our men off, and we couldn't seem to get the drop on these snipers.

They would disappear just as quickly as they would shoot at us. After a couple of episodes like that, we began to stop just outside of the town. Then every vehicle, whether it was a tank, half-track, jeep, truck, or whatever we drove, would open fire upon the town. When we advanced forward into town, there wouldn't be a window left untouched in any house or building. Whenever we walked down the sidewalks, the men on the right side of the street watched the window openings on the left side of the street. The men on the left watched the doors and window openings on the right side of the street. In that manner, we covered each other. The Krauts knew we weren't fooling around. These steps literally put a stop to the sniper action against us.



I didn't like night fighting, probably because I couldn't see worth a darn once it was dark. Also, it always seemed I was following a short guy and he always blended into the foreground, instead of being a silhouette against the lighter sky before me. When you can't see who is *friend* or who may be *foe*; that is really scary!

One time, in a town after dark, some of our guys went into a barn-like building and discovered several Krauts standing beside an 88, which

was an artillery
a brief fight and
of prisoners, their
heads; plus they
with a rifle butt
always glad when
where to spend
as long as we
the night!



piece. There was
we took a couple
hands behind their
left one behind
to his head. I was
we stopped any-
the night, just as
could **STOP** for

On Patrol

Another time, when we were on the move, we stopped briefly outside of the house of a family. There was a light, but steady rainfall that chilled us to the bone. We were trying to keep dry and stay warm. I knocked on the door of this particular home and I asked the *der mann* of the house if he had any schnapps [whiskey]. He brought a water glass out that was full, to give to me. I said, "Danke Schön," but took the bottle instead. A little nip on a wet cold day felt pretty good to a bunch of foot soldiers.

I mentioned sleeping anywhere; just so it was under some kind of cover, it had its drawbacks too. Even though the shelter may have been a house, barn, shed, or just the ground under our vehicle, you never knew what might share your bed with you. We were going through what was called the "Black Forest" and I was itching all around my midsection. We stopped as we had a dozen times a day, so I ran into the woods to check out my clothing. My long johns were full of what looked like salt. I knew they were nits or eggs from body lice, so while I jumped out of my long johns, my squad yelled for me to get aboard. (By the way I was the only one that those little devils jumped upon -- they bothered no one else in my squad!) I hopped back into my uniform and combat boots and then scrambled aboard the half-track.



I couldn't believe I lost another pair of winter underwear. All my life, insects have plagued me. Whenever I went hunting after the war, field ticks would jump upon me and not bother my buddies. Whenever we had pets, the fleas would attack me, no one else in the family. Must have been my body chemistry that attracted the varmints!



Village after village, town after town, we marched, *ran*, and struggled through each obstacle leery of snipers, booby traps or even a squad of German soldiers holding on to that bit of land or a building.

Once we stopped for the night and took over a house by sending the people to their neighbors until we left the next day. Another G. I. and I were awakened about 11:40 p.m. to pull outpost duty. We followed the guy that we were to relieve to the outpost site, where they had a hole dug in the field above the local houses. At that position, we had a .30 caliber machine gun facing the direction in which we believed any Krauts might come from if they desired to attack our location. After our guard duty time was up, I went to wake up the next watch, the guys who were to relieve us, and in the dark all the houses looked alike.

Looking down at the homes I couldn't tell one from the others. Getting my buddy to wake up our replacements seemed like a very good idea.

What was almost funny, if it wasn't so serious, was just before my buddy and I left the outpost to hit the sack again, a figure came into view. There I was with the machine gun trained on him and called out the password, and he gave the correct countersign to our relief. At this point, I don't know what we would have done if he had answered in German. By the way, he couldn't find his relief either!

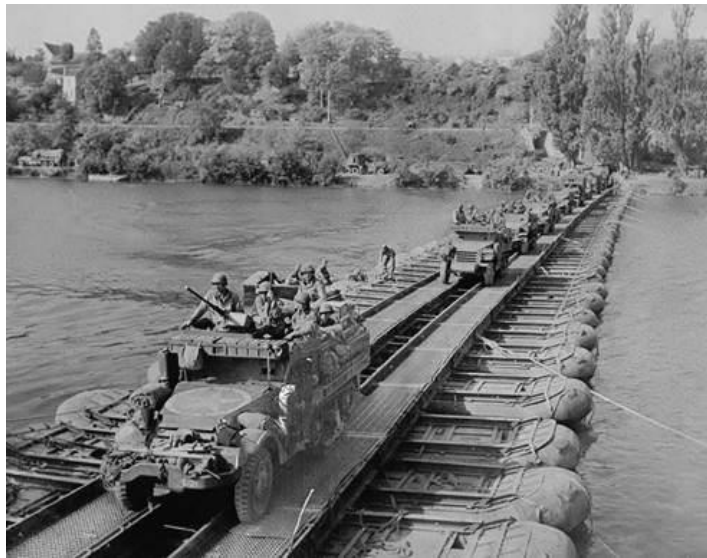
Another time when we stopped for the night, I asked the Frau of the house, where we were staying, if she had any eggs. I followed her to the cellar, and out of a crock of what looked like white creamy stuff; she pulled out a dozen eggs. She rinsed off those eggs and they looked like fresh eggs. It was years later that a woman in this country told me what that white stuff was.

The Europeans would place eggs in a crock and cover the eggs with water. The calcium from the eggshells would make this thick cream like stuff, which in turn, would preserve the eggs.

I had a Wehrmacht flag with the *Swastika* upon it, but after carrying it for a couple of weeks, I finally chucked it. I should have tucked it in my duffel bag. What a souvenir it would be today!



We took town after town – looks like a scene from a Hollywood movie!



With Kaiserslautern behind us, we headed for the Rhine River. We crossed the Rhine at **Mannheim** on March 28th, over *pontoon boats*, thanks to the engineers that were always on the job.



My great grandfather, left, David Demmy, 127th Regiment PA Vol Inf at Camp Curtin, Harrisburg, 1862 on this way to the front at Virginia and pontoon boats into battle – thus, the boats above, remind me of the Civil War engineers, in Fredericksburg, Virginia, in December 1862, who built a pontoon bridge across the Rappahannock River, for the Union forces, *The Army of the Potomac*, to across over into enemy territory and pursue the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia.



10th Crosses Necker Riv, Mannheim, G 80-9

Editor's note: The 10th Armored Division crossed the Rhine River on 28 March 1945, and continued east. With rapid night movements, the "Tigers" continually surprised the Germans by appearing in different sectors. German dispatches referred to the 10th as the "Ghost Division." The division helped to seize Heilbronn, defended the Crailsheim Salient, and moved south to isolate Stuttgart. On 23 April 1945, the 10th crossed the Danube River. Then on 27 April 1945, it led the Seventh Army into Austria. By the conclusion of hostilities on 9 May 1945, the "Tigers" had reached Mittenwald, Bavaria, where they halted, their mission accomplished.

Mannheim, Germany came into view. It looked like a big city, but I didn't see any of it because we kept moving toward Heilbronn, a walled city. I heard the city contained 4 divisions of *S.S.* Troops there, 2 Panzer, and 2 hard-core foot infantry divisions, all *S.S.* Troops too.

During the night and all through the day, you could hear the burp of guns, and other artillery like shells and bombs, also mortars coming from inside of Heilbronn. There was a canal that ran past the city and just on the other side of the canal was a road. Houses lined the side of the road opposite the canal, and our tanks were pulled into the front yards next to each house in case of a breakthrough.

Our shells were falling into Heilbronn and from 12 miles back, so I knew they had to be big stuff. I was standing guard at the entrance to the sidewalk from the road to the house. There was a stone or brick pillar about 6 feet tall along side of the sidewalk, and I was using that as protection in case any enemy fire would come my way.

While on guard at this walkway, I saw a Kraut coming down the road, on a bicycle, toward us and since our squad was on the far end of our platoon, we would be the first G.I.'s the bicyclist would encounter. I allowed him to come within about 10 feet of my position, and then I stepped out and yelled "der Halt"! He came off the bicycle in a flying slide and I wondered how he kept his feet under him. His hobnail boots were skidding on the road. His rifle went sliding across the road, the bicycle ended up in the canal, and after checking him for weapons, I sent him on further down the road toward our Command Post.

Our outfit was pulled out of Heilbronn and sent around southwest of Heilbronn to cut off any retreat and bottle up the Germans that were now caught in a trap with no escape.



Nearly all of our travel seemed to be 'countryside' while we moved on from town to town. We'd clean up one town and begin shelling the next one from our current position. During one such shelling occasion, we noticed an "aelter" Kraut watching! We took the *older* man prisoner!

Along with 4 younger "Soldaten" [soldiers], my squad leader, the assistant squad leader, and myself, *began to escort these 5 Krauts to the rear.*

The "older" Kraut really gave us a bad time, and the assistant squad leader tried everything to make him obey us. Finally, the squad leader took this stubborn old soldier out of sight of the 4 younger ones and shot him. No more trouble from him. Perhaps he was just tired of everything and wanted it that way. I just think he was one of those die-hard guys.

I heard tell Hitler would say, "ich und Gott" meaning, me and God; but the belt-buckles that the Wehrmacht (regular Army) wore reflected, "Gott mit uns" – God with us.

Every day brought more danger from landmines. As we left one town to reach the next town, landmines knocked out several of our vehicles. And, to make matters worse, they had the stretch of road zeroed in from where they were shelling us with their artillery.



10th AD scanning for snipers as they mop up another town!

You could hear the shells screaming as they sped toward us, also the mortars on their way in too. They couldn't be far away because we could hear the mortars coming out of their tube. They sounded like someone took a sledgehammer and hit a solid stump, that dull thud, then we'd hear the flutter of the mortar before it hit, that's when we would hit the ditch for a

little safety. During that was coming in on a ditch along side the Embankment by the about 2 feet high. and I dug my head embankment. I felt into the ground



a barrage of shells us, I was laying in the road. The side of road was I heard these shells into the side of the this shell plowed somewhere near

where I was taking cover. The dirt fell upon me as the shell drove into the earth, and I felt the ground tremble from the impact, yet there was no explosion!



No one needs to tell me angels don't watch over us



FLOYD J DEMMY, 2ND FROM THE LEFT, WITH .38 ACROSS LEFT BREAST AND M-1 SLUNG RIGHT SHOULDER. From official photos of the US Army 10th Armored Division images!

As the 10th Armored Division *marched* across Germany, we captured town after town. Upon capturing a town or village, we would begin to shell the heck out of the next town – to soft it up – soft up the Krauts trying to hold on! Our artillery firing along with tank firing was intended to make things easier when our infantrymen, like my half-track squad, entered the next town to mop up and clean out left over Krauts and snipers too.

At one time, while shelling a town from a just captured town, an officer told our assistant squad leader and me to proceed to a barn about three blocks away and bring back several krauts that a GI was holding there. Shortly we learned there were a number of civilians located there too. As I entered the barn, my assistant squad leader shot into the air. Krauts and civilians a like, flew in every direction! I almost hit the dirt myself and it surely took a little persuading to get those Krauts outside. Then as I was taking them back to the compound myself, I said to them, “spreken sie English, Americanish”, and one replied, “Yes, I speak English”! I told him to relate to the others that if any of them tries to break away, I’d shoot all of them; they gave me no trouble!



shelling the next town with all we had at company strength!

Late one afternoon, we stopped at a house out in the country and told the inhabitants of the place to gather themselves in one room. We were taking over the rest of the house – then in the morning, we'd be on our way. Their beds had feather ticks* on them, and when you laid down the comforter it wrapped around you. Boy was that nice and comfortable after weeks of sleeping on the ground, in cellars, and under our vehicles!

*THE BEDS, ALSO CALLED FEATHER TICKS OR FEATHER MATTRESSES, WERE VALUABLE POSSESSIONS. PEOPLE MADE WILLS PROMISING THEM TO THE NEXT GENERATION. EMIGRANTS TRAVELLING TO THE NEW WORLD FROM EUROPE PACKED UP BULKY FEATHERBEDS AND TOOK THEM ON THE VOYAGE.

THE FEATHERS COULD BE SAVED FROM GEESE OR DUCKS BEING PREPARED FOR COOKING. SERVANT-GIRLS WERE OFTEN ALLOWED TO KEEP FEATHERS FROM POULTRY THEY'D **PLUCKED AND** COULD SAVE THEM TO MAKE A FEATHERBED OR PILLOWS FOR THEIR FUTURE MARRIED LIFE! WHY WERE THEY CALLED FEATHER TICKS? A TICK IS SIMPLY A LINEN OR COTTON BAG FILLED WITH FEATHERS – OR STRAW OR WOOL OR COTTON – AND SEWN SHUT. THE FABRIC, CALLED TICKING, NEEDED TO BE **CLOSELY WOVEN** TO AVOID FEATHERS LEAKING OUT. THE TICKING WAS WAXED, OR RUBBED WITH SOAP, TO HELP KEEP IT IMPENETRABLE. TWENTIETH CENTURY THINKING

CHANGED FEATHER TICK BEDDING INTO THE MORE FANCIFUL NAME OF
DUVETS! AND NOW BACK TO WORLD WAR II.

Out in the country away from the bigger towns or cities, there were times I saw, sitting on the doorstep, a pair of wooden shoes that the Dutch wear in Holland. I guess they wear them to do chores outside in the gardens, barns, leaving the dirt outside of their homes.

Upon entering the property of a fairly prosperous family, we discovered another family living there too. The second family was the caretaker's family. Generally these folks didn't say much about or against their German employer for fear of losing their occupation and a roof over their heads. But, coming upon the father of the indentured family, he motioned me aside. He dropped his work pants and I thought what's this guy up too. He showed me scars on the sides of his abdomen and in his broken German/English, he prepared to tell me that the German authorities fixed him so that he could not father any more children – particularly non-German. Had he been a full bloodied German, he may have been honored by the authorities for fathering more for Hitler's superior race.

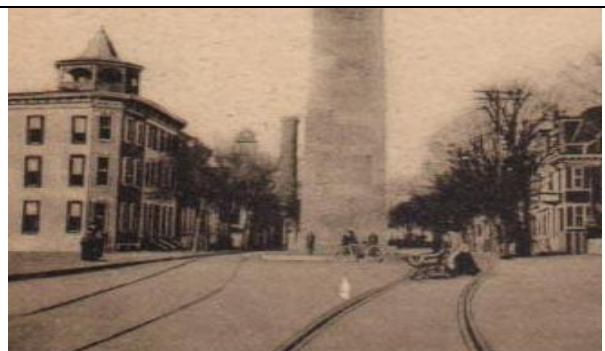
It is strange that another time another town, a German lady gave me a badge or pin commending her for having so many children – she had several at that time and was expecting another one.

I sent the badge to my mother, who herself, had seven children out of 12 that survived their first year, but years later I couldn't track down the badge!

When I was a kid in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, before the buses came into being, we had trolleys (streetcars). These streetcars had a pantograph or rod that extended upward from the top of the streetcar to an over-head wire. This wire produced electricity to run the car, which also ran on a rail or tracks embedded into the street.



TROLLEY 700 ON MARKET SQUARE



TROLLEY TRACKS NORTH 2ND STREET

1933

AT CIVIL WAR MONUMENT AT STATE
STREET, HARRISBURG



While I was stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey, outside of Trenton, New Jersey, they had at that time, buses which had a pantograph on the roof of the bus and it extended upward to a wire just like a streetcar. See photo at left.

The bus would pull over toward the curb to pick up or dismount people, but the driver had to be careful not to pull too far from the wire. One day he did pull the bus too far from the wire and lost his power. He had to sit there until the bus company brought a rig out to show him back under the wire.... So, he could continue along his route.

Ah, back to the war! Another time, somewhere in war-torn Germany, we got the drop on a number of Krauts fresh back from the eastern front. They had several things they had taken from Russian soldiers:

Rifles, bayonets etc. The bayonets were about 18 – 20 inches long and had three edges. I guess it was a Russian design, not like our or Germans. I guess these Krauts were taking this stuff home – spoils of war! I didn't take any of these things because if I were captured, what would the Germans think if they found German or Russian things upon me. They would, very likely, believe I had killed some krauts and relieved them of these things.



KeepShooting.com

While I am on this subject, I saw a German bayonet that had a blade like a large knife, but the edge opposite from the sharp edge had saw teeth. The handle was made like brass knuckles. I believe they were from World War I – a very dangerous weapon. See sample WWI item.

On the troop ship while we waited to lift anchor and embark from this French port, I noticed on the dock several Japanese families. They must have been there talking over how things were going with the war. They probably got caught in Germany with no way

back to Japan. And now they were being taken to America to be questioned, because America was still at war with Japan.

Years later, after the war, they found a couple of Japs up in the mountains of some pacific islands. Those poor soldiers were in bad need of clothing and many other things. They never heard the war was over and during all those years, they stayed hidden! I understand some took Philippino girls as wives and raised families there. After all those years, maybe they didn't want to go home!

After I had been overseas for a while, I had written to Gret and asked her to send me my album of the guys I had trained with and the album of pictures of Gret and I and others from home. At that time, she also sent along cigarettes and some candy I liked. Guess what? I never received the package. I often wondered if the mail personnel in France or somewhere else along the way stole everything. I always wondered how crooked the GI postal clerks were and if they stole from their buddies on the front lines. I don't know how much lower a guy could become to rip-off his fellow GIs. I heard stories how packages were looted in France only to end up with the ladies of the night in French towns.

In one town, whose name I don't recall after all these years, the main Straße went about halfway into the town. Then the town street swung to the left about 20 feet, and then it straightened out again.



Well, the Lieutenant and the Staff Sergeant got ahead of the rest of us, and as they rounded this dogleg in the main road, they looked up the street only to find a Kraut with a **panzerfaust** (bazooka) aiming at them. Instead of shooting this Kraut, they yelled halt, and he fired the

panzerfaust, which sailed toward them. They turned and ran, but the panzerfaust hit the corner of a building and they each got wounded in their hip pocket. I'm sure they each earned a purple heart that day.

I never knew why we stopped so many times only to start again. One time I was on an outpost, by myself, commanding a row of rolling fields. I'm on duty inside of a building about 10' by 10' and in every direction; there was one field after another. In the **Old West**, this building would have been called a line-shack. It was a place where the cowboys would hurry to, (when they were riding and inspecting the fences, that separated the many fields), whenever a thunderstorm came down upon them!



I'm on guard duty, and I'm thinking, 'this building was used in somewhat the same way.' I had an idea from what direction the Krauts would be coming from if they were to counterattack our current position. While I was there, by myself, the sky opened up with 12 fighter planes that kept buzzing overhead. Two would break out of formation and come swooping down over this shed I was inside.

Of course, there were windows in this old building, so I could see everything that was taking place before me and around me, without having to go outside the shed. While the first fighter plane would drop bombs in the valley beyond these rolling hills and fields I surveyed, the second one just followed. Then the next 2 would come down only this time the first of these would strafe this valley in the direction of where the Germans were, and again the second one followed suit.

I could see their wings lighting up and seconds later, I'd hear the report of their machine guns as they strafed a column in the valley. This went on for hours and I didn't leave that shed for fear they might turn their guns upon me, mistaking me for a Kraut. They continued to swoop

so low the force of the planes brushed the tops of the trees, and I could see the pilots just before they pulled out of their dive. Later that afternoon they departed leaving two fighter planes on patrol. That's when I was called back to my unit and we advanced into the valley where the German column was trying to get away.



German Convoy - A Grisly Scene - Town of Brie Comte Robert, France, on August 27, 1944. Throughout the war, the German Army was a frequent user of horse-drawn vehicles. More than likely, the above scene was the result of Allied air strafing.

It's hard to describe what was waiting for us when we entered that valley road. There was every conceivable type of vehicle that the Germans had that could be pulled by horses. The only problem: nearly every horse was dead or shot up or torn apart by the shrapnel from the bombs and strafing of the machine gun fire. Nearly every vehicle had a horse down, dead or dying, and the weight of that animal pulled the other one down also. Since they had no gasoline or diesel, the Krauts used horses to pull their trucks and artillery pieces and other wheeled-vehicles.

There were holes everywhere from the day's bombing runs, and the horses tried to flee by running off the road only to fall under the terrible rain of fire from the fighter planes. What a terrible thing to happen to those beautiful animals.

I heard a Kraut moaning for the longest time, before the sound got so faint that he couldn't be heard any longer. [I still hear his moan from time to time. Some things are hard to shake off.] Another Kraut was coming toward us to surrender and everyone started shooting at him. The last I saw him; he dived behind a stone wall.

In one town as we continued moving across Germany, there was a factory and it was reported to be the place that made Buzz Bombs. These

were the bombs that had been used to rain down upon England and the awful destruction they caused throughout London and other English towns.



While I was guarding this place, a military car came by with several stars on the front, indicating the vehicle and passenger was that of a high-ranking General. I saluted! Even today I often wonder who that Major General had been.

At left is a photo of Gen George Patton and fellow officers!

Sometime after I lost my 2nd pair of long johns, we could see the Alps ahead of us, and the snow-capped mountains. They seemed just ahead, but even though it started snowing that afternoon, there were still nice days before us because it was now late spring (May) in Europe.

One eventful day, as we were moving forward, out of the clear, 2 Jet Planes appeared right ahead of us. We didn't hear them coming and by the grace of God, their bombs missed us by a mile. Still, that's the first time we had seen jet planes. I'm sure if Hitler had developed these jets before "D-Day", the events of the war may have been a degree or two different and making the Allies conquest of Nazi occupied Europe more difficult than it had been.



We were on the move to a town named **Shangau** and our half-track slipped off the road and broke a track. We sat for a week until a new track could be delivered to our location. It was hard to tell just how fierce the fighting was as our squad was just a small portion of the whole picture.

[We were going back into combat! The thought of it brought a momentary icy sensation to the heart! After a week off, it is strange how soon men forget the terrifying screech of an incoming shell and the merciless chatter of a machine gun.]

I recall another town we approached just as a train was pulling out. I'm sure they knew we were coming, because the train was loaded with Air Corps personnel and since they had no fuel, their planes couldn't fly. The Germans had railroad flat cars equipped with 88 anti-aircraft guns and a building, where the Krauts lodged, while traveling on the rails. They had but to jump out of this 8' x 8' building and follow a catwalk to man the gun. This gun was probably an 88, their favorite artillery piece.



The train was already moving as we pulled onto the railroad tracks crossing the road when the locomotive could be heard. The train was pulling out from the far side of this town and it had to circle the town as it was leaving. As the front of the engine cleared the last buildings, one of our tanks pulled up onto the tracks close to us and swung his turret around and fired upon the train locomotive. It only required one shot and I watched that locomotive jump up and down when the shell hit it.

When that 105 hit the locomotive broadside, the steam seemed to come out of every crack of that old steamer! The black smoke came out of the stack and just covered the train.

The engine gave out such mournful groans as it sat there with the hissing, belching of its labored breath, it was like a dying monster gasping its last. We rounded up the Krauts, which was no problem this day! They seemed almost glad *to give up*. I took a Flyer's Wings from one of them



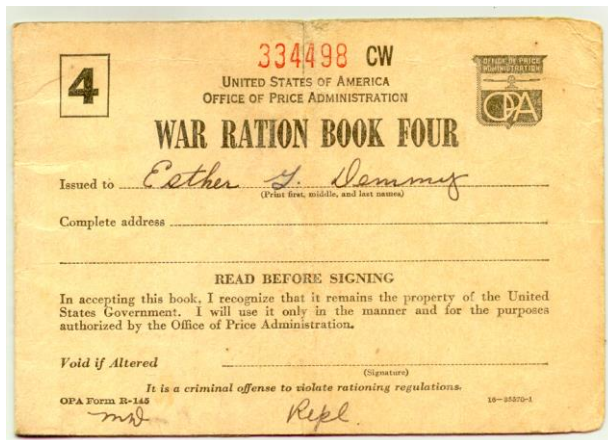
[THE ONE I LIBERATED WAS IN SILVER; THE ONE ABOVE IS IN GOLD FOR WEAR BY A GENERAL!]

and then followed a the flatcar and around cabin to retrieve some She would need these to the rear where she about their activities. these weary prisoners.

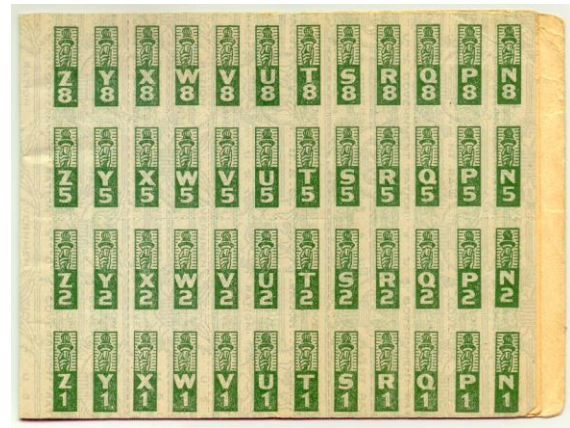


the next several days, thousands of Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe troops that surrendered by company, battalion, regiment, and division, were not the once proud combat troops that fought against our Division's drive through the very heart of the Army that had conquered all of Western Europe and threatened to dominate the world.

Luftwaffe Frau onto the gun and into her personal belongings. items for her trip back would be questioned The war was over for We learned that during



Mother's Ration Card



Typical Ration Stamps



10TH ARMORED SENDS POWS TO THE REAR

These were defeated professional soldiers and now they were truly weary and perhaps secretly delighted to have an end to the madness! By this time, the war was almost over for us, too. Praise the Lord!

After catching up with our unit in Bavaria, we were sent to Tegernsee [tourist's paradise before the war] which was further east than Garmish-Partenkirchen. This place was set to hold together several prison camps that held S.S. Troopers. If I had it to do all over again, I would have liberated a lot of loot from those birds. They all had S.S. on their uniforms and skulls on their caps.



The Luft Eagle Patch

Editor's note: these prison camps housed more than 1,400 inmates, although they were built to contain no more than 500. The prisoners were from all nations, and were both political and criminal.

On **May 5th**, at 1830 hours, the message came which announced **VE Day** - Victory in Europe ended the war in Europe.

We then returned to Garmish-Partenkirchen. The '36 Olympics were held at Garmish (what scenery with the Alps in the background. We spent some time in Bavaria). Then the word came down that many of the younger guys would have to be sent back home to meet the 95th Division and be sent to the Pacific Area. America still had to deal with Japan.



This is the part I never understood: we boarded boxcars 40 x 8's as they were referred to during the era of World War II ~~~ [40 men or 8 horses] ~~~ and we traveled 4 nights and 3 days back to France. [See photos]. Now that I recall these events, the authorities treated POW's better than us, combat veterans, and to top it all off, I don't know how

many stops we made and sat for hours until we moved again, only to stop again.



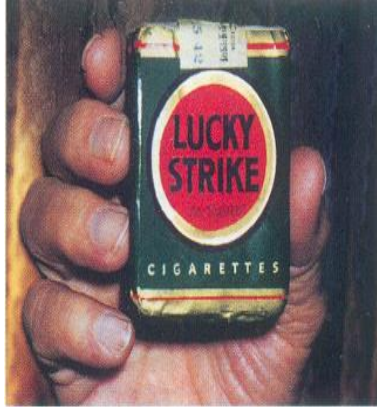
THIS 40 x 8 IS ON DISPLAY AT FORT INDIANTOWN GAP, ANNVILLE, PA.

Everyone on the train got sick in some manner, which made the ride even more unbearable. Finally, we made it to France where we spent



CAMP LUCKY STRIKES, FRANCE!

about a month in a camp named Lucky Strikes, waiting for a boat to take us back home. [Most of the temporary Allied camps were named after familiar things in America -- Camp Lucky Strikes was named for the popular Lucky Strike cigarettes]. The days were so hot you and the nights, a person we boarded a Liberty rowboat compared to went overseas on. I was home to the states. I Meade, Maryland. From arriving in Harrisburg, Japan, **August 8, 1945** World War II.



could barely stand it, almost froze. Eventually Ship which was like a the *Aquatania* that I sick the whole way was sent onto Fort there, we took a bus on **VJ Day**. Victory in that brought an end to

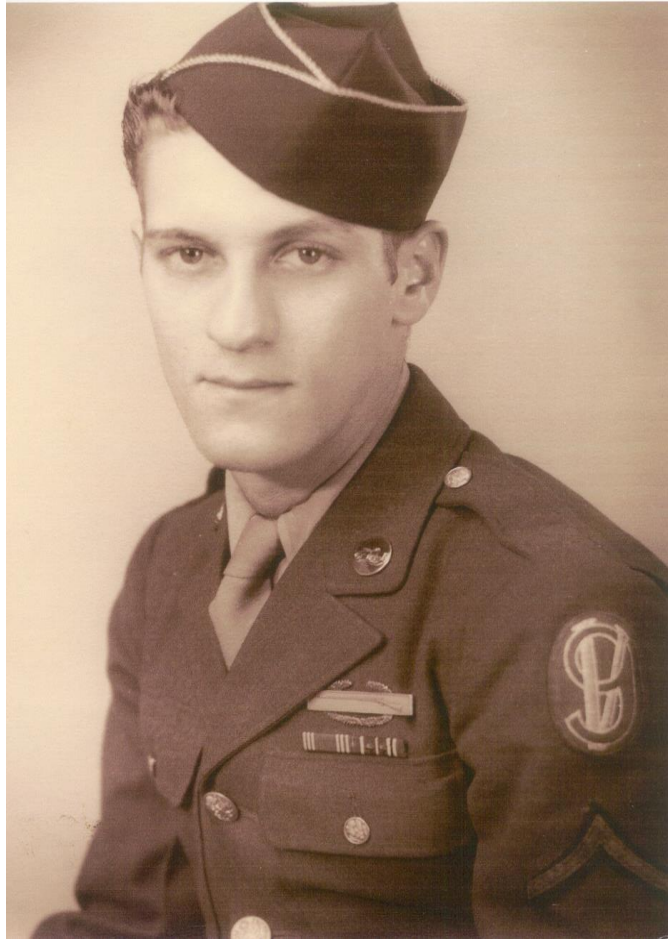


My Combat travels were over; at least for the moment!



Arrived home to America!

Following this furlough, I was sent to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, by way of train going to St. Louis. I was immensely thrilled when we rode around the magnificent horseshoe curve in western Pennsylvania, at Altoona, on the way to St. Louis, Missouri, then swinging south to Mississippi. There, we joined the 95th Division.



95 DIVISION PATCH ON LEFT SHOULDER!

We quickly learned that the 95th had refused to go to the Pacific Arena as the war was over and they had already participated in combat in the ETO. Orders were ditched! I was sent to Fort Jackson, South Carolina to attend school to learn typing and pay data. From there, some of us recent graduates of office training, were sent to Fort Dix, New Jersey to help process men coming home to be discharged. By this time, my brother Bill had been discharged, returned to Harrisburg and tried to get into the swing of things as civilian life goes. His first daughter, Kathy, was approximately 2½ years of age and she was trying to get to know him, her daddy.

The Furlough of a Lifetime

About this time of year, the weather in New Jersey was becoming colder and I could feel old man winter around the corner. The dampness rushed in off of the ocean and chilled me to the bone. During this time, I became friends with a fellow stationed with me. He was far better at typing and clerical work than me. We discovered that we could enlist for one year and this seemed like the way out of Ft. Dix and the coming winter. We went for it; signed up for another year in Uncle Sam's Army! This was the early part of December 1945; I received my discharge and was given \$300 mustering out pay for my first enlistment and now I was on a month furlough. I beat it to the train station for a ticket to Harrisburg. While listening to the clickity clack of the west bound train, I could only think of getting back to Gret, the girl I wanted to marry.

Upon arriving at home, Gret and I didn't fool around making plans to be married. Almost on the spur of the moment, I bought rings and on the evening of December 22nd, 1945, we were on our way to the preacher's house in the 1700 block of State Street. It was a terrible, cold, snowy evening – just the kind I wanted to avoid at Ft. Dix. As we pulled up to the curb, the car overheated. That was the start of our long life together.

After I was in the service for a while and I was shipped around the country or traveling from camp to camp, I would call home as soon as possible. At one camp another GI called me by name, a name I didn't know. I said, "I'm not who you think I am." I've been mistaken for someone else so many times, I've lost track. Just recently it happened again. A lady asked me if I had a twin brother. I informed her that I was not her daughter's school bus driver, whom she believed I was. There were many times folks suggested I favored the actor James Arness of the 1955 *Gunsmoke* cowboy TV show!

Following a furlough and transfer to another camp, I would always call home to let folks know I arrived safely. I would ask the telephone operator to let me speak Person-to-Person with Floyd Demmy. Of course, he was never home – *I was in camp!* In that manner, Mother or whoever answered the phone knew I had arrived safely.

They would tell the operator that "Floyd" wasn't home and that way, they wouldn't be charged for the long-distance call. Person-to-Person meant that the operator would only allow the caller to speak to the party whom they had asked for and not just anyone who might answer the call! Years later, Bell Telephone got wise to that practice.

I had to report to Ft. Meade, Maryland. I was sent to Camp Campbell, Kentucky to join the 3rd Infantry Division -- That's Audie Murphy's outfit.



3RD INFANTRY PATCH ON LEFT SHOULDER

Gret came to visit me while I was stationed there. My friend, Robert Pryor was now stationed in Texas, and we were writing back and forth. I guess I must have mentioned it would be great if he were transferred to Camp Campbell. The next thing I knew, he came pulling into camp on a motorcycle he had purchased in Texas and rode to Kentucky. We spent lots of days and evenings and Sundays just riding around. He allowed me to ride the bike but whenever we would go on a spin, he would always drive. He could really handle that bike.

While at Camp Campbell, Kentucky, I was the Company Clerk working out of Regimental Personnel, a position that called for the rank of Sergeant. I was a corporal performing the duties of a Sergeant, but because there were so many non-cons (Non-Commissioned Officers)

on duty following the war, I was granted the pay of a Sarge, but not the stripes, benefits, nor the prestige of a buck Sergeant. Since I was on the horizon to be discharged, I was never given the opportunity to be promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

A riot had occurred in a Midwest City and the 3rd Infantry Division was assigned to help stem the riot. A good portion of the folks involved were veterans of WWII – they were the last folks I wanted to tangle with. We were told not to shoot unless first fired upon – and that was really scary. After that incident, I didn't want any more of the Army life. When my year was up, I was sent to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina to be discharged. See the pattern. The Army ships you here and there and back again and then over there – all the while rushing you to hurry up and wait. I took my last northern train ride home. It seemed the train wouldn't travel fast enough to suit me.

Finally, it pulled into the train station in Harrisburg. Within 2 weeks I went back to work on the Pennsylvania Railroad. By this time, I was elevated to machinist helper, and in time, to machinist. In 1947, we bought our first home in Colonial Park. Gret and I were the first of all of our brothers and sisters to move out of uptown Harrisburg and buy a house in the suburbs. It wasn't much, but it was ours – just Gret and me, and little David, and a lot of dreams lay ahead.

After the war, some images of life:



7th Street uptown Harrisburg



Honor Bus Trip 2012 always helping!



Presented my WWII story to
Central PA
WWII Round Table 2014

Page 5 of 6

The Heartbeat

Meet a Resident at Kindred Place at Harrisburg

By Vanessa Gullage, Lifestyle Services, Kindred Place at Harrisburg

Mr. Floyd Demmy has been a resident of Kindred Place at Harrisburg for about a year and a half. He and his wife of almost 69 years moved here in June 2013. The Demmys chose Kindred Place at Harrisburg because they liked it the best over all the communities in the area.

The residents and staff at Kindred Place at Harrisburg had the chance to hear Mr. Demmy speak in May 2014 about his youth as a soldier in the US Army. He is a fluent writer and read to us from a journal he created with the accounts of his life in the service along with pictures, correspondence and memorabilia while WWII was taking place.

Floyd was drafted into the Army at the age of 18. He spent his first few days at the New Cumberland Army Depot where he got his uniform, a haircut, and equipment in preparation for basic training. At that time the soldiers were not told where they would be going. Once they had enough soldiers to fill a train, they headed out. Floyd remembers them trying to guess where they were going. They ended up at Camp Wheeler in Georgia. After spending several weeks in basic training, they returned to Harrisburg for a few days until they were sent to Fort Meade, Maryland and then to Fort Hamilton, New York and finally to Camp Shanks, New York where they boarded the ship Aquatania which would take them to Glasgow, Scotland. Floyd clearly remembers passing the Statue of Liberty and watching it grow smaller as they headed out to sea, not knowing if he would ever return to the United States again.

After arriving at Glasgow, they were sent by train to South Hampton, England and then by boat on the English Channel over to France. For the final leg of their journey, they were trucked into Germany where Floyd was assigned to the 10th Armor Division and was off to war. They arrived immediately following the Battle of the Bulge where the US troops experienced the highest casualties for any operation during WWII. It was January 1945 and little did they know but the war was soon to end. By May of that year the Germans had surrendered. Although the war was technically over, Floyd was told that he was going home for a short period of time but would be sent to Japan since the US was still at war with the Japanese. By the time he got home, the Japanese had surrendered and Floyd would remain in the states. He was only home for about a week before he was sent to Mississippi with the 95th Division. He finally ended up at Fort Dix in New Jersey, a lot closer to home.

After his first year in the Army, Floyd decided to re-enlist for one more year. He received a \$300 re-enlistment bonus and a 30 day leave, at which time he married his sweetheart, Gert. He spent his last year at Camp Campbell in Kentucky, free from harm and war. Believe it or not, he still fits into his original uniform!

If you ever have the good fortune to talk with Floyd, be sure to ask about his journal. I hope you have the opportunity to view it.



Mr. Floyd Demmy

presentation in community paper



Army Heritage Days at Carlisle PA
with reenactors



2015 WWII return trip to Europe
Dog Tags Tour Group, Hummelstown, PA.
Site of where Major Dick Winters
once upon a time stood for same
famous pose!



In my element with reenactors.
I love to quiz living histories on
"what's that on your uniform?
Or what do you do with
that item?"



Another day with reenactors!



This is how we did it
a long time ago



Living Historians move in ever closer;
Along with civilians enjoying the day!



Another cold annual reenactment
of
The Battle of the Bulge at
Fort Indiantown Gap 25 miles east
of Harrisburg.



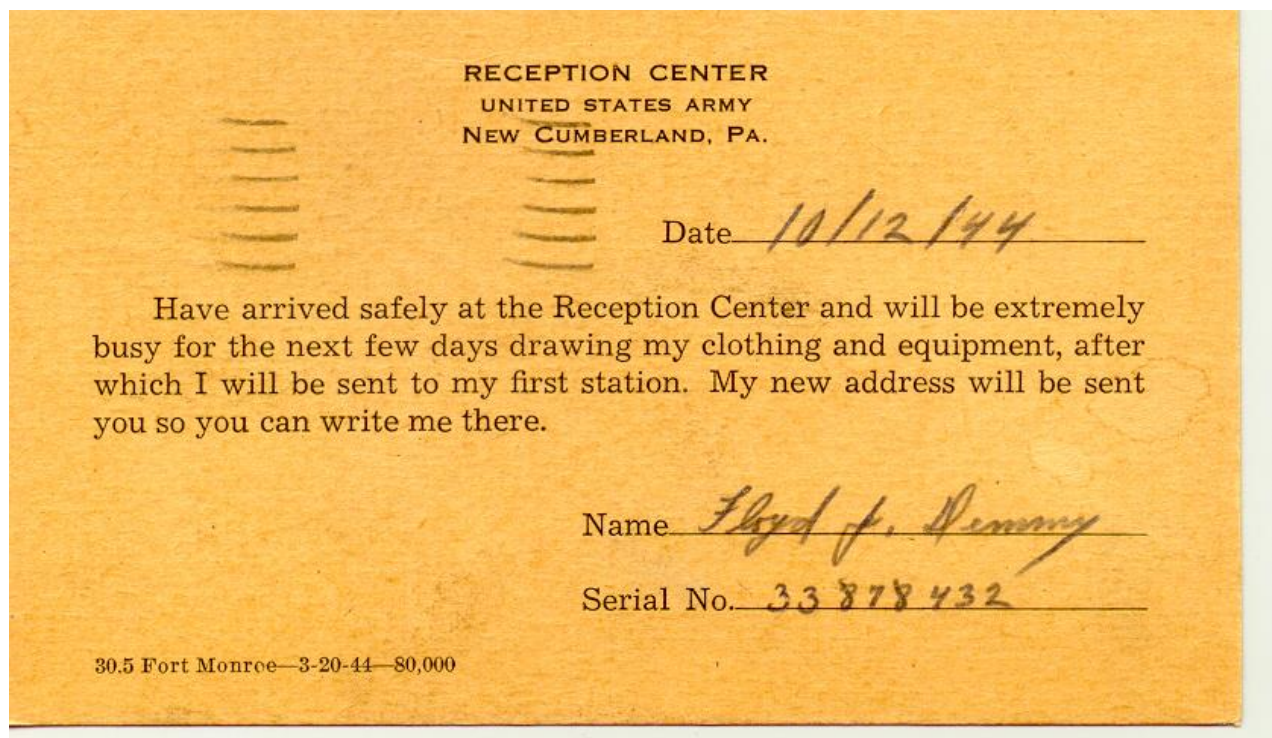
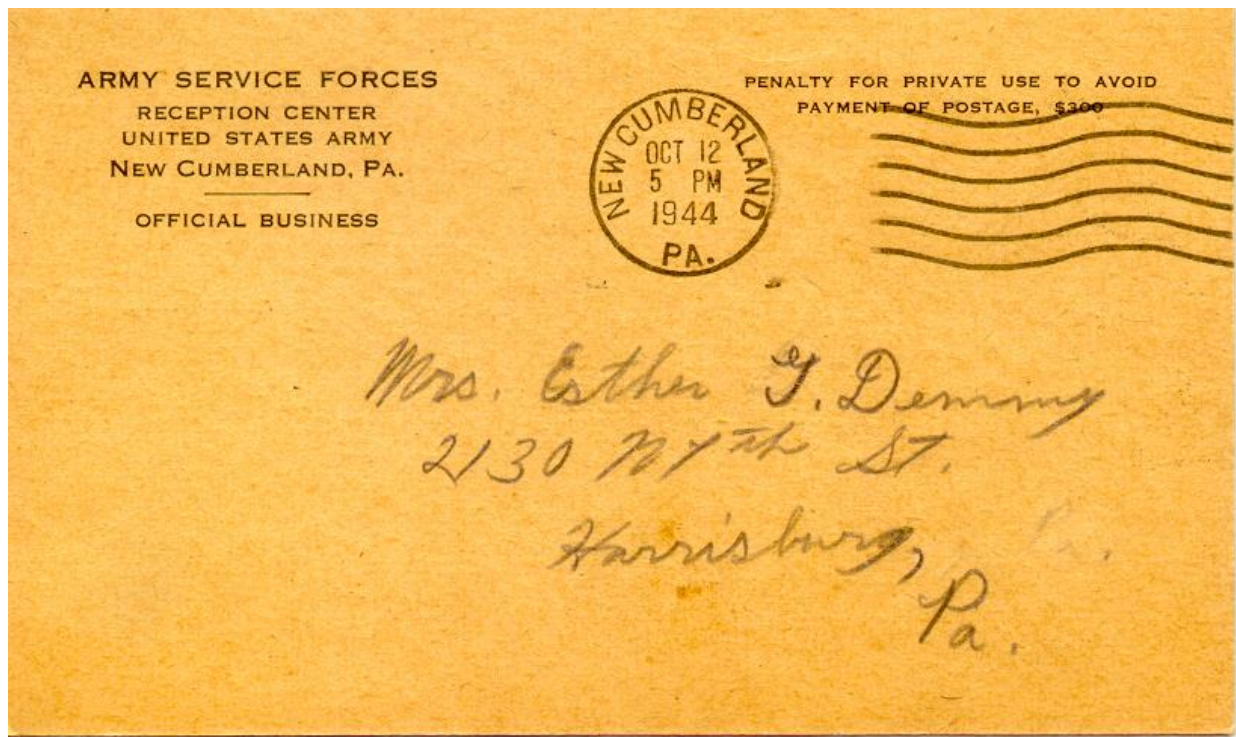
With local journalist 'Lois Lane'
Besides visiting with reenactors and
the public at Indiantown Gap and
Carlisle, I have visited the WWII
Memorial in D.C. with the
10th Armored Division reunion too.



Pop Pop with our little Miss Aubree, first born great grand child circa 2014 for Memorial Day 2014!

--- Appendix ---

Image of Post Card from New Cumberland





Courtesy of www.HomeOfHeroes.com

The Aquatania –



Aquatania Fore



Aquatania Aft



Deuce and half Army Truck

M-1





This was our backpack. The backpack you see here was "combat mode". Generally, I carried a blanket in it, which took the full length and width of the backpack, and I could put my c-rations in the upper envelope part of the pack.

Editor's note: Leggings & regular boots were what most G. I.'s wore in combat in the mud, snow, and rain! Notice, this picture was taken in December, 1944, and this GI is wearing leggings! Leggings were made of canvas, worn around the calf of the leg, held in place by laces and hooks. The boots were regular high tops and provided little protection, whatsoever, from the cold, water, or mud, although, before the war, L. L. Bean, Company had previously invented a fine waterproof boot compatible for combat conditions!



**A Letter to Mom
"Somewhere in France"**

Somewhere in France

Dear Mom,

I'm writing to let you know that I'm fine and I hope you are the same. I'm going to try to write to June, because the last time I wrote to him, was at Camp Wheeler, Ga.. We rode through England and it's a very beautiful country, and they have a lot of old things, such as gas lamps along the street, and stone walls that run for miles. France is a green country, the fields are all green, and the farmers are plowing their fields.

I can't understand the ~~language~~ the French people because they don't talk like us, but other wise they look like us. The people here are very friendly.

Well Mom I'll try to write more the next time so I'll close with all my love.

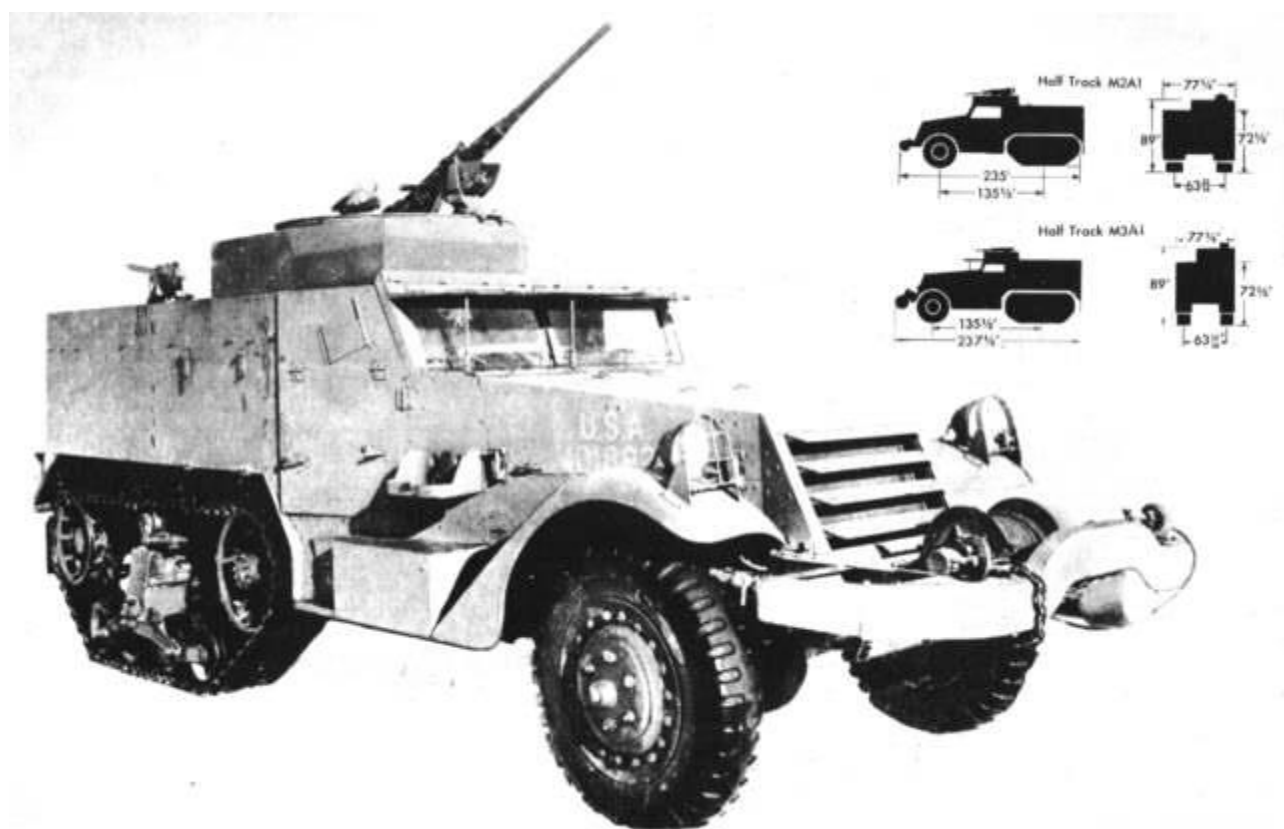
*all my love
F. Lloyd*

P.S. Tell every body I said hello.

Envelope on previous page indicates that it was 'passed' by the Censor!

Half-Track

This is a World War II Half-Track Armored Personnel Vehicle with mounted .50 Caliber and .30 Caliber machine guns.



Best half-track squad in ETO! Author far right —



Ha ha, the original image of this restored photo revealed a boot near the machine gun. It was eliminated by the photo restoration personnel!

A colorful Half-Track



On Patrol in a Half-track



No question, it is unusual what war, it's modern design that makes the big difference!

"Correct! Pall Mall's modern design filters the smoke—lessens throat irritation!"



Just as a modern design in a tank or a modern design in a machine gun makes the difference, so a modern design in a cigarette makes the difference. Pall Mall's modern design makes the difference. They tell you that in cigarette, as in general, it's modern design that makes the big difference.

Pall Mall's modern design makes the greatest forward step in smoking pleasure in thirty years. For the streamlined cigarette is deliberately designed to give you a smoother, less irritating smoke. It is a modern, fast, efficient, and reliable design.

And that's why Pall Mall the smoke is so much smoother. That's why it's the longest taste of Pall Mall's modern design tobacco.

Pall Mall's modern design also makes a difference in the smoke. The advanced length works the smoke back-right of the tip and into the air.

Now, as for the modern design that makes the difference in the smoke, it's the modern design that makes the difference. It's the modern design that makes the difference. It's the modern design that makes the difference.

"WHIRLWIND PARTICULAR PEOPLE CONGRATULATE"

Patriotic
Advertisement
Circa 1940's

My Tour of Duty



A generation later, my son David would be stationed about 30 miles north of Frankfurt and 10 miles south of Giessen!

Floyd J. Demmy's decorations for his service to his country



U. S. Army Service Number: U.S. 33-878-432

Mustered in	11 October 1944
Assigned	3 rd Army, 10 th Armored Division, 54 th Armored Infantry Battalion
Actions	Participated in the Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns and Battles
Awarded	The CIB – Combat Infantry Badge
Decoration	The Bronze Star Medal
Decoration	The Army Good Conduct Medal
Campaign	The American Campaign Medal in defense of America
And	The Europe-Africa-Middle East Medal, with 2 bronze stars
Service	The World War II Victory Medal
Medals	The World War II Army Occupation Medal - Germany
	Belgium Croix De-Guerre Medal
Presentation	Army Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon
Re-enlisted	3 December 1945
Permanent Rank	Corporal 9 November 1946
Mustered out	25 November 1946



Bronze
Star

Good
Conduct

American
Campaign

EAME
w/2 stars

Victory
Medal

Occupation
Medal

Croix De-
Guerre



Son David and my favorite daughter in law, Marilyn,
created this for me for my birthday circa 1998.
Marilyn would always say, "Dad, I am your only daughter
in law" and I would laugh once again!

OTHER WRITTEN WORKS BY FLOYD J. DEMMY

- Poems and Short Stories © 1970 - 2003
- **Saga** of **127th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment** Company C, Penna.
Vols. – Infantry
1862 - 1863 © 1993
- I Remember Growing Up in Harrisburg ©
1999 - 2001
- My Mother, the Girl from the Country
© 2001
- His Eminence, Brother Paul © 2001
- The **War Years** in America © 2001
(Following the Great Depression)
Continued!
- (My) **Reflections** on **World War II** --
Across Europe in a Half-track © 2002
- The Makings of a Hero © 2003
- A **Tribute** to **American Comrades** in Arms ©
2003

▪ **A Compilation of stories on the Jacobs and Sugar Families © 2003**

– for copies, write to David at DoubleD@Demmy.cc

Other areas of interest:

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/victory/index.htm#Contents>

<http://www.chickenhead.com/truth/>

<http://www.campcurtin.org/>

www.suvcwHarrisburgPA.org

Floyd J. Demmy
member

*Camp Curtin Historical Society and Civil War Round Table Inc.,
The General John F. Hartranft Camp Number 15, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War,*

and
10th Armored Division (Tiger) Association



Am Ended

-- The End --

auf Wiedersehen

Good-bye and God bless you and yours, Floyd.

~~~ DWD ~~~