

Cpl John Peter Hazenberg
Letters Home to
Grand Rapids, Michigan
World War II



7th Armored Division
40th Tank Battalion
Company B



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FOREWORD

This book contains letters John Peter Hazenberg, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, sent home during WWII. John's mother saved everything, from his first draft notice in 1942 to his discharge papers in 1945. The letters were compiled into this book by John's niece, Gertrude (Trudy) Boerema Fetters in 2012.

John took his Army training with the 13th Armored Division at Camp Beale, CA and Camp Bowie, TX from 1942-June 1944. He earned the following Qualifying Medals: Expert: Thompson Machine Gun; Sharpshooter: Machine Gun; and Marksman: Carbine.

In Europe John was assigned to the 7th Armored Division, known by the nickname the "Lucky 7th". He was a gun loader/radio operator on an M4A3 Sherman Tank, Medium, but could also drive the tank, and perform all the duties to keep the tank functioning. John landed at Omaha Beach on 13 or 14 August 1944 with the 53rd Replacement Depot, assigned to the 7th Armored Division, 40th Tank Battalion, Company B.

I think John was in the first platoon, tank number 2. John has a photo of himself by tank #2 and I assume it is his tank. A company consisted of 16 tanks, divided into 3 platoons of 5-6 tanks each. First platoon was made up of tanks 1-2-3-4-5-6; 2nd platoon was tanks 7-8-9-10-11; 3rd platoon was 12-13-14-15-16. There were 5 men per tank, so 80 men per company (plus another 20 men were officers and staff). These 100 men and 16 tanks made up Company B. The five man tank crew consisted of a driver and co-driver who sat in the lower part of the tank. In the turret were the gun loader/radio operator (John), the gunner, and the tank commander.

Mr. Ralph Arneson (2nd Platoon, tank #11) said the men would sometimes spend days in the tank, sleeping in their seats, eating K-rations, and using an empty shell casing as a port-a-potty. At times they would sleep underneath the tank with its 17" ground clearance - a relatively safe place from unexpected enemy fire at night.

The 7th ArmdDiv fought all the way from the beaches of Normandy to the Baltic Sea of northern Germany. During the Battle of the Bulge they are credited with stopping the Germans at the cross roads of St. Vith, thus preventing the Germans from taking the port of Antwerp, Belgium. St. Vith was strategically more important than Bastogne, but that town made for a more interesting news story and sadly the heroism of St Vith is relegated to the history books. John was in the hospital Nov 1944-March 1945 with frozen feet.

After Germany finally surrendered on 8 May 1945, John's company moved from northern to central Germany, through the towns of Gröbzig, Schweinberg, and on to Strasbourg, France where they turned in their tanks in late July 1945. According to Mr. Ralph Arneson (2nd Platoon, tank #11) it was quite emotional to say goodbye to their tanks which had so served them so well through many dangers.

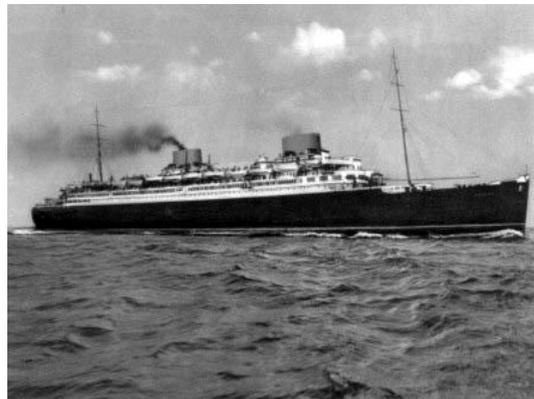
John was transferred to the 40th Amphibian Tractor Battalion in Terneuzen, Holland to train for the invasion of Japan. Japan officially surrendered 15 August 1945, and John was transferred to LeHavre, France in early October, 1945, in preparation to being sent

home. While at Camp Philip Morris (the camps were named after cigarettes, and thus were called Cigarette Camps.) the men had the duty of watching German prisoners of war who were responsible for clean up duty, KP, etc. for the camp.

Towards the end of November 1945 John went with the other men from the 40th Amphibian Tractor Battalion to Southampton, England and sailed for New York about 11 Dec 1945 on the USS Europa along with 12,000 other men. Because of a longshoreman strike in New York harbor the ship waited a few days in England. President Truman went to N.Y. and ended the strike so the boys could come home.

The ship arrived in New York harbor 17 December 1945, taking only 3 days to cross instead of the usual 5, and was met with boat whistles and fire boats using water cannons. It was a very emotional experience said Mr. Arneson. John spent about a week at Camp Kilmer, NJ to complete paperwork, check his things thru customs, and get necessary shots, etc. before taking a troop train to Camp Atterbury, IN the end of December 1945. After a little more paper work he was given \$16.80 travel pay 28 December 1945 to take a train home to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

John was awarded the Good Conduct Ribbon, European Theater Ribbon with 4 bronze Campaign Stars (Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe, Northern France), American Theater Ribbon, and World War II Victory Medal. The 7th ArmdDiv was also awarded the Belgian Fourragere. This is a red and green braided rope worn on the left shoulder. It was not awarded until 1950, so John probably never received his. In 1982 the Netherlands presented the 7th ArmdDiv with the Netherlands Resistance Cross. John's length of service was 3 years, with almost half of that spent in Europe. His rank upon discharge was Corporal, earning a pay of \$80 a month.



The USS Europa was built by Germany in 1929 and acquired as war prize in May 1945. A normal crossing by the USS Europa took 5 days, at 28 knots. John's crossing took only 3 days, with a speed of 40 knots (46 mph) according to Mr. Arneson. That ship had a most precious cargo to deliver ASAP - 12,000 war weary troops!

I have typed John's letters exactly as they were written. I did not make any spelling or punctuation corrections, so the errors you will encounter are not "typos". TF

John's Ribbons and Awards

John's shoulder patches: The 13th Armor was at Camp Beale, CA and Camp Bowie, TX. John trained with the 13th Armor for 1 ½ years, from 1943 to June 1944.

In July 1944 he sailed to Europe on the RMS Aquitania, and was assigned to the 53rd "Repl Depl" for the 7th Armored Division, 40th Tank Battalion, Company B.

At the end of the war John had the following ribbons on his uniform:

Top Row: Good Conduct Medal

Second Row: American Campaign Medal, Europe-Africa-Middle East Medal with 4 bronze stars for 4 European Campaigns, Victory Medal.

Corporal stripes.

Qualification Badges, earned in training Stateside.

Expert: Sub Machine Gun

Sharpshooter: Machine Gun

Marksman: Carbine

John was also awarded the Belgian Fourragere in 1950, which is a braided red and green cord worn on the left shoulder.

In 1982 the 7th Armored Division was awarded the Netherlands Resistance Cross. See pp 151-152

John probably did not receive either of these awards, and most likely was not even aware that he was honored with them.



NOTICE OF CLASSIFICATION

Registrant John Peter Hazenberg Order No. 12163

has been classified in Class I-A (Until 19)
(Insert Date for Class II-A and II-B only)

by Local Board
 Board of Appeal (by vote of _____ to _____)
 President

October 16, 19 42 Waldo R. Rose
(Date of mailing) Member of Local Board.

NOTICE OF RIGHT TO APPEAL

Appeal from classification by local board or board of appeal must be made by signing appeal form on back of questionnaire at office of local board, or by filing written notice of appeal, within ten days after the mailing of this notice. Before appeal, a registrant may file a written request for appearance within the same ten-day period; and, if he does so, the local board will fix a day and notify him to appear personally before the local board; if this is done, the time to appeal is extended to ten days beyond the day set for the local board for such appearance. There is a right in certain dependency cases, of appeal from appeal board decision to the President; see Selective Service Regulations. The law requires you—To keep in touch with your local board. To notify it of any change of address. To notify it of any fact which might change classification.

D. S. S. Form 57 (Rev. 4-15-42) 10-21971-1 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Brief Biographical Outline of John Peter Hazenberg

Born 4 Feb 1922, in Grand Rapids, Michigan to Dutch immigrant parents. John had an older sister, Gertrude, born 1912, and an older brother, Edward, 1914-1940. John was a member of First Protestant Reformed Church and later Mayfair Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI.

1941: graduated from Central High School.

June 1942: Registered with the Selective Service

October 1942: Passed his physical and is classified 1-A

December 1942: Drafted into Active Service, Camp Grant, Illinois.

10 Dec. 1942-17 Dec. 1943: Stationed at Camp Beale, CA (about 40 miles north of Sacramento) for training with the 13th Armored Division.

Aug 1943: Home on leave from Camp Beale, California.

Nov. 1943: Home on leave from Camp Beale, California.

17 Dec 1943-May 1944: Transferred to Camp Bowie, Texas (Near Brownwood, in central Texas.)

April 1944: Promoted to Private First Class.

May 1944: Home on leave from Camp Bowie, Texas.

June-July 1944: Ft. Meade, MD, waiting to ship out to Europe.

14 July 1944(about): sailed on the RMS Aquitania from New York to Scotland.

Late July 1944: Somewhere in England, most likely Tidworth Barracks, Wiltshire, Eng.

13-14 Aug 1944: 7th ArmdDiv replacement troops landed at Omaha Beach.

15 Sept 1944: Arrived at 7th Armored Div. detachment in N.E. France. Assigned to 40th Tank Battalion, Co. B.

16 Sept 1944: Battle for Metz, France; John's "baptism by fire"!

7 Oct 1944: 7th ArmdDiv sent up to Holland.

Oct- Nov 1944: Battle of Overloon, and Battle of the Canals, Holland.

16 Nov 1944: left Co. B at Gronsveld, Holland, for the 111th Evacuation Hospital, and then to Paris, France. John had severely frozen feet requiring medical attention.

29 Nov 1944: Sent to 94th General Hospital, Bristol, England.

28 Dec 1944: Sent to 828th Convalescent Center, Honiton, England, a 2,300 bed rehabilitation facility.

December 1944 to Jan. 1945: Battle of the Bulge! John missed this.

March 1945: on leave in London prior to rejoining his outfit.

12 April 1945: President Roosevelt died.

20 April 1945: Rejoins his outfit in Germany.

8 May 1945: Germany surrenders!!

23 July 1945: Sent to Holland to train with the 40th Amphibian Tractor BN. for the invasion of Japan.

15 Aug 1945: Japan surrenders!!

25 Aug 1945: Promoted to the rank of Corporal.

9 Oct 1945: Sent to Camp Philip Morris, Le Havre, France to await orders home.

Late Nov 1945: sailed to England.

11 Dec 1945: (about) Sailed from Southampton for New York on the USS Europa along with 12,000 other GI's.

17 Dec 1945: Arrived New York harbor, and sent to Camp Kilmer, NJ for a week.

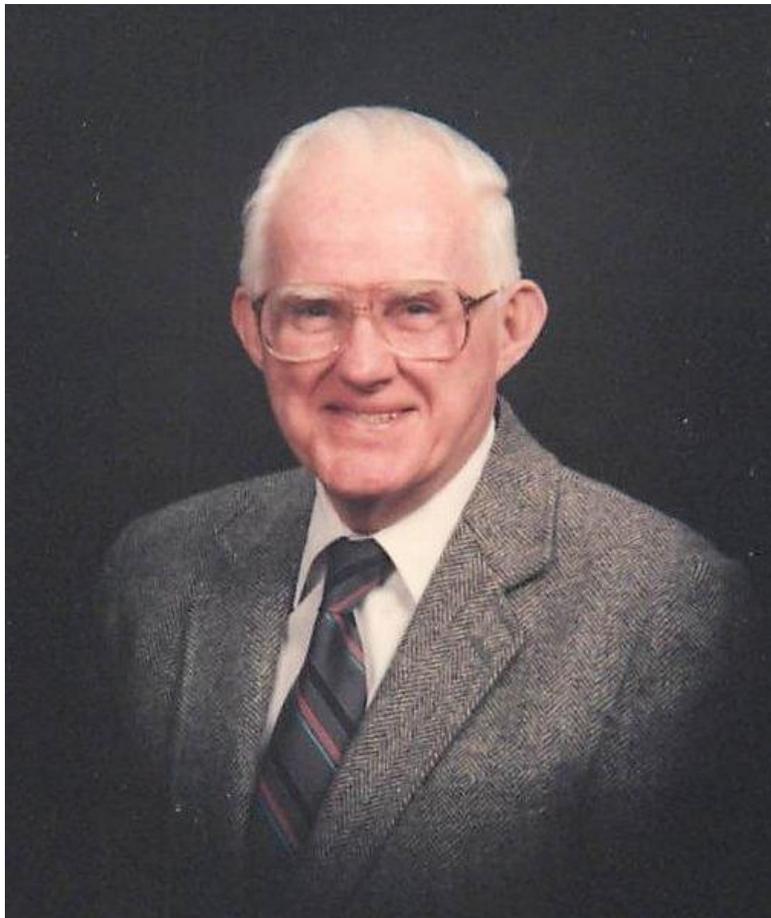
20 Dec 1945: (about) Sent by train to Camp Atterbury, IN (near Indianapolis) for discharge on 28 Dec 1945.

28 Dec 1945: Officially discharged from the Armed Services after 3 years, 1 month, 8 days. John was allotted \$16.80 travel money to get home.

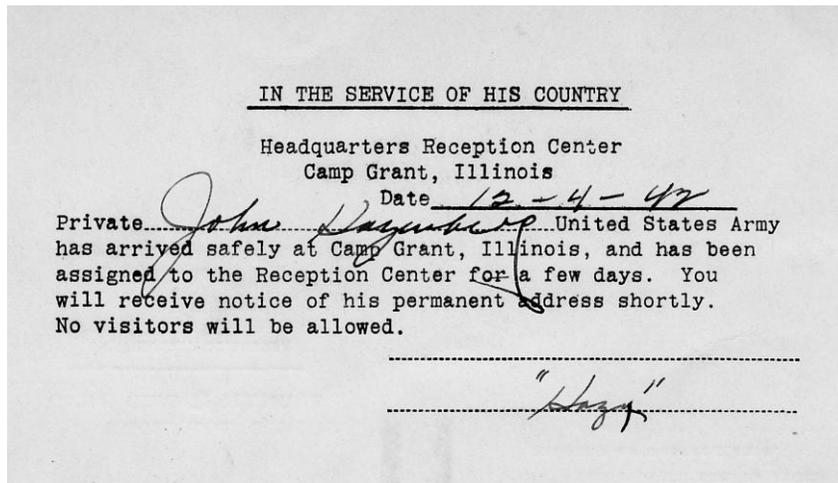
29 Dec 1945: John Arrived home!!

13 June 1950: Married Blazina DeLooff. They had three children.

31 May 2003: John died at age 81. The United States lost a quiet hero!



1942



Dec 5, 1942, Saturday
Camp Grant, Ill.

Dear Mother and Father,

We arrived in camp Friday at 8:30 PM. Had been riding the train all day. Got here and had a lecture. Wilbur and me are in the same barracks, close together. Got our uniforms and enough clothes to last a century. Had our exams and one shot already. They say that we'll probably get shipped out Monday, don't know thou. Can't write much now, but when I get stationed will let you know. Didn't sleep so much. Sure wish I was home. Boy, you sure get lonesome for the homestead out here, but you just have to take it. Conditions are different. Going to Chapel tomorrow with Will and Pete. Get up at 5:15 (ha ha) don't laugh. Give a hundred bucks for the old bed at home. You hear lot of no good language around here, but you just have to put up with it and trust that God will keep me from doing it. Couldn't get pass to go to Chicago to see Etta & Frank because we were not here long enough.

Good bye, John

Don't write back until you hear from me & I tell you.

Dec 8, 1942

Post card of the Post Exchange, Camp Grant, Ill., with a postmark from Cheyenne, Wyoming

I am in Cheyenne, Wyoming so far.

Postmark Dec 9, 1942, Salt Lake City, Utah

Dear Ma & Pa,

Stayed in Camp Grant a few days and got shipped out. Willy, Joe Fron, Jud Helder. Somewhere out in Wyoming now, been riding all day & night. Seem to be getting near the mountains, still going-cannot leave the train-or go from car to car. All us kids in the same case. Have had wonderful food so far. Going over the praries and haven't seen

civilization so far, for quite a long while. Sit in the car all day, talking and smoking. Cant write very good, kinda crowded & bumpy-Going further away from home all the time. Hope you are all well. So many guys were coming into Camp Grant when we left, it wasnt even funny. If you ask me they just get and order and pick out the first cards in the rack, good or no good. Not so lonesome yet, but would rather be home. If you ask me we're going for the pacific coast, but you can't tell anything, every thing is secret. They switch engines every once in awhile, I imagine so the engineers won't know where we're headed for. Having a good time. Woke up 6:00 AM Sunday morning, had duty Sunday night from 12:00 AM to 2 AM and got to be about 3 AM. Sat in the orderly office waiting for any telephone calls, but then had to wake up the sarge. Got up about 5 Monday morning. Got to bed on train Monday night about 12:00 at night. Won't go to bed about same time Tuesday. So that figures up to about 8 hours sleep in the last 60 hours. Well have to say good bye. God bless you all and hope to write later.

Your son, John

Included with the letter is a newspaper clipping of a poem:

A Conversation

By Anne Campbell

The burden of our conversation was "after the war."

"I would like to go," said George, "to far-off places I have never been before."

"Flying to London would be fun!" Bill said.

"It's Pike's Peak for me!" laughed Ted.

They were all younger men, but there was one,

The youngest son,

Home on furlough, and he said to me, quietly:

"I've been a lot of places; I've seen a lot of things.

I'm ready for the changes that the war brings,

But when the war is over I won't want to roam.

There's just one place I'll head for and that is home!"

Dec 9, 1942

Postcard of the Illinois Central Depot, Chicago, with a postmark of 9 Dec 1942, Salt Lake City, Utah. Written by John's friend, Wilbur O'Dell

Hello Folks:

Dropped a line to say Hello to you both. Taking good care of Johnny. He's feeling great. I'll write you both later. Willy

Dec 12, 1942 post mark

Pvt John Hazenberg

Camp Beal, California

Dear Mother & Father,

We left Camp Grant Monday, Dec. 7 about 1:30 P.M. Arrived at Camp Beal, California, Thursday Dec. 10 at about 8:00 P.M. We rode on the train about 80 hours altogether.

The climate out here, which is in central Cal., is kind of crisp. It rains quite a bit. All us kids, Willy, Joe Fron, Jud Helder, Marve DeWitt all rode down on the same car. We saw

many scenes and different landscapes. The most desolate being Wyoming & Utah, not seeing any people for many miles. We arrived in camp Thursday Dec.10, and immediately all us kids were separated at least a great share of us. Maybe Willy and Joe stuck together but the rest of us are in different barracks. When we got here didn't get a very good reception, in fact I think we got the worst they could give any one, and so does everyone else, but you must have to take it and make the best of it. We didnt get no food here last night when everyone was hungry than a hog. In fact to tell you the truth you have to walk about a mile and a half every time you want chow (eat). Haven't even got no drinking water in the barracks and the closest place to get that is also to the mess hall which is 1 1/2 miles away. The barracks we got in the first night didn't even have bunks in them. We had to wait around till 1:00 AM before we got into bed and got up at 5:30 AM. The ground around here is terrible, all red clay that sticks to you. As far as I know this place is a place for an armored division (Jeep tanks trucks etc) Said there are arriving about 1,000 a day out here. Had a nice trip but cant write more in letter. I will send my address later in quarantine.

Love, John

Dec 16, 1942 post mark
Pvt John P. Hazenberg
Co E 46th ARMD REGT
13th ARME'D DIV APO #263
CAMP BEALE, CALIF.
US Army



My new address, use this address

Dear Mother & Father,

How are you. O.K. that's good got my new address today, that's it on the top of this page. We arrived in our new barrack's Dec.14, 42. And am in quarrantine for quite a few day's, about 14 days. In other words, we can't go any place we want to, such as the post exchange etc. But I can go to the officers day room and write letters and read magazines if I want too. Jud Helder isn't so far from me, but I don't know where Willy went, but he's somewhere in the Medical Department. I'm in the Armored Regiment. Do not know what doing yet as I am just starting my "basic" training, lots of marching and drilling and doing odd jobs. Cathnetics (excercise) 1/2 hours in the morning when I get up then we run for a while and march, can you imagine me running, but I don't know the legs just seem to keep on going until they get tired. Maybe I'll lose some weight I hope so. It will ease my burden a lot. The company I'm in is in the tank division, you know them big things that go through anything. I don't know what duty I'll have because you don't find out until about 5 weeks of my basic training is done. Basic training last 13 weeks. A tank consists of about 6 men, driver, radioman, 3 gunners, and an assistant. They also have trucks and other implements. This camp is only 3 months old, no water yet, water is impure, so once in a while, we get a canteen of water from the mess hall. The food is pretty good here, better than we had when we didn't have our address. The weather is kind of chilly here. And the fog doesn't rise until about eleven 'o'clock in the morning and starts settling about 6:30 at night. We are 3 hours behind you as we are on Pacific time. I think this camp isn't very settled yet, there is nothing to do in your spare

time, you can't go to any town, because the nearest town is about 15 miles distant and that town has only 7,000 people. Walk one street and you're through it. This camp according to the best information I could get covers 88,000 acres, so you can see its really a big one. Hardly none of the barracks are furnished very good. The heating in them isn't worth a "toot". The officers are very young, I imagine some of them 90 day miricals, propley went to officers candidate school. Lots of southerners in our barracks. Only found one other Hollander in our place, pretty nice kid form near Chicago, went to a Christian Reformed Church out there. Fella by the name of Langland sleeps near me, all the others seem to be from Ohio, Kentucky, and Virginia. Maybe wont get out of quarrantine until after Christmas. I don't know yet. Haven't had a chance to spend much money, spent only about \$1.10 maybe not even that since I left home. Get some lecture on something different every day, but the marching!!! is all the same almost, (walk, walk this way and that way. Hear and awful lot of bad language, but you just have to put up with it and hope for the best. I think the 46th Regiment is mostly practicing for desert warfare as they have maneuvers always in the desert (a kinda hot place) Sure would like to be a little closer to home, I'm only 2,700 miles from home now. How I long for just one sleeping on that bed at home instead of this army cot, but I seem to sleep OK. The other night I got up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom and thought I was home, and then came to my senses and realized I was in the barracks, and gives a fella a funny feeling. Didnt do much at classification, ask you if you drove a car and thats about all. It seems they just put a fella anyplace they feel like where ever they have room. Seems they dont care wether a fellas had any experience in a certain field. Seen one fella who drove a truck all the time for about 6 years, he got stuck in the infantry but maybe they have a reason for it. Cant tell wether my skin is getting better or worse yet. If it starts getting worse, I'll quick get a pass to see the doctor, but I'm hoping I wont have to. Try to keep up with church activities as much as possible, but there are certain restrictions when Im in quarantine. I usually read a passage out of the testament at night, and sometimes during the day, although I dont have much time, always on the go. But hope that the Lord will keep me in perfect safety in this war torn world nowadays. Hope the Lord may bless you all and provide you all sufficiently and take care of you all. Religion is very scarce in these parts, especially when you are amongst some fellows who never saw the inside of a church. Enjoy going to chapel on Sundays and hope to continue on going to it. Have to be closing now as time getting a little short. Am allowed to stay up till 11 o clock but usually retire before that. Get up at 6:00 in the morning. Hope that the Lord may bless you and keep you all.

I remain

Your son John Hazenberg

You can start writing now, use the address on the first page.

Dec 17, 1942 postmark

Camp Beale. Calif.

Christmas card, with a note on the back.

Dear Everyone

This was the only Christmas postcard I could get. As they havent got much of a post exchange out here, nothing in the "joint". In other words there isnt much a fella can do

for entertainment at night out here. So this card goes for every one, Gert, Chuck, Walt, Bert, Coral, and every one else, all relatives, etc. etc.
With love, John

Dec 18, 1942

Camp Beale, Calif.

Dear Mother and Father,

Still going strong, I hope. Haven't got much for entertainment in fact nothing. The Post Exchange hasent got nothing in it and the guys are lined up about 7 deep. Still marching & drilling and excercises. Cant write much now as Im in bed already but hope to receive a letter from someone soon. It takes so long for a letter to get here sometimes 5 days. Im sending this one via airmail let me know how many days it takes to get to you. My address is on the other side, when you send a letter put your return address on the back of it. If it dont reach me you will get it back. Writing this letter Dec. 18, '42 in the morning. Have to quit now.

God Bless you all, John

(Enclosed with the letter is a Catholic devotional card with a picture of Jesus behind two servicemen. "Our Divine Protector". On the back of the card are the Act of Contrition and a Prayer.)

Dec 19, 1942

Camp Beale, Calif.

Penny postcard

Dear Mother & Father

Am not writing anything much on this card, but just to let you know that Im all O.K. and will write you a full letter a little later.

Your son, John

Postmarked Dec 30, 1942

Camp Beale, Calif.

Dear Ma & Pa,

You probably didn't receive a letter for quite awhile, well dont worry. You will probably get letters regularly now. The slight irregularity in the continuous supply was caused by my being put in the (you guessed it) Hospital. I contacted a "cold" and "sore throat" about Dec. 17. I went to the dispensary here in our area. All they gave me was a couple of lozenges to take when I cough. That was on a Friday morning. Well the cold got pretty bad Sat. night. The Commander of the Co. told me to go to the doc in the morning, as I could hardly talk and my throat was so sore I could hardly swallow. I went to the doc in the morning, and what do you think they did, they gave me a little bottle of cough medicine. Boy if anyone tells you the army gives its men the best medical attention in the world you tell em there nuts. Well they let it go so far that Monday nite Dec. 21, I was so "doggone" low, throwing ups, coughing, etc, sore throat etc that I told the sarge I wanted to go to the dispensary again. They took my temperature, they wont

let a guy in the hosp. unless he's got a temperature, I dont care if ya dont feel good, and then they say they got the best med. attention for its men in the world. Theres a little spread of "Spino Magitus" or something like that, they discovered 4 or 5 cases in the camp. The Heck of it they got the kid that sleeps next to me in the barracks, I came back from the hosp. Dec 29, he left today for the hosp. and now our whole Co. is quarantined for an indefinite time. And we had just got out of it so now we have to stay in awhile longer. Havent got many luxuries here. No footlockers, they have classes always out doors and its always cold out (chilly) and rainy, well it just rains for days out here, never saw such terrible weather, sun never shines, this camp you see is in the Sacrento valley. In other words it isn't no place to enjoy yourself. But it maybe clears up about in 3 or 4 months but that still to long. Saw Willy & Joe night before I went to the hosp. They happened to drop in to the barracks to see us, but I didn't feel so good then. Sure was funny spending Christmas in the hosp. didn't have a one vistor in the 8 days I was there. But hope to have a better letter to write next time. I have to quit writing now. Have to sit on bunk or cot to write, they havent got any tables or chairs hardly or a room to write in. In other words they aint got a XXX thing here. But maybe it might improve. I sure do hope so. I get sick of not having any thing to do or any place to go. Will write you more later.

I remain

Your son, John

P.S. So far I dont need anything.

1943

January 1, 1943

PVT Wilbur O'Dell

HQ Co., Ren BN

APO #263Camp Beale, California

U.S.Army

Hello Folks,

Finally dropping you a line to let you know that I'm alright. We are having terrible weather. Went to see Johnny once but he had a bad cold, I have a bad one too.

Well, I'm having a good time. Army life isn't bad. I'm gaining weight. Today is new years and we have it off. How is everything at home. Hope you both are well and fine.

I'm in the Reconnaissance battalion of this division. We are the ones who go ahead and do the scouting. We find the enemy positions, and report back to our division and tell them the news.

I see Johnny got in the tank corps and so did Judd. Fron is with me so I am not so lonesome.

Boy, there is some big rabbits here. If I had my shotgun I'd plug a few of them and send you home a rabbit.

Well am closing. Pray for me and write.

God Bless You All,

Wilbur O'Dell

Jan 3, 1943
PVT John P Hazenberg
Co "E", 46th ARM'D Regt
13th Arm'd Div A.P.O. 263
Camp Beale, California
U.S.Army

Dear Mother & Father,

Am still in quarrantine and its getting mighty tiresome just staying in this small co. area. Not a thing to do. The sun shone today, but not a very warm one. They haven't got no heat in these barracks, they got pipes running thru them but they dont throw out any heat, last night it got so cold in here that it wasn't even funny. This XXX climate here. Every one's got a cold and they have someone out to the hospital every day it seems to be. No body likes the weather hear. Got a chance to go to church this morning about the first time since here, this ground here is all clay and the barracks are full of the dust all the time, really takes the pep out of a guy. Was on K.P. the other day, boy you realy work, havent got no equipment here, for the last week & half, havent had sheets on our beds, just sleep on the mattress, and then they are supposed to keep up the morale in this army. Got a package from Gert & Chuck and also from the church society and Miss Gretta Whychers, that is she sent them for the society of the church. Havent been able to see Joe or Willie yet as have been in quarrantine all the time. Is all we got to do in our spare time is lay around the barracks and that isn't no fun. Havent got nothing else to write about as I havent been able to do a doggone thing since I got in this army. Surely appreciate the letters you write as thats about the only news I get of the outside world. As they dont have any services in this Camp here. Will write more later. Hope you are all well, will write more later and hope the Lord may bless you.

I remain
Your son, John

Jan 7, 1943

Postcard

Dear Mother & Father,

Just got out of quarrantine. 1 whole month of it. Very damp here. Been learning about different guns and equipment. Hoping you are all well, will write full letter soon. So long until then.

I remain
Your son, John

Jan 11, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother & Father,

Am writing you this Sunday nite. Went to chaple this Sunday morning. The services were pretty nice. The place was full to. We didnt do much today in the line of duty today. Maybe our group will get it next Sunday, most likely. Well we just got



kicked in the back again. We just got out of quarantine last Wed nite, and now Sunday nite, they put the whole camp in quarantine for eight days "Ouch", Closed all the P.X.s, theaters, clubs and every other place, so now the place is really "dead". Although it wasn't very alive in the first place. Saw Joe & Willy Saturday they are about 1 1/2 to 2 miles away from my barracks, quiet a hike. Judd Helder is in the barracks next to me. Transportation facilities here are very bad. The fellows with week end passes have to wait sometimes 3-4 hours. The streets going into the nearest town which is Marysville 15 miles distant. Its a very pathetic site, you would think they would remedy it. Boy oh boy, they have kids out of the barrack every day and take them to the hospital. And the medical care is below par. All of us have colds or sore throat. Joe & Willy had a cold & sore throat too, were in bed a day or two. Barracks are very crowded and the heating system never throws out any heat. There cold all nite long, and us guys nearly freeze.

We have no footlockers to put our stuff in, just have to leave it in the barracks bag. And you have no way to lock it up. Can not have any suitcases in the barracks. They do not have much equipment here and the conditions are not so hot. Had to wait in line for 1 hr in order to get a money order cashed. Got the order from Mich Litho for the sum of 25 bucks, and will probably get paid soon, so maybe will send some money home soon. I cant tell or explain much about my experiences in the line of work here, as you know I am under an "oath". I think you understand but will write as much about it as possible. Will write more later and in the mean time hope and pray that you are all well. Hoping to hear from you as the mail call puts a cheer in very dull place.

The Lord bless you all, Best Wishes and Happy New Year.

I remain

Your Son, John

P.S. Will write more later, and hoping to hear from you.

Jan 13, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Ma & Pa,

Heres 40 bucks. If you have to use it, use it. Pay any debts I owe etc etc.

John

Jan 18, 1943 post mark

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother & Father,

It now happens to be Sunday morning, and the sun is shining, but it is a very chilly one, so the sweater that Aunt Maggie sent me sure comes in handy. As we are in a quarantine now, some kind of thing. We cannot have church services, but I cant understand it around here. They have Catholic services in front of the chaple, but no Protestant services.

I sent Pa 40 bucks by money order. Let me know if he gets it. Get paid the end of this month, so will send some more home in Feb sometime. Oh, boy my birthday Feb 4.

Walked over to see Jud Helder today (this morning) he's located about ½ block away. He told me his sisters husband was killed in action in New Guinea. Been doing quite a bit of physical work lately so my muscles are a little tightened up now, but by the time you get this letter, they will probably be O.K.

So there was a new addition to the Boerema family. Well, well, a 7 lb baby boy. Give them my congratulations. (Charles E. Boerema, Jr, 5 Jan.'43, to John's sister Gert. TF) Got a letter from Carrie the other day and one also from Frank & Etta. Sure like to read letters as it kind of make time seem to be better spent. ..dinner time.. Just got back from dinner so will continue to write. For dinner on Sunday we usually have pretty good meals. Today for dinner we had 2 creampuffs, 2 slices of ice cream-oh, boy- mashed potatoes & gravy, as much as you want, roast beef, carrots, bread, butter, Jello, lima bean soup, so you can see we had a pretty good meal, though I dont over stuff myself. In fact I dont always feel like eating very much. Though I feel pretty full on just a little bit. Its noon here now, and there is a couple of puddles of ice in front of the barracks, so you can see, its not as sunny here in Cal. as they try to tell you.

Saw Willy yesterday (Sat) but couldn't talk to him much as he was on detail, working all Sat. afternoon. Boy, they really rob a fella out here. For a hair cut, they soak 40 cents. A shampoo cost \$1.00, they put some oil in your hair, then some soap, and then they rub your head for 6 or 7 seconds, yes I said seconds, and rinse it. They call that a shampoo. I got sucked in on that. If you want to they will put a little oil, to keep your hair down and they soak you 20 cents for that. So that shows you how they rob a fella. 40 cents for a hair cut and shampoo. 20 cents extra for a little oil to keep your hair down. Can see the foothills of the rockies, out of the barracks windows, although its very damp here all the time, so there is a fog in front of them.

Well cant think of much more to write just now. So will write more later. Willy said he got a letter from you the other day. Sure appreciated it.

Oh, yes, if "pa" gets time ma, send him down to the press building and put in an order for me to get the press. Just do it for 1 month no more. Take the money it cost's out of the 40 bucks I sent you. So, I can get a little news from the home town. Tell pa to go down on a Saturday, and put the order in, give them my address and tell them to send it for 1 month. If I want it after 1 month, I'll let you know.

God Bless and Keep you all.

I remain

Your son, Pvt John P Hazenberg

Jan 19, 1943 post mark

1 cent postcard

Received the Jan. 11 issue of the Press, here Jan 18. Let me know if you put in the subscription. I wrote you yesterday a letter telling to send me the Press. But you or someone else must have done it already. Will write more later.

With Love

Your son, John

Jan 23, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother & Father,

Received your letter and was sure glad to get it. I get the press now, so can read a little about the news, as to whats going on in Grand Rapids. So Gerts coming along O.K. and the young one too. I have to come home some time and see it. That is my former home, as the army likes me to call Blg. No. 983 as my present home (huh).

Well we just got through having 2 ½ days of continuous rain. And when I mean rain I mean rain! When it rains here, there is always a terrific wind, boy how it does blow and the rain coming down at the same time. Sometimes the wind hits about 65 or 70 miles per hours. And it just blows a fella all over. And the rain is a cold rain. Today it is very cloudy (Sat) so far it hasent rained much today.

Went through the gas chamber this morning. We put our mask on outside and then walk into a room filled with tear gas. After we all get in there we stand around for a couple of minutes. Its O.K. when you got a gas mask on. But then when you are in the room, they tell you to take it off. And Oh Boy, you should have see 'Big Boys' eyes tear. They were running down my cheeks. Every one was flooding the place with "tears". But it dont hurt you in any way. Then you go out, and get in the line of the wind, so to clear your eyes. We are never allowed to rub our eyes, as that is bad. They do that, just to show you, how important a gas mask is.

Well, the time really flys out here. And have lots to learn yet. Went to the Recreation Hall the other nite and played a little basketball. All us guys were just playing in our under pants, when in walked 3 girls, oh boy did our faces get red. Women are not allowed in it usually, but these 3 just happened to walk in. Still do my excercies in the morning and am feeling fine.

Got a letter from Art Dekker the other day. And also from a person at Michigan Litho. Also Aunt Deanie, Susie, Deckers, etc.

Will write more later, God keep you and bless you all.

I remain

Your son, John

P.S. Got the Becan Lites the other day. Send me the bulletin with correction if you can get hold of one.

Feb 3, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letters and Birthday package. And sure did appreciate it. Sorry that I couldn't write back sooner. But we've been so busy, that I havent found time to write a letter in the past week. Just couldn't find time to write to any one. You know, classes, details, work, etc.

Am starting this letter at 7:30 in the morning, just before calthentics , and may get time to finish it tonight. Boy you know things are so busy down here. I think they cut the basic training down to 9 weeks instead of the regular 13 weeks.

Weve been doing many different things out here lately. The weather here is still very damp and it rains quite a bit. Some days the sun shines, but it's a very. Went into the

little town, last Saturday and got a few supplies, also found out where the bowling alleys were, so maybe can be able to bowl a few games sometime.

Was out in field all day yesterday, eating in the open, etc, showing the Co. about tanks which are stuck, way down in the mud, how to get them out. Really interesting. It's all you see out here is hills and hills and hills. These tanks are really massive things. Think the motors (5 motors) in them weigh 5,200 pds. And some of the armament protection is 2 inches and the turret on the tank is 3 inches thick. Because there are 3 fellas up there in that turret. So they need lots of protection. As you know these things weigh 66,000 and cost \$1 a pd or \$66,000. So you see it really cost the government money. And you can get 1 mile on 2 gal. of gas. So you see how big they are. Really dont know what we are to do yet. As they have not picked any fellas out for any particular jobs yet. At least I dont think so. Was in a tank today and started it up. But didnt drive it. That turret can turn in any direction you want it. A complete circle.

Got a letter and package from Gert Chuck and family. Also Irve & Minnie (letter and package) Sure appreciated it. Cant write much more now. Just got back from having 2 mono shots in the arm.

God bless you all & keep you.

I remain,

Your son, John

P.S. Got a letter from Ken Smith & also Bud & wife

P.S. No.2 Send me Art & Diene address in Detroit. A fella's got a catarrh (guitar TF) up here. He can play it so we all sing those cowboy songs (huh).

Feb 10, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother & Father,

Am very sorry I could not write earlier, but it was almost impossible, just to busy. Today is Wed. the sun shone today, but it was kind of a chilly one. There is nothing new to report from this end of the line, except, that I drew guard duty tomorrow nite (Thursday) ouch. Got another shot in the arm today.

Have inspection by the General this coming Saturday so will be very busy Friday nite. May be able to write more Sat. Havent had enough time to write any full letters so far, so have only been sending out postcards to everyone.

Hows everything back in Grand Rapids, is the town slowly filling up with soldiers or not. I get the Press pretty good lately. That is it comes on time, maybe 4 or 5 days late, but that isnt so bad. Dont have time to go and see Joe Fron or Will. Once in a while I see Jud Helder. But not much, as we are always so busy. We learn quite a few different things every day.

Hows Chuck & Gert and the children coming along? O.K. thats good. Received quite a few letters lately and was sure glad to get them. The kids are really going out of G.R. fast, I see by the paper.

Will have to close now. Always trust in the Lord, as he is the only giver of all good things. God bless you all and keep you.

I remain

Your son, John

P.S. Am planning on getting some pictures taken if I can, and will send you some, as soon as possible, but it might be quite a while. John

Feb 20, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother& Father,

Sorry I couldn't write more. But my hands are all swabbed up in bandages. This soap we use on K.P. (Government issue) is too strong, my skin just can't stand it. So I have quite a few blisters. Sure hope they get over soon.

Say will you send me that camera, you know, Eddies box camera. Maybe if you gave Charly it he could wrap it up good. Also let me know what size film it takes, some films you can't get any of them around here. If Chuck sends it tell him to send it the best way and give him the money to pay for it. The weather here is pretty nice lately. Will send some money home, soon as we get paid, the 1st of the month.

Will close now, but will try to write more later.

I remain,

Your son, John

Feb 24, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother& Father,

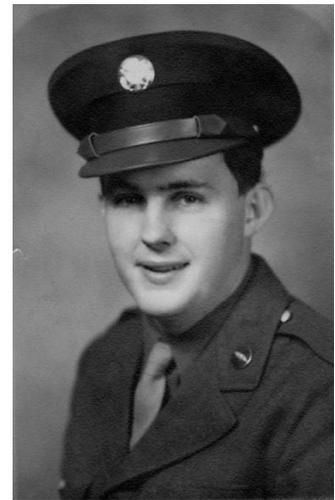
Received your letter and was sure glad to hear from you. I'm really too busy to write back very often. Had some pictures taken in town, and will send them as soon as possible.

It's raining here all the time, this afternoon it rained and hailed a lot, so you see it's not such "sunny Cal" as they say it is.

Will write more later as the lites are ready to go out.

With love,

Your son, John



Feb 27, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother and Father,

Well, it's about time I write a letter again. Well, the weather here varies very much. Last week it was sunshine almost all the week. This week it was all rain. And once it "hailed". Sorry I can't write more but, it is just impossible. And I don't write unless I'm in the mood for writing. I will probably send some money home next week as I think we get paid.

Awhile, back I asked, if you would please send that camera that used to be Eddies. Sure wish you would send it, as I would love to take some pictures. I also have to probably settle up on my income tax business. If pa has time, go to the litho, or ask "boss" Decker to find out how much I made. I don't know whether you's people are allowed to pay it for

me and sign the papers or wether they have to be signed by me. Any way, find out if possible.

This coming week dont expect much writing from here, as this is going to be our busiest week. Firing from tanks on the range. Go out on "bivowac", camping out over nite, road markers classes etc etc. So you see how busy we are going to be. Am going into town and select proofs for my pictures, and will send them soon as possible (pictures).

Hows everything going as home. O.K. thats great. Well I got the bandages taken off my hands (about 5 fingers) to nite so I can write pretty good. I kind of burned and blistered the fingers a week and a half ago on K.P. (ouch). But they are all not healed yet, but getting along pretty well.

Will have to close now, but will write more later. God bless and keep all of you.

I remain

Your son, John

March 15, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother and Father,

Thought it was about time to write again. I'm going into town and get my pictures Sat. That is if I can get off. I sure hope I can, but you cant tell for sure all the time. Took some pictures Sunday, and am getting them developed. Could only take one roll, as the sun only shone a little while. Went to Chapel Sunday and had a nice time. We start on maneuvers in July they think. 2 months on the Cal. desert and one month in Tenessee and Kentucky. At least that thats what they think it will be. I sent my income tax sheet in today (the 15th) and asked them to let me pay after the war. I thought that would be best, as now they cant say I didn't let them hear about me. So I dont have to worry about the present.

Say Ma, if you can get hold of a couple 120's films for my camera, send them, as they are hard to get around here, but maybe I can get a few in town Sat. I'm going to try.

Please dont mind the writing as its after 9:00 and I want to get to bed. The sun shone all day today but it was a very cold one.

About them films, just go to the drugstore on the corner and see if they got any. If they havent, forget about it.

Hows everything at home? O.K. thats good.

Will write to Gert & Chuck tomorrow if possible.

Will have to close now as time is getting short and I need my sleep.

I remain

Your loving son, John

P.S. I will write more later.

March 21, 1943

Camp Beale, California

Dear Mother and Father,

Boy I thought I had better start writing right away. Its Sunday afternoon now and I better step it up.

I planned on taking a hike and go and see Joe Fron & Willy O'Dell but as usual, its raining out here and so I had to cancel the trip. Boy I havent seen them for so long. Weve been so busy lately that I havent had time to do much. Oh yes, I went into town, yesterday and got the pictures and sent them to you, they are insured. I also put a little message in the package which I should not have done as its against regulations. But you will probably get them anyway. They look pretty nice, although you will have to get a frame for the 8x10 picture. As soon as you do get them, send me a postcard immediately or a letter.

Gert was telling me that you had the impression there was not much room in a tank. Well theres quite a bit of room, enough to move around in easy. Although when you do move, you always bump into something. Boy there isn't a piece of wood in this thing. Just 33 tons of solid steel and iron. I'll give you a description of how we sit. In the turret there are 3 men. Looking down into the turret heres how they are arranged. The two drivers sit in front of the turrent and lower than the turret.

Will try and write more a little later on in the afternoon.

I got a roll of films developed and am sending you a set and also Gert & Chuck some. Will write more later.

I remain
Your son, John

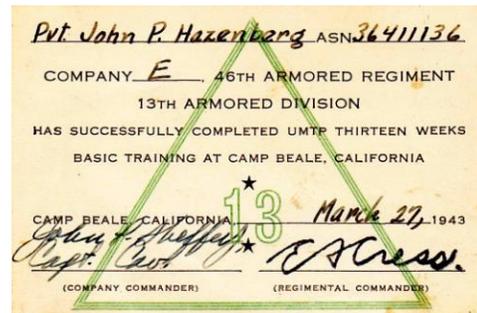
April 4, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal. (postcard)

Dear Mother & Father

Happen to be in town just now, but will write a full letter when I get back to camp. And will send some more pictures.

John



April 8, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal.

Dear Mother and Father,

Am sending you these pictures and will send more later when I get them. Tomorrow Gen. Devers (one of the four in the US.) is around so we have to spruce up for. I will write you a letter probably tomorrow. The weather is a few days of sunshine and then rain.

Will write more later.

Love, John

April 15, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal.

Dear Mother and Father,

Well its about time I started writing for a change, sorry for the delay. Well the weather here the last week has been very sunny and hot, and boy how a guy sweats.

Say, have you got any of them pictures left or did you hand them all out, let me know. Received a letter from Mrs. Dekker and also from Minuet in Detroit, sure appreciated them. And wrote them both back, although I wasn't in no writing mood. Boy this army cost a guy money, although I always have some on hand. Boy and how the time does fly out here. It seems like yesterday was Sunday and here its going on Thursday already. Boy I sure wish I could think of more to write but I just seem to run out of words all of a sudden.

Well, hows everything in Grand Rapids? O.K. thats good. Huh, everyone in there letters, ask me when Im going to get a furlough. Well, it wont be for a long time, as tank crews get them last of all. They say there is too much to learn which is important. So we dont know weather we will get one before or after or probably never. But we dont expect any for a long time.

They say the temp average between 105° & 110° here in the summer, and summer is just about here. Out in the desert they say it sometimes hits 135° & 140° temp. Realy hot stuff.

Will have to close now and hoping to hear from you

I remain

Your son, John

April 22, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Im just writing you a few lines tonite as it is almost time to get to bed.

The weather out here is O.K. now. Usually hot & sunny sometimes rain. Lately we have been going to the range and firing from the tank. We spend all day out on the range and when we get back are kinda tired. Sorry I cant write more tonite. But will try and get more off later. I sent you another pillow case, let me know if you get it.

With Love

Your son, John

April 25, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal.

Dear Mother and Father,

Im writing this letter on Easter. No Easter Parade out here as we are having a genuine dust storm. The wind really blowing and the dust kicking up.

Say will you send me a list of all who you gave them pictures to. Right away, as I might order a few more. I know I missed some friends. Well one more week and I'll be in this thing 5 months already. Boy how time does fly.

Well I'll close now as I'm getting ready to go church.

Will write more a little later on probably in the day.

With love

Your son, John

May 4, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Received some of your letters the last few days and was sure glad to receive them. Keep the good work up as I sure like to get them.

Oh yes, be sure and give Bud and Dorothy one of them pictures and also Gerrit and Ella. I ordered 6 more. And if you have another one left give it to Chuck to put in the church basement. If you havent got enough, I'll send one to Chuck in a short while.

The weather lately has been swell, lots of sun and hot. This morning the Co. went on a 10 mile march. We made it in 2 hrs & 11 min. That averages 1 mile every 13 minutes. And with full field pack besides, gas mask, canteen, field bag, blanket roll, and steel helmets. We went on a seven mile hike the other day. We still got a 17 mile and 25 mile hike to do. So you see we do lots of fast stepping even in the arm'd force. We been going on the range quite abit. Also been going cross country in the tanks, boy you sure get a lot of jars when that 33 tons hits a ditch or tree. We always wear crash helmets and safety belts, but boy sure is a lot of fun and excitement.

If anyone ever asks you how I like this job, tell 'em it is O.K. Its getting more thrilling and better all the time. Don't ever tell I don't like it, even though we work day and nite, it still is O.K. and lots of fun. To tell you the truth, I don't even think it would be fun any more working in civilian life. I don't know what it is, but something gets in your blood, and a fella cant picture returning back to civilian life. So if any one asks you how I like it tell em I like it better all the time. It was probably the weather, which made me disgusted with the army awhile back, but that's all passed and now its getting better all the time. We went in to kaki the other day, you know changed to summer clothing. They look nice but get dirty even when you turn around.

Say ma, you maybe think there isn't much room in a tank but theres enough room to move your body around a little. See Judd Helder every once in awhile, and once in awhile take a walk to see Joe Fron and Willy.

Well will close now and hope to hear from you again.

I remain, with love, your son, John

May 11, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Well, I thought I had better get right down to business and write you a quick letter, its after 9:00 oclock now, and I usually go to bed at 9 as the lights go out at that time.

The weather here has been swell, lots of sun, and hot. Getting hotter every day. So the weather is G.R. is improving as time passes, well thats good. Been having lots of hard work lately. As you once realize, before I came into the army, I tipped the scales at around 187 or 188 pds, now its down to 170 pds. Dont ask me where the 18 pds went. Say, that Press suscription ends soon, please, if you can, go down and put it in for a couple of more months. Oh, yes, ma, I sent them negatives home in an envelope awhile back, let me know if you got them.

Got a letter from Uncle Art & Aunt Diene in Detroit the other day. Sure enjoyed hearing from them. Uncle Art is working nites now.

So the young kids like to ramble around up in the attic etc. Well let em go ahead and do it as long as they have fun. We have been going on a number of long hikes lately in fast time (walking) with full field pack, steel helmets, gas masks, pistol belts, canteen, leggings and GI shoes. We went on a 7 mile, 10 mile, 13 mile, 16 mile and now Thursday nite we get our real test. 25 miles. Start at 7 P.M. and probably get back about 3 A.M. Sure is a tough grind, huh.

Am sending you some pictures and a bulletin from church on Mothers day. I sent you a large Mothers day card, and am wondering if you got it. Let me know. I seen Willy about 3 wks ago. Sure looked well and am going to go see him again. Hardly recognized him he looked so different, maybe it was because I didn't see him in quite awhile.

Say hello to everyone for me and hoping you are all well. God bless us all.

I remain

Your son, John

May 12, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Ma & Pa

In a nother letter I just dropped in the mail box, I wrote I was sending you some pictures. Well what do you think, I sealed the letter and dropped it in the mail box and then it came to my mind, I forgot to put the pictures in it. So here they are.

John

(also enclosed is a 46th Armored Regiment chapel bulletin, Mother's Day Service, 9 May 1943)

May 16, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

I thought it was about time I wrote. So here goes. The weather here lately has been swell, lots of sun, no rain. And it really gets hot down here some days.

You said Coral wanted a picture for the litho co. well we wear our kakies now, and will send you some pictures as soon as I get em. I am also getting a few more of those in the frame. I sent you all the negatives I had, quite awhile back let me know if you got em.

Got a letter from Aunt Dienie & Art in Detroit.

We have been going on the range quite abit lately. And also cross-country riding, practicing, formations etc.

Thursday we went on a 25 mile hike with full field pack and steel hellmets, boy and how good that old army cot felt when we got back we started out at 7 P.M. and got back about 3 A.M. We walked 4 miles an hour for the first 4 hrs and 3 miles an hr for the next 3 hrs. It took us 7 hrs in all. We recouperated all day Friday.

You said something of the Litho sending something, well I don't remember receiving anything maybe you misunderstood Coral although Diene & Art sent me a package too, that I never got.

Will close now

Love, John

June 3, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letters and sure enjoyed reading em. I thought I'd better write back immediately as it has been quite awhile since I wrote last.

The weather has been swell. For a whole month or more, we didnt have any rain, but the other day it rained just once. The last weekend we were on "alert", left Sat. morning and didnt get back till Sunday nite. Slept on the ground Sat nite. I mean tried to sleep out in the foothills. I only got 2 hrs sleep as we were on ground quite a bit. Got back Sunday nite. Got up at 4:30 Monday morning and the Co went out and fired the 75mm gun, for the 1st time. Thats the big baby which weighs 910 pds all together. The shell weighs 19 pds. The projectile which goes through the air weighs 15 pds. That shell is so powerful it throws the gun weighing 910 pds backwards (recoil) about 11 ½ inches. A person gets quite a jar if he is standing outside of the tank, but there is not a bit of noise inside the tank, except the empty case hitting the floor.

Next weekend we go out for 4 days. Firing all kinds of guns from the tanks, that means we sleep on the ground 4 nites.

Yesterday we went through the "Battle Inocultations" or Infiltration Course. We had to crawl under live fire from 30 cal machine guns. Bombs bursting all around you. Had to crawl under barb wire etc. They try to make it just like the real thing. The course was about 100 yards long. With barb wire to crawl under, etc. They soaked the ground and when we got through, I'm telling you we were covered from head to toe with mud and dirt.

We are really getting prepared for the real thing and most of us hope it comes along soon. Fourloughs, huh, we talk about em and thats all. We are just too busy with this important training to bother about them things.

Will close now and try and write more later.

God bless you all.

I remain

Love, John

June 12, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

Received your letters and certainly enjoyed reading them. I am very sorry that I have not written sooner. But for the last couple of weekends we have been camping out all the time.

The weekend before last we were on "alert". Left Sat. aft and arrived back on Monday. Very busy so couldnt find time to write. Also very busy during the week. Then last Saturday we left out again on a Sat. and didnt get back til Tuesday sleeping on the ground and guard duty makes it so you dont get much sleep. And the mosquitos were like four motored bombers. But all in all its lots of fun. We were out Sat. Sun, Mon, & Tues. Working out problems, firing live ammution in all the guns. Also on Tuesday took a 15

mile march out where we were "bivouacing" and that was way out in the hills. Marching through these hills, Boy I'm tellin ya, that was really tough. These hills or mountains went practically straight up and down. On the way back, some of the mountains were so tough we had to stop every 40 or 50 yds and rest. It was a hot day and we are only allowed 1 quart of water on these marches. That's all the water any soldier should use a day. Should never drink water. Just get the mouth wet as that's best. Oh yes, the weight is down to 166 lbs now. That is with my clothes on, probably weigh about 163 with em off.

Got a letter from Etta and also one from Harold Dertien. To tell you the truth I'm about 21 letters behind right now and it's so doggone hard to find time to catch up.

The weather here has been fine, sun shining all the time. But don't get no burn, as we always keep our clothes on. Have been really hitting the ditches lately. Lots of fun and hard knocks. Hardly ever see Willy or Jud. No time.

A short while ago we went through the battle inoculation course. Crawling under live fire on you stomach, back, side etc. with your nose in pure clean mud through puddles of water. Dynamite going off all around you. It's all for our good. When we came out, we were covered from head to toe with mud. Anyway lots of fun.

Say Pa go and send me the Press for a couple of more months. It expired the other day. Don't know any thing about furloughs yet. None of the tank crews can get one yet, and really don't know if we ever will. Maybe we will get one a little later on.

How's every thing in G.R. How's the kids Bert Sis & Chuck Jr coming. O.K. that's good. Well will close now as time is getting short.

God bless & keep us all until we can meet again.

I remain

Your loving son, John

June 16, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mom & Dad,

I'm just writing you a very short letter and hoping you will do me the favor I ask a little later in this letter.

It's so hot here now, that while I'm writing, the sweat is just dropping off from me.

And now for that little ???. Well I'll tell you a few (a very few) of the boys have been going on furlough lately. I don't have any hope of going home any too soon. But you can't tell what may come up. I was just wondering if you could send me about 30.00 Send it by a "Money Order." You know, one of them that I send you the first month. If I don't need it after while I'll send it back.

Will close now as time is getting short.

Love

Your son, John

P.S. Put the small card in the bookcase. Also send you a bulletin, if you will read it through, I think you'll find my name in it.

July 2, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

I know its a long time since I have written. Put please accept my apologies. We are so busy. Never have any wk ends off anymore. From now on its 7 days a wk. For the last three wks ends we have been on "alerts," "bivouac" and combat range. This week end, July 4th on Sunday, we will also be very busy. The preview of the entire division is going to be held in camp here. The state of California has adopted the 13th as its very own. As this is the only complete division in the state. All our vehicles now have names of Cal cites, counties, etc. on them and they are to be christened Sunday. The govonors going to be there and every thing. Its just a pile of bunk & work for us. This coming wk we go out in the field for 4 days straight. The wk after that another 4 days straight. So now you see why we dont get much time off. Willy O'Dell should be home on fourlough now, as he told me he was leaving the first. Dont know anything about ours yet, some of the fellas are getting em. Received the money order and cashed it and put it in the Co. safe. Thanks a lot for sending it and sure will take good care of it.

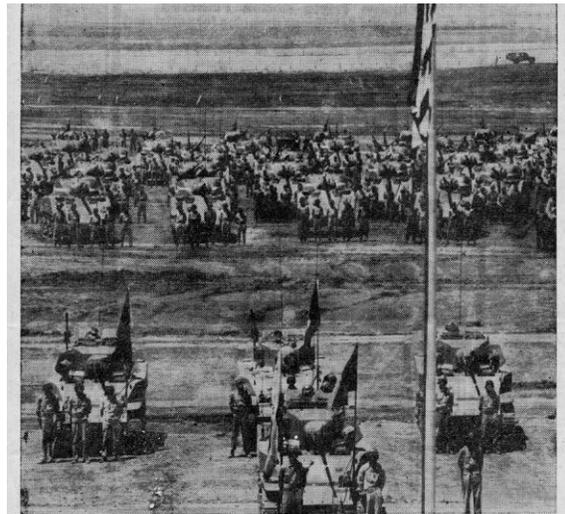
The weather here well it hasnt rained for mths, sun shining all the time. But we dont get no burn, as we are not allowed to take our clothes off.

Hoping you people are all well and will try to write as soon as I get time. You see by the foregoing statement that we dont have much time off. But any way its lots of fun. Sure must be plain "hell" over in Europe, as we sometimes see captive films and they dont look any too good.

Will close now and hoping to hear from you, always anxious to hear for you.

Will say goodbye now

Love, John



CALIFORNIA "ADOPTS" TANKS—
Tanks and vehicles of the army's 13th armored division line up on the parade ground at Camp Beale, Calif., as the state of California adopts the division as "its own." More than 1,000 vehicles, ranging from jeeps to tanks, took part in the adoption ceremony and took two hours to pass the reviewing stand. The 13th division, which is officially a training unit, was organized and trained in California. Tanks were named for various California counties and cities as 15,000 persons watched.

Cal Press July 14 - 1943

Grand Rapids Press July 14, 1943

July 10, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

Received your letter and thanks a lot. I sent you a letter a short time back but you must have not received it. But Ill try and write more in the future.

The weather here, well Im telling you, its really hot. How a fella does sweat. Its so hot here you are just wet all the time. Lately we have been going on bivouacs for 3 or 4 days straight, and you just cant write letters out there. Because you just dont see camp for 3 or 4 days. Boy the sweat is just pouring off from me.

Tomorrow is Sunday-and this will be the 1st week end we have had off in a month.

It hasnt rained here in I should say 2 to 3 months. Everything is dried up and the ground is just baked. Tomorrow I will write you more. But will close for now

Love, John

P.S. Received the \$50.00. No news about furlough yet but don't worry.

July 14, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

I thought it was about time I wrote again. I realize it is quite a while since I last wrote.

But sometimes Im in a writing mood and lots of times I am not.

Boy Im telling, some times this place gets so disgusting it isn't funny. The latest thing now is they are going to stop all furloughs till Aug. 23. But a fella just has to put up and take it for the best. May be I'll get one some time later. Lets hope so.

The weather has been the same. You know, all sun no rain. And very very hot. They are going to give regimental test's between Aug 2 and 23 and all tank crews have to be present. Already we have had platoon, Co & Batallon tests.

Got a letter from Chuck the other day and sure welcomed it. Boy the young kids sure must be growing. Im still staying down to old weight 165 pds. As you know I was about 187 or 188 when I came in.

I cant write all the time, as some times we go out in the field and stay for days.

It hasnt rained here for close to 3 mths. So you can see how dry it is here. We have had only about I cloudy day in those 3 months. So you can... (The rest of the letter is missing. TF)

July 18, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal.

Dear Mother& Father,

Am writing this letter on a Sunday nite. We happened to have the week end off. So I thought Id better get down and write.

The weather here is still the same, you know, all sun. There isnt much news from this end. Dont know anything about a furlough yet. Maybe it will come on a little later.

Have been very busy lately and dont find much spare time, all work. But are learning some thing new every day. It really gets hot down here. But you cant do nothing about it. Just sweat and sweat more.

Havent been taking many pictures lately, but will try and take some this week.

Well will close now as time is getting short.

Hope you are all well and may God bless us all.

I remain

With Love

Your son, John

P.S. Received the Money Order O.K.

Save this paper Im sending for me.

(Enclosed is a copy of The Bealiner newspaper, with the feature article of the 13th becoming "California's Own" armored division and the ceremony. TF)

July 25, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother & Father,

Well its a wk end here, so I thought I had better get down to business and write you a letter immediately. So here goes.

The weather here is the same as always, you know sun & more sun. Its very hot in fact sometimes it gets very uncomfortable.

Right now, I happened to be listening to a comment over the radio on the resignation of Mussalinie and how the allies are advancing, sure hope they keep the good works up. About furloughs, dont know any thing much. Sometimes they send out replacements from this regiment for overseas. Latest report is they are sending some out next month. Most of the boys would like to go, as a fella some times gets a little discouraged with this outfit. They throw so much stuff at a fella around here. But we just have to put up with it and take it in the best way possible. But if they want to send me, they can do it any time they want to. I think Im fully prepared. And it would be a good change to get a little real action instead of all this dry run stuff. But no one knows when they will go. Is all I hope is that I get a furlough before that.

Hows every thing in G.R. O.K. thats good. Hows all the little Boeremas coming along. I suppose they have lots of fun together. Huh.

Well will close now.

God bless us all

I remain

With love, your son

John

July 28, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

I thought that I had better write you tonite as I have time. Where as I wont have for the next 2 nites. As we go out on "bivoac" camping out, tomorrow. And run a divisional test problem. So I'd better start on with the letter.

The weather here, well its so hot that it isn't funny. I dont know what the temperature is, but its way up. Its so hot, that they wont even let us run the obstacle course in the morning. As it does a guy more harm than good, in this type of weather.

There hasn't been much new going on around to report that is right at this time. It wont be long before I get a fourlough. Maybe some time in Sept or before, if every thing goes well. It will be 8 months next wk, that Ive been in here. Boy Im telling you time sure flys.

I wouldnt know what to do if I even came home. Here I get up a 5 to 6:00 AM (5:55AM). Wash my clothes quite a bit, shave every morning usually take 2 showers a day-go to bed at 9:00. I suppose you cant imagine that. The latest I ever got to bed is 12:00.

Will close now. Hope you are all well, and may God bless us all.

I remain

Your son, Love, John

(John had a furlough and was home on 9 August 1943 for this photo. Nephew Chucky Boerema is sitting on his lap at the cottage in Holland, MI. John was not allowed to wear civilian clothes while on leave. TF)



Aug 20, 1943
Camp Beale, Cal
Dear Mother and Father,
Hello, arrived back O.K. Sure seems different but am used to it already. Had a good train ride, but didnt get any to much sleep. The weather here lately, since I got back, has been O.K. the nites are a little cool. Cant write much now, but will write tomorrow again. Just got news that we move out of this camp for a couple months sometime in Sept. Go up to Oregon for maneuvers and then probably come back here. Will close now till tomorrow.
Yours,
John

Sept 8, 1943
Camp Beale, Cal
Dear Mother& Father,
Received your letter, thanks a lot. Not much too write about out here. You know the same nothing usually. Up at 6:00 AM, calhlantics, work and then to bed. The weather out here is still hot, but the nites are nice. A little cool for a change. The other nite, out on bivouac, I even got a little chilly, usually I just lay down on the ground and go to sleep, never use a blanket. But after this may be Ill try it for once. We were supposed to go to Oregon for maneuvers, the whole 13th Div. But the war dept called it off and now we are waiting for special orders. That maneuver up in Oregon would have been about the largest ever in the U.S. 5 Divisions of Infantry and the 13th. Probably number about 50,000 troops, but now they cancelled us out of that. We had been issued wool combat suits, extra blankets etc. As it gets very cold up there at nite usually 10° above.
Got new tanks this week and all new equipment, we sure needed it. Say hello to every one, and will try and write a little oftener.
Love, John

Sept 21, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letter and thought I had better write back rite away.

The weather out here has been very torrid (hot) and a guy sure can feel it, sweating all the time.

Oh yes, Happy Birthday Pop. I hope this letter gets there on time. Not much has been happening around here, although they are planning on re-organizing this division.

Cutting the regiments down and only have Battalion and stuff like that. But we dont know when or what its going to be like.

Has been rumors around that we are going to get out of here before the rains sets in. But you cant believe any thing.

Well if I think of more to write, I would but I just cant. So will be closing now & hoping you are all well.

Am sending a snap shot along.

Love, John

Sept 28, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

Just dropping a short line during noon hour. Nothing much new to report around here.

The weather has been pretty nice out here lately, although very cool at nite. Usually have to have 2 blankets on.

Hope Pa had a happy birthday and many more to come. Please notice new address. Will try and send some pictures as soon as I get 'em made.

Hows everything back in G.R. O.K. thats good. I suppose cool weather is starting to set in there. And therefore I suppose you have to keep a fire agoing.

Well will close for now hoping you are all well and God may bless us all.

I remain

Love, John

(new address is changed to Co. C. from Co. E.)

29 Sept, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

Well I thought I had better write you another short letter. I know these letters are not very long, but they contain a little information, huh. As usual, nothing much to report from this end of the line. The weather is O.K. the nites are very cool though.

Got your letter and thanks a lot. As I sure enjoy reading em. My Chuck sure must be busy. But if the manpower gets too bad, he can put "bertie" in the store during the daytime while he rest's, huh.

Well will close now and hoping to hear from you again soon.

Love, John

(Brother-in-law Charles Boerema was not drafted but was assigned to war-time work building gliders. He managed the clothing store from 9:00 to early afternoon, then went to work in the glider factory until late in the evening.)

Sept 30, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

Its kinda late at night but I thought I had better sit down and write a line.

The weather still nice and every thing going O.K.

Hows every thing back there. I hope O.K. I suppose its really cold by now well, just use that little stove in the kitchen. Took some pictures, but the censors got hold of some of them, huh.

Closing now and will try and write again tomorrow.

I remain,

Love, John

Oct 3, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

This is Sunday nite, so I thought I had better write you a letter. The weather is pretty nice, but still very cool at nite.

Went to Chapel this morning and had a very nice time. I dont think you could find a better looking and as nicely furnished as ours. Have been going out in the tanks lately, as you know we have our new ones. About the only diference is a little more streamlined and has a gas instead of diesel engine. Plus a few other nick nacks.

Will close now till later.

Love, John

Oct 5, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Thought I had better drop a short line to nite. Lights are out and I'm not doing any thing so I thought I would sit down and write.

Nothing much doing around here lately. Still going out in the field once in a while.

You asked about sending certain papers. Yes I see some of them. Usually get the banner from a kid by the name of John Langland here. Also, get the readers Digest and other papers.

The weather is very nice, but the rainy season should start in a couple mths. But you can never tell.

Will close now till later.

Love, John

Oct 11, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother & Father,

Received your letter today and thought I'd better write back immediately.

I got your can of cookies, they sure were good. I ate a few of them, and then went down to the latrine, leaving the can on the bed open, of course when I came back, every one had smiles on their faces, so they must have enjoyed them. Also wrote to Ed & Alice & thanked them.

Will close till tomorrow when maybe I'll be able to think of more to write.

Love, John

Oct 17, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letter and thanks loads. You asked in it whether I got your package (can) of cookies. Well, I am positive I wrote you and mentioned I did get them. But maybe you didn't receive the letter.

Am sending you (this week sometime) some enlargements I had made (3). You will have to get the frames, as you can't get any thing worth while out here. They rob you in these little towns. Two of them will be me sitting on a tank, give one to Gert & Chuck. That will leave 2 left, one of me & tank and one by the barracks. Also sent (yesterday) you another roll pictures of the battalion (46th) I'm in the back row and put an ink arrow above me.

Closing now till later.

Love, John



Oct 18, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal.

Dear Mother and Father,

Thought I'd write again tonight. I sent the pictures and also another package with some chewing gum and slugs in it. So let me know if you get them. In the box with the gum, shake out the papers which it is packed in. You'll find some slugs, 50 cal. are the large one. 45 cal are the small, stubby type. You'll also find some chunks of steel which are from a hand grenade. Will you please put these on the book case with those other shells I had home on furlough.

The weather out here is kinda cool had a very little sprinkle of rain this morning, the first since last spring.

Will close now till a little later.

I remain

Love, John



Oct. 24, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letter the other day and thought I'd better write right now. This is a Sunday morning. The weather is not so good, kinda chilly and very cloudy. Planned on going to church this morning, but was held up, as I happened to be on duty over to Battalion headquarters, as a messenger.

Nothing much new has been happening around here. Got a letter from Gert the other day and am planning on writing her & Chuck this afternoon. Starting this week we go on the firing range quite a bit. Next week end we are also held up, as we have a firing problem next Sunday and most likely will go out on Sat. and come back Monday. Usually always go up into the mountains to fire these problems.

Say if you get that box of gum and other stuff in it let me know. Also those pictures I sent. Give one of them, of me on the tank to Gert and Chuck.

Well will close now and hoping you are all well, will try and write more later.

Love, John

Oct 28, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother& Father,

Thought I had better drop a line tonite. Thanks for the letters I get so regularly.

The weather, pretty good, a little chilly, not so much rain, although it really hasn't started. I'll be sure and write Melvin as soon as I get time.

Was on the tommy gun range yesterday. Tomorrow we have inspection of our tanks. Sat we load em up and Sunday we are on a firing problem. So am kinda filled up for the week end, huh.

Nothing much new to report from out here. Joe Louis is going to be here Monday and give a demonstration. So will close till probably tomorrow.

I remain,

Love, John

P.S. Let me know if you get the pictures & a box.

Nov 5, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letter and thanks a lot. Have been very busy lately and so, are kinda behind in letter writing. But am going to try and catch up this week end.

Well I'll try and answer a few of the questions you have been asking. First, that came to me O.K, the paper was still on and the contents in good condition. I don't think the string was around. I just cant remember.

About those pictures. Put them up somewhere. On the wall by the book case or in the front room. But dont keep 'em rolled up. Display them shells and hand grenade

fragments on the book case with the rest. Just won an expert medal for the tommy gun (Sub Machine Gun) so I might send that home. I hope you still have my other medal. (This would have been John's Sharpshooter Badge for Machine Gun. TF)
Am sending 2 more pictures home so be on the look for em. Also a magazine, save it. Too bad about Mrs. Koole, plan on writing the family soon.
In this letter you will find a money order for 20. Use that too pay up my insurance which I think will be due in Dec. Just got a letter from Minuet and Charley in Detroit. They are all very busy out there.
The weather out here is pretty good yet. Hasent started raining yet.
Well will close this short message now but will try and write more later. Just got through washing, ah good old Rinso-2 work suits, field jacket and other small things. Usually send it to the laundry, but was out last Sunday and this last Wednesday on one of the many combat firing test which the battalion goes on. We use the live ammunition on these.
Well till later.
Love, John

Nov 9, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Well I thought it was high time I wrote you in reply to your last letter. Nothing much doing out here lately.

Oh yes, before I forget. The night be fore I got you letter I sent you a 20 buck money order for that insurance. So pay that insurance up. Huh, if I ever need money in a hurry, don't worry I'll write.

We put our names in for another furlough. But we wont get it for quite awhile. That is if we get any.

The weather out here is about the same, pretty nice. The nites sometimes are not so cool as they were for awhile there.

Say while I think of it, the next time you get a chance, go to the post office and send me a money order for \$25. I know it sounds funny, but I just dont want to get caught short of cash, if any thing does pop up. And in case I dont use it, I'll send you the money back with interest. Huh.

Well will close now. And try and write you more later. I remain

Love, John

10 Nov, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

You'l probably get quite a few letters these last few days. And all of them urging \$25.00. Please wire it out by Western Union. I sent you a money order a few days ago. And now I wish I would not have sent. As I expect a furlough the 18th of this month. If every thing goes all right. I've got \$50 left. But I need more.

Well will close now. John

Nov 13, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letter today and thanks loads. Haventent got much to write about.

Early Monday we pull out on a Corps test that is the whole Bn. Come back in I think Tuesday night.

Wed night, I mean Thursday morning expect to leave on furlough. I hope I hope. At least I got the ticket today and expect to get home about Sat night. If everything goes well.

So its snowing up there. Well I'm taking my over coat any way.

Well will close now

Till later

Johnny, love



John came home on furlough mid November, 1943



Dec 2, 1943

Camp Beale, Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Have a little time to write so here goes. Arrived back O.K. things have been really happening around here. We move out of this camp very soon. Know where to, but will tell you, after we arrive there. It will be awhile yet. Your food and Gert & Chucks came in very handy. Had a pretty good trip. But now have quite a few letters to catch up on.

Hows everything back there O.K. thats good.

Well will write more as soon as I get time.

Love, John

P.S. Don't send any packages after you receive this letter. Wait till later.

Dec 7, 1943

Camp Beale Cal

Dear Mother and Father,

Just a short line. Moving out so here is my new address:

Pvt John P. Hazenberg 36411136

Co C 46th Tank Bn.

13th Arm'd Div. A.P.O. 263

Camp Bowie

Brownwood, Texas

Send all things to that address, am too busy to write.

Love, Son John

(This letter was sent in a small military Christmas card. TF)

Dec 17, 1943

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother & Father,

Not much time now, pretty late. Received your letter & will write you a long one soon as possible.

The weather is pretty nice so far. Very cool at night.

Everything is O.K. Tell Gert & Chuck to get the change on the bulletin and will write them, as soon as possible too.

Love, John

(This letter was also in a military Christmas card. TF)

1944

Jan 6, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother & Father,

Received your package and thanks a lot. I know I've been kinda late in answering, but just a little too busy. But will try and improve in the future.

Been having pretty nice weather lately. Just got a letter from Gert & Chuck. But still am behind in letters.

Been having 3rd Army tests all this week, so this whole week has been very busy. We have a night bivouac test tomorrow nite so I'm settled for tomorrow nite too.

Just now was going to take a shower and thought I'd better drop you a line quick. Will write more later.

Love, John

Jan 17, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother and Father,

Received your letter and have planned on doing so much writing and just never felt like it or didnt have time. Tomorrow night I plan on writing you a long letter if nothing interferes. This last wk end I went down to Camp Hood and saw Harold Dertien and Hank Knot. They happened to be going to school down there, they got about 3 wks left and then they go back to there outfit in Kentucky. Had a very nice "bull session". So will close till tomorrow nite.

Love, John (Harold Dertien is on the right. Both were home on leave in Nov. 1943. TF)



Jan 29, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well its high time I dropped a letter. It seems I plan on writing every nite but just am not in any mood or busy. The time flys so fast-have been going out in the field so much lately. Got back in camp late Friday nite and pull out Sunday nite again. Feb 6, I think it is, we go out in the field for 30 days, so you can imagine what that will be like.

Otherwise there isn't much happening around here-this is the first letter I've written in a wk. But will just have to start writing again.

So Walt finally got in, huh. I'll betcha they get him on the ball soon.

Gosh, I just cant think of a thing to write. I don't know whats wrong---. Well, hows everything back there. O.K., thats good.

Well will close till a little later.

Love, John

Feb 6, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother & Father,

Just dropping you a line, as have a little spare time out here in the field. At present we are on a months maneuvers, back here in the hills.

The weather here lately had been kinda rainy. It rained yesterday and was very misty this morning. But it cleared up in the afternoon when we pulled out. And it kinda looks like we might get some rain tonight. Lets hope not. As it isnt very much fun in the field when everything is cold & wet.

Otherwise have not been doing any thing else very special. At least nothing that I can think of. Except that we are bottled up for a whole month out in the field. So it wont be till March till we see some sort of civilization again.

Oh yes, I sent you a couple of books awhile back. Let me know if you got them. Also yesterday I sent some pictures home. So you ought to get them in a short time. They are not very plain, kinda dark. But they'l do if they have too. Hold on to at least 2 of them

as I might send back for one of them, if anything should come up and I need one. But for the present, hold on to one for sure in case I want it.

Well hows everything going back there. I suppose you have everything right on the ball. Well, thats the way to have it.

Hows Gert & Chuck and all the kids coming. I suppose the kids are growing every day. Gosh, I must write them a letter soon. Had a carton of gum and sent it to them but dont know wether they got it or not.

I suppose its kinda cold up there yet. But it wont be long before it warms. The sun is just going down and it is getting a little dark. So will close till a little later.

Hoping this reaches you in the best of health and Spirit.

I remain,

Love, John

Feb 18, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother and Father,

Just a short line to let you know everything is O.K. We are still on maneuvers and will be till the first part of March. Don't have much time to do any writing. Theres always something doing. The weather has been very cold and quite a bit of rain. The sun happens to be shining now, but it is windy and cool.

Oh yes, I received your package and also Tom & Dienies, also Min & Irv Joe & Mrs. Boerema. Also one from the Ladies Aid of Fuller Prot. But am so far behind in letter writing have not caught up yet. But maybe a little later.

Well hows everything going back there? O.K. I suppose. Say hello to everyone for me and tell 'em I'll try and write them a little later.

So will close till later.

Love, John

Feb 20, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

"Sunday"

Dear Mother and Dad & Gert & Chuck & Children,

Thought I had better drop you a short line. And am putting it all together as we dont have much spare time.

Yes we are still out in the field yet. I think about 10 days left in the field yet.

Last night was a very miserable one. Damp, rainy and cold. My feet were so cold it wasn't even funny. And today is practically the same, cloudy, damp and cold. And no prospect of clearing up.

Dont do much of any writing out here in the field. Not much in any mood even. Right now we are on another problem, but we are still in our bivouac area, so I just started writing. You



can notice the writing is not so extra smooth. Must be my joints are still froze or something.

Just a little while ago I almost stepped on a rabbit nest. It was only about 10 ft from the tank. I looked inside of it and found 4 cute little tiny black rabbits, gosh they were cute. We covered them up again with the rabbits fur and grass and put a couple of stakes up so no one would walk on them.

Last night was so dark you couldnt discern a figure 3 feet in front of you. I was on an outpost for a couple of hrs. What a time. You would swear you heard a noise over there and by golly the guy would pop up just the opposite place every time. The tanks were 50 yds apart and I'm telling you, everyone got lost trying to (John omitted a word. TF) the tank next to them.

Well will close till later and say hello to everyone for me.

Yes, I got the five bucks, thanks.

I remain

Love, John

March 12, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother and Father,

Have been receiving your letters regularly and you dont know how much I appreciate them. As mail dont come to me so much nowadays. Received a letter from Gert & Chuck. Sure was welcome. Just got off K.P.-this is Sunday nite. The weather is pretty good. Sorry I didn't remember you on your birthday. Anyway, ma, happy birthday and wish you many more.

Say what ever happened to that income tax problem of mine. So Walts home, huh, hansome brute. I'll betcha he looks ducky in that suit, huh. You said something about getting Gert & family a present, huh, well I had a little tough luck. You know you cant trust no one in this army. And thats what happened in my case. Happened to leave my wallet with 30 bucks in my locker by mistake. Some one picked the lock and lifted the money. Oh yes, I got your 5 bucks you sent the first of the year, thanks loads. I borrowed 5 bucks and am going to try and make that last the rest of the month.

Next week a bunch of us go to Ft. Bliss for a week of anti aircraft gunnery training.

Thats dealing with the 50 cal mach. gun. Thats March 19 to 26. Otherwise nothing much else to report. Tell Gert I'll send her something after next payday, as I'm in no position now. Also will send you folks something if we are still down. But you know time goes so fast, and you just dont stay in one place forever.

So will close till

God Bless you all

Love, John

March 28, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mom & Pop & Gert & Chuck & Kids (Sis, Bert & Chucky)

Sorry I didnt write sooner but I wasent around last week and mail wasent sent out. You know down at Dona Ana, near El Paso, about 45 min from it, at that anti aircraft Gunnery class. Had a nice time, really enjoyed it out there on the desert, and let me tell you it was really desert.

When I got back I had 2 letters from mom & pop and one from Gert and Chuck. Also others, from Joey and other persons. Mom and Dad letters, one with 5 bucks another with 10 bucks, received them in good condition. Gert's letter with 2 bucks, thanks loads, I'll get you back someway or other, as I get paid in a couple days. Loaned 3 bucks from one of the fellas last week. But it lasted.

Nothing much new going on around here. We were supposed to go to Louisiana about the 10th of April. But called off, so theres something in the air. Just dont know what yet. Very cold out here, I wouldnt doubt but what it snows.

Will close now till later.

Love, John

P.S. Tell Joe & Irv & Min, I got there letters and thanks a lot, will try and write them soon.

P.S. #2 So the kids liked the turtle, huh, thats good. Cute, Huh.

Am mailing some pictures. Please save them for me if you can.

John was promoted to Private First Class in April 1944, earning \$54 a month. Overseas pay would be a boost of 20%, equaling \$64.80 a month while in Europe.

April 16, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Boeremas, and Ma & Pa,

Its about time I dropped you people a line I think. While I think of it, tell Ma & Pa, I got all the \$\$ they sent and also yours, and will try and repay it soon.

Well there isn't much going on down here. Went to town this morning to church, some Baptist Church. But otherwise there just isn't any thing to do in a town.

The weather is pretty nice down here. Got a little sunburn yesterday around the shoulders. Saw Irvs picture in the paper the other nite. Have planned on writing them for so long, but just cant get down to it. But am going to try to tonite.

Now, Im going to go rinse a pair of fatigue out, so will close till a little later.

John

P.S. The envelope as you noticed is a little dirty. I am so sorry.

(included with this letter is a copy of the "Camp Bowie Blade" newspaper, dated Friday, April 14, 1944. The paper had two pictures featuring the 13th Armored Div. TF)

April 23, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother and Father and Gert, Chuck, Coral, Bertie, Chucky,

Ahem, quite a heading-Boy I'm telling you, I just have to write to the whole bunch in one letter, Gosh, I wouldn't know what to do if I had to write two. They would just be a repetition of each other.

I just cant think of a thing to write anymore, why it would take the duration and 10 month to catch up on all the letter writing.

Well to get on with the same old stuff.

This weather is pretty nice down here. Went and saw Willy, this afternoon. Had a little chat, you know, about the old times. Just a regular "bull" session. Have been out on the range quite a bit lately. So my time has been pretty will occupied.

Oh, yes, I sent a couple of pictures home. I think they are pretty nice, Gert & Chuck get one and you keep one, Ma & Dad. I plan on sending the watch home tomorrow. Its kinda busted up. On maneuvers the second hand was always missing but I cracked the crystal a few places and I snapped the stem off. So its in pretty bad shape.

Boy things are really happening around here. I think in a few weeks some of us will have new addresses. I'll explain. You see, when the army cut down on this A.S.T.P. and Air Cadet schools, they put quite a few of them down here in the 13th. Well they have to make room for them, and they seem to be shipping out almost all the Pvts & P.F.C.'s Weve had clothing checks and 'shot' checks already-so is all we are waiting for is the "go" signal. But you cant tell who really is going to get to go. About 14 car loads (train) pulled out today (23rd, Sunday).

Well I cant think of much of any thing else to write, so will sign off.

Hows every thing going back there. O.K. I hope, I suppose it is warming up by now.

Say Bert Coral & Chucky hows their little turtle coming. Did you teach him to talk yet?

Or did one of you little "tikes" swallow him.

So till later,

Love, John

Western Union Telegram

May 5, 1944

Possibility I might be home this weekend. John

Home on leave.

May 1944

Sister Gert

Bertie, Chucky, Coral



May 20, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother and Dad-

Well, arrived back in camp Wednesday, every thing is O.K. But of course, am very busy. In fact very busy-catching up on different things. Been busy every nite so far. Quite a few fellas pulled out a couple days before I got back. And I imagine it won't be very long before a few more of us get our shipping papers. Been seeing quite a few war films that I missed, am going to one tonite. Had another clothing check today. Replacing all our old stuff with new stuff. But a fella dont know when his number is up. The next week will tell.

The weather is kinda rainy lately. Please dont mind the scribbling, as I am in a great hurry.

Hows everything back there. O.K. thats good.

Hows the kittens coming along. I'll betcha they are really cute. Huh, remember when the train was pulling out.

Im on guard this weekend so I imagine I wont have much spare time.

Well will close till a little later.

Love, Johnnie

Western Union Telegram

May 24, 1944

Wire \$25 immediately. John

(Included in the envelope is a receipt for \$35, send to John by his father, E. Hazenberg.)

Camp Bowie Texas

May 25, 1944

Dear Gert & Chuck, Kids, & Ma & Dad,

Well have been quite busy. Expect to get shipped in a couple days. Have been having so many checks lately-took out a small allotment, which will be sent home (\$15.00)

Sent Ma a telegram for a little money, quick, as I dont know wether I'll get paid here or not. Either will get sent to Replacement Depot No 1 at Ft Mead Maryland or No 2 at Ft Ord Calif.

Dont have much time to write, as we are so busy. Hows everything going back there.

OK, thats good.

Will try and drop another line tomorrow nite.

Till then

Love, Johnnie

Included in the letter, which was sent to John's sister Gertrude, 748 Thomas St., is a separate letter to John's parents, and a photo.

Mother and Dad,

Hold on to this picture and dont lose it. Also this address:

Charles Cauble Jr.

Charles Cauble, Jr.

Route #2 Box 89

R.R.#1 Box 296

Salisbury, N.C. (wifes home)

Salisbury, N.C. (dad & moms house)

Also this address
Miss Betty Lippard
R.R. #1
Salisbury, N.C.

The last address is that of a very nice young woman of which I have been corresponding with .

If anything should happen to me, you know what I mean, be sure and let them know.
(He enclosed a photo of a couple, the man was in uniform, and the inscription on the back was: Chas. Cauble & wife, R.R. #1, Box 296, Salisbury, N.C. TF)

Camp Bowie, Texas
May 25, 1944

Dear Mother& Dad,

Received your box of candy and also the money you sent today. Thanks loads. I dont know wether I'll get paid this month or not, so was getting kinda low. But will send it back as soon as possible. Thanks again.

Am very busy, in fact too busy. Will probably pull out Sunday for, I dont know where, some port of replacement.

Also got your letter-thanks. So Harold was home-thats nice.

Ah yes, please do this for me-you know that large 8 by 10 picture I have-not the small one I put in the frame-but that one of me "crouching" by the barracks in my light kaki uniform-that large real nice one of me that was with the ones in the package on the piano-(it dosent have any tank or any thing in it, just me-) Will give it too Chuck and ask him to wrap it up between some cardboard real good and send it too the following address- Miss Betty Lippard

R.R. #1

Salisbury, North Carolina and put return address of John

P. Hazenberg

1025 Helen St. N.E.

Grand Rapids Michigan in the upper left hand corner of the package. He dont have to send it insured and if no frame is available, send it just as it is- because if there is glass in it it might bust and I dont want that. Dont forget- that large 8x10 of me in my light kaki uniform along side the barracks. O.K. thanks.

Love till a little later- John

PS- Send that picture quick as possible.



May 27, 1944

Camp Bowie, Texas

Dear Mother& Dad,

Just dropping you a short line till a little later. A few of us are pulling out of here in a couple of days.

Am inclosing an allotment slip in this letter. Please hold on too it. Went to see Willy last nite and saw Judd Helder yesterday.

Been raining down here lately. Dont know where we will end up yet. But for Gosh sakes dont worry. Keep writing to this same address until I give you a new one.

Did you get my last letter in which I wanted you to send that large 8x10 picture, the one of me in my light kaki uniform crouching besides the barracks and send it to the following address-Miss Betty Lippard

R.R. #1

Salisbury, North Carolina

It didn't have to be in any frame if none was not handy. Maybe Chuck could wrap it up real nice and send it.

Received your Western Union wire and money, your box of candy and letter. Leave that stationary back there.

I sold my bed roll, and also a shirt I had. Havent got hardly any other valuables down here now.

Go for a physical exam tomorrow. Have had so many checks, clothing, physicals, etc. Say hello to Gert & Chuck for me, time is kinda limited at this stage of the game.

Send that picture as quick as possible, and put my home address in the upper left hand corner of the package, you know John P Hazenberg, 1025 Helen St N.E., Grand Rapids Michigan.

A very nice young woman, have been corresponding with her for a while already. She's a doggone nice young kid.

Will close now, dont ever worry.

Love, John

P.S. Dont subscribe to the Press again till I let you know. I sent a package home with some articles. My ring is in the pencil box.

P.F.C. John P. Hazenberg A.S.N. 36411136

A.G.F. Replacement Depot

Ft George G. Meade

Maryland

U.S. Army

May 30, 1944

Dear Mother& Dad & Gert & Chuck,

Just a line to let you know everything is O.K. Am now going through Arkansas.

Notice the above address. Dont forget the serial number, as that is important.

Cant think of much to write right now. But maybe a little later on.

Hope everything is O.K. back there. Say hello to Gert & Chuck & kids for me.

Am now crossing the Mississippi River, (right now) Certainly is a large river. I mean I was in Arkansas a minute ago. Am now in Memphis Tennessee-since we are on the other side of the river-huh.

Please dont worry, am closing till a little later.

Your loving son, John

TRP "B" 27th Sq 7th REGT
A.G.F. Replacement Depot #1
Ft George G. Meade, Maryland
June 2, 1944

Dear Mother & Father & Gert & Chuck,
Nothing much to write, very busy, all this new equipment etc. But will try and write a long letter tomorrow.
Boy, sure is hot down here.
Cant hardly think of a thing to write. Maybe will be able to tomorrow. I hope so. Have very good eats.
Hows all the children-O.K. that's good.
Will write a longer one tomorrow.
Love, John

June 4, 1944
Ft. Meade, Maryland
Dear Boeremas,

Just a short line till a little later. Kinda chilly down here. Today happened to get a pass and what do you think I did. Yes took a trip to Washington-only stayed there a few hours. Went all through the capital on one of them tours. Also saw many of the other buildings. But there are so many gov. buildings down there. I never walked so much in my life. Pretty busy place I must say.
Don't know how long we stay here. No one knows when they will get called to an A.P.O.
Oh yes, I happened to run into a store with some films in it. But they were 616's. Anyway, I'll send the two rolls along. Maybe you can use them, or otherwise find someone with a camera that size. Sorry, but they just didnt have 116's.
Hows everything down there. Havent had any mail for a week. It hasnt come from Bowie yet-and then it all has to be sorted down here again.
Am sending a couple of pictures-give the one with the capital on it to ma & pa for me. O.K.. I need proof that I'd been in Washington whenever I try to B.S. them. O.K.
Will send the films tomorrow night if possible.
Heyah kids, hope you ore O.K.
Till later
Love, John
P.S. Please excuse the wrapping of the films.

June 5, 1944
Ft. Meade, Md.
Postcard with FORT MEADE Md on the front
Everything OK
Will try and write a full letter tomorrow. O.K. thats good
Love, John

June 10, 1944

Ft Meade, Md

Dear Mother& Dad & Gert & Chuck,

Just a short line. Am very busy practicly all the time. Just waiting for our numbers to come up-Huh, very interesting-am usually busy day and nite. Weather is pretty nice.

Went on a 2 day "bivouac" down to the beach on Cheasupeak Bay this past week, and had a very nice time.

Hows everything back there. O.K. that's good. Cant think of much of any thing to write of any importance.

So will close till a little later.

Love, John

P.S. Betty said thanks for sending that picture-thanks from me too. Ive got one of her too-its really a knockout.

P.S. Received your letter the other day. Thanks.

June 16, 1944

Ft. Meade, Md

Salisbury, N.C.

Dear Ma & Pa,

Well, its about time I dropped you a line. I admit I dont write very much, but will try to improve it.

Happened to get a short pass, not long enough to get home, so took a little trip down here to see Betty. Its only 300 miles from Washington and very good connections. Nothing much has been doing. Got new guys in, ship old ones out. You just wait for your number to come up.

The weather here is Salisbury N.C. is swell, very sunny. But other wise nothing else much doing-except a few things.

Have been receiving your letters regularly and thanks a lot, as they mean very much, so keep it up. Hope Gert & Chuck are O.K. and kids, say hello to them for me.

Well, will close till a little later.

Your loving son, John

June 17, 1944

Ft. Meade, Md

Salisbury, N.C., Yadkin Hotel

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, heres another short line to you. Oh yes, before I go any further-tell dad to discard that list that I gave him while I was home, you know that one with, Hey dad, His pa etc. If I ever get into action, I'll let you know by writing "am having a great time" or "grand time". I wont mean it, but thats the way I'll word it.

Am having a nice time down here in Salisbury, pretty nice little town. Very hot down here though. Saw Betty last night and had a very interesting time.

Have very nice accomodations here, in this hotel. Have a single room, large bed, writing desk, dressing table, two mirrors, chair, clothes rack, ash tray, washing basin, in other words, very nice, only a \$1.50 a day. Am leaving here in the morning, heading back to camp, and after that, no one knows.

But any way, I still think of you all the time.

Till a little later,

Love, son John

June 25, 1944

Ft. Meade, Md

Dear Mother & Dad,

Received your letter. Thanks loads. Gosh I just cant think of a thing to write. But otherwise every thing is O.K. and hope its the same back there.

Hows every thing back there. O.K. thats good. Rains quite a bit here. Do quite a bit of hiking and being out in the field.

Nothing new going on here. Same old routine.

Had a letter from Walt & Harold Dertien. Also, Maggie & Adrain. Of course also regular ones from, oh you know who. "Betty"—Had a nice time while down there-very nice kid.

Well will close till later.

Honest, I know these letters arent long, but I just cant think of a thing to write, but I'll try and do better in the future.

Love, John

July 3, 1944

Sgt. George S. Glass 33395559

Co. "C" 46 Tank Battalion

13th Armd. Div

Camp Bowie, Texas

Mrs. Hazenberg,

Am dropping you a few lines. The main reason for this is that I am sending \$10.00 which I owe John for a sleeping bag that I bought from him & he told me to send it to you, so if you will please write & tell him that you got it.

Yours truly. Sgt. Glass

July 3, 1944

Ft. Meade, Md

Dear Mother and Dad, also Gert & Chuck and "kids",

Well, its about time I dropped a line, I realize I dont write very much.

But things are happening so fast. The shipping orders are in, weve been on alert for 2 days already, are all packed and ready to get shipped to P.O.E. I think will pull out right after the 4th of July-thats pretty definite.

So you will probably receive a new address soon. In the meantime write to this same one. When the new address does get to you, please send it down to, you know who,

Miss Betty Lippard
Route #1
Salisbury, North Carolina

That goes for any new addresses I might get. Catch!! Just write it and send it in a plain envelope, with her address on it.

Oh yes, I sent a package home tonite. Its got that carrying bag and also a field jacket in it. Be sure and keep that jacket in the closet for me. Huh, please no remarks happened to be on a clothes salvage detail today and just couldn't let it slip by.

Tell Gert & Chuck that I'm sorry I dont write very often.

Oh yes, I'm sending a money order home for 20 bucks, put it in the bank for me, if you dont need it.

Had a week end pass last week, yes, you know where I went-North Carolina.

Am sending a few more letters in an envelope from Bet., keep them for me.

Think I'll just lay around the 4th (tomorrow)

(This is the 4th of July)

I am laying around, slept till 12 this noon (ouch). Was kinda tired. This will be the last day of that kind of stuff.

It is very hot down here right now.

So don't forget to let "Betty" know of any new addresses.

Hoping everything is O.K. back there, and so till a little later.

"Love" John

War Department postcard noting change of address.

NOTICE OF CHANGE OF ADDRESS

(Sufficient cards will be distributed to each soldier when his mail address is changed to permit him to send one to each of his regular correspondents and publishers.)

Date July 6, 1944

This is to advise you that my correct address now is—

PFC. John P. HAZENBERG 36411136
(Grade) (Name) (Army Serial No.)

ARMY Co F
(Company or comparable unit) (Regiment or comparable unit)

APO No. 15379 % Postmaster NY NY
(Strike out if not applicable) (Name of post office)

Signature John P. Hazenberg

NOTE.—Newspapers and magazines may need your old address for correct processing.

My old address was Tip "B"

W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 204* (1 November 1943)
*This form supersedes W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 204, 8 April 1943, which may be used until existing stocks are exhausted.

e16-33987-2 GPO

July 9, 1944

ARM'D Co. "F" A.P.O. 15379

Postmaster NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad and Boeremas,

Well, thought I,d better drop you folks a line. As you will notice, the new address. It will probly change after while, I don't know. But thats it for now.

I cant name the camp, sorry, as all letters are censored. But it's a... (The Army censor cut out the next few words.)

No one knows how long they stay here. We have doggone good eats down here. In fact better than any other place Ive been. Its very hot at the present. In fact to doggone hot. Hows every thing back there? O.K. thats good. I suppose the heat is getting you people too. Say hello to the kids for me. And send Betty any new addresses I get. I sent her this one already. I dont know if Ill be able too much, I mean regular.

Say hello for me back there. So till a little later, Ill write when possible.

Love

Your son, John

P.S. I might send a few bucks home by wire. So if you get notice, you will know who its from.

July 10, 1944

ARM'D Co. "F" A.P.O. 15379

c/o P.M.

NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad,

Just a short line. Everything is O.K. so far. Nothing much new happening. Have very good eats. The weather is very hot.

Hows everything going back there. O.K. thats good.

Oh yes, before I forget. This morning I received my allotment. So beginning in August (Aug. pay) you will receive an allotment of \$40.00. It will probably arrive sometime in Sept. The insurance is the same. I didnt really know if I had put down a second beneficiary or not. So I put down a new slip-the first beneficiary is you (mother) and the second in line is pa (father). I'm quite sure I had you (mother) as first beneficiary when I first took the policy out-back in '42.

A fella back at Bowie by the name of Glass, sent you a money order for a bed roll I sold him. Let me know if you got it.

You see, a fella gets 20% more when he gets overseas. So thats why the boost in allotment.

Dad, keep the money for me, put it in the bank or bonds. Or if you need it, use it. If you put it in bonds, make it out for me and you as co-owner or beneficiary, which ever is best. On that insurance, if the two (1st & 2nd) beneficiaries are not there, the next in blood line get it (which would be Gert) So let her know, just in case some thing should happen.

Be good, and I'll write more later.

Love, John

July 12, 1944

ARM'D Co. "F" APO 15379

NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad- and the rest,

Well, just a short line for now. Just to say hello. Everything is right on the ball.

Hows every thing back there O.K. thats good. Say hello to the Boeremas for me. Got your letter and Gerts postcard today. Hope they are having a good time out at the cottage. Huh, thats a cute name for their boat, "CoralBert". I'll betcha the kids are proud of it.

Say hello to them for me, as time is kinda precious.

Well will close now.

Love, John

(The next letter was sent "V-Mail" from aboard ship. John left New York harbor mid-July 1944 for either Greenock or Glasgow, Scotland aboard the RMS AQUITANIA, then traveled by troop train to England.)

July 20, 1944

ARM'D Co. "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother & Dad,

Just a short line to let you know every thing is O.K. At the writing of this, am riding the waves. Kinda crowded, but time passes pretty fast. So its not so bad.

Hows every thing back there? O.K. thats good.

Say hello to Gert & Chuck and the kids for me. Say, how did those kittens the old cat had, turn out. Have they still got both of them, huh, or did they talk you into taking one of them, they sure were cute.

Well, will close till a little later, hope every thing is going O.K.

So till later,

Love, John

This is John's first letter from overseas.

July 29, 1944

ARM'D Co. "F" APO 15379

c/o PM, NY, NY

England

Dear Mother & Dad,

Received your letter of July 18 today, thanks a lot.

Its about 8'o clock now (nite) and just got through washing a few clothes. You know, "tattle tale grey" huh, no I didn't have any washing machine, just the good old scrubbing method.

It rained tonite kinda hard for a spell, but has now quit and the sun is shining.

Of course this letter will be a couple weeks old when you get it. But anyway, I have to think of something to write.

Am still with a few fellas from the old outfit, but of course no one knows how long-at least none of us do.

Just took time out to read "The Stars & Stripes" a 4 page paper which comes out every day, and is pretty interesting to read. At least a fellow knows a little of what is going on outside of him.

Am kept pretty busy at times. Lots of things today, tomorrow is Sunday, a day of duty. I don't know wether we will be able to get time off or not to go to chapel. Will have to wait and see.

Live in tents, 8 men to a tent. It gets pretty cold here at nite, in fact so cold that we use 3 or 4 blankets, half on top and half on bottom, huh, last nite I really must have rolled in my sleep, cause I woke up about an hour before revilie and my blankets were almost all off. Lets hope I turn out better tonite.

Hows every thing back there. Lets hope O.K. Hows Gert & Chuck & the kids coming? OK thats good. Oh yes, what did they do with the kittens, have they got them yet?

Well am going to close this short letter. Not much in it. But it will just have to do. So till a little later.,.

Love, John

P.S. Send a few airmail stamps with your next letter.

The next 11 letters were sent V-MAIL. V-Mail was devised by the government to accommodate the huge volume of mail from Europe. Letters were written on an 8.5"x10" form with addressee's name and address printed at the top, next to that was the sender's name and address, followed by the message. Some V-Mail was folded to make its own envelope. After the letter was posted and censored, it was put on micro film, flown to the U.S., printed and reduced to 4"x5" size and delivered. One mail sack could hold 150,000 microfilmed letters, as opposed to 37 sacks required for the same amount of regular letters. V-Mail was difficult to read because of the small script. TF

July 29, 1944

England

ARM'D Co. "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad-

Received your letter today, the first one, after this, send them air mail -they come faster.

Yours was dated the 13th and you had a three cent stamp on it. Got one from Betty also today the 18th. It gets here a little quicker.

Well, there isn't anything to write about this is such a doggone dull place. Pulling details all the time. Ye Gads, no wonder this war never gets over with.

The weather is very cold out here. In fact very very cold.

Hows everything out there. So you got the money from Sarge Glass. O.K.

Well, will close till later.

Love, John

July 29, 1944

England

ARM'D Co. "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother & Dad,

Just a short line to let you know everything is O.K. Am still in England, the weather is cold and very damp.

Yesterday I sent a 10 dollar money order to pop. Starting with my August pay, \$40 in allotment will be sent home. So you should get that some time in Sept. I think for my July pay the regular 15 bucks will be sent home. The \$40 starts with August pay.

Am kinda busy, usually all the time. It dosnt get dark here until about 11:00 at night.

And gets light at about the same time as in the states.

Hows every thing back there? O.K. that's good. Send my letters with an airmail stamp after this.

Say hello to everyone for me. Well I think I'll close for now.

So til a little later-

Love, John

August 5, 1944

England

ARM'D Co. "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother & Dad,

It's about time I dropped you a line. So here goes. Well, things have been busy off and on. Usually have nites off. There isnt anything to do in this camp here. So every now and then take a pass to one of the towns around here.

Tonite didn't feel much like going out so stuck around and cleaned up a little equipment, and am now writing this letter. Just got back from the Red Cross tent, had a couple do-nuts and some coffee. Boy, time sure does fly. Gosh, August already.

Well, the way things are going now adays, sure is enlightening, but still a long, long ways to go yet.

Hows every one, O.K. thats good. Dont get very much mail nowadays, sometimes it takes a little time to get in.

Well, till later, say hello to the rest for me.

Love, John

P.S. I sent home \$10.00 July 28 and \$20.00 on Aug. 4-Let me know when you get it. Just got July pay, \$40.00. Alot. will start with Aug. In other words, the end of Aug.

August 8, 1944

England

ARM'D Co. "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad,

Its noon here, so sat down and am trying to write you a letter. Well, this morning went on another road march. It must have been about 9 or 10 miles march. That was with light packs. Yesterday went on a shorter one with heavy packs.

Otherwise there isnt so extra much doing, but one can never tell when something will come up. The weather here lately has been nice. The sun usually always shining.

Well, hows every thing going back there. O.K. thats good. My \$40 allotment starts with my Aug. pay. So you should start getting it sometime in Sept I think. Let me know if it does. I also sent a \$10 money order 4th of Aug. Just brought the money down to the finance office and they take care of the rest. So let me know if you get them.

So till later-

Love, John

(The next 6 letters are V-Mail)

August 11, 1944

England

ARM'D Co "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, am writing this letter at a different camp. Moved the other day. Accommodations here are pretty good, and the food so far has been O.K.

The camp is situated right on the side of a small town. Its pretty nice scenery around here, also they have quite a bit of things going on around here. At nite they have a Red Cross, a couple theaters, P.X's, etc. I think this is an old British army camp. Sleep in brick buildings on cots.

Well, enough for now so till later,

Love, John

August 13, 1944

England

ARM'D Co "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad-

Received a letter from you today, the one dated the 25th of July. There was also a card from Betty and thats about all the mail I've gotten for the last two weeks. But sometimes it takes quite a while to get here. I've seen letters which sometimes take a month to get here. Altogether I've gotten 4 letters and two postals since I left the states somewhere around 3 or 4 weeks ago. But maybe they'll catch up with me sometime.

So Marge got married, well give her my best wishes.
Well, the things seem to be progressing very good across the channel, according to all reports.
Well, till later.
Love, John

August 19, 1944
Somewhere in France
ARM'D Co "F"
APO NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad,
Well, am writing this letter from a different place than the last one, as you will notice by the heading. Every move now brings us a little closer to the front. After being landed in a section of the beach which was used during the invasion, we men moved into the interior by truck, a drive which took all nite long. Passing through a few towns, of which one was really battered, the others not so bad. St. Lo was pretty bad, lot of buildings just the walls standing.
Have been moving quite a bit so my mail has quite a time catching up with me. But maybe someday it will. Its raining this afternoon so am laying in a pup tent trying to write.
Hows everything back there, O.K. that's good. Say hello to Gert & Chuck for me.
So, till later-
Love, John

August 28, 1944
France
ARM'D Co. "F"
APO NY, NY

Dear Mom & Dad & Gert & Chuck & "kids"-
Well, am at a new camp. For the last week, pracity every place we have been, we have had a chance to go swimming every day. Went swimming tonight, was raining all day, so the water was kinda cool.
At present we are...(the next few words were blacked out by the Army censor)... not so extra far from Paris. But I dont think we are still close enough to the lines. Started this letter last night but couldn't finish it. Was on KP today. Was pretty easy, so didn't mind it. Hope everything is O.K.
Till later
Love, John

Sept 6, 1944

France

ARM'D Co "F"

APO NY, NY

Dear Mother & Dad and the rest,

As usual, raining. Received one of your letters today, the one dated Aug. 1. Thanks a lot. Hows Gert coming along, O.K. that's good. Gosh, I should write them. Tell them I'll try to. This morning sent a money order home for 15 bucks. So let me know if you get it. Looked at a catalogue to send Christmas Gifts, ow, but couldnt find anything worth while, so will have to forget it.

Hows every thing going O.K. thats good. Say hello to the kids for me. Had a letter from Evertse yesterday.

Love, John

Sept. 19, 1944

(See page 141 Morning Report. TF)

Co. "B" 40th TANK BN

APO 257 NY, NY (APO 257 is the address for the 7th Armored Division. TF)

Dear Mom & Pop,

Well, you will notice my new address. Have finally arrived up here. Things are a little different up here. Artillery fires nite and day and these towns really catch h____. We eat pretty good out here, of course all rationed stuff. Had been raining quite a bit. But hasent started yet today. Live in a tank. Sleep, eat in it, and it really is crowded. Full of ammunition etc. Of course havent received any more mail. Only have got 8 letters since the middle of July, so am kinda hurting. Say hello to Boeremas. Ive gotten about 4 from Betty and 4 from you. Also Mins and Evertse's.

Well till later

Love, John

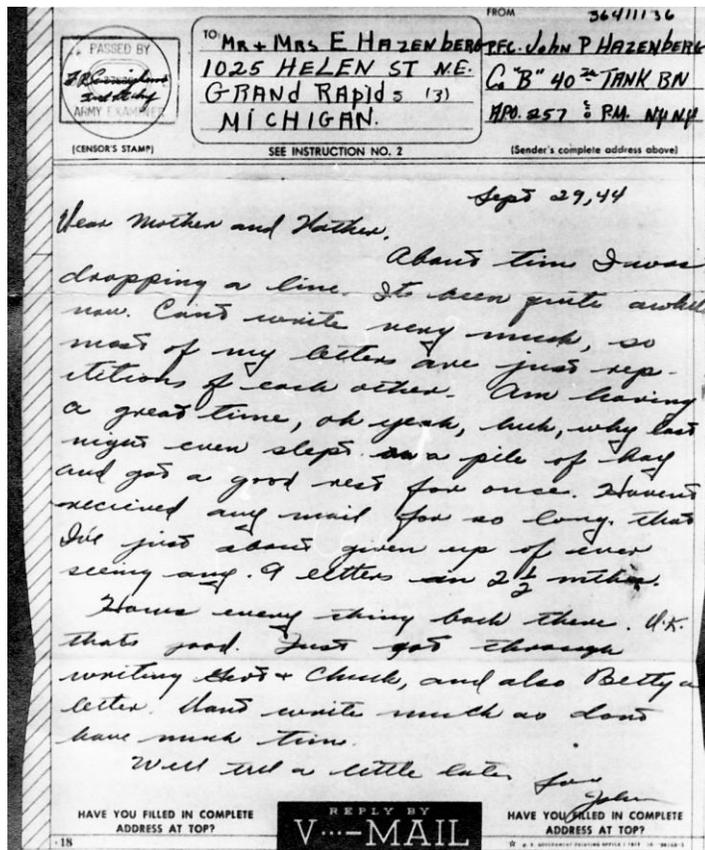
(The following letter makes reference to John having seen action, by his use of the code 'having a great time'. This was the major battle for the city of Metz, France. This photo is not John's tank, but his would have looked like this one. TF)



(Note censor's stamp in upper left)

Sept. 29, 1944 V-MAIL
Co. "B" 40th TANK BN
APO 257 NY, NY

Dear Mother and Father,
About time I was dropping a line.
Its been quite awhile now. Cant
write very much, so most of my
letters are just repetitions of each
other. Am having a great time, oh
yeah, huh, why last night even slept
on a pile of hay and got a good rest
for once. Havent received any mail
for so long that I've just about given
up of ever seeing any. 9 letters in 2
½ months.
Hows everything back there. O.K.
that's good. Just got through writing
Gert & Chuck, and also Betty a
letter. Don't write much as dont
have much time.
Well till a little later-
Love, John



Oct. 5, 1944

Pfc. Melvin J. Roetman (Mel was a good friend of John's brother Ed, who died in 1940
7th Depot Unit, Army at age 26. TF)
Hill Field, Ogden, Utah

Dear Friends-

It's been a long time since I have written to you and letting you know that all is well with me as I hope it is with you.

It is quite a ways from Georgia to Utah and quite a difference in many other ways to. The climate, scenery, work and what not. It is quite cool here even when the sun is shining and quite cold at night.

The second week I was in the outfit we were sent on a five day bivouac. It seemed we were miles from every where. Only till we climbed to the top of one of the many high hills could we see more than about a half mile away. We were down near the Great Salt Lake and could see it from the hill. That was quite a scenery never to forget. Large mountains as far as you could see, with the tops hidden by clouds. I had never seen anything like it before and it really was very interesting to see the view that it gave us. I'm receiving the Press regularly and don't know of any days paper I've missed reading thoroughly and really enjoying. I thank you so very much for your kind thoughts and your generosity in sending them to me.

Back to school again for about six weeks. A kind of a refresher course. I thought I had studied all the aircraft radio sets, but now we are to work on one I've never heard of or seen before. Our unit will be repairing small planes for the ground forces. It is still a question yet though, whether the Ground forces will have anything to do with or have around them an Air Force unit. It makes no difference to me. As long as they feed us and pay us, I'll do what they want me to.

They are not strict at all around here. As long as we behave ourselves and keep clean they don't bother us with a lot of inspections etc. We have three very good officers over us. They are our bosses yet they know and realize what the men can do and what they won't. Usually we get what we want from them.

While I was down in Georgia I was very lucky to have my wife with me for a few weeks. I'm pretty sure she enjoyed it and could sort of call it a little vacation. I know it did me a world of good to have her with me and it seemed to bring me so close to home again. But it didn't last as long as we had hoped and looked for it to. They notified me one day I was shipping and suddenly the next afternoon I was on my way west.

Wasn't to very far from home on my way here. Arrived at Chicago Sat. afternoon and left there Sat.nite. Four of us had a private little compartment from Atlanta Ga to Chicago and rode a good Pullman car from Chicago to Ogden. Saw many interesting things, even as fast as the train was traveling.

I bought me a very close pal today. I can't seem to get used to smoking cigarettes so I bought me a good little pipe. I can warm up my insides and my hands at the same time now. Now I have to learn how to smoke it right. It goes out to quick. But it is food for my nerves and gives me something to fiddle with while listening to very boring lectures. Which are plenty.

Well, folks, I have no more news to write about. I can't ask you for any news I guess, as long as I'm getting the old home town paper.

Something certainly should happen around here to make news though, and as soon as it does, I'll sit right down and write you another letter.

I've had my quart of milk which I have nearly every nite before hitting this bunk, and feel like a good night sleep. (Milk is cheap and plentiful here.)

So long for now and till we see each other again. (Soon I hope.) God be with you and keep you well each and every day.

It is my good fortune to have good friends like you have been to me. It means very much to me. Good night for now. Will write again soon.

As ever, your friend, Mel

(Not a V-Mail)

October 7, 1944

Somewhere

(John could not say where, but the 7th ArmdDiv moved from France, through Belgium, to Holland on Sept 24. The 7th ArmdDiv was diverted from the battle for Metz to provide flank coverage for Operation Market Garden in Holland. Co B was the striking force at the town of Vortum, liberating it on 2 Oct 1944. TF)

Co "B" 40th TANK BN

Dear Mother and Dad,

About time I'm dropping you a line. Hope you got my new address. Im quite sure that I'll get letters if you write to that address. So write to this address. I hope I get the rest of your letters soon. You know I've only gotten 3 or 4 of yours that were written since the middle of July. So you see I'm kinda "hurting". But maybe some day they'l come through. If I'm still here. Have been kinda busy lately so havent been writing very much.

Huh, why didn't you talk your old Dutch language more while I was at home. I'm lost as far as talking goes, just like the other places.

Well it sure gets cold up here. Especially at nite, and when you live, eat and sleep in a tank for days, oh my G I back.

Hows Gert & Chuck and the kids coming. Having a grand time, huh, with that bunch of kids. Say hello to them for me. Dropped them a line the other day, and will try and drop another.

Say hello to every one for me, as I just cant possibly drop them all a line.

So will close this till a little later and start on a letter to Betty down south there. Oh yeah, Happy Birthday pop, a little late.

Till later, Love, John

October 8, 1944 V-Mail

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother & Dad & Boeremas,

Well hows every little thing going back there. O.K. I hope Hows the weather back there. O.K. thats good. Gets very cold up here at nite. Am going to put on the "long handles" one of these days. Hows the Boeremas coming along. Honest, I forgot what the new member of the family is already, a boy or a girl, huh, I already cant think of the name to save my life.

Well, say hello to everyone for me, Deckers and O'Dells, as I haven't written them yet.

So till later. Love, John

PS. Give J. Decker my address as he sent me a church paper.

October 12, 1944 V-MAIL

Holland

(From now to July 1945, John's address remains: Co B, 40th Tank BN, APO 257. TF)

Dear Mom & Dad and the rest,

Well hows every thing going back there? O.K. I hope. Well today it looks like its going to be a beautiful day-one of the very few. It rains so doggone much here, that it isn't even funny any more. Sure is beautiful country. The tank has a little stove for cooking purposes and once in awhile when we have a chance we have a real meal. Last nite we had one, went and picked up some potatoes out of a field in back of us and had French fried potatoes, also tomatoes, and macaroni out of our rations. Oh yes, also coffee. Boy it really tasted good. Sometimes we trade cigarettes for eggs etc. No one knows how to say eggs in dutch, so one of the guys holds his hands the shape of an egg and then "cackles." P.S. We get 'em. Well till a little later-John

October 13, 1944 V-MAIL

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mom & Pop & the rest-

Well, am trying to drop you a line as much as possible. Today it isn't raining, for once, but there is a strong wind a blowing. So it is a little chilly out. Well there isnt any thing new to report as far as I know. So dont have much to write on.

Hows every thing going back there. How's Gert & Chuck and the kids coming along? Huh, I dont know, I havent received any mail for so long. Personally, I don't think this post office system that they talk about as being so good, well, I dont think its worth a d _____. But maybe someday I'll receive some, I hope. Well till a little later-John

Oct. 16, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother & Dad and the rest,

Well hows every thing going back there. Received a couple back dated letters yesterday. No, none of them were from you. They were all dated way back in August. One from Gerrit & Ella, one from Donna Evertse, Stedmans, and one from a kid back in Texas.

Sure felt good getting a couple for once. Maybe more will be coming in now. I dont know, Ella was saying that Rev.Veldman had left, and is now down at Boston Square, or someplace near there. Also Gret had a new member. Sorry to hear about Johnie Swartz.

If you happen to run into any of the family, give them my sympathy. Sure hope that Ralph is feeling better. Well hows the Boeremas coming along. Say Gert, you must be right on the ball, aren't you. "Production Line." Ella said, Chuck sure makes a dandy husband. Huh, I'm just wondering. He's sure keeping you on the run isn't he! Ahem!

Small, but might powerfull—huh—. Say, I'll betcha the kids are really growing aren't they. They'l probably be grown up by the time I get back there. Say Bert, how are the kittens and old cat coming along. Does Coral still pull their tails huh, I'll betcha little Chuckie can talk by now, cant he? Huh, I just cant think of that new ones name to save my neck, maybe some day I will. Huh, any way think its a "she". Huh you'd better watch Bert and little Chuckie, you know there's a manpower shortage these days--.

Say mom, do you still take care of the kids every now and then. Do they still go and tear up the attic like they used too. Or have they settled down a little.

I'm sitting in the tank here trying to write and am kinda running out of words. (PS-continued the next day) Well last nite was a bad nite, as usual, rain, and a very dark nite, makes it kinda bad, for a while, we couldnt see our hand in front of our face. Today, raining part of the time and very damp, in other words, miserable.

Well, heres hoping every thing is going O.K. back there. Say hello and drop me a line.

Do you still get them allotments or not.

So till a little later-

Love, John

(The new baby that John was referring to is me, the editor, born 3 Aug 1944 to John's sister Gertrude Hazenberg Boerema. TF)

October 17, 1944 V-MAIL

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mom & Dad, Gert & Chuck, and Bert, Coral & Chuckie & ?

Huh, that question mark is for the one I dont know the name of, at least I cant think of it. Well any way, hows every thing going back there. I suppose it is getting a little more cold back there by now. Tell pa, his feet aren't the only ones which get cold. Gosh, mine doggone near frozen stiff on outpost last nite. They ought to invent some shoes with a heating device in them. Huh, that would be the day. But will just have to wait for that to come along. Say young kids, you really must be growing, aren't you. Do you still play the phonograph, well, play it all you want too. Will close, till the next opportunity.
Love, John

October 18, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother & Dad,

Well, what do you think, I received one of your letters today. The one dated Oct. 5, 44. Sure was glad to hear from you. You sent it V-Mail and on the front of it was marked "Unsuitable for micro-filming." So when you send any more of that V mail wont you try and write that address on the inside of the form a little more clearer and not crowd up the lines so much, especially towards the end of it. O.K. So Tom Jr. finally got home, well, say hello to him for me. This place they call Holland, huh, you can have it for all I care, as all it does is rain anyway. This forsaken place, the sun was out a few minutes this morning, but it has started to rain again, rained all last nite, well, I'll finish it, it rains all the time. I'm going to make this letter short as am not in much of any mood for writing. So, say hello to every one for me, and I'll write again soon if possible.
So till a little later---John



Cousin Tom Van Wyk

October 18, 1944 V-MAIL

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother & Dad and Gert, Chuck, and "kids"-

Will try and drop you a short line from this disgusting country, which you call you "fatherland". Huh, mom & pop I can now understand why you went to the states when you were young. Huh, you can give this country and its climate back to the Indians. And I dont even know if they would want it. Oh well, enough "bitchin" for this short line. How is every thing back there, did little Coral start going to school with Bertie. Gert really must have a job on her hands with that "flock" of "kids" (ahem) or is it Chuck. Oh well, will close till a little later. Say hello for me and till later-
Love, John

October 21, 1944 V-MAIL

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother & Dad and the Boeremas (also the Cramers)

Well received another one of your letters, this one dated Oct. 10. Gosh thanks a lot. So Tom is home, well be sure and say hello to him for me. Sure am glad to hear every thing is going O.K. back there and hope it stays that way. Today for the first time in a very long time it was pretty nice out. A little cloudy but the sun did manage to get through. Seem to be getting my mail regular now. Yours and Bettys and it sure makes things different.

Will write again soon as possible.

Love, John

October 22, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother and Dad and Gert & Chuck & "kids",

Well received another one of your letters yesterday, this one dated Aug. 29, 44. Some more backmail. In fact I got about 8 of them yesterday. Quite a few back ones. So it finally is catching up with me. There was also one from Gert & Chuck, Barbara & Ralph, Gerrit & Ella, Slayers, Evertse, and, you guessed it Betty.

So I have a little writing to catch up on. It didn't rain last night or all day today, so far, but it looks like it might start any minute. The doggone climate in this country, it isn't fit to be called climate. Well, there isn't much new that I can report from over here. About the only thing is, that these dutch have more kids, than you can count. Huh, Gert (Production Line) you'd better speed it up a little. Gosh, only four, oh well, thats plenty if you ask me. Oh yes, also had a letter from Walt.

Well, will close this short line for now and will drop more later if possible, so till then— Say hello for me.

Love, John

October 27, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother & Dad and the Boeremas,

Well have been receiving quite a bit of mail lately, most of it my Sept. mail but also mixed in it some new stuff too. I got about 13 of them last nite. Please dont mind the writing as my hands are a little stiff and cold yet. Its about 10 in the morning. Received mom's & pops letters dated Sept. 14, 21, 28, and Gerts letter of Oct. 2. Received that Dennis news a couple of days ago. Am having quite a job catching up on these letters. Had one from Betty, Minuet (Detroit) Donna Evertse, Mrs. Decker, O' Dells and a couple others. So if you think you got letter writing to do, huh, think of me.

Well there isn't much to report from down this way. At least nothing I can mention. The weather is cold. Gerts letter had the pictures in it. Thanks a lot-say Sis, how old are you.

You don't look a day over 17__ahem! Compliments._So the kids are coming along O.K. thats good. Lets hope Gert & Chuck read all these letters, as they go for all of you. Wrote Walt a letter the other day, and am going to write the "kids" (Gerts) one as soon as possible. So be sure and let them see all of the letters which I write to you. Well am going to close this short line and try and catch up on a few of the others. So till a little later-
Love, John

October 29, 1944 V-MAIL

Holland

Dear Mom & Dad and the rest,

Just a short line to let you know every thing is still O.K. and hope its the same back there. Was a very beautiful day. Oh yes, Sunday, went to church this morning while I had the chance, and sure seemed good.

Had a letter from Gert & Chuck, back dated, and Betty, and O'Dells.

I suppose it is getting a little cold back there isn't it. Well its the same over here.

Will close till, if possible tomorrow.

Love, John

October 31, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

(Sent to John's sister Gertrude Boerema at 748 Thomas Street, Grand Rapids, MI TF)

My Dear—(here goes) Gert, Chuck, Bert, Coral, Chucky Jr. and Gertrude Minnie-whew, what a start-huh. Received your letter of Aug. 11 the other day, I wrote that in a letter to either you or mom & pop before. Well, I want to thank you again. Huh, dont worry, I well understand why you cant write much, you must have quite a job on your hands, havent you? You wrote this particular letter while you were in the "horsepistol" and the young thing was only 7 days old. "She's a young thing and cannot leave her mother." Huh.

Well lets hope every thing is going good back there. May I ask you a question? She (the new one) isn't the type which pulls hair, is she? No, well thats good. And I suppose Bert, Coral and Chucky really have fun together. So Bert is going to school or has been for a couple of semesters and now "Little Sis" has started in. Say I'll bet she's a "cracker". Hey Bert dont you let her copy your homework, huh.

I imagine by the time you get this letter, snow might be falling back there. Huh, well I'd eat that snow any day before I would any of this over here, even if it was full of soot.

Boy, if I ever get home again, and those "wooden shoes" (mom & pop) ever mention how swell the old country (Holland) used to be, huh, they had better be on the alert, huh, as they can have every inch of it. And I dont think a million other guys would mind either.

Oh yes, thanks a lot for them airmail stamps you had attached to that little baby card.

Gosh, can always use them. Gert, I think Chuck put them there without you knowing it.

Now confess Chuck, what (huh) what are you trying to do, slip something past Gert, trying to make points with me.

Gosh, and talking about points, honest I'm hurting on this point system in connection with this demobilization plan. Huh, will have to figure out some way of picking up quite a few more, huh. Well anyway, we'll let that worry wait until its time is due.

Last nite it rained, didn't get practically any sleep. And talk about cold. If this army would only invent some way of keeping a guys feet warm. They spend millions of bucks on research on what is best suited for different climates, but seems they cant even solve the "cold toes" situation, and when they get cold, everything gets cold. Just like them, after the war is over, then they'l come out with something.

Oh yes Gert, you wanted the lowdown of Betty-well, I'll try and give you a little of it here, and if your a good little girl, more later-huh-so I have to give you the age, you know I'm no "child stealer", huh. O.K., shes about 19 and stands about 5 ft 4 (I "tink") slim build, blond hair (dishwater), blue eyes and has a very nice intellectual talk and disposition. In other words, I think she's a swell kid. Very decent and the right kind. Not the rowdy type. Like to send you a picture of her, but only have this one of her, but will tell her to send some along. She goes to a Lutheran Church and after you add every thing up, shes a swell kid.

Well Gert, & the rest, I'll try and give you more "dope" later. Thanks again for the letter and stamps. And Best Wishes. Be sure and let mom & pop read this also.

Till later-love, John

P.S. I dont know when I'll be able to mail this, but I'll mail it at the first opportunity. Personally, I think this war has got a long way to go. Hope the Russians keep it up.

October 31, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

Dearest Mother and Dad-

Just got through dropping a line to Gert & Chuck & kids, O'Dells and Betty, so am now started on one to you. I dont know when I'll be able to mail any of them. So I just keep a-writing them and mail them at the first opportunity. I know you read the ones I send to Gert & Chuck and I suppose (I hope) they do visa versa. So some of the things will be repetitious of the other letters. But that wont matter much.

I wont say any thing about this Holland as I've said what I think of it in letters before. Rained last nite, so made it all the more miserable and I wouldn't doubt but what it starts up anytime again. Today the fog lifted about 1:30 PM this afternoon. So it was a bad day in conjunction with the rainy nite. But we lived through it, huh. Boy it sure does get cold over here. I see by the papers that snow has fallen in certain parts of Holland. It hasent fell yet around here yet, but we can expect it any day now, as it sure is cold enough for it.

Well, there isn't any thing much new that I can report from this end of the line. Red Cross happened to be around, so got a few sheets of stationary, gosh, sure can use it. If you care to send me a few tablets of paper about this size, sure could use them, as paper is kinda hard to get around here.

How is every thing back there. I suppose you go to Gert & Chucks quite a bit and take care of the kids. Or do they bring them over to the house. Oh thats right the kids go to school now. How do they like it. Gosh I'll betcha Coral thinks she's the "cats mew"

now dont she, huh, anyway give her a kiss for me and tell her & Bert to play the phonograph as much as they want too.

Well its 6:00 o'clock out and dark. Guard is just starting. We pull it by tank crews, every crew pull guard. Divide up the time. So will have to put a close to this letter. Dont know when I can mail it, but will get it out at the first opportunity. Went to church Sunday while I had the chance, as the chance dosent always come. So till later- Love, John

In this next letter, what John does not say is more important that what he does say. The 7th ArmdDiv was involved in very heavy action in the Peel Marshes, the Maas River, and the towns of Ospel-Miejel-Liesel against heavy German resistance. It is referred to as the Battle of the Canals. TF

November 9, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mother and Dad and the Boeremas and all the rest,

Well, well, O.K. knock me all over the place for not writing, but it was just impossible. I still have a letter for you that I was going to mail the first of November, but forgot to turn it in, and didn't have a chance till now, the 9th, to mail it so will turn it in tomorrow with this one. As this is the first chance.

We are now in a little different position, kind of a rest period, taking a breather and getting organized again. So I couldnt do any letter writing for a spell, but maybe now will catch up on a little letter writing.

Well the weather has been kinda miserable all the time. Usually raining all the time and this afternoon it snowed. Snowed pretty hard for a short spell.

For once we had a chance to cook our own meal. Had a pretty good one tonite. Peas and waxed beans, crackers and jam, and corned beef and coffee. Really tasted good.

Had a "heck" of a time yesterday trying to shave off about a 6 day beard. Huh really tough. Had a chance to take a shower yesterday and that really hit the spot.

Dont know who won the election yet. But I think F.D.R. took it easily, of course no one around here took much interest in it anyway. I'm hoping Roosevelt took it, not that I dont think Dewey was any good, but F.D.R. I think is more experienced for the type of situation the country is now in. I think he could handle the job the best. Boy just think, he's been in there 12 yrs now, thats an awful long time. When you come down too it, that sure is a hardship. In these times especially-but I hope he got it any way.

Hows all the kids coming along O.K. that's good. Havent had any mail for a spell, so am looking for some to come in.

Hope you have, or had, a nice thanksgiving. Well, will close till a little later and hoping every thing is O.K. back there.

Say hello for me and so till a little later, at the next opportunity. Love, John

(With the defeat of the Germans, the 7th ArmdDiv ended its Holland campaign. For the rest of November the Division was given R&R in Maastricht, its first one since August. TF)

November 11, 1944

Somewhere in Holland

Dear Mom & Pop and the Boerema's (and all the rest)

Well, will try and drop you a short line, seeing I have the time. Am also going to try and get one off to the O'Dells while I have the time. So say hello to them for me.

Well there isn't much to report from here. Although while we are back here, something did happen, we did have chicken for dinner, gosh, that sure did taste good. Hmmm hmm. The weather was finally good today, rained once in awhile, but otherwise for the better part of the day, it did not rain. Had snow yesterday. Sure is muddy around here, in fact all over.

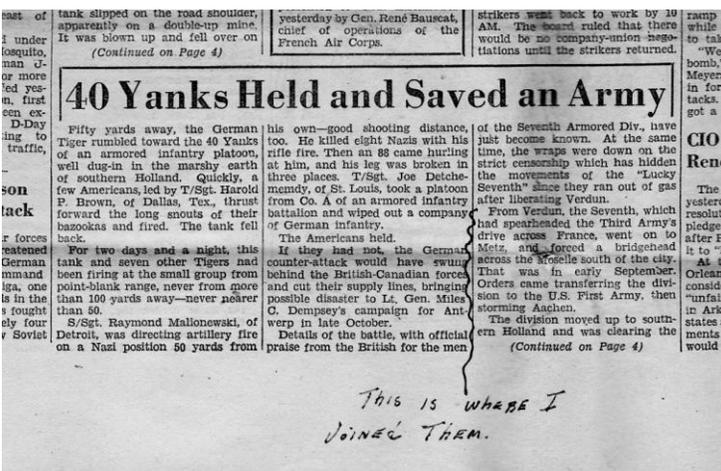
How is every thing back there? O.K. thats good. I suppose pop is working every day. Huh, it sure would help if I could speak a little of your dutch. About the only words I know is what pop used to say around the house, once in a while-in other words I cant say a word, except "shut your mouth", "church" and that stuff you used to make for breakfast, I think it was "Supen Bray", oats and milk, and that is all. If I knew this was going to come up I would have had you talk Dutch around the house all the time. Huh— Hows the kids coming along. Lets hope O.K. Dont get very much mail nowadays, and am expecting one from you any day. Just got paid today for the last 2 mths so have some extra cash on hand and am going to try to send some home as there isn't much use for it over here. I can practically count in cents what I have spent in the last 3 months.

Well there isnt much more to report from this side of the line, but will try and keep writing whenever I get the time.

Hope you have a nice Thanksgiving. Eat a piece of chicken for me to, if I dont have the chance to have any.

Boy it sure gets cold here at nite. Gosh, my poor feet. How are pops feet holding out, does his still get cold? Huh-

Well, Im going to put a close to this for now. Say hello for me, and till a little later-
Love, John



November 18, 1944

Somewhere in France

Dear Mom & Pop,

Havent dropped you a line for a few days. As you will notice the caption reads France instead of Holland. Had a little trouble with my feet and developed a slight case of "trench foot". Didnt have a chance to change for quite awhile up ahead, but changed socks and shoes as soon as we got back. But it looks like it was a little too late. So am now sitting back in these Hosp. thawing them out. I dont know when Ill be able to go back to the outfit, but I'm going to try like the "dickens" to get there as soon as possible. Because I really want to get back, just ain't at home, any other place. And we had a good crew. Which you always dont find in a tank.

So send my mail to the same address.

Am inclosing a money order, I picked up a while back and didn't have a chance to send out. Its for 15 bucks. Hope everything is O.K. back there. Say hello for me and best wishes.

Love, John

November 21, 1944 V-MAIL

Somewhere in France

Dear Mom and Pop and all the rest,

Dropped you a letter a couple days ago in which I stated I was back in a hosp. with a slight case of trenchfoot caused from having wet feet too long a period. Hope I'm not out much longer as I sure would like to get back to the outfit.

Sure is a difference way back here in the weather than it is up there in Holland and also Germany. Why the sun is even shining now, back here. Hardly ever saw it shine up there.

Well, am going to close till a little later. Hope every thing is O.K. Say hello to the Boeremas for me.

Love, John

November 22, 1944

Post card in Dutch for a "Merry Christmas and Happy New Year"

It was postmarked 23 Nov 44 by APO Postal Service, and received on 26 Dec.44.

Best Wishes, to you "Hollanders". Happened to pick these up quite awhile back, some little town.

Love, John

(John does not give his location, but he is in Paris, France, waiting for transport to the 94th General Hospital in Bristol, England. TF)

November 24, 1944 V-MAIL

Dear Mom & Pop and all the rest-

Well, hows every little thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Hope you had a nice thanksgiving. Hows the weather back there? I imagine it's turning a little cold isnt it. Have you had any snow yet. Huh, if you havent its probably on its way now. Am still

back here in this hospital, way back, with this case of “trenchfoot”. But they feel a 100% better than the day I left for the “medic”.

This will kind of “screw” up my mail again. I hope to get back to the Co. again soon, but of course I dont know when, and if its possible.

Will close till a little later.

Love, John

November 29, 1944 V-MAIL

England

Dear Mother& Dad and the rest-

Am dropping you a short line to let you know that everything so far is pretty good. Got shipped back to England, to some hospital. But the feet feel a lot better that they did 2 weeks ago. Dont know when or if I'll ever get back to the outfit. But lets hope I get back to the same outfit.

There isnt much else to say. Had Thanksgiving in a Hospital in Paris.

Well will close till the next opportunity. Say hello to everyone for me.

Love, John

December 11, 1944 V-MAIL

US ARMY HOSPITAL

PLANT 4134

APO 508 NY, NY

Dear Mother and Dad and the rest,

Well, hows everything going back there? O.K. Thats good. Heres wishing you a very Merry Christmas. Today the Chaplin was around (Prot) and I took confession. I had always been thinking of taking it, but quite a bit of the time up front we always didnt have a chance to go to church and when we did have a chance I put it off. But today I had a talk with him and took it.

Hows the “kids” coming along down there? O.K. Say hello to them for me. My feet are feeling pretty good.

Well, will close till a little later. Say hello for me.

Till later, Love, John

December 13, 1944 V-MAIL

DET.of PAT.

US ARMY HOSP. PLANT 4134

APO 508 NY, NY

Dear Mom and Dad and the rest,

Well its about time I dropped you a line. When we were up front I didn't have time to write. But now, way back here I still cant write as I cant think of any thing to write.

Am still laying around with them feet of mine. Can hobble around on my heels a little, but cant put any pressure forward of the heel as it causes quite a bit of pain. Have to keep

the “dogs” outside of the blankets all the time. Just have to thaw them out. They are cold in a warm room.

Ran into a kid from G.R. The first one since we shipped early in July, in a hosp. back away. Another Hollander from up on Leonard St. W. by the name of Gerald Haadsma. He has a case of the same stuff. He went to 7th Reformed Church, use to hang around with Jr. Tietsma. He’s only 2 beds from me, so we have some good old talks.

Love, John

(I called a Mr. Art Haadsma in Grand Rapids, MI, who turned out to be Gerald’s brother. Gerald died in 1999; he was in the Infantry in Belgium when he suffered “trenchfoot” and remained hospitalized until the end of the war. He became a missionary to Africa and spent most of his adult life there. Herman “Jr” Tietsma became a minister, but did not serve in the military. TF)

Walter Decker F 2nd Class

USS LST 123 (Landing Ship Tank, LST123’s area of operation and campaigns were Asiatic-Pacific Theater, Guam, and the Philippines. TF)

FPO San Francisco, Calif.

Dec. 18, 1944

South Pacific

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Hazenberg:

Just a few words tonight before I hit the sack.

When I do get a chance to write I have so many people to write to that I just can’t write long letters to anyone. However, I want you to know how much I appreciate your remembering me at Christmas time. I want to thank you very much for the box that you sent me. The food was very good but the candy was a little soft however it tasted real good. Oh yes Mr Hazenberg I want to thank you very much for that John Elbrink special and I’m going to smoke it the 25th of Dec. You don’t have to worry about me getting sick on it because I’m pretty use to smoking them, ha ha.

A few days ago I received a nice letter from John and in it he stated he was in Holland. I was quite surprised to hear it and I was hoping John would get to stay in England for awhile. Of course its not our way but the Lords way and He knows what is best for us. We must take it to the Lord in prayer and He will be near us in whatever ways we must travel. That certainly is a great comfort, isn’t it?

Right now I’m striking for water tender and I like the work. It has to do with the fuel & water aboard ship. I’m feeling fine-other than that I can’t say much about myself because of censorship. About a week ago I saw Gord Van Oostenberg and sure had a nice visit with him. It sure seemed good to see somebody from back home.

Well folks I think I’ll close for now because it is getting rather late & don’t know what more to write.

May this be a blessed Christmas season for you all.

Sincerely, Walt Decker

P.S. And again I say Thanks Loads.

December 21, 1944 V...— MAIL (This type of "V...—Mail"/Victory Mail , dot dot dot
US Army Hosp Plant 4134 dash, was not a microfilm letter. TF)
APO 508, NY, NY

England

Dear Mom and Dad and the rest-

Well its about time I dropped you a line. Well there isn't much to report from this end of
the line. So its kinda hard to write anything that would be interesting.

Hows every thing going back there? Lets hope O.K. How are Gert & Chuck and the kids
coming along. I suppose they are all ready for Christmas. Hows the new little one
coming along. I suppose it is kinda cold up there by now isn't it. Must be snowing.

Well, will put a close to this letter till a little later.

Love, John

December 25, 1944 V-MAIL

US Army Hosp Plant 4134

APO 508

England

Dear Mom, Dad, Gert, Chuck, and the rest,

Its about time I dropped you a line. I'll have to admit I dont write very much. Well there
isn't much to report from this end of the line. Today was Christmas, really had a swell
dinner. My "feet's" just dont seem to be up to par. They are always cold, especially the
toes, and have some pain in them.

Hows every thing going back there. Did you have a good time Christmas. Huh its 3
times now that I havent been home for Christmas. Time sure does fly. Well, will close
this for now. Say hello for me.

Love, John

(John was sent to the 828th Convalescent Center, Honiton, England, 54 miles from the
94th Hospital in Bristol, 153 miles S.W. of London. From now to the end of March,
John's address is the same, so I won't repeat it each time. TF)

December 28, 1944

Co. "E"

4158 US Army Hosp. Plant

APO 511, NY, NY

England

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, its about time I dropped you another line. As you will notice I have another new
address. To tell you the truth, I doubt if I ever get any of the mail that was sent me. Huh,
will just have to wait and see.

Well, hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. I got a package from Barb and
Ralph back in the other hospital and also one from Timmers out by Ada. I dont know
how they caught up with me. They had my old replacement address on them and they did
not go to the company, but came to the hosp.

Well there isn't much to report from this end of the line. This place here is a rehabilitation place. I dont know what they are going to do in our case. As I dont think my feet are in any condition for any thing and I dont know if they ever will be the same again. They are always cold and have pain in them yet. Swell up quite a bit. Well, I'm going to close this, not much to write about so till a little later—
Love, Johnie

(For the next 6 months, all John's letters are sent V-MAIL. TF)

December 31, 1944

England

Dear Mom & Dad,

Well, about time I dropped you a line. While here, I've ran into several persons I know. Oh yes, tell Gert and Chuck I'll bet they cant guess who I ran into. He saw my name at the Red Cross register and looked me up. Well, it was Al Terburgin, Ann Hertels husband. He sure looks good. I met him at your house one night around Thanksgiving of '43 when I was home on furlough. Remember.

Well lets hope every thing is O.K. back there. My feet are so so. Still get some pains in them and they swell up so often.

Well, will close till a little later.

Love, John

1945

January 6, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and the rest,

About time I dropped you a line. Nothing much to report from this end of the line.

Weather is usually kind of chilly and foggy. Once in a while the sun shines. Havent had any mail since I left the outfit, but expect to get some any day.

As far as the "dogs" are concerned, they dont seem to be up to par yet. They swell up at times and have pain in them.

Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Kinda cold back there isn't it.

Well will close till later.

Love, John

January 9, 1945

England

Dear Mom and Dad and the rest,

About time I dropped you a line again. Nothing much to report from this end of the line.

At least nothing of much importance. The weather here is usually chilly, but no snow.

At least not yet. As far as the "dogs" are concerned, they still give me some trouble.

Down here we take certain exercises to aid in getting circulation back in them. Although

they dont know any too much about the stuff, it can partly be credited to improper circulation. So will just have to wait and see how they come along.
Hows every thing going back there. I expect to get some mail any day now. Havent had any since I left the... (the next two words were blacken out by the Army censor. TF)... in November.

Well, say hello and I'll write again soon.

Love, John

January 11, 1945

England

Dear Mom and Dad,

Please hold on to these clippings for me.

John

(From Warweek newspaper is a full page article dated 30 December 1944 entitled "How They Took Metz", complete with photos and maps. The article speaks of the 7th ArmdDiv putting another bridgehead across the Moselle River at Arnaville under heavy enemy attack on 10 September. John wrote in the margin: "joined them just before this. This, huh, was my "baptism" of combat."

Another clipping, dated 9 Jan 1945, from The Stars and Stripes is titled: "U.S. Units in Ardennes Bulge Identified." There are photos of the American generals directing units north of the German salient in Belgium. The article goes on to say that "the 7th Armored Division fought against overwhelming odds, and helped prevent German attempts to swing north from their initial breakthrough. The 7th Armored, for example, is credited with holding St. Vith for three days longer than expected, thereby contributing materially to the eventual stopping of the counter-offensive." Due to John being hospitalized in England, he missed seeing action in the Battle of the Bulge, although the rest of Co. B was heavily involved. TF)

January 13, 1945

England

Dear Mom and Pop,

Well thought I would drop you a line. Nothing much to say from this end of the line. How is every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Kinda cold back there I imagine. I suppose the kids (Gert & Chucks) are really growing up, aint they.

Havent had any mail since I left the outfit quite awhile back. Maybe some day I'll get some. Lets hope so. So as far as mail goes, I'm kinda "hurtin."

Oh yes before I forget. Happy birthday "mom". Kinda early, but better than never.

Well, will put a close to this, till a little later.

Say hello for me, and I'll try and write more often.

Love, John

January 19, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad,

Am enclosing a "Stars and Stripes." Please hold on to it for me. Am going to write a regular letter to you soon.

Hope every thing is O.K. back there and say hello.

Till a little later-

Love, John

(Stars and Stripes, dated 23 November 1944. The article is entitled "40 Yanks Held and Saved an Army". It describes the battles around Aachen, Holland and the attacks near the town of Meijel in late October, 1944. See page 66. TF)

January 21, 1945

England

Dear Mom and Dad and the rest,

Well, hows every little thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Not much to report from this end of the line. Havent had any mail for well over 2 mths now. Same way as it was in replacement pools. So you can see, this mail service, "ain't what its cracked up to be."

How is the kids coming along. O.K. thats good. I imagine one of these days I'll be "headin" back up to the front again. One hell of a place to be, but if you got to go back, you just gotta go back, huh. Sure hope I can get back to the 7th Arm'd and the same crew, that is if its still there, considering that German breakthrough.

Well, will close till a little later. Oh yes, mom, happy birthday and many wishes.

Till a little later-

Love, John

P.S. Please save all these for me.

(enclosed are two US propaganda fliers directed at German soldiers. One is a "Safe Conduct Pass", signed by General Eisenhower, guaranteeing the bearer protection under the rules of The Geneva Convention.

The other flier tells the German soldier that his homeland and family are at risk of being destroyed, so surrender now.

These two flyers are in German, but John included the English translations.

A third enclosure is dated 10 Jan 45 from the Stars and Stripes and says "Row with Patton? Silvester, Tank General, Demoted, Returned to U.S." TF)



January 24, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and the rest,

Well, its about time I dropped you a line. As usual, there isnt much to report from this end of the line. There was about 3 or 4 inches of snow on the ground the last couple days, but its slowly going away, as the sun is out now. A fella just came around with a

“corny” joke. What part of the body is the “yet”. He said it was in the paper. A woman got shot and bullet was in her “yet.” Corny I’ll admit.
Hows the young kids coming along. O.K. Lets hope so.
Well, will close till a little later.
Love, John

January 29, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad-

Well, what do you think, I finally got some mail. Of course it was all back dated from last November. One from Ed & Alice, Betty, Jake (next door), Donna Evertse, and you. Sure was glad to get some as it was 2 ½ mths ago that I got the last ones. Hope that they keep acoming.

How is every little thing back there. Lets hope O.K. I suppose the kids are really growing up. Have really been having some snow here lately. Kinda reminds a fella of back there. I suppose you have been having some also.

Say hello for me. I imagine one of these days I’ll be headin back for the front.

Well will close till a little later.

Love, John

January 31, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and the rest,

Well, how is every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. I suppose its kinda cold back there, isnt it.

There isnt much to report from this end of the line. Just cant think of a thing to write.

Had a letter from Timmers at Ada today and cards from the Deckers and Zeefs and Evertse. Am going to drop them a line as soon as possible.

Well till a little later.

Love, John

February 4, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad, Gert & Chuck & the rest,

Am in a letter writing mood. Something new, huh, especially for me.

Was on K.P. today and just got off a little while ago. Sat down and am now trying to write. Huh, its my birthday Sunday-Gosh, how time does fly. (John will be 23 years old.

TF) How are the young kids coming along. Gosh, I’ll bet they are growing aren’t they.

Is “Coral” just as chubby as she always was. Or is she growing up instead of sideways.

Dont get much mail. But maybe some day my ship will come in. I hope soon as I sure could stand to read some letters.

Well, will close till a little later. Say hello for me and till later.

Love, John

February 9, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and the rest,

Well, received about 30 letters and was sure glad to get them. There was about 10 of yours, also Gert & Chucks and some from Betty.

Well, how is every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. There isn't much to report from this end of the line. The weather, as it always is in England, is very damp and usually raining.

The Russians really seem to be going to town lately. Sure glad to hear that. Got a letter from the "Litho" with a present in it.

Well will have to be closing in a short time. How are the "kids" coming along. I suppose really growing up. Well, say hello and till later-

Love, Johnnie

February 11, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Pop and all the rest,

Well, hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Have been receiving some mail now and then. Sure feels good to get some. Got Min & Irv's package today. So maybe they will keep acoming in.

As far as the weather is concerned, well its pretty lousy as it usually is at this time of the year in England.

Hows Gert and Chuck & the kids O.K. Lets hope. Say hello for me and till a little later-
Love, John

February 12, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Pop and all the rest,

Well how is every little thing going back there. I suppose you have every thing right on the ball. Had a letter from Betty yesterday. They seem to be coming in quite regular lately. But no one knows how long that will last.

Things seem to be going pretty well on this end of the line. How is the weather back there. I suppose the snow is going away and I imagine spring will be coming along in a little while. How are Gert & Chuck and the "kids" coming along. O.K. thats good. Well will close till a little later.

Love, Johnnie

February 14, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Pop and all the rest,

Recieved a letter of you this morning. A V-Mail dated Jan. 29. Thanks a lot. Seems that your mail is coming in pretty regular now, the same way as Betty's is. Well how is every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Today so far has been a pretty nice day. Sun out now and then. So the "kids" are going to school. Little "sis" I imagine just goes in the afternoon, dosent she. Well, will close till later.
Love, John

February 16, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and the rest,

Well its about time I dropped you a line. Received a package from Betty today. Sure could use every thing she had in it. Stationary, cigarettes and candy. Very nice of her. Hows every thing back there. Got Gerts & Chucks letters the other day with the picture in it. Sure is cute. Do you still get the checks regularly?

Well, hoping every thing is O.K. till later, say hello,

Love, Johnnie

February 18, 1945

England

Dear Mom and Dad and Gert & Chuck and all the rest,

Its about time I dropped you a line. Received your V-Mail of Jan 29 yesterday and that Dennis Church paper today. Sure was glad to get them. I know these aren't much of any letters, but I'll try and improve and write a regular one soon.

Got the pictures of the "kids" the other day. They sure are growing and cute. Also got Betty's box the other day. Sure appreciate them all. Maybe I'll get the rest of them soon. Pretty nice day out today. Warm and once in awhile the sun breakes out. Hoping every thing is O.K. back there as it is here.

Till a little later-

Love, John

February 23, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and all the rest,

Well, how is every thing going down that way? Lets hope O.K. Well, there isn't much to report from this end of the line. Things seem to be going pretty good. Am on guard tonite, it looked like rain about supper time, but has cleared up, so it looks like it wont be such a bad nite after all.

Had a couple back dated letters today. From Donna Evertse and also another kid.

Otherwise havent received much mail the last week or so. Got 4 pks. yesterday, Gert & Chucks, Jake and Amelias and Ed & Alice.

Well, till a little later. Say hello for me.

Love, John

February 26, 1945

England

Dear Mom and Pop,

Here it is Sunday nite. So thought I'd better drop you a line.

How is every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Took a walk this afternoon. The weather was kinda cold and cloudy out.

Hows the "kids" coming along. I suppose the snow is about gone I suppose. Oh yes, "mom", am wishing you a Happy Birthday. I know this will come a little late, but better late than never.

Get mail now and then, not too much lately. But enough to keep me going.

Well, will close for now, hoping every thing is O.K.

Love, John

February 28, 1945

England

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Just a short line, to let you know everything is going pretty good and hoping it is going the same way back there.

There isnt much to report from this end of the line. The weather has been so so.

Hows the "kids" coming along. OK lets hope. Well, till a little later.

Love, John

March 1, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Pop and all the rest,

About time I've dropped you a letter. Yesterday received your letter of Jan 10 and Feb.10 and today your V-Mail of Feb14 and letter of Feb 21, also got the knife you sent a long time ago. Thanks for everything. Will get a letter off tomorrow if I can.

Hows every thing going? Lets hope just fine. Sorry to hear about Ralph. How did Chuck come out. Lets hope he's still home.

Well, will close, till a little later probably tomorrow. Happy Birthday, mom.

Love, John

March 4, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and all the rest,

Its about time I dropped you a line. Hows every thing going. Lets hope just fine. Well there isn't much to report from this end of the line. The weather has been pretty nice here lately.

Hows Gert & Chuck and the kids coming along. Can Gert sit down a little more often now. Lets hope so. Well, will close till a little later. Say hello for me, till later. Mail has been coming pretty good

.Love, Johnie

(John's sister, Gert, fell down the stairs and broke her tail bone. TF)

(The following letter was written by John's mother on March 5, 1945. It was sent airmail to John's correct address in the hospital in England, but was stamped "Return to Sender". It was received back in Grand Rapids, MI on May 24, 1945. TF)

March 5, 1945

My Dear John-

I guess I better sit right down this Monday night, to get your letter started so that I can give you a little more news on regular writing paper than on a V mail sheet, they are very nice if you have to write in a hurry to get it off for in a short time I have it full and ready, but I cant get very much news on them and I think you enjoy them more if they are a little longer, and a little more news of home. Well big boy was very glad with the letter we got today to hear that your things are arriving at last, which we all got ready for you for Christmas, letters and boxes, be sure and let me know John when you receive ours, surely I am very thankfull that you are receiving them now, and hope that you and some friend or friends may enjoy them, let me know some of the things which are very good and tasty. This is only Monday yet, but I have been to Gertrude all day to stay with little Gertrude and Chucky. They were over yesterday, Sunday noon, while Bert E. and Coral were to Sunday school, and wanted to know if I could and would come over for the day, as they would like to go to Holland for the day together to make a little trip and a little change, I thought they were going to Chicago, but it was Holland, and they enjoyed the day very much together, they went to Holland for their dinner, and enjoyed the cottage and went hiking some, you know the cottage is very nice and handy you know they have the little back shed on the back porch as their toilet room, and have gas and electric lights, they all enjoy it out there, they were even there last September for a while, with the little baby Gertrude. Charley was saying it was not dirty in the cottage, just mostly dust. He and Chucky came after me this morning about 9/30 o'clock, and they got back a little after 5 tonight, so I got home nice in time as pa dont get home until 7:15, and it was a very nice sunshiney spring day, until about 4 o'clock, it got real cloudy and started to rain a little. The snow and ice is just about gone, have had a real thaw and nice weather for three days now. Yesterday Sunday was a nice sunshiney but real cold in the morning. The paper tonight says out west they are having a real cold spell way below zero in places, well we can look for winter this month yet. Pa says the spring out there is about a month earlier than it is here. Pa and I went to Herman and Gretty and daughter yesterday Sunday afternoon awhile to visit and bring a present for the baby, and Aunt Deane had left her present here for us to take along for them, and the baby was just fine, a real cute smart looking little girl, her name is Susan after the Grandma, there is only about two weeks difference between Susan and our little Gertrude. Bertie and Coral both go to school in the morning, and they went home with their cousin Joe, from school this noon, and had dinner to Aunt Minnies house, and this afternoon they stayed there too. Mrs. Dekker stopped in last Thursday night a little while, and brought me a nice birthday card, you know Nellies Fathers birthday was the first of March and Etta's little girls birthday is the same, she is the age of Chucky. I had five nice birthday cards, one a little letter of Carrie, she is getting a little stronger, so she can do a little more waking now, and I guess she is enjoying it more now, as she and a friend live in a little home together, she says they have some chickens, and enough eggs for what they need, and some to sell, that covers the cost of feed, and they keep a dog, I suppose a nice little dog for company, and she most always feels real well. I got a postal of Hattie for my birthday too, and makes

me think to tell you, that Harold sent us a whole crate of Grapefruit, oranges and tangerines which we got a week ago Friday, a crate is supposed to be a bushel I guess. Well they are just fine tasting wishing you could be here to help us eat them, do you get fruit over there John, something we very seldom can get, and that is bananas, I never see them in the stores, if they have them they keep them out of sight. Well Gertrude took some of the fruit along and I guess I will take a few to Mrs. DeVos next door, but we each have an orange every day, and eat one grapefruit at night which always tastes very good, they all have a very nice flavor. Well big boy we are getting your checks regular the first part of each month, and am getting good bonds for them to you, hoping that some day you may enjoy them in a good way. I met Mrs. O'Dell the other day, and she said Wilbur had gone across, and arrived somewhere in France, will get his address and send it to you next time. We hope and pray that this terrible war may cease, and that you may all be home again before long, the Lord willing. Well son cant think of much more news, hoping you may receive it in good health and strength, both in body and in spirit, and of good courage, trusting in the Lord to keep you in His care, and guide you and direct your ways. Till later with much love to you from us all, Mother, Father and all.

March 11, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and all the rest,

About time I am dropping you a line. Tomorrow am getting a seven day delay enroute before heading for the "reinforcement" depot. Expect to go to London and visit other places.

Received 2 packages today. Yours and Gerts and Chucks. Thanks a lot, dont worry we put them to good use. They were gone just like that.

Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Thanks for the pk Gert & Chuck and kids. Received the knife the other day.

Well will close till a little later.

Love, John

March 15, 1945

England

Dear Mom & Dad and all the rest,

Well, hows everything going back there, lets hope just fine.

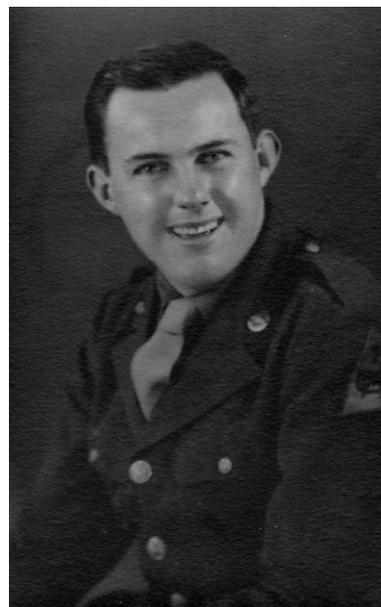
Am on this seven day delay enroute and am spending it in London. As far as housing is concerned, am well put up down here at a Red Cross place. Received your package and also Gerts & Chucks the day I left. Thanks loads.

Every now and then at nite them buzz bombs fall. One just got through. Didn't sound so extra far away.

Well, will put a close to this for now and write a little later.

Love, Johnie

(John had this photo taken while in London. TF)



March 29, 1945

Belgium

Co. B 40th Tank BN

APO 257, NY, NY

Dear Mom & Dad and all the rest,

Well, hows every thing going back there? Lets hope O.K. Have been very busy the last week or two and so, as you will notice, haven't been writing very much. Expect to be back to the outfit very soon. So am using the old address. So write to that from now on. There isn't very much to report from this end of the line. Am feeling well, as can be expected and hope its the same back there.

Hows Gert and Chuck and the kids coming along. I'll betcha they are really growing, aren't they!

Gosh, but its kinda hard to think of anything to write about.

Page 2:

Belgium.

2 April '45

Expect to get back to the outfit very shortly. Am inclosing some pictures taken in London and also a 40 buck money order.

Till later, love, John

April 3, 1945 V-MAIL

Germany

Co. B, 40th Tank BN

APO 257, NY, NY

Dear Mom & Pop and all the rest,

Well, it's about time I dropped you a line. Hows everything going back there. Just fine I hope. Right now am billeted in a house on... (the next several words were blacked out by the Army censor. TF).. huh, but expect to get back to the outfit soon.

Sent you a letter with a money order for 40 bucks from the last place and also a picture in it.

Well, will close till later.

Love, Johnie

(The following V-Mail letter was written by John's mother on April 4, 1945. It was sent to John's hospital address in England, and finally returned to Grand Rapids on 13 June, 1945, marked "return to writer for better address")

4-4-1945

My Dear John-Have not heard from you for over two weeks, but am looking for a letter any time. I suppose you will be having some other address, and that you were on your seven day enroute pass, surely hoping you are well, and enjoying some of the scenery of the countries way of there, but am hoping and longing that you may be seeing your homeland and cities again before long. This is Wednesday night, and I was to Aunt Maggie for the day, and we had a nice visit together, I had not been there for a long time, and I was to Gertrude all day yesterday to help along a little. We are all real well at

present, the little nieces and nephews too. Do you meet any of your old friends lately at all? Well my boy I guess I feel like you sometimes, I cant think of much news, but of you, hoping that you are well and of good courage, trusting in our Lord to protect and care for us all, to guide and direct our ways, so that we may live to His honor and praise with a thankfull heart, live in hopes my boy, and let the good spirit dwell in you, hoping you may receive it, and enjoy it, hoping to see each other before long, if it can be, the Lord willing. With much love to you-Mother, Father, and us all. mother

April 11, 1945

Germany

This letter is V-Mail and is a pre-printed birthday greeting. John blacked out the word 'Birth' so that it reads:

On Mother's _____ Day

Everything's Just Swell!

Altho I'm far away from you

Remember that each day

I think of you and love you

In the same old grateful way

And, Mother, please don't worry

For I think this life is swell,-B.S. (B.S. was John's personal note TF)

I'm feeling fine and everything

Is going mighty well!

Love, Johnie

April 17, 1945 V-MAIL

Germany

Dear Mom & Pop and all the rest,

Hows every thing back there. Lets hope O.K. I suppose the kids are really growing, aint they. Well, moved from the last place on the Rhine and am now at a point further in Germany. Expect to join the outfit from this place.

This is very beautiful county of course most of the cities are really beat up.

Well, there isn't much more to report from this end of the line. So till a little later-

Love, Johnie

April 18, 1945 V-MAIL

Germany

Dear Mom and Pop,

Well, hows every thing going back there! Lets hope O.K. Every thing seems to be going pretty well lately. The weather is pretty nice. Expect to bet back to the outfit any day now. Sure is beautiful country around here. Never realized it was this beautiful. Dont write very much these days, but will try to improve it in the future.

Haven't had any mail for quite awhile, but that can be expected.

Well, will close till a little later, say hello for me.

Love, Johnie

April 23, 1945 V-MAIL

Germany

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Its about time I dropped you a line to let you know every thing is O.K. so far. Got back to this Co. a couple days ago. Otherwise there isn't much to report. Rained most of the day. Even hailed a little.

Hows Gert and Chuck and the "kids" coming along. Gosh I'll bet they are really growing up.

Well I'll try and write a little longer letter next time if possible, say hello and till later-
Love, Johnie

April 24, 1945 V-MAIL

Germany

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well, Lets hope every thing is going fine at that end of the line. Things seem to be going O.K. out here. I ought to start getting some mail very soon. Lets hope so.

Hows Gert and Chuck and the "kids" coming along. Say hello to them for me.

I suppose its getting more warm there every day, and will soon be summer.

Well, till a little later.

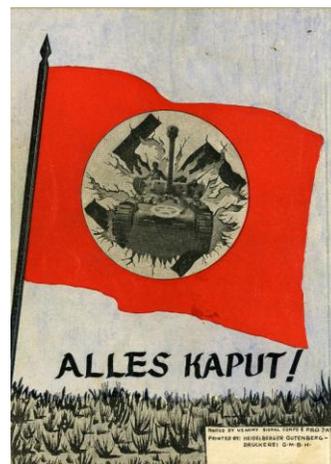
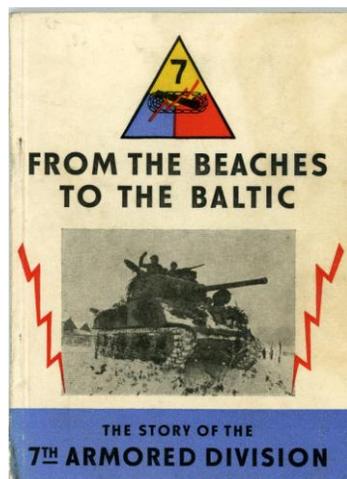
Love, Johnie

Germany Surrendered on 5 May 1945, ending the war in Europe!!!

The remainder of John's letters are written on regular paper, not V-MAIL.

According to the After Action Reports, John's Company B spent 4-20 May 1945 near Gravesmuhlen, in northern Germany. Their time was spent collecting thousands of German Prisoners of War, and operating a PW camp there. The British took over the camp duties, and the 7th ArmdDiv moved to central Germany in late May, 1945. From here on, censorship of letters home is not as strict. TF

Front and
Back Cover
4 1/2"x5 1/2"
64 pages



May 11, 1945

Germany

Dear Mom & Dad and all the rest,

Well, hows every thing going back there. Have been receiving your letters regularly. And sure am glad to hear from you every week. Well, there isn't much to report from this end of the line. I know I dont write very much, but will try to improve and get a few more letters off minimum. Am up here in northern Germany. On the edge of a fairly large city. Have a couple tank crews pulling guard on a road block. Very nice country around here. Across the street, there's a lake. Can go fishing, and would go swimming but its a little to cold yet. Am billeted here in a house. Its a good deal of course dont know what happens from here on in. The weather has been swell, practicly no rain, and the sun has been out almost every day so, all in all, its pretty nice weather. Hows Gert and Chuck and the kids coming along. Just fine I hope. Say hello to them for me, also to all the others. Usually always receive a letter from you and Betty every week also have had some from others. Had one from Si Wilderom and the Kuipers. Glad to hear from them. (This is the last time John mentions the girl named Betty. TF)

Hows things going back there since the "going's on" over here in Europe are over. If that thing with Japan would get over, every thing would be "oaky doaky"- Am going to try to get a couple letters off this afternoon if I find the ambition to do it. Or I should say if I'm in a writing mood.

Whats the weather like back there. I suppose it is warming up a little or at least it should be. Cant think of much more to write, so will put a close to this till later. Love Johnie

Article from Grand Rapids Press

May 17, 1945

Germany

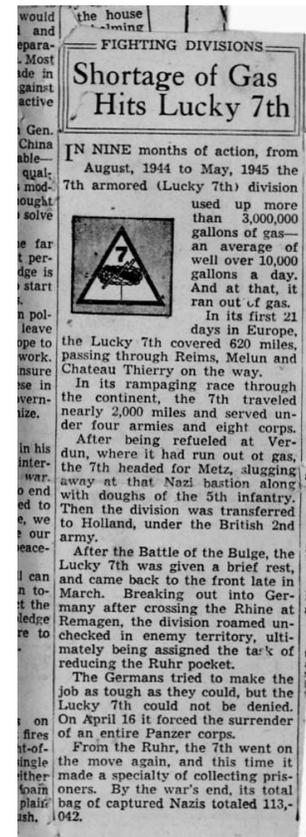
Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Its about time I dropped you a line again. Am here, laying around in a small German village (Maybe Tessin, east of Rostock. TF) in N. Germany. Most of the people around here are German civilians, refugges from different parts of this country. Most of them getting out of the Russians way.

The weather around here has been very nice. In other words, nothing bitch on that count. The sun is always out and very warm but cool at nite. Usually doesn't get dark until about 10 or 10:30 at nite. So the days are very long. Don't know whats going to happen from here on in.

May 24, 1945

Well, this is quite a while since I started writing this letter. Have been moving around so much lately. Am now located in central Germany. Tonite it is raining, and very miserable out. Am in a small town, south west of Berlin, down towards Leipzig. Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Havent been doing much writing lately. So will have to start to get busy soon. Mostly always have good accommodations where



ever we go. Take over some house. At present have a very nice place. Electricity, water, etc. So cant bitch on that part of it.

Well, will close this for now, but will try and write more later.

Say hello for me, and until a little later-love, John

June 4, 1945 (V-Mail)

Germany

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Its been a long time since I last dropped you a line. Will try to write a little more often in the future. Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Receive you letters all the time. Thanks a lot. Went to church today. Dont always get a chance to go very much. Am located in a little town here north of Leipzig, by the name of Grobzig. Having excellent weather and altogether there isnt too much to bitch about. Well, say hello, and till a little later-Love, John

June 16, 1945

Germany

Dear Mom and Dad and the rest,

Realize its about time I was dropping you a line. Dont write much now days. Just aint in any mood. Or in otherwords just cant think of any thing to write. Not much doing around here so havent got much to write about. Things seem to be going O.K. as far as I can see. The weather lately has been quite frequent rains and very chilly out. Sure wish that it would warm up a little. Pull guard most of the time around here and when we aren't doing that they always find something else for us to do. Classes, calthentics, athletic or something of the like.

Hows every little thing going back there. Lets hope its going just fine. Had a letter from Gert awhile back an gosh, havent even answered it yet, but I'll get down to it soon I hope. I suppose the kids are really growing up, aren't they. Must be some whoppers.

Hows the weather back there. I suppose it is real nice out there.

Well, tomorrow is Sunday, but I dont think I'll be able to get to go to church tomorrow.

Am on guard so it dont look like I'll be able to make it.

Well, its pretty late now and I should be hitting the "hay" So will try and finish this tomorrow if every thing turns out O.K. So till then. Good night.

Well, this is a couple days later. Have been fairly busy, so didnt get so extra much time to write and as you already know, I have to be in a writing mood before I can do any letter writing. Havent been getting any mail for quite awhile. But that can be expected. You have to give to receive.

You have to give to receive.

Well, the weather has been real nice around. Really gets hot at times. Today was a "beautiful day", or as they would say it in German "Sherin Tag". Well, really cant tell whats going to happen from here on in. They been shipping a few guys out of the Co. every now and then to different places. So will just have to wait and let time tell.

Well, hows every little thing going back there. Lets hope right on the ball. Hows the weather, I imagine real warm.

Hows Gert and Chuck and all the kids coming along. Be sure and say hello to them for me. Its about time I was dropping them a line.
Well, will put a close to this for now, and until a little later. Till then, love, Johnie

Postmarked July 13, 1945

No date on the letter

Dear Mom and Pop and the rest,

Time I was dropping you a line. The div. has made another move, out of Grobzig, which was Russian occupation territory and am now located in a small town by the name of Schweineberg which is just south west of Wurzburg. Isn't much of a place, but we have it pretty well settled, am living in a schoolhouse. (The following portion of the letter was crossed out by John, but I have included it in here. TF)... but dont expect to stay here long, as they are deploying the divisions. Putting new fellas in and transferring the old ones out. A group of us are leaving this week and I'm among them. Dont know what div. we well go to but most likely some occupation div. Not sure, but it might be the 7th Armd. Div. But no one knows and no one knows what happens to us after we get there. So will just have to wait and see. So dont mail me any more letters to this address. I will give you my new address as soon as I get it...(This is where John stopped crossing out what he had written. TF)

I mailed about three packages home awhile back, let me know if you ever get them. Also mailed a German Rifle home in a wooden box. When you get it open the box and oil up all the metal parts of it and be sure and dont loose any parts. Use car oil or any good oil that will prevent rust, especially in the bore or barrel of the gun. Have a pistol, but cant ship that home as its not allowed. Dont try to assemble the rile, as I dont want it busted. And let me know if it got to you in good condition. O.K., thank you.

Hows every thing going back there. Let's hope just fine. Have to go on guard in a few minutes so will have to continue this letter tomorrow. So till tomorrow morning, when I'll finish this letter. Sweet dreams, huh.

Just scratched the forward part of this letter out, as our being transferred was canceled for awhile. So am just as much in the dark as I ever was. So just keep amailing to this address O.K. Understand.

Well am on guard again tonight. Thats about all we do around here is pull guard. The eats are fair. But there isn't much to do around here. The weather is pretty nice but it does get cold and rainy at times.

Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. I suppose the kids are really growing up aren't they. Well say hello to everyone for me.

Otherwise there isnt much to report from this end of the line. So will close for now hoping every thing is O.K. and until a little later. Love, Johnie

(John took this photo of Mannheim, Germany)



July 23, 1945

Schwieberg, Germany (correct spelling is Schweinberg. TF)

Dear Mom and Pop,

Received one of your letters today and thanks loads. As I dont get much mail. So it really comes in handy. Glad to know that every thing is going O.K. back there, and hope it continues that way.

Well, am still at this same place and there isnt much doing. Same things as usual. Guard duty, work on the tanks and well thats about all. Am having fine weather around here. The meals are fair. Have our sleeping quarters in the schoolhouse. It isn't such a bad setup, but it could be improved. Dont expect to stay here much longer. They are shifting the fellas around and you dont know what you'l end up at. But I have a pretty good idea. But am going to hold up on it til it is official and have been transferred. Oh well, what it will probably be is an Amphibious Tractor BN. Of course no one is sure, but that's the latest poop.

Here it is a couple days later and will try and finish up.

My new address is: Co. B 40th Amphibian Tractor BN.

c/o P.M. N.Y., N.Y.

So send my mail to that address. We leave Sunday for Belgium to begin training on it. Its a water job. Bringing in troops and supplies and as far as we know, it is a unit which will end up in the Pacific eventually. Wether as a combat unit or just a supply unit, I do not know. Hoping the latter, but it looks more like the former. Dont know when we will get back to the states. Will give more "poop" on it as I get it.

Well, will close for now and hoping every thing is O.K. Say hello and till a little later-love, Johnie

(The 40th Tank BN was reorganized to 40th AmphTractor BN, training for an invasion of Japan. The atom bomb and Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945 changed all that! TF)

Schweinberg, Germany



John's tank, B-2



John is standing on the right

August 5, 1945
CO. B, 40th Amphibian Tractor BN
17th ARMD Group
APO 562, c/o PM N.Y., N.Y.
(This letter is a V-Mail)

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,
How is everything going back there. I suppose every thing is right on the ball. Notice the new address. Co. B 40th Amphibian Tractor BN, 17th Arm'd Group, APO 562 c/o P.M. N.Y., N.Y.
Well, there isnt much to report from this end of the line. Am sitting on the shore of some canal out here. Live in tents, the food is good. Weather cold at nite, daytime pretty warm. Say hello for me and tell a little later-
Love, John

August 10, 1945
A little card was addressed to Mrs. Hazenberg and said:
Dear friend,
You are cordially invited to a birthday tea for my mother, Mrs. Cora Roetman, on Thursday, August 16, at 2: o'clock at my home.
Bring a birthday card if you wish, but no presents, please.
Sincerely,
Louise Gingrich



This is the shoulder patch for the 40th Amphibian Tractor Battalion

August 15, 1945

Holland

Dear Mom and Dad,

About time I dropped you a line. Well, there isn't much to report from this end of the line. Has been raining all night long. So it is very miserable weather. Boy, there is so little to write about that it is very hard for me to get a letter out.

Had a letter of you the other day and also one yesterday.

So you have been getting the stuff which I have been sending home. Did you oil the rifle which I sent. Old car oil will do. Or any good oil. Oil all of it. The wooden parts too. Or other wise use grease.

I have a couple pistols but cant send them home through the mail. Will have to carry them on me. If I send any thing more I will let you know.

Dont know what is going to happen to us since the war is over with. Lots of rumors of course, but you cant believe any thing until it happens.

How is every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. I suppose the kids are really growing up.

Had the day off today. Laid around, didn't do a thing. Well, will put a close to this for now and until a little later. Say hello.

Love, John

On August 25, 1945, John was promoted from Private First Class to Corporal, earning \$79.20 overseas pay. See pp 143-144.

September 1, 1945

Holland

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Time I dropped you a short line to let you know I'm still "kicking". Well there isn't much to report from this end of the. Don't know whats going to happen to us as yet. Of course, lots of rumors, cant believe none of them though. Very seldom get any mail. Have a letter from you pretty regular, but thats about all. Had one from the Deckers the other day. I hardly ever write. But every thing seems to be going along pretty good.

Sent a box home the other day. Let me know when you get it.

Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope just fine. Yesterday was the "queens" birthday, so all these Hollanders were celebrating. And today is there "decoration" day- you know, trimmings hung all over and parades.

Don't like Holland very much, weather ain't no good, too damp.

Have training here most of the time. Out on the water in these amphibious tractors and tanks.

Weighed myself in town the other night and tipped the beams at 164 stripped. Right now have a 32 pants on, but it seems to vary, huh sometimes can get it on, and other times cant.

Well, will close till a little later, hoping every thing is going O.K. and will continue to do so.

Say hello and till a little later. Love, Johnie

John saved a portion of a letter from home.

...so you are in Holland well if you meet anybody by the name of Zigter or Hazenberg, just tell them you are one, or if you meet any Van Duinen or Smits tell them your mother was a Smit (original Dutch spelling is Smid. TF) and her father was Egbert a blacksmith. Oh yes John I forgot to say it before but Tom is a little hard of hearing and he kind of expects to have an.... ..hospital where...

...engineering class, but Uncle Tom was saying he was having quite a hard time of it now + working drilling and studiing, quite a change from what he has had. Well my boy the new magazine, The Tie that Binds is out again, and hope you may get it before long time as your name is in it a lot....Greetings to your friends and buddies. Mother.

Say John if there is anything I can send you that you would like in clothes or so be sure and let me know, stamps or paper. Mother

This snippet was from John's father.

How does it seem to be a Dutchman and not able to speak it? Ha Ha. If you have a chance go to Oldekerk, Prov. Groningen and you can see the places where we were born, but that is way up in the northern part. Hope all goes well. Keep courage, be strong. Pop

September 7, 1945

Holland

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Received a letter of you today and was sure glad to hear from you. Am glad that every thing is going well back there. Even thought the tires on the car ain't very good.

Well, there isn't much to report from this end of the line. Am on guard in this town down here by camp tonight. The town by the name of Ternuezen which is located near the Belgium border, west and a little north of Antwerp, on one of these schelds.

The weather has been pretty fair the last couple days. But it still gets very cool at night.

Well, by the way this program is going on this "points" system, it looks like it will be quite awhile yet over here. I'm kinda hurtin as far as points go. 34 for points or months in the service, 14 for overseas, and 15 for 3 battle stars. Which makes a "grand total" of only 63 points. So you see I'm still hurting. So will just have to stick around a little longer. (85 points were needed for being sent home. TF)

Am sitting here in the police station writing, and listening to all this talk in Dutch going on. I think they speak the Flemish version of it around here. You know, a mixture of Flemish, Belgic, and Dutch. But any way, I cant understand a word of it, huh.

Hows every thing going back there. I suppose things are right on the pivot. Nothing to kick about. Dont get very much mail, but the cause probably is, I dont write very much. But maybe it will pick up for all I know. Oh, yes, before I forget it. I sent home through the mail, that hunting knife you sent me a long time ago. And also I sent you a package with some articles in it, wooden shoes, a piece of a Gun sight (a light deflector for the sight) so be sure and hold on to it for me. Oh, yes, I hope you oiled that rifle up good. So that is wont rust. Vaseline does a good job on it. Anyway, dont lose any of the parts to it.

Hows the "kids" coming along, huh, I'll betcha I wont even be able to recognize them if I ever get back there. I'll betcha, they are really growing up, aren't they. Little "Chucky"

really gets around now a days, doesn't he. Is he still chubby or is he lengthening out a little now a days.

Gerts "tailbone" coming along now adays, lets hope its O.K. and back in its right place by now. I have had a little trouble with my skin a little nowadays, but am putting some stuff on it that seems to be pretty good. Since I've been over seas, which is now 14 months, I've ran across 2 guys from Grand Rapids, thats all. Do you still get the checks for \$40 bucks each month from the government. Gosh, how many of those things have you got already. Have about \$50 bucks spending money in my pocket now, but will wait until I get paid at the end of the month and then maybe send home a check or money order. Don't spend much money over here. Dont drink, so there isn't many things which I can spend any money on.

Well, will close this until a little later on. Say hello for me and best wishes.
Love, Johnie

September 12, 1945

Holland

Dear Mom and Dad-

About time I dropped you a line. Nothing much to report from this end of the line. Lately at nite have been going to this town of TerNuezon here and visiting some people who go to the Christian Reformed Church in TerNuezon. (Correct spelling is Terneuzen TF) The wife doesn't speak english, but the man and daughter speak good english. So usually have a good chat every night almost. They also used to live up near Groningen. There last name is Heersema.

Well how is every thing going back there. I suppose right on the pivot. It looks like I'll be around here in Europe for quite awhile yet according to this point system. I really dont think much of that point system. It stinks to tell the truth. But whatever did the army do that was right.

Hows the kids coming along. Am not in much of a writing mood tonight. So will close till a little later. Love, John

Heersema Family: (A brief bio of the family. TF)

Father: Harm Heersema, speaks and reads/writes English.

Mother: C. Heersema, we don't learn her first name. She does not speak English.

Oldest son: Pete- lives in Rotterdam, expecting first child in May, 1946.

Son: Jan- age 28 in 1945, lived in Rotterdam but when it was liberated he went home to Terneuzen. Married Bertha Breedijk of Rotterdam on 19 June 1946; has a son, Harm, born 22 May 1947. Jan wants to be a baker.

Daughter: Nell- must be in early 20's, talks of working in a bank after the war. Speaks English.

Daughter: Jantje- no age mentioned, so perhaps a teenager.

September 14, 1945 (Translated from Dutch)

Nellie Heersema

Scheldekade 46

Terneuzen

Netherlands

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hazenberg,

It will seem strange to receive a letter from someone totally unfamiliar. This is how it happened, your son John lost his wallet with letters and photos and my brother Jan found them. Father looked to see whose letters these were and saw the name Hazenberg. Father said to us he was sure this is a Groninger. Father sent a letter with an American to his camp with the instruction that he could retrieve his pocket book at our address. The following evening they already phoned, and later father and John, having a deep conversation about Groningen. Because Father is a real Groninger, he is drawn to other Groningers. Mother at first was hopeful that the soldier could speak Dutch, but it disappointed her that he had to do it with gestures.

Otherwise we found it pleasant that he came. It is too bad that he didn't lose his pocketbook earlier, because he thinks he has to depart on Monday. Hopefully he will soon be home. Now he is coming every evening, and Mother invited him for the whole Sunday, but he did not think he could come. Father said to us that at least we have a soldier who could tell us much. Since we were liberated September 20, 1944 we had many soldiers over. It was always to give them hospitality because in the service they had to miss home.

We had a soldier from the R.A.F. for each evening in January from London, and while he was here, his wife wrote me once. Afterward we corresponded regularly. It is different, for it is difficult for me to write in English, because it has been a while since I was in high school. For Dad it is easier because he taught English in school, but I thought it amusing to write a Dutch letter to a foreign country. So I asked John if it were OK to write you. I teased him that I would write a lot about him. We are also members of the Gereformeerde (Christian Reformed) Church. It's sad that in our country there is so much feuding with the followers of Schilder. Maybe you have heard about it. In certain areas it is hateful and divisive, and that does not speak well for the people supporting Professor Schilder. In many places this feuding has caused church splits. Fortunately it is a minority that supports Prof. Schilder. He promotes a whole different teaching which we cannot call Reformed anymore. Every day he has speaking engagements and travels throughout the country to see how many people he can convince to support him.

Do you have a longing to come to Holland, or have you become through and through American, that you don't care much for poor, little Netherlands.

We have experienced much under the tyranny of the Germans, of which thankfully you were spared. During that time I often said that maybe we should go to another country. Fortunately our liberation went successfully, although we had 14 fearful days. But in the northern parts of the country it was terrible, especially the famine. In Amsterdam alone 5,000 people died of hunger. My brothers were in Rotterdam, my married brother was almost in Germany when he was able to escape, which almost cost his life. The young men who were walking on the streets were shot dead. To hide these men became more and more dangerous because of the Nazi raids. For nine months we did not hear from

him. Mother worried much, and we thought we would never see him again. In addition, Mother is very weak and often sickly, but we can thank God that He provided the right outcome. When the danger is the greatest the delivery is at hand. It is sad you hear so little of gratitude from people. Everybody always seems to complain. The people suddenly think they can now buy everything again, and are disappointed that the stores are still empty. They forget the Germans plundered us and little remains in our country, and the Netherlands is worse off than most. September 20 we now had a great celebration of the liberation, and many of the Poles who liberated us joined us for the festivities. We also had a pleasant Queens Day celebration for the first time since liberation. I hope I will soon receive a nice big letter in return from you. With hearty greeting from Father and Mother and Nellie.

14 Sept '45 (Translated from Dutch)

Terneuzen

Dear Mr and Mrs Hazenberg.

It was really amazing how we met your son. The name caught my attention and I already said: "that could be people from Groningen originally", and yes, we heard that you are from Oldekerk.

Well, I am also from Groningen. I was born in Zuidwolde, have lived in Loppersum, Middelstum and Sappemeer. I know many people in the province of Groningen, but I have lived here already for 24 years. You'll understand that the old is closed (history) and lately I have not been back. Maybe I will check it out soon. Travelling is still difficult. I have time enough. Here I have been a principal of a school for children in the age of 12 to 16. Now I am retired.

Last night I still read the Standard Bearer. There-in I saw a short article about our church. But the message is very coloured: whatever the Synode established according baptism is the same as what was proclaimed in 1905. We have lived in peace for 40 years. Some years ago Dr. Schilder has defended this case with hand and foot, and now all of the sudden, he is against it and plays a leading part in church division and many follow. It is in the air. The whole society is still ill. Our land and people have suffered but have not learned much and in religious aspect have we not grown. War doesn't heal people. You can be so proud of your son; he is a brave strong fellow and one who has not lost the old faith in the war. I am so sorry that I cannot express myself in English better. I can speak about daily things but about religious matters I don't have words enough. Too bad that we have not met in reality. He comes here almost every evening and we chat about everything but he has to leave soon. We hope that very soon he will arrive in the parental home as a civilian. That is much better than being a soldier.

With friendly greetings

Your dedicated

H. Heersema

Scheldekade 46, Terneuzen.

Ps

My brother K. Heersema lives in Redlands California and my brother in law P.Voss in Oaklawn near Chicago. Both of them are Reformed.

September 17, 1945

Holland

Dear mom and dad and all the rest,

Well, how is everything going from that end of the line. Nothing much to report from this end. The weather has been pretty good lately. Although the last couple days have had a cold and sore throat. Them tonsils still bother me every now and then. Very seldom ever get any letters. Get yours and thats about all.

Usually every night go into town and spend the evening with these people that go to this Chr. Reformed Church in Ternuezan here. They wrote you a couple letters, but it will probably take some time to get to you. Huh, I told them you could read dutch, so thats what they wrote you in. So if you get the letters, write back and let them know. They can read english and dutch, so it doesn't matter what you write back in.

Hows the kids coming along. I imagine that they are right on the ball. Really growing up I imagine. Have had some pictures developed and will send them home a little later on.

Gets dark here pretty early at night now. Otherwise it stayed light very long. But they set the time up an hour and its getting fall so it gets dark kind of early.

Well, there isnt much more to write and will close this for now.

Love, Johnie

September 18, 1945

Holland

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Well hows every thing going back there? Lets hope just fine. Was going into town and visit with these people tonight, but it has started to rain, so now dont know weather I will go in or not. Might go in if it clears up in a little while. Well, havent been doing much around here lately. In the morning we can go swimming if we care to in a pool in town about 30 miles from here. Went this morning and had an extra very good swim. Its a very nice pool in the city of Ghent in Belgium. They are very liberal with passes lately to different towns around here. But usually find enough work around here to keep me busy. But just cant seem to get into any kind of writing mood.

As far as the points are concerned I'm kind of in a hole. Dont expect much to happen to me as far as getting back to the states in the near future is concerned.

Hardly ever get any mail, but I dont write very much either. So I cant expect much. How is the "beast" coming along. I mean the car, is she still kicking, the tires still holding out. Or are you running on patches now, huh.

Well, say hello to everyone for me and till a little later.

Love, Johnie. P.S. Keep the negatives separate from all others.

September 18, 1945

Holland

Dear Mom and Dad,

Here are some pictures. I sent the negatives of them to you in another letter tonight.

Keep these pics and the negatives in a separate envelope.

Till later- love, John.

(The pictures were taken at Schweinberg, Germany and include group pictures of his friends, a wedding taking place in the town, and John's tank. Other pictures were taken in the "tent city" in Terneuzen, Holland. TF)

September 23, 1945

Ternuezon, Holland

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

About time I dropped you a line again. Received a letter of you yesterday dated Sept. 8. Was sure glad to hear from you. Nothing much to report from this end of the line.

Usually at nite go to town and visit with these people I go to see. People by the name of Heersema. I think they wrote you a letter and mailed it already. So drop them a line back. So thats the way I usually spend my evenings. Instead of running around or laying around back here in the tent. The weather has been quite cold here lately. Sometimes rains quite a bit. Have had a cold the last few days. In the morning usually go to a town in Belgium and go swimming at an indoor pool.

Oh yes, if you haven't sent them yet, dont send any Christmas packages, as I dont know how long I'll be over here. According to the papers, I should be out of Europe before the first of the year or before. But we can never tell. So dont send any.

It just started raining, but if it stops, will take a little trip to town and do some visiting. Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope Pa's back to work again. Am having a little trouble with my skin again, because of this damp weather I think.

Well, will close till a little later. Say hello and till later-

Love, Johnie

September 24, 1945

A postcard of Dutch children, and signed by Mr and Mrs Heersema, Nelle, Jan, Yantje and John. "Best wishes to all."

September 29, 1945

Ternuezon, Holland

Dear Mom and Dad,

Received another one of your letters and was very glad to get it. Before I forget. Awhile back I sent you a box with some different stuff in it. A metal light deflector for a sight, pair of wooden shoes and a pair of goggles. Let me know if you ever got that box.

Lately, I sent you a box with some tulip bulbs in it. And yesterday I sent a box with some wooden shoes and a good conduct medal, a Dutch coin and some film which was not developed yet. 3 rolls, size 620. So let me know if you get any of those packages.

Usually at night go and visit these people down here in Ternuezan. People by the name of Heersema. They go to this Chr. R. church in town here. Went to church this morning.

Well, will close till a little later.

Love, John

Huh, we found this add in the Dutch paper, while visiting the other nite. (The clipping was an ad for household help with three school aged children, placed by a Mevrouw Hazenberg-De Jonge, Wassenaar bij Den Haag.)

Oct. 3, 1945

Holland

Dear Mom and Dad,

Just a short line to let you know every thing is still going O.K. Havent been doing much. Usually go visiting at nite. During the day, lay around. Gets very cold at nite and sometimes during the day the sun comes out. But not to much.

Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope O.K. Have been getting your letters. Not much to report from this end of the line. I suppose it will start getting cold back there soon. Same over here.

Well, will close till a little later, and until then-

Love, John

Oct. 9, 1945

Camp Phillip Morris, France

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest,

Well, hows every thing going back at that end of the line. Lets hope just fine. As you will notice, have moved to a different place. Down here in France now. The BN moved down here. I think to help run this camp. As yet do not know what we are supposed to do.

The weather here is pretty nice during the day time, but gets very cold at night. Kinda close to the ocean. Not very far from Le Havre.

Have a pretty nice camp here. Live in barracks. PW's do most of the work. (Prisoners of War. TF)

Hows pop coming along. Has he gone back to work yet. He had better get on the ball. Wrote a letter to these people up in Holland last night and thought I had better get on the ball and drop you a line tonight.

Hows Gert and Chuck and the kids coming along. Hope O.K.

Gosh, I just can't write letters any more. But will try and get one out now and then.

Well, till a little later- love, John

(The next three letters were all sent in one envelope. TF)

October 14, 1945

Camp Phillip Morris

Le Havre, France

Dear Mom and Pop-

Received one of your letters this past week and as usual was very glad to hear from you. Also had one of Gert & Chuck. Dropped them a line this afternoon and am writing this one at night.

Today was a nice day, cloudy but otherwise O.K. Went to church this morning and layed around this afternoon. Just cant get my mind in letter writing. Well by the way things look now. It looks like it will be a long time before I get home. Otherwise I had hopes of getting home before Christmas. But now with every thing the way it is, the British taking back there two large boats, well, things are kinda “screwed” up. But will just have to hope for the best. Even thought you get more disgusted with this army all the time.
Love, Johnie

(On 11 October 1945 the US gave two ships back to the British, the Queen Elizabeth and Aquitania, which were owned by Britain’s Cunard Line. The ships were now taking Canadian troops home instead of U.S. troops. With the ships’ speed and combined troop capacity of 24,000 men, it is estimated that 125,000 fewer U.S. troops were sent home in the winter of 1945-46. TF)



A billboard-sized, troop movement and departure schedule near the enlisted men’s recreation hall at Camp Philip Morris was updated many times each day.

Cpl. John P. Hazenberg 36411136
Co. B 40th Amph. Trac. Bn.
A.P.O. 562 3/4 P.M. N.Y.N.Y.

Camp Phillip Morris, France
Oct 16 1945

Dear Mom And Dad , And All The Rest*****

.Well howsevery thing goining down that way? Lets hope every little thing is right on the ball. Well there isn't much to report from this end of the line. The weather has been fair, some time the sun shines ,but not all the time. But that can be expected with winter almost here. At night it gets pretty cold though. Huh, I pile everything on top of me when I go to bed. I put an overcoat over my feet , besides that, I sleep in a sleeping bag and also have about four wool blankets around me. So now I dont sleep so bad after all .

Happened to see this typewriter vacant tonight, so started punching out a letter on it. But as you have already noticed I do make mistakes , huh , but who said I was a typist in the first place. Gosh, but its hard to think of anything to write these days. Just cant think of a thing.

How's the kids coming along? I suppose they are right on the ball and really growing up . Sure will be a surprise to see them again . I'm now going on my 16th month over here and it looks like I'll still have to spend a few more over here the way that redeployment situation is all "screwed" up. But will just have to hope for the best. But when you add it all up , its pretty disgusting.

Started this letter but never finished, so am sending it any way.

J. P. Hazenberg

Oct 19, 1945

Camp Phillip Morris

Le Havre, France

Dear Mom and Dad and all the rest-

Have been tending to right you quite a bit. But I just start a letter and never get it finished. So am sending them along any way.

Hows every thing going back there? Lets hope just fine. Havent got much to complain about out here. The weather is already getting colder so I imagine one of these days we will have snow. Have a couple small stoves in the barracks, but its quite hard to keep the place warm. These barracks are made of plywood and hold about 25 men. But we have plenty blankets and a sleeping bag so we keep warm at night.

Am on guard Sunday so will not be able to go to church in the morning.

I dont know wether I told you before or not, but I sent a box home with about 50 tulip bulbs in it. So let me know when you get any boxes from me.

Just got back from the P.X. where I went and had a couple cokes. And am now trying to write this letter. Recently received 2 of your letters. They have been coming regularly, so cant complain about that. Sure enjoy reading them. How is pops back coming along. I suppose it is all better by now.

Well, till a little later. Say hello for me and till then-

Love, Johnnie

Pvt. L. Cirabisi

1062 M.P.Co (AVN)

APO 149, c/o PM N.Y., N.Y.

Sat., Oct 27, 1945

Fritzlar, Germany

Mr. & Mrs. Hazenberg,

Perhaps you're wondering who I am since the name on the envelope is a strange one to you. If your son John is home he can quickly clear up the mystery for you. If he isn't I'll explain briefly the facts behind this letter.

I first met your son toward the close of last year at the 94th General Hospital. I too, like him had come back from the continent with trench foot. We both left at the same time for the 828th Convalescent Center at Honiton and even lived in the same barracks, except for the last remaining days of our stay there. We both left there at the same time and spent our furlough together in London. Perhaps he told you about that. That brings up the matter of the money order which you found in this letter (and I do hope I have the correct first name down. If it isn't and you have trouble cashing the order because of it perhaps this letter would help.) During our stay there your son was kind enough to lend me two pounds when I ran a little short of money. (In 2011 dollars, that would be equal to about \$50. TF) I told him I'd either pay him back or send the money to his home in case I lost contact with him. He told me to forget about repaying him but I do feel that all debts should be repaid. It may have taken quite some time to have gotten around to it but I do hope you feel that it's better late than never. It's been quite some time since I last heard from Johnny and I hope his delay in answering my last letter was caused by the fact that

he was caught in the redeployment shuffle and is now back home. If he's still in the service perhaps you'll send him my address since I was recently transferred to this M.P. company and Johnny only has my last address. Well that's about all I have to say for now. Do tell Johnny "hello" for me. And if ever you had any doubt about him taking care of himself while in the service forget about it because he was doing all right for himself while I was with him. He "has a head on his shoulders" and knows right well how to take good care of himself. And I think you'll still find him to be the same clean-cut, decent boy he was before he entered the army. Trusting this letter finds you all in the very best of health.

I remain, Lenny C

Nov. 1, 1945

Dear Mom and Dad,

In closed find money order for 20 bucks. Will try and write you letter tonight. Have been receiving your letters. But what I would like you to do is, tell me what is in every package you get from me. Gosh, how do I know now if any thing is missing. I sent a couple packages with wooden shoes and other stuff in them. But you never told me what other stuff was in with the shoes, so now I'm just wondering wether they took it out or wether it was stolen. Also sent you a money order up there in Holland for 25 bucks. So let me know what the heck was in all the packages you got from me.

Hoping every thing is O.K. and till a little later. Love, John.

Nov. 2, 1945

Camp Phillip Morris

Dear Mother and Dad, and all the rest,

Well how is every thing going out that way. I suppose every thing is right on the ball. Well, as usual there isn't much to report from this end of the line. The wether lately has been kind of rainy and chilly. Has pa gone back to work yet or is he still at home. Yesterday sent a money order home for 20 bucks. Also sent one back in Holland for 25 bucks. Did you ever get it. Let me know.

How are the kids coming along. I'll bet they are really big by now, aren't they.

Cant think of much to write these days. Had a letter from the Cramers and also from Timmers out by Ada or Cascade. Usually get your letters regularly.

Well will put a close to this for now and hoping everything is O.K. Until a little later.

Love, John

P.S. Say hello for me.

Nel.Heersema
Scheldekade 46
Terneuzen

8-11-'45 (8 Nov.1945, written in English) Stamped "Returning to United States.
Forward to 1025 Helen St. 12/12/45"

Dear John,

We have received your third letter, and my father has written you 2 weeks ago, and now I shall write you back instead of father. Is it good John? But don't laugh at my mistakes. It is easier for me to read letters than to write letters in your language.

I have received a nice big letter from your mother, don't be jealous John (Girls teasing also in my letters). You have a good mother John, it is a privilege to have Christian parents. I like it that your mother writes me, and next I shall write her back.

When my mother has a letter from you, she asks me than, "What is it in Dutch"? And than I have read your letter in one minute, because you write so large. We are glad to receive letters from you.

What a long time are you in leHavre. And all the time waiting for a ship. Have you been in the city of leHavre? How do you like it? I don't go to my work now for a few days. I have a bad cold in my head, and a little fever. I was not able to work. I write now in bed. What a bad weather every day foggy, rain, and wind. How many blankets have you now? I don't like autumn and winter.

My brother John is back now from Rotterdam, he is engaged 31 Oct. with Betty, it is not your Betty it is a Dutch Betty (don't be angry, I tease again) In the first part of December he has maybe a shop, he marry than in the latter part of November. We go all to Rotterdam than, with Jack and his sister aunt and father. Do you come to the wedding John! You borrow than a motor-cycle, leHavre is not so far from here. He has much chance to get that shop, it is one mile from Germany. From here is it a whole day in a train. That name of the town is Winterswijk. I become than his shop girl. 5,000 inhabitant. But it is not yet sure, he know it 15 Nov.

It is very quiet here in Terneuzen, no soldiers. I have heard that the Canadians are coming here in the schools. But I don't know or it is the truth.

John and Jack are playing chess now, and my sister and her friends are playing that game (Do you remember it?) I hear the noise in my bedroom. (Nel drew a picture of Dutch shuffle-board. TF)

Next week a Dutch singer comes here, he can sing beautifully, his wife and I play than the piano. We are learning in the church now for Christmas. The first Christmas in peace-time John, and I hope that it is peace-time for always., but I don't think so. What a pessimist I am John. I cannot write more, because I don't know more English. I hope that you receive this letter in a good heath.

Your sincerely, Nel

P.S. Your address is c/o P.M. New York. Does your letter go first to New York and than to leHavre? What a long time than. You have written us 26 Oct. and we received your letter 7 November.

Nov. 11, 1945

Dear Mom and Dad,

Received your letter a couple days ago, the one dated Nov. 3, and am now just answering it. It takes about 8 or 9 days for me to get your letters. So that isn't so extra bad. So it takes just about the same time, it seems.

Well there isn't much to report from this end of the line. Had a letter from the Heersemas also the other day and have sent them a letter back.

How is every thing going back there. Lets hope just fine. Things here aren't too bad. As yet dont know when I'll be able to get back home. As soon as they start shipping out those over 60 points, as I have in the 60's.

Gosh its hard to think of any thing to write, just cant think of any thing to write.

Hows the kids coming along. Lets hope just fine. Am inclosing a money order with this letter for \$25. Let me know when you get it. I'll put a close to this for now. Say hello and till a little later. Love, John

Nov. 13, 1945

Dear Mom and Dad,

Well just a short line for tonite, as usual, am not in a very writing mood. But maybe it will pick up later on.

Well, for once it isn't raining here tonite, otherwise it has been raining so much. Such dog gone lousy weather. Gets pretty cold here at nite. But we usually keep pretty warm. In the day time usually have the two small stoves burning, so that the place isnt so cold after all. But it gets pretty cold outside.

Usually get your mail pretty regular and enjoy it very much. Dont know when I'll be able to come home. My bet is around New Years or a little afterwards. But you can never tell.

Hows every thing going back there. Lets hope just fine. Oh yes did you ever receive a package from me which contained the following items, if I remember correctly. 1 pr wooden shoes, 1 pr. goggles and a front light deflector for a sight I have, which looked like this: (John drew a sketch. TF) Let me know if you ever got that package. Since being here at Le Harve I've sent 2 money orders home. One awhile back for 20 bucks and one the other day for 25 bucks so let me know when you receive them. O.K. Am mailing a patch in this letter. One from the 7th Arm'd Div. So hold on to it for me. Huh you can hang it on the ship clock on the book case if you care to.

Hows my rifle holding out. O.K. Just make sure that it dosent start rusting.

Well there isnt much to report from this end of the line. I suppose every thing is just on the ball. Has Pa gone back to work yet. Lets hope so. But I imagine he's enjoying his rest and it wont hurt him any. So you still got the old bus running.

Well, say hello to Gert and Chuck and the kids and till a little later. Love, Johnie

There are no more letters sent home by John. There is an empty envelope postmarked Nov. 23, 1945 from his APO 562 but no letter inside. Following are letters sent TO John. TF

Terneuzen, November 14, 1945 (Translated from Dutch.)

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hazenberg,

We have received your letter, and by this communication are becoming acquainted with you. You sent greetings to your son, but some time ago he had already been transferred to France. Too bad that we could only visit each other for such a short time. He came here almost every evening for about four weeks. You were writing about Schilder and Hoeksema. John gave me several copies of the Standard Bearer, which already included articles about the church strife. The initial information was vague, but slowly on you will no doubt receive more information about it. In our neighborhood it is serious. In Terneusen it is not so bad yet. Here three elders left the church. We all received a circular from them stating we had to choose for or against Christ. Underneath was the name of the Gereformeerde Kerk of Terneusen and the three elders. Interestingly they never complained about the old teachings and discipline of the old church. The point of their complaint is baptism. What men like Kuyper, Bovinck, Lindekoom and Bos drew up in 1905 suddenly is no longer right with the support of Dr. Schilder. According to him the baptism of a believer and unbeliever is equal. Through baptism you go through a certain date, then you have to choose between heaven or hell. Baptism is an invitation of grace—now you have to choose if you will serve God or not. Eventually you come to the free will of people. They reason too much and want to explain too much.

So you have to explain to the baptized one, believe you are a child of God and you are OK. When you make profession of faith you say OK, I am a child of God, so now you are a child of God. This develops careless people. A minister can no longer ask whether you have true faith, because this is an insult. These are strange reasoning that do not depend on God's Word and confessions. These are positions that synod never approved. They read into the synodical pronouncements that a child is regenerated at baptism, thereby trying to deceive members of the church. Their conclusions are clear. We view them as regenerated as long as they live it and the same for those who made profession of faith. It is a strange time after the war. People are losing their balance and do foolish things. They often take all kinds of rumors for truth, not only in spiritual matters but in other matters as well.

Many are searching for work; most do not have steady jobs. Strong, healthy young people have no desire to work. Some enjoy relief and never find a full time job. Everywhere there is much work to be done, but not much comes of it. They could build houses, but there is no cement. There is no lumber. They do not want to work in the fields because the wages are insufficient. I think 60 cents per hour is reasonable, and on rainy days they still get paid. How high must the price of products become? Higher cost of goods and then complaints.

We are happy that the war is past, but we are not on top of the after effects yet. We are thankful that America has helped us, because with this help the church has become independent again. During the war the church was crystal clear on its positions as well as fought against the teachings of National Socialism. Many pastors suffered in concentration camps as a result. The church protested against the abduction of many men who became slaves in the factories of Germany. Eventually the Germans destroyed the church just like it destroyed Germany itself. There it started with the youth. On Sundays the children were forced to attend the meetings of the Hitler Youth, and they made sure

there was no time left for the church. Those who dared to protest that would land up in the concentration camp. Those who survived confirmed how terrible these concentration camps were. It takes a strong faith to sustain the suffering for our Lord and Savior. Many succumbed through fear and intimidation. Thankfully the church can breathe again, and strangely out of gratitude they are splitting the church.

Priority must be given to the victims. Those who lost everything must be helped first. But when is it the turn of the others. The last five years we could buy nothing and everything is depleted. When you need something you must first fill out papers and wait a few months for an answer. You must fill out more papers and then get permission to buy something. Then you find the stores empty.

We are making progress with food, but extremely expensive—five times more expensive than before the war. For example, apples cost 50 cents per kilo, but before the war they cost 10 cents, and so it goes on. We live in a land where this you may not do and that you may not do. So we hope that real freedom will return and we can live as we choose as we lived before the war.

Traveling is terrible. Recently I went to Rotterdam by boat, starting at 7 AM and arrived at 6 PM. I wanted to go to Groningen, but it is not sure you can make that in one day. And sometimes you have to travel in animal cars like herring in a can. Now that it is getting colder there is no heat in those train cars. If you get in a good passenger car the windows are closed with boards because the glass is still broken. The railway bridges are still destroyed. You just cannot imagine what a hassle everything is in our country. Materially America did not suffer, although many of their men gave their lives. But here many families were destroyed. Yesterday I read that the 200,000 families were destroyed in addition to the victims of hunger and suffering. Thankfully we do not have any victims of the war to mourn in our family. We hope that John will soon be with you again. Then all will be normal again.

With friendly greetings,
H. Heersema

Terneuzen, 14 Nov '45 (written in English)

Dear John,

We received your second letter and I send you also the second letter. I have also send a letter to your home.

It is getting cold here and in France also, but you have a stove. You can go to bed en then to the stove. I believe you must have new clothes cas you are going fatter and fatter. But it is not agreeable for you that you cannot go home. Your mother longs for you and as you give that reason to the officers you can go with the first ship to the United States. My son John will buy a baker's trade but it is difficult. There are many man who will buy and not so many who will sell. And not every shop likes him. He will not only have bread, but he is also a confechoner. Therefore he must not have a little village but a little town. When he has bought a shop we will go to that place for we can help him. Then I have much to do. I can write the letters, the book keeping and do the messages etc. Now I have to take care of the hens and rabbits en to give some lessons.

The food is now getting better here, but most of the shops are empty and all things are very dear. We miss the good cigarettes. We can buy bad cigarettes for high prices and

not many. But we hope that it will be soon better. So it is with clothes and other things. The war is over, but it last long time before all is in order.

Do you like the French people? Did you see leHavre? Are there also people who can speak English? I think near a harbour many men speak and understand English. But you cannot find a Reformed Church. Have you a good chaplain in your camp?

Your mother promised she would write in a following letter about Rev. Hoeksema. Now I am interesting about what. My brother wrote me about the church but he doesn't like the preacher there.

Here we all are well and we hope your cold is over.

With many greetings, yours sincerely, H. Heersema

(This letter was sent to John's APO 562 address. TF)

The following letter was written by John's mother and received by him overseas. John must have carried it back home with him.

Nov. 13, 1945

My Dear John-

This is Tuesday night so I thought I better sit and start your letter this week, and hoping you may get it in time, as you would like to hear a little more news, and before I got started, I thought I better read your letter which we received last week, but I don't know when you wrote it, because it does not have any date on it, but the envelope was stamped Nov. 2, and we received it the 9th so that was just only one week on the way. Well my big boy I just had to laugh, because you must have felt kind of put out, because you dont seem to remember what I have written in my letters, as you say I have not written it.

Well son, as far as I know, I think that every time we have received anything of you, I think I have always answered it in my next letter, so just keep cool and thankfull with good thoughts and hopes, and be thankfull for Uncle Sam, for doing such good work, with mailing and delivering you know it takes about a month, or more to get your things, and then it sometimes takes two weeks or more to get my letters, and I think that I let you know in the letter after we have received it, alright big boy take hope for we have received all the things whatever you wrote that you was sending home, and am keeping all the things for you to see when you get home, surely hoping that it may be before long, the Lord willing, hoping you may come and surprise us before long if possible, hoping you are well and of good courage, both in spirit and body, trusting in the Lord your Saviour to guide and direct your ways seeking to know Him through his word and testimonies, so that you may find joy and peace with a thankful heart in the ways you have to go. Alright big boy, be strong and of good courage humbly waking and striving to walk in the right way so that it may be well with you. Well son we are all real well, and the factory was opened for work again yesterday Monday morning, so pa has started to work again, but he enjoyed his vacation, and was not tired of it, but he says he and I enjoyed it very much, well the days wont be quite so long now, because they stop at five o clock, which certainly seems good. They have been home about 10 weeks. But there are so many strikes of all different kinds of work yet. The Factory of pa have given them a raise of 10ct an hour, it surely must seem good to a lots of them to be working again, although a good many of them had been working at other places, as they say there is a

lots of work. Oh yes we got a letter last week of one of your friends, who was with you in the hospital and you were living in the same barracks and he had had trench feet too, and who went visiting with you, on your furlough to London, and you had been so kind to lend him two pounds, and some way or another he and you lost contact of one another, and he thought maybe you was on your way home, as he had sent you a letter, but did not get an answer to it. So he had said, he might send it home to you, he was sorry he had not sent it back before, but he felt all debts should be paid, so he was in hopes that we would feel that it was better late than never, as you had said to forget about it, he felt all debts should be repaid, and he would rather give it to you, or send it to your home. Well he sent a very nice friendly letter with a check of 8 dollars in it. Oh yes I think I told you about it in my other letter, oh yess about your government checks and the extra checks and a check for pa of Charlie, and the gas bill, all that same morning, and after dinner pa got rid of all the checks 8 of them and the bill. Oh yess your friend is Lenny Cirabisi he surely wrote a very nice word of praise of you, for which I am very glad and thankful, as you was alright, and knew the way, as a cleancut decent boy, and to be sure and say, hello to Johnny, for him, and to give him your address, if you were still away, well John this is the second letter today, as I wrote him a letter and your address this morning. We received your \$20 check in your letter, and the other one of Holland, at that time too. Well my boy quite a few boys are home, and others are expected home before long, and you too. Coral wanted a little pair of wooden shoes so bad, so I let her take a little pair along until I can buy her some or until you get home. Well son I cant think of much more news, will try and write again in a few days, hoping you may receive it in good health and strength and enjoy it. Love to you from us all-friends relatives Mother Father Brother Sister Nieces Nephews

P.S. Hoping to see and hear from you soon. We are having very nice weather real fresh and cold, but the petunias in the back yard are all green yet, have not had any hard freezing the lowest on the themomitor was 28° degrees. Mother
Your friend Lenny said he had written you, but that you must have been gone away. The address of you Friend who called himself Lenny C. Pa got you a good bond for your checks already. So long Johnny
Pvt. L. Cirabisi 32273962
1062 M.P. Co. (AVN)
A.P.O. 149 c/o Postmaster
N.Y., N.Y.

18/11/'45 (18 Nov 1945.) The envelope was stamped "Returning to United States. Forward to 1025 Helen St. 12/1/45." It reached Grand Rapids 24 Dec.'45.

J W Heersema
Scheldekade 46
Terneuzen

Dear John,

Well John I have leant a little english too and schall try to write a little letter to you. How are you? I am doing very well but I am in going to marry and I can't buy any

cigarette. So John I ask you, can you maby buy some cigarets for me? You write the prize and I shall pay it to you.

John, if you are some days of you must try to come to Terneuzen ask my mother. John I schall finished now, because I don't no words more.

The kind regards from your friend John

P.S. Mother ask too for some packets chewing gum for Johnny (my sister)

You write the prize and I pay you every thing back.

The following letter was written by Gertrude Hazenberg Boerema, John's sister. It was stamped "Forward to 1025 Helen St, Grand Rapids, Mich. 12/06/45"

Sunday, Nov. 25, 1945

Dear John-

The temptation to lie down on the davenport and read a magazine is strong-you know me-but for once I won-so here is a letter. It is 8:30 and I finally have everyone bedded down. They don't usually stay up so late, but I had promised to read them a couple of stories and in the middle of the first one, baby got so tired that she couldn't wait to be put to bed, so I undressed her, fixed her bottle, and brought her up while the rest waited up, figuring that that was some break-which, of course, it was. When we went to Mom & Pop this afternoon, Bert and Coral each took a book home with them and wanted to start them right away. Chuck went to church tonight and pretty soon Papa and Mama are coming here for a little while. I almost finished the stories tonight when Chucky said "Me has drink of milk." So I finished reading and then we all went out to the kitchen and they each had some milk and a small piece of fudge cake which I made about midnight last night. I make cake so seldom that when I do, they want cake for every meal and between times, too. With six of us, it doesn't take long for one to disappear. I think I can manage to eke out a sliver for each of us pretty soon with coffee, tho!

I suppose you are more or less just waiting around to come back, aren't you? Or do you have a lot of special work and training to do? I talked with Pearl Postmus the other day and her brother-Gerald Haadsma-you know-is still in Germany and wants to come home so badly-just doesn't know when he will. He got back to his outfit right smack on VE Day. Did Mother tell you about Lenny Cerbisi's letter? He wants to get in touch with you.

Wednesday night-8:10 P.M. Well, I couldn't seem to get back to this letter again-Mon. nite I go to Girls Glee Club, last night I made Chucky a pair of flannel pajamas. Today Mama came over and sewed a couple of buttonholes in it for me. Chuck & I went downtown this afternoon Christmas shopping-and Grandma took care of the children. I wish you could get home before Christmas. Wouldn't we have a swell day! We are all anxious to see how Trudy will act when the tree is set up. Boy, she catches on to things fast-just so she doesn't catch on to the tree and pull it over! You know, of course, that we did not send you boxes because your instructions came in time. Minnie, I think, sent you two boxes because she mailed them early, so either way, you'll get something. If there is anything in particular or in general, that you would like, please write because we can't mail anything without a letter to show at the P.O. How do you stand for points now? Does yours stay at 63 or are you adding to them as you go along? You might come home before you know it. Just in case you don't, I am enclosing a few snaps which I meant to

send long ago. You won't know the children, but they do remember you-even Chucky knows you from your pictures and the conversations around here.

Well, John, I think this letter should end. I saved room for some last minute item, but don't know of any more to write just now. Hope to see you soon. Our tel. no.at store is 38610 or Minnie at night is 59949 or Mrs. Clapp above shoe store (under name of Ruth Blickle) is 30389 in case you arrive in N.Y. how about a person to person call-unless you call Buffinga's for the folks. Do what you want to about it. Save these numbers if you ever should need them. See or hear you soon. Bye-Gertrude

P.S. Did Mama tell you we had your three rolls of film developed? Turned out good. One of you with pipe and puppy was especially good. The other man with puppy also a good picture-I don't know who he is.

"Return to Sender 12/8/1945"

11-29-45

My Dear John-

I thought I better start writing your letter again this Monday morning, then I can have it ready the first part of the week, as I don't feel good about it if I wait to long, I all the time think I am going to send an extra one once in a while, but it surely don't happen very often, but am hoping if it can be, that you may be home one of these days before Christmas, in health and strength the Lord willing, so that we may rejoice in one another, but above all that we may all together rejoice in Our Lord, Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate on Christmas day, as Our Saviour and King. Hoping my boy that you may be strong, fighting the good fight in the good spirit, that you may be of good courage, abiding the time, and of good patience, trusting in the Lord your Saviour, with a thankfull heart, for his Fatherly care over us all, for He doeth all things well, according to His will. Well big boy, I did not finish the letter last night as I had intended to do. Mrs. Jonker from next door happened to come over to spend the evening. So am started to write again this morning, it is kind of a dark morning as if we might have some more snow. Last Thursday thanksgiving day morning it started to snow while we were in church, and at night from Aunt Dienie when we went home there was about a foot of snow, which looked very nice, but not so much fun, going through it. We went to Aunt Dienie for the day, and all enjoyed it very much, Egbert & Elaine and family Cornelia Geraldine and children and us and the family had dinner together, and in the afternoon Tom and Lucile came over. You surely will have some nice visiting to do when you may get home, which I am looking for now every day, a little nearer we hope. You asked about some things in your last letter John, and we have received them all and your checks, but the second check from there we have not received yet, but will be looking for it to arrive. This has been a very dark, and rainy day, but take it for the best, and when it clears up, it will seem that much brighter, for we have or can do nothing about it, so just be thankfull, if we can take the weather as it comes, if we are well, and can take it for the best, son, as your mother has had experience and knows about it, as our Heavenly Father rules over it all. Well son hoping you may be classed with 65 points, as the press states, that they are supposed to be on the way, by the 1st of December but be of good courage, hoping you are well and strong, both in body and in spirit, patiently abiding the time Trusting in the Lord your Saviour, to guide and direct you in all of lifes way, so that you may experience

joy and peace, with prayer and thanksgiving to His homer and Praise, seek Him in all your ways and needs, as He is always near to all that call on Him in truth, as He has promised in His word and testimonies. Well big boy, I and we all keep busy, at something or another. Monday morning Mrs. Dekker, Nellie came over a little while with her little granddaughter Etta's little girl almost three years old, and at night Mrs. Jonker, and Tuesday night Mr Mrs. DeWit, Mr. came home with Pa after Barnabas meeting, and yesterday Charley came before dinner, if I could come over and stay with the children, because they were going to town together, and Nellie wanted me to come over this morning and visit with her awhile, she has been home for almost six weeks, and feels much better, but she has to be more quiet and take it easy, she makes herself to busy. I am getting your room and bed ready, so that I may look for you any time or day now, and will be hoping you may be here for Christmas or soon after, the Lord willing. We are all real well as far as I know in the relation. Well son I cant think of much more news at present, and hope you may receive it in good health and strength both in body and in spirit, trusting in the Lord to guide and direct your ways, and to protect and care for us all. Be of good courage, abiding the time. With much Love to You-From us all. Mother-Father-and all. Mother

“Returning to United States, 12/19/45, Forward to 1025 Helen St.”

1st Dec. 45 (written in English)

Dear John,

You have surprised us and we thank you very much. We haved received your “Standard Bearer” and a Magazine and yesterday a parcel. A Magazine is of more value that a paper. In the “Standard B” is it interesting what they say in America about what had happened in our churches

My son is always here. He has not yet succeeded in buying a shop. There are more men who will buy a shop and therefore is it not so easy. Here it is all well. Sometimes we have foggy wheater en than it is very cold. I think you can remember the wheater of last year. You was in Overloon. And now we have the last month of the year.

Many Americans go to their country. How is it with you. When do you go home. I have written a letter to your father and mother. I have written about the church. They are interesting about that, I think.

You have also surprised my wife and I must you thank for her. She cannot write you in English. It was for us Santa Claus. I don't now if they have it in America. In some parts they have the Thankgivings day and then they give presents. Here it is a use to give them at Santa Claus or at Christmas.

I hope you are at home at New Year's day. It is a good begin to be a civilian. As soldier you cannot learn anything for your life and is it necessary to learn something.

Did you receive the other letters?

With kind regards and many greetings

Yours sincerely, H. Heersema

December 2, 1945 (written in English)
Nell Heersema
46 Scheldekade
Terneuzen

Dear Hazenberg Family,

Finally I have a chance to write you back again because of the business I did not get to it. Father wrote you a few weeks ago. No doubt you already received this letter. It was nice to receive a letter from you. You write good Dutch, much better than my English.

My youngest brother is still here, and his girlfriend came last week. She is staying until New Year, for which we are happy. This afternoon we walked to Axel, 8 km. from here to listen to Rev. Kraan from Vlaardingen. He preached about the last two verses of Psalm 27. It was a beautiful sermon. They worshiped in a school because the church split and the followers of Prof. Schilder claimed the building, so that the other people had to settle with the school. We were stiff from walking two times one and one-half hours since we cannot use the bicycle because tires are not yet available. It was beautiful weather and it is nice to hear a different preacher since we still have the same one.

Recently I have been gone many evenings and presently I am in the church choir and we have to practice much for the Christmas program. We are singing together with the choir of Axel. We are singing an eight part piece, and that sounds so good. This will be the first Christmas in peace time, and I trust will not be the last. Almost everyone thinks we will soon have war again. This is not to be hoped, because the next war will be worse with that terrible atomic bomb. People are already talking about how they can most speedily destroy other people. If that's the way people remain, it will not be a real peace, but only a preparation for the next war. It turns out as the Bible says that one woe follows upon the other. Don't you believe we are quickly going toward the end? That will be a terrifying time, or do you find me extremely pessimistic?

It would be nice for you if John would be home by Christmas. I am sure that then you would have a beautiful Christmas wreath on the table. Then we will peek around the corner. We will cross the sea on a water bike and suddenly you will have the whole Heersema family visiting, if that were possible. We write each other and we don't even know each other. Yet it is not strange for me to write you. It just seems as though I am chatting with you.

My brother has been trying for a while to purchase a bakery business, but has not been able to so far. He almost bought one in Winterswyk and would get married this month. He wanted me to go with him to take care of the store. Just at the last moment the sale fell through. He felt bad about this because it is so difficult to get hold of a business—too many buyers and not enough properties available. I had already given notice at the office, but fortunately I could come back. Now Jan wants to ask you if there is a future in America to start a business. What do you think of it? It is a good thing Mother doesn't know what I'm asking you because she would find it difficult if we would go that far away. He already told his girlfriend that if there is something there he would go first and she could come later. She didn't find that too hard to accept. I was surprised that she found that acceptable. From John we receive a letter every week. Last week he sent me several issues of the Standard Bearer. Father loves to read them. In the past, the uncle from Redlands used to send them. Father wrote him twice and I wrote him once to

continue that. I also wrote him that if he found mistakes in our writing he shouldn't laugh about it because it is not easy to write in a different language and express yourself in your own mother tongue.

All of last winter we had an R.A.F. Englishman with us. He still writes to us regularly. He writes much about the church worship services, but it is difficult to respond because of the many difficult words that are required. Fortunately I had a big English dictionary, which keeps me sweat all night and I am learning from it also. Now I hope that you will soon write me back if it is not too much effort because we love to receive your letters. I wish you all a blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Hearty greetings from all to all,

Nellie

PS – If you ever have an extra photograph or picture, send us one. John showed us one of your photographs and I have almost forgotten it. Am I too bold in asking this?

“Return to Sender, 12/12/45”

Dec. 3, 45

My Dear John-

We are watching the press every night hoping that your name may be on the list with the returning boys, and patiently longing and waiting until we may see each other again in health and strength, the Lord willing, to rejoice in one another, but above all that we may together rejoice in Our Lord, with a true thankful heart, who has watched over us and cared for us all, these many days of separation, and hoping and praying that our Heavenly Father may further protect and care for you, and us all, to his Honor and Glory, and we are all hoping you may be here before Christmas, the Lord willing. Hoping you are well and strong and of good courage, patiently abiding the time trusting in the Lord, who only knows and can and will supply all our needs. Well big boy, this is Monday night again, Gertrude Charley and children were over yesterday Sunday afternoon awhile, and they all enjoy coming over, and little Trudy acts so glad, and enjoys it so much when they are here, well Gertrude and Charley were going to Herman and Gretties for the evening but she said she couldn't get anybody to stay with the children, and wanted to know if we had any plans, and if not, if we would come over after church and stay with the children, they were all in bed and asleep when we came there. Well John we are having very nice weather, and the snow is gone and the sidewalks are all clean and dry, although we have had some very dark days, and a little rain too, but the days are getting very short, just think in a couple weeks we will have the shortest day of the year already, (oh yes) the time just seems to be flying at times. Well Pa is working regular again, and tonight they had to work overtime already again, and that makes the evenings very short, it seemed so nice when he could come home at five o'clock, but now it's a 12 hour day again, 7:15 in the morning Pa leaves, and at 7:15 at night he is home again, then they are long days, to late to get ready after supper and go out for company. I thought Barbara was in her home again and probably working, but Gertrude said, that she was in the hospital for a rest-up, as she has hospital insurance, and she thought it was to busy for her mother Aunt Susie, to take care of Uncle Ho, and her too, Alice had said last night by Grettie, that she- Barbara- felt very good, and felt better there to rest, as she had a very good bed, in a room for two, and had a very nice room-mate in with her. Hoping and praying that the Lord

may restore her health and strength before long. She has her rooms all settled so nice upstairs by Uncle Jake and Aunt Amelia on Charles street, where she is renting, and had lived there and working a short time, but she had been very busy since Ralph her husband died, as they sold that house, and some of the things, and then the moving upstairs, and so many different things that she had to attend to, so she had been very busy all the time. I have not heard of the others for awhile now, but am in hopes that they are all well, will try and call them by phone tomorrow, if I can. Well my boy all kinds of shopping going on for Christmas already, and all the buying with money, but, oh, oh, all the Union and Labor troubles, all over the Countries and states, such dissatisfaction, and all unthankfulness, and they all want more, money money, as if that is going to make them satisfied, but as the saying goes, the more you have, the more you want, a lot of them never satisfied, and never will be. Well son received your nice Christmas card, thanks very much, will hope that you may have a happy Blessed Christmas, and a happy New Year, oh yess, hoping we may be seeing one another. Pa was saying that it will be three years tomorrow that you had to go away, well that's a long time to be away from home and loved ones. Walter is still around Okinawa I guess. Wilbur and Fern Oувenday are home, Harry Delnay is home to from the pacific, and Melvin Roetman expects to come home soon after the New Year. I did wash this morning, but if Gertrude or Charley come after me in the morning will go there for the day if needed. We have not heard from Heersema again, but will write them a letter again soon, and plan on sending them some things too. Well big boy, am hoping to see you any time in a few days, or short time. I guess I will close now, as I cant think of much more news, and get it off with the morning mail, hoping you may receive it in good health and strength, both in body and in the good spirit, trusting in the Lord to guide and direct your ways and that you may be strong, and of good courage. We all and the little children surely will be glad to see you again, and I know you surely will be to. With much love to you From us All, Mother Father and All. Mother

“Returning to United States. Forward to 1025 Helen St.”

Carrie Brilstra,
507 Acequia Madre
Santa Fe, N. Mex.
Dec. 6, 1945

Dear John,

Just received the pretty Christmas card and happy to get your address, for I wanted to write you a Christmas letter but where to send it was the question. Now that has been taken care of so no excuses.

It is a year ago you were “marking time” in a hospital. Do your feet give you any more trouble? Suppose they have grown larger and that might cause trouble.

Just went out to see about the chickens and found one with a bleeding spot on her head-cause unknown. Put her in a box in the garage and hope she will settle down and stop scratching it. Once I made the statement I would nurse people but not their pets. Many times of late I have been reminded of that statement and it always shuts me up.

You hear from home regularly and so may know more news from there then I do. The few letters I have had from your Mother were nice long letters and giving all the details.

Had a letter from home saying they really had a wintry Thanksgiving Day. It reminded me of some when we used to go to your house for the day. Aunt Dena & Uncle Tom would be there and there was always somebody in a box on the sled.

Here in Santa Fe we haven't had much winter so far. The coldest has been 12° and one doesn't feel the cold here for we are high & dry. Guess you have been in many different kinds of climate and must be awfully tired of seeing so much misery around you all the time. We see pictures of groups going down a road not really knowing what the end has in store for them. You wrote about there being so many children and what a start they have in life.

Someone wrote you had been in Holland and have been in some of their homes. Could you speak enough of their language to converse with them or did you use the Indians language, sign language?

You may be able to rattle off a lot of towns that we find hard to pronounce but would like to hear you say the name of the street we live on. It took me a month to learn to say it and even now have to think before saying it.

Do hope you will have a nice Christmas and that it won't be too long before you will be shipping for home.

Tho I don't write you as often as I should I do remember you in my prayers. Thanks for your letters and flag. Glad you sent it in a K ration box. Read the instructions with much interest. Love, Carrie

“Return to Sender 12/17/45”

Dec. 7, 1945

My Dear John-

I thought I better write a little letter to let you know that we received your letter yesterday with your \$25 check. It was sent Nov. 11 and postmarked Nov. 12, and we received it yesterday Dec.6 so that took quite a while, once in a while it don't take so long but generally about 2 weeks, was going to write last night, but I am writing first thing this morning. It is a fine morning, and looks as though we might have a nice bright day, it is real frosty, but everything is dry and clean, the thermometer is pretty near 30:deg. Well big boy when your letter came, it had a painted government stamp and I thought maybe it might be that you were starting on your way home, hoping you may be next time, but all the boys or young men, are looking and longing for it, and no wonder, for there is no place like home. Well big boy hoping you are well and strong, and keeping up the good spirit, so that you may be of good courage, trusting in your Lord and Saviour, to guide and direct your ways, at all times, as He only knows, and can and will supply all your needs. Draw nigh to Him, and He will draw nigh to you. Hoping and praying that He may be your comfort and strength, with thankful heart for His Fatherly Care over us all. We are hoping to see you before Christmas, the Lord willing, and if not, hoping you may have a Blessed Joyfull Christmas and a Happy Blessed New Year. I was to Gertrude Tuesday, and Wednesday to society, and they had letters of some of the boys, thanking the society for the nice boxes they had received, and was wondering and hoping, they might have sent you one, because it makes me feel bad to think I have not sent you any, thinking and hoping you might be home anytime, and you thought I better not send it. Well my boy, we are all real well, and pa is working overtime again, which we don't like

very well. Cant think of very much more news, hoping you may receive it in good health and strength, pretty near and almost on your way home. With much love to you, From Mother Father and us All. Mother

I am looking for your check today or tomorrow. Gov. check.

“Return to Sender 12/17/45”

A Christmas card was mailed Dec. 8, 1945. Merry Christmas Son. Inside it was signed: John, Expect to see you, Happy New Year, Happy Blessed New Year. Mother Father and us All.

“Returning to United States. Forward to 1025 Helen St., 12/30/45”

Fran Hemmes

1115 Baldwin

A Christmas card, signed by Ethel Hemmes. On the back she wrote: Hi Johnny, coming home soon. Suppose you'll be the last one in. The war is over, isn't it, what are you doing over there? Will be looking for you soon. Just a friend, Ethel Hemmes

“Return to Sender 12/21/45”

Dec. 13, '45

My Dear John-

I am going to start your letter any way, because it is wednesday night already, because it seems I cant think of very much news to tell, seeing the main thoughts and hopes are every day that you may be coming home, any day, and I have not sent you any thing but letters, where I wanted to send you different things all the time, either some good things to eat, or otherwise to read, well big boy, I am just consoling myself, that you may enjoy them when you may get home again. I always wanted to send you the banner, because the boys all say that they enjoy it so much, and so do I. Do you ever see any there? Or do you get good reading things from the church, did you get any Christmas box yet from anywhere? Alright big boy, keep up good hopes, and when you return, I hope you surely may enjoy things. Well John we are having very nice winter weather at present, there is a little snow on the ground, but it is quite cold at present, the thermometer was about 15 degrees early this morning the paper is saying, but it was a nice bright day, you know it wont be winter until next week, it don't seem possible that Christmas and New Year are so near already. We are all real well, Bert E. came down with the mumps tuesday, but he feels pretty good, but gets tired. Sunday afternoon the family came over awhile and wanted to know if we could come over after church, as Aunt Dienie and Uncle Tom were coming over too, and we all had a very nice evening visiting together. Last week thursday we got your letter and checks, and your gov. checks Saturday, and we got a nice letter from Heersema, Saturday too. Oh yess I got your Christmas card and have sent you one, and a little letter last Friday too. I had thought of having Gertrude and family over here for Christmas, but she would much rather have us come over there for the dinner and the day as it is such a job to get the children ready to go out, as they would rather stay home to enjoy their presents, and she said if you were home, you would like to come over there too. Surely hoping you may be here if it can be. I guess Barbara has been too busy, an over done, she is in the hospital, for a good rest, as she has had trouble with her stomach and if affected her heart, but she feels much easier and better, but she has to take

it easy for quite a long time hoping the Lord may restore health and strength, so that she may go to her home upstairs, on Charles st. which she has furnished so nicely. Have not see Aunt Maggie for quite a while, but Barbara said she was over there to see her last Monday. There are a good many boys home, but there are many more boys that will be expecting to come home yet. Hoping big boy that you may have a nice trip coming back from across. Hoping and praying that our Heavenly Father may protect and care for us all and that we may meet each other in health and strength, rejoicing in one another, to His Honer and Praise. Well John, the points or O.P.A. stamps are all discontinued on all things now, so we can get all the meat vegetables butter cheese fruit we want now, if we pay for them, but cant get no sugar unless another stamp is due for 5 lbs about once a month. I was real short on it, but Mrs. Roetman and Alma have some to spare, so I bought 5 lbs of Alma, she is home here with her mother Mrs. Roetman, as she is married, and has a little baby boy with her, and her little girl about 3-4 years, her husband is in the navy. Pearls husband, Smitty Gary, is expected home anytime with his discharge papers, all men with three or more children, do not need to serve anymore, and Marie and children have gone to live south near where her husband John Bouterse is serving in Fort Leavenworth, he is doing some kind of office work like he had at home here. Well my boy I cant think of much more news, so will close for this time, Hoping you may receive it in good health and strength and of good courage, both in mind and body, trusting in the Lord to guide and direct your ways at all times. Well son hoping to see you one of these days soon, the Lord willing, I'll close for this time. With much love to you-From Mother Father and us All. Mother

John out-processed at Camp Atterbury, Indiana on 28 Dec 1945 and depending on the train schedules got home either the 28th or 29th of December 1945. Most likely John arrived in Grand Rapids on Saturday, the 29th.

1946

John wrote this letter to the Heersema family, but obviously didn't send it.

Jan 26, 1946

Dear Heersema's

Its about time I was dropping you a letter. So here goes. Well, every thing seems to be going pretty well around here lately. I went back to work this week. So no more laying in bed till 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning for me. Now have to get up about 6:15 A.M. and go to work. This morning it was very cold. I should say pretty close to zero (0). There is snow all over and still cold out. Just got back from work. Have sent you some parcels and let us know if you get them. A few days ago sent one my sister had made up. So if you see an address on one of them you don't recognize it will be from them. The name on it will be "Boerema".

Well there isn't much to report from this end of the line.

“Returning to United States. 2/17/46. Forward to 1025 Helen St.”

Ter Neuzen 21st Jan '46 (written in English)

Dear Friend,

It is a long time we heard some thing from you. Are you yet in France. We hear from the people that the group that were here, are in France. Or are you with leave to your home, but it is a long journey to go and return to America.

Here all is well. It was cold a few days ago en we have had snow and some of us were ill, but they are better now. Every winter many men are ill and it was not so serious.

And how are you and your elders. I have written your mother but we did not receive a letter back. And I don't know who has written for the last time you or I. I thought it was I who wrote a letter but it doesn't matter. In December we received a packet and a letter en we thank you very much. And now we hope to receive again a letter from you.

My son did not get succeed in buying a bakery. There are too many persons who will buy and we live in a corner of our country. So it is not easy and we must wait till it is our turn.

We have now eggs. If you were here you could eat an egg from our hens. It is the first time that we have eggs from our own hens. Before the war we could buy eggs enough and I had no time, to go to the farmers for corn and the eggs were cheap enough and we could buy them in every shop.

There is revolution in East Indies and that is the end of the wars. You have written in the papers I think how our country is ruined by the Germans. It is the most ruined of all the countries of Europe. We cannot buy in the shops what we will. It is very difficult to get something. We must have coupons for clothes en we can ask for them. Then there is no café, a few cigarettes.

My son is working here in a bakery. One of the assistants was sick.

And how are you. Always busy with cooking, brassing your clothes and walking?

We hope soon to receive a letter. Yours, H. Heersema

TerNeuzen 8th Feb 1946 (written in English)

Dear John,

I don't know if you have received the last letter I wrote in Januari. I didn't know that you were at your home. But you are glad to be at home than in a camp. I congratulate you that you are with your father and mother in your own country.

I thank you very much for what you send to us but it is too much. We can use it all and the cigarettes are for our John for his wedding day. When he has a bakery, he will mary.

I believe it will not last a long time. He has seen a shop and is number two. When the first is not ready, it is his turn. It is always a disappointment for him. It is as you when you were in TerNeuzen. There were many soldiers who went to their country and you must stay here in at LeHavre. But suddenly was it your turn. Now when it is also with our John, other persons have first a shop, at last it is his turn. He will also be very glad.

In the paper we have read the names of many Dutchmen, especially from Groningen. I don't know the families. Most of them went to America when I was a little boy and they were grown-up. At that time a cousin went to Chicago. His name is Huister. I believe that he is dead.

Is it always striking in America? Did you find work? It is always other thing than the

work of a soldier especially the last year. But you are young and strong. It is a long time, you have had your work and it is strange to begin.

We have not had a strong winter, some onces could slat for a few days en we had a few days snow and now we have always storm and rain. It is not so very cold and the people are glad, for there are not many coals for the stove.

Our rabbits are always behind the house and we have also hens. They leg eggs and so I need not to go to a farmer for eggs. It was often a disappointment and many times I came home without eggs. We get now more food than in the time when you were here, but not as the time before the war. What did your father say? Did you learn many Dutch words or only the words before you came here? It was always difficult for you to understand Dutch and I think it is always the same.

You can now go to church. Was it not a little strange to hear your old preacher? Many thanks for all you have done. With kind regards to you and your family.

H. Heersema

February 8, 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Terneuzen

Dear Hazenberg Family,

How you surprised us and at the same time shamed us! Two days ago we received a package. What a joy that was! And yesterday another package. This made us embarrassed. We are extremely thankful, but this is too much. We can certainly find good use for everything. The last five years we have been unable to buy anything, and even now there is very little available. This week was the first time we could buy a skein of wool in the store. At 6 o'clock in the morning two people were already in line, and at 9:30 there were 300 in line. The store did not open until 10 o'clock. Go stand in line for three hours! Even if you wait that long, by the time your turn comes they are all sold out. Here we had a timely liberation, but the boys were in Rotterdam. There they suffered much hunger. With the boys everything turned out good, but they had to work hard to get a little to eat. Out of need my oldest son had to trade in his overcoat for some potatoes. Another coat of his was stolen. Now you understand why the coat you sent was so welcome. Who knows how long it will take to buy another one? And then the worse off will get priority. They are extremely expensive. The war emptied all our savings and the wages are very low that very little can be purchased. In addition, in May they are expecting a baby, so it remains what is to be seen. My brother has already sent some baby clothes. Fortunately they are receiving some help. Now he has experienced another bad day. During the war days he had rented a cart from a friend. The Germans took the cart away from him and never got it back. He was the responsible person and had to pay the friend for the cart. Repaying his friend will no doubt be a small amount, but it will be another burden. You want to help someone and then this happens. It is an awful time. The war is passed, but now what? We have a national debt of 20 billion guilders. The taxes are becoming enormous. All we do is work for the national debt. And then we have the war in Indonesia, and that costs more money. We have become an extremely poor people, as you no doubt already know how much they have taken away from us. The warehouses are empty; many factories were moved to Germany, and then the terrible suffering. In Groningen and Friesland many people were

shot and killed. There is almost no family not sorrowing the death of a loved one. Of all the occupied countries, our Netherlands suffered the most. Even now many mass graves are discovered, and many are still missing after they fled to Russia and nobody knows what happened. Some of our people are under the impression that we are under the judgment of God, but most of them are not. All they do is dance and visit the theaters, and the church remains empty. May that change! Then we will have a future. Now, dear friends, hearty greetings and again thanks.
Mrs. H. Heersema

TerNeuzen (written in English)

1st March 1946

Dear John,

We all thank you very much for all you sent us. It was the third packet we received. I thank also your mother for what she sent us. The tobacco was very good, better than we have to-day. Before the war we had the best tobacco and the best cigars of the world. It was cultivated in the East Indies but there is still war and now we have tobacco from other countries and from our own and it is not so best.

A fortnight ago we had nearly bought a bakery but our John was no. 2 and the first man got it. It is very pity for him. My brother in Redlands wrote: Come here in Redlands and you can begin. There are 18,000 inhabitants and 3 bakers. But he cannot speak English and so it is very difficult to begin. In summer it is very hot there and then work in a bakery when it is more that 100 degrees. I think it is better in Grand Rapids. He is always at home and waits for a bakery.

It was very interesting to read your missionary papers. We are very thankfull to read that in Jan. every day 500 parcels were sent to our people. We thank God that He will help us and that so many people in America will send us parcels. Many missionaries are killed in our East Indies and others have suffered much. One missionary van Es is married with a woman from TerNeuzen. Her elders live here on the Scheldekade. They and their four children are alive and arrived in Amsterdam but they were too tired and too feeble to come here.

It is difficult to travel here. The boats and the trains were stolen or ruined and as you know, all the bridges. My wife and Janny were in Rotterdam at my eldest son. From here they could go with an auto but when they returned they must go by train, by autobus and boat. There were many travelers and it was very difficult and uncomfortable but the war is over now and we hope that it will be soon better.

When I see the paper Holland Home, I see many names from Holland especially from Groningen and Friesland, but I did not see my name.

Have you found work? I hope so.

Thank you very much for all and we think of the evenings you was here.

With healthy greetings to all of you, H. Heersema

1 March 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Terneuzen

Dear Friends!

My husband is writing a letter to your son, so I will write a note to you because I can't write English too well nor speak it. Too bad, eh! How are you doing? A bond has developed between us and we have never seen each other. What a beautiful time it was when your son and others came here. We think and talk about it often.

I thank you heartily for your love that we have received. Total strangers we are to you, yet you have given so much love. We are humbled by it, and what have we done to deserve it? This week I came home from Rotterdam, where my oldest son lives. They are expecting their first child in May. She is terribly malnourished and that is now ravishing her body. She often falls and is terribly weak. There is very little muscle or fat on her. We now have chickens and are saving the eggs for her, so we don't eat them ourselves. The stores are still empty here, so you can understand how happy she is with all this. Jan is still at home and is happy with the smoke shop called Jan Cigarette, so you know the rest. I still remember your son once said pas op (be careful) as well as smeerlap (person you cannot trust/a dirty person). But now he is with you again, and I am sure he would not want to go back to those times. Now I must quit, and again, my hearty thanks and a hearty handshake. Please write again soon. Do you still have that good tasting coffee? Your son will know what I mean. It tasted so good—we really enjoyed.

Yours,

C. Heersma, Jan, Nell & Jantje

March 5, 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Terneuzen

Dear Hazenberg Family,

Since I am at home by myself tonight, it's a good time to write you a letter. How are you? No doubt very happy that your son is home. How he will be spoiled! Mother went with my sister for a few weeks to Rotterdam to my oldest brother. That is really something when she leaves. It hasn't happened in years. Mother loves to work and take care of us and she cannot take it if others are neglected and she feels others have not done it right. But since Pete often asked her to come, she finally went, and so Father, Jan and myself, the three of us stayed behind. We got a lot of work done when I went to the office, and the rest I did at home. Jan cooked the meals, since he is unemployed and the baker can do everything. We had Father for supervisor. During that time we received your package. Father, no doubt, has already written you. We were very happy with it and again thank you. The postman brought it in the morning around 9 o'clock. Jan came with it in the kitchen. I had my coat on already to go to work, but I was so nosy about the package that I could not resist the temptation to be there when it was opened, and I was 15 minutes late at work. How happy we were with everything. The peas were extremely welcome because vegetables are almost unavailable. The calendar we have hung in the living room so that when we have company we can say what a beautiful calendar you sent us. We are proud to say it's an American calendar. What beautiful pictures it has. I never knew Michigan was so beautiful when compared to our country. Jan was also very

happy with the cigarettes and cigars. Afterwards we found out that he had secretly written you for them and thought that was not very nice of him. It's a little bold. He had not mentioned it to me at all because he knows that I don't like them.

It continues to be problematic for him to buy a business. Several times he thought he was in luck, but someone else had priority. There are too many buyers and not enough to buy. If you're not in the middle of the country, it becomes very difficult to buy a business, and to develop a new business is not allowed. You cannot add a new bakery to existing ones. He now has all his certificates but cannot go beyond that. Uncle wrote him from Redlands that if he any inclination to start a business in Redlands, it has 18,000 residents but only three bakeries. He could easily start there. Jan had real interest to go there, but Mother finds it so terrible for him to go away and will try to hold him back, I think. Jan asked whether I would go with him to help in the business, but I said if Father and Mother also go with us. I'm eager to see how it turns out. There are so many Hollanders that want to go to America, but our government is not giving permission even though it's approved by America

Next week I will go for several days to Rotterdam and April 1 I will start a new job at an office in a bank. It is quite easy to get an office job here since there is a shortage of skilled personnel. Things aren't really looking up in our little country, and it will take many years to get on top again if we can keep peace. But as long as people don't change, that will not happen, I think.

On a regular basis many Hollanders are coming from India (Indonesia). My have they suffered also and came from the boat with nothing along except the clothes they could wear. An acquaintance of mine whose daughter is married to a missionary came over from India with five children. They were so emaciated they could not be recognized anymore. So many people died there as martyrs.

Your mission paper and the other papers were read by Father and me from cover to cover, and found them very nice. We come across so many Dutch names in them. I'm sure these Hollanders have a good time with each other. What a beautiful building that Holland Home is, and it even has a little windmill in front of it. In foreign countries they just don't know the Netherlands without a windmill and a Dutch girl. I will end my letter. If you have time, please write me back.

Hearty greetings,
Nell

Rotterdam, 21-3-46 (21 March '46. Translated from Dutch)

J W Heersema

Nesserdyk 53A

Dear Hazenberg Family,

I must first heartily congratulate you with the safe homecoming of your son John. It is a great privilege to come out of the war alive while so many others were casualties and are to be mourned. We have all experienced so much, especially those who were persecuted by the occupiers with hunger, persecution and concentration camps. We experienced much hunger also. Personally I was in Rotterdam all that time and lost total contact with my parents and family because they were already liberated in September 1944 while we were only in the beginning of May 1945. Terrible things happened in that time, but

fortunately we all survived it. Therefore, for us it is a great privilege to enjoy the free world again. Immediately following the liberation I went home (Terneuzen), where it was a great joy to see each other again after so much suffering.

After a little while I found a package of photos that appear to be from John. We were able to contact your son again and we shared a real joyful evening together. We noticed immediately that he felt right at home. It was so nice that he came from a Christian family, something you don't experience much with the Americans. Now we often still receive packages from you in Terneuzen, and want to heartily thank you. We are really touched by it, and every time it's a thrill. Please thank John also. It's too bad that I can't write him personally since I can't do it in English. I am starting to work on it, and it's my plan to go to America since there is very little future for me here. It will take some time yet since it is not so easy. I am at present 28 years old and am engaged with a girl from Rotterdam. We would love to be married soon, but since we have nothing for house or furniture, so we will have to postpone it for a while. In the past, before the war, you could get everything. But today, you still need 10,000 guilders to start, and then you do not have enough. For bedroom furniture you still have to pay 2,600 guilders, and it wasn't even that much before the war. And so it is with everything. Sheets and pillowcases you can't even get here. I just received a packet from a cousin of mine in America with some flour bags which my fiancé will make into sheets, and that will do for us. I hope that you will send me some more. I don't know, but I find it hard to ask him for more. Maybe it is not easy for him to get them. Even this week we received a packet from your daughter, and I want to take this opportunity to thank her, because we are extremely grateful to receive these packages from strangers. It has been a long time since we have received a letter from John. Ask him if he will write some time because Father will read them to me in Dutch, which I can understand better than English, obviously. Once more, thank you for the cigarettes. They sure tasted good and they are very scarce here. Greetings to all, and especially to John

From John's friend, Jan

J W Heersema
Nesserdyk 53A
Rotterdam

Terneuzen April 6th 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Dear friends,

We have received your letter and also two parcels from Boerema. You asked in your last letter that, if you sent us something that we could not use, to give it to someone else. With great pleasure and great gratitude. Do you know who needs it the most: the small middle class. They would like to present themselves decently and are totally exhausted. There is for instance a widow here with three children. She tries her best and still they are having a hard time. By the way, I need only ask the minister and he knows addresses. We are greatly thankful for your son-in-laws two parcels. I have written him after we received the first parcel, and now the second has arrived. There was a newspaper on top with a caricature: now, we do not look like these people yet, that are portrayed on it. We luckily do not die from starvation. That time is over. Our Jan did come from Rotterdam last year and was totally exhausted. Long time he was unable to do anything, it was not

only from hunger, but also the nerves have suffered a lot. In constant fear of being arrested or shot to death, a man cannot stand for a long time. He travelled distances of 60 km (37.5 miles) on foot to fetch food. Daily he had to watch out for airplanes (literally: flying machines) because the English shot at everything that dared walk on the main roads and at night the Germans sometimes shot. Above that, every young man had to report to go to work in Germany so there was always danger.

Once he was, with seven others, at eleven o'clock in the evening, arrested and locked up in a farmer's barn. The barn was locked. Fortunately the German guard went to bed at midnight, and they managed to escape through another door. He said he'd never ridden his bike as fast as he did then. You understand what an ever present fear to stay out of the (concentration) camps. Three times, a bicycle was stolen from him, and still there are no bicycles for sale.

But we can be thankful that we all managed to stay alive, but life still is not what we expected it to be after the war. Everything is still scarce. Slowly though things are getting better, but there is oh so little available. So much has been damaged by the war, our country has been plundered empty and so much has been destroyed. The city of Groningen is also very damaged. The town of Holwierde near Delfzijl is totally destroyed. Appingedam is also damaged severely for most parts. In Holland (province) near the coast it is terrible: Den Haag, Rotterdam and other places. It is indescribable. The rebuild is taking an awful long time. There are shortages of materials and the workers have been spoilt by the Germans. It used to be high wages and doing nothing, but that cannot remain the case. The will and lust to work has vanished for many. Spiritually we have deteriorated and God comes with his punishment. Who leaves the Lord has woe upon woe to fear, and that also applies to these times. It is to be hoped that people learn to appreciate that.

My brother wrote that Dr. Hoeksema disagrees with Prof. Schilder, and ferociously challenges him. I believe that Schilder proclaims Prof. Hagens his theories more.

Will you thank Boerema. Receive from all of us kind regards and God's blessing. We were glad to receive everything, thank you. Everything was most welcome, my husband was very pleased with the tobacco.

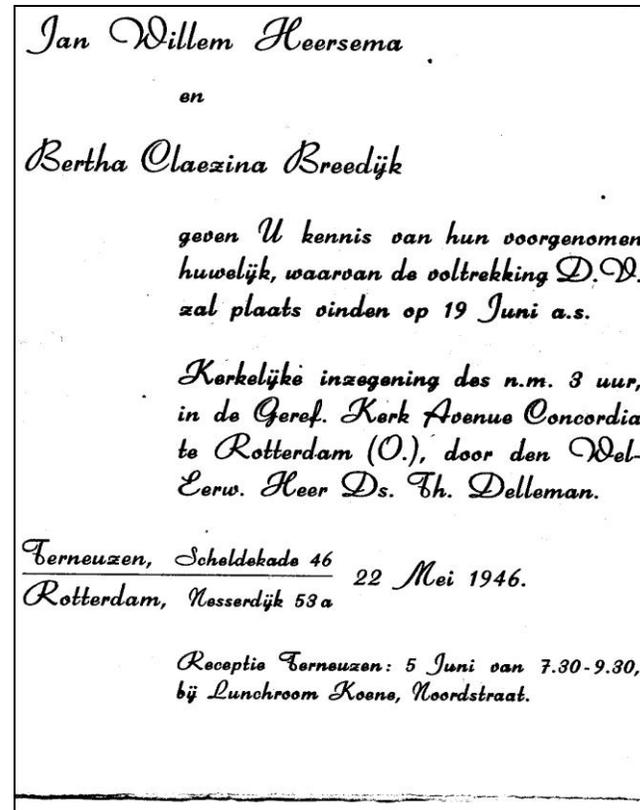
Should you be sending something again, please send some peanut butter.

To all, thank you.

Best regards.

H. Heersema

Following is the wedding invitation to Jan Heersema wedding:



June 18, 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Grootegast

Dear Friends,

We thought about writing you a letter. You will no doubt think, a letter from the Netherlands? Where does that come from? So I will let you and your wife know. This winter we received a letter from Bert and Nellie Hares that you are with them in Grand Rapids. That was a miracle because Nellie is my cousin. I have four lady cousins and three male cousins and an uncle. Earlier my Father had a brother and a sister, but they are both gone. My uncle and aunt in America are also gone. Uncle Willem is still there, and we wrote each other often when the parents were still living. But that all ended when the war came, because everything changed. The war restricted everything as to what you could do in our country. Our land is completely robbed and murdered and everything was sold by ration coupons—which meant little bread and less fuel. We were always happy when Saturday came and we received new coupons. There was no shortening, except for cheap cooking oil. I said to my boys the moffen (Germans) ate the good stuff. Yes, if you were only here to see what happened and how everything went, you would

realize how many young men were murdered in the concentration camps in Vugt, near Ammersvoort, where they were first brought, and most of them never came back again because they were brought to their death there and others were shot. Even in the village of Grootegast five were killed. Our next-door neighbor, H. Top, was shot in bed. What a good man he was! No doubt you will remember him from the past. His son for whom they came was in hiding, and because they could not find him, they shot the father as well as the mayor of the village of Oldekerk, who also was murdered and his body was found on the other side of Groningen in a mass grave with 26 others. And in Westerborg 15 from Marum were buried in a mass grave. That's how you find out what happened to them. But we don't hear anything from that anymore lately. And those airplanes at night! Friday evening in Sebaldeburn the bombs completely destroyed a house and severely damaged the drawbridge where Reges Van Hoog was standing. He was so unnerved that it took him three years before he dared to go across it again even with a bus. Then Garkeurken was also bombed on Saturday afternoon. Our house just shook. Our son, Hank, was in bed. I said to Hank to get out of there because I thought they would bomb our house too. But we were not involved in it any further. But then came the forced labor digging trenches, and our oldest had to do that like a dog on the other side of the city of Haren. Our Jan stayed home. He was disqualified, and after that they never came here again although he left for two nights because we were warned of raids when the moffen (Germans) would come to pick him up. Those were fearful nights and we had little sleep. Other night there was the fear of burning airplanes which fell nearby, but the war is fortunately over. And the national socialist supporters are fortunately behind barbed wire at Nuis, where they built a camp for Nazi sympathizers from Grootegast and other sympathizers. I trust they will receive just punishment, those rascals. Now we can sleep in peace again, and in America our family was fearful about how we were, and we about them, but the Lord spared us all, as we celebrated this week. All the churches in our country had a thanksgiving service and a children's celebration. In Oldekerk and here everything is still the same, but Oldekerk is changed because Oldekerk became a town since we lived there. It has a new parsonage and great changes and the community has progressed so much that even our pastor changed and moved to Zuidlaren, where he also died. All the change included a paved road and new houses. Peter Leunstra and wife have died and their son, Jacob Leunstra has already retired. He had his auction sale and sold all the cows and now lives in Niezyl, where he still farms with a cousin of my husband, Attje De Boer, whom you no doubt know. She is in very poor health, full of rheumatism so that she cannot move and they have to carry her to bed and take her out again. She is a widow since her husband died a few years ago and still has two children at home. The rest are married. I thought about stopping by there sometime, but that is as far as it has come. It is too far to walk, and I have to pace myself too. I have been down the last five months and must live carefully and not overdo. Then our son Hank who was in hiding for five years has been in the hospital because he suffers from epilepsy but is able to get around a bit if he is careful. We are thankful that he is still with us because he is such a pious young man. According to Nellie, your son is also engaged. When you're facing your marriage everything looks rosy, but then illnesses come, as I have experienced with Hank, but the Lord gives strength according to each one's needs to carry our worries. You have no more family here since your brother Peter passed away and also a daughter, but we do not know what happened to the widower

because he had moved away. There were two daughters, but we do not know what happened to the widow because she moved away from here. Her daughter was my brother's daughter's best friend, and visited her on the farm but later on she became sick too. She was so ailing that it did not seem very promising. She always had stomach problems, and all she did is lay around and sleep. She is regained her health and has been married for several years already and has a child, a boy seven years old. She was already dating when she was still sick. We thought, why don't they just end their dating because the future didn't look good, but no, they felt cut out for each other. Things are going reasonably good now. The girl always had a sore throat, but it's going better now, and we will write about that later. But the clothing needs are still here, so if you have extra, please send it here. We have a need for underwear. We have two boys, they youngest 26, the oldest 30. We had packets come to the village from America for distribution, including coats and curtains, but we stood in line for four hours to get something. By the time you get there the bags are empty. In March it is very cold here, and because of my health I cannot stand in line for four hours; I would be sick the next day again, so if you could send directly some underwear of larger sizes and other clothing, that would be so much appreciated by all of us. We are extremely thankful for the two packages of food and two packages of clothing that were sent to us. We hear things are real good in America. Bert and Nellie write that you can buy everything you need there, but here in Groningen you come to empty stores. I went there last week but the stores are empty and the city was so badly bombed that the streets were all gone. If you and your wife would ever see this you would not believe it. But we are thankful we survived. We here there are grain ships coming in and also sugar, but there are major strikes in Amsterdam, so these boats have been redirected to other countries. Recently it happened again when a boatload of bananas came to port, but they would not unload it, so the boat went back to Denmark with its load. Our son Hank loves them, but we just can't get them. One time we were able to get some oranges, which we have not had for a long time. But they were good for him and his illness. In the morning I give him a plate of oatmeal porridge, but that's all we can get for him. The doctor gave us a few coupons for eggs, so right now we have some. But I am fearful that things will get worse in the future, but there is not much we can do about it. You asked about on what side of Grootegast we live, we live on this side of the drawbridge, next to the family of Den Heer, who were no doubt living there when you lived here. We have our own new house that my husband built because he is a carpenter by trade. We have an orchard behind us with apples and peaches. It looks like a good crop, but last year we had nothing. We are getting older, my husband is 68 and I am 62 and find it difficult to pick the fruit, so we rent it out. It has been a long letter, so I am ending now. I hope we will hear back from you as to how you are doing and your family and your married children. No doubt you're not young either any more, 64 years old.

Greetings from your friends,
Allandus Nicolai and Antje Nicolai Noordhuis

PS, I will enclose our address

Allandus Nicolai
A 108 Grootegast
Province Groningen,
Nederland

TerNeuzen, July 18, 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Dear Hazenberg family,

It's been a while since we have heard from each other. Therefore, I will take this opportunity to share a few things. Our Jan was married June 19 at Rotterdam. We had a wonderful wedding. In the morning they were married in City Hall, that was quite a business. It looks like a marketplace in the hall. 80 couples were married. Ten couples at a time went into the wedding hall. There was no dignity to it before and after the ceremony. The cars were an hour late, and we were happy to be in a different surrounding again where it's peaceful. They rented a hall because our house was not big enough. After lunch the church wedding ceremony was held. The minister spoke from the text Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd". If only we would see that in our lives we would see things a lot different and live more peacefully, because then we would trust in the care of the Lord. In the evening we had a nice wedding reception—it was lively, but nothing unusual happened. Jan asked me to enclose a photo showing himself and his bride as well as the bridesmaids. That picture is meant for John. John added to the joy of the evening by sending cigars and cigarettes, and now he will receive this photo as a thank you.

Jan is presently not a baker, but has become a dealer in bakery materials. He has a business in Nymegen and is married, but still can't get his own house. A strange world these days. Here in TerNeuzen 10,000 population, some 500 families live together because of the housing shortage. Some even live in barns and other families in war bunkers. Some live in chicken coops.

A few months ago I went to Groningen. That city center around the big church was extensively damaged. The city hall and the Martini Tower are still standing. The Ebbing Street, some 30 houses were totally destroyed as well as all the houses in the Botering Street and everything in between. No doubt you remember these areas from your past. The Scholten house is also gone. But beyond that the damage is not so bad. A niece of mine is a teacher in Oldekerk and she told me that they had a mayor Hazenberg. No doubt that's related to you folks.

It's getting to be a little better in our country, but it's going slowly. New houses are being built, but they can't get lumber yet. Since no one can emigrate yet, while we are getting more and more people, especially from Indonesia. When the situation normalizes, they plan to return to Indonesia. Our little country has more than nine million inhabitants. I think our country is the most densely populated in Europe, with the result that everything is extremely expensive and, no doubt, that will last for a while yet. In the church the controversy continues. A minister from Groningen, Rev. Van Dyke, traveled to America to get the churches on his side. He claims that anyone who has made profession of faith is a true believer, and it is terrible that a preacher dares to preach on self-examination. Our formularies talk about hypocrites, but they don't exist anymore. The times have gotten better. If only that were true!

Wishing you hearty greetings and God's blessings,
H. Heersema

TerNeuzen 18 July 1946 (written in English)

Dear John,

Here is a foto for you. At the wedding day of our John we thought of you. You sent him cigars and cigarettes. We could not buy them here and we thank you very much for them. We have had a pretty day in Rotterdam. John is married now, but he can not get a house. Perhaps we all go to Nymegen. It is the only way to get a house other people in our house en we all there. It is not as pleasant old ones and young ones together in one house, but it is the only way to come in Nymegen.

We have had this few warm days it is always wind and rain. It is not so pleasant, but we hope that the beautiful days soon come. The summer is such a short time here.

I read in the newspaper that millions soldiers are at work in America. Is striking over? Here in the harbor of Rotterdam was also striking but many volunteers have helped to discharge the ships. But now it is over. Many houses here are repaired and the streets are cleaner than in the time you were here. Painting a house is very dear. The fruits and vegetables are also very dear. One must earn much money at this moment to buy something. But the war is over and we hope that it is soon over in the East Indies. And you are at work. I think it likes you better than in the army.

With many greetings, yours sincerely,

H. Heersema

The following letter is from one of John's war buddies, a Walter O' Neill, of Wyoming, Illinois.

Sept. 23, 1946

Hi John,

I was more or less surprise today when I receive your packages. Just as soon as I seen the return address, I knew what it was. Thanks a lot, oh kid.

Well it's been a long time since we have seen each other. Boy if we do, we sure will put on a big one. Anyhow, we aint over there sweating the bullets out. That means a lot to all of us. Boy, I would like to see the old gang again. I bet we could really shoot the bull. How about it, oh chap.

On the 9th of Oct I will be out of the army. That was one of my happier days. If there ever was one I guess you can say the same thing.

I sure have been getting around ever since I got out. Boy, 'these girls' over here. Sure giving me a hard time. But I can take it. How about you. I bet you are doing OK your self.

Well John, how is the world treating you by this time? I have been rather busy since I have gotten back. You know how it is, trying to keep up the night work.

I just heard the latest news. Oh, it doesn't sound to bad. But it could be a hell of a lot better. How about it.

Well John, I guess I will sign off for now. I hope you are in the best of health. I hope to see you in the next hundred years. So in the mean time, don't do anything I wouldn't.

Your old pal, Willie

P.S. Write when you have a little time. I will do the same.

Sunday, Oct. 20, 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Dear Hazenberg Family,

It's been some time already that we last heard from each other, and I always plan to write you, but because of the business I always postpone it until now because I am by myself and it is a nice time to write you. How are you all doing? I must thank you for a nice letter and the picture of your beautiful grandchildren, eh? Are they all going to school already? I still have a vague memory of how you all look. All are Dutch faces except your son-in-law. He looks to be a foreigner.

(How funny! Nell Heersema is referring to my father, Charles Boerema, who speaks Dutch, and is Dutch as she. I'm the baby, 1945. TF)



Jan (my youngest brother) was married in June, and because of the serious housing shortage is living with us here. They have three rooms upstairs, although his work is in Nymegen, so that he comes home every weekend. Otherwise we would have been forced to take in other people because of the housing shortage. It is mandatory for us to take in others, so others would be living with us, so it is better that Jan and his wife are living with us because they are not strangers. The houses are so full that it causes much quarreling between families. Construction of emergency housing is going extremely slow. I am enclosing a picture of the wedding of Jan that we celebrated in Rotterdam. We are just exiting the church. Pete and his wife who live in Rotterdam are in front, and behind them my sister Jantje and myself. John will no doubt still recognize us. We had a nice wedding. They had invited all the nephews and nieces, a total of 90 people. At city Hall we had to wait extremely long. We stood for two hours in the line because 80 other couples were also waiting to be married; ten at a time. That is a strange way of doing it. We are not used to that in Ten Neuzen. Everybody seems to get married these days. Since they cannot buy any furniture and housing is not available, I do not understand it.

Since the middle of April I am working in a new office at a bank. Five of us girls work there and 11 men, and we're still short of personnel and have to work overtime everyday and Saturdays, and only Sunday is off, giving us the only chance to write.

Our pastor went to Ulrum (Groningen), so every Sunday we have a different minister preaching. Let's hope we will soon have a new one. It is not so easy to get a pastor in Ten Neuzen since it is so isolated. We haven't even called one yet.

Sundays we have a lot of choir practice and plan to do a Christmas concert. This is sung all in the German language, eight part, accompanied by violinists. Do you have a choir in Grand Rapids? We just love to sing here.

The sister of our bank director lives in Akron, OH. Have you ever been there? Oh yes, I forgot to write you I became an aunt in May. My brother Pete had a baby girl, a first grandchild.

This summer we have very little sunshine, but this fall it's much better, and fortunately not cold yet. This winter we should be able to get more coal. Living costs in Holland are extremely expensive—more than four times higher than at the beginning of the war. Last

week we had a Dutch-American visitor at the bank to exchange his money. He came from Washington and will be here for three weeks. We had many conversations already. His family lives here in Holland. Traveling is extremely expensive, so he is more than ready to go back to America again. Jan and a friend started a factory in Nymegen for bakery supplies. They bought a car to service their customers, and it makes it much easier for him to come here because with a train it takes so long and they are always so full of people.

In the meantime, it has become bedtime, and I will close my letter. I hope you all will receive this letter in good health. A hearty greetings to all from all,
Nell

Ten Neuzen, Nov. 6, 1946 (Translated from Dutch)

Dear Friends,

I will take this opportunity to pick up my pen since we have not heard from you for quite a while. My husband and Nell wrote you some time ago, and I wonder whether you received those letters. How are you doing? I haven't heard much from your son either; it's so easy to postpone writing. Our oldest son, who lived in Rotterdam, has a job in Oss. But this terrible housing shortage is awful. They don't have a house yet, so his wife and child live in Rotterdam and he travels back and forth every Saturday and Monday from Oss (Brabant) where he is boarding. Houses are being assigned by lot, so they hope that this year they may get one. Credit rating is difficult to get, and if there is something for sale often your credit is not good enough. My daughter-in-law is extremely nervous and afraid they won't get anything. Last time he sent a bill and he will be paying you. We are extremely happy we are able to get some of our necessary things. If that's not OK with you, please let us know and we will have to try something else. There's very little available here; we have to borrow everything from each other and acquaintances. Nobody has anything. The little one of my son is still wearing the material you sent, but we just have enough. What a world we live in! There is a great dissatisfaction without taking into account what has happened. Just to have a house. Our oldest son, Jan, who knows your son well, was married in June, has a business in Nymegen, does not have a house, so he lives upstairs of us. After all, they need a roof over their head, so Jan travels back and forth every Saturday and Monday. The saddest part is that in three months they are expecting a baby. To be separated a whole week would be very difficult. He is doing his very best to get a house or rooms, so he went to the minister for advice because we don't have anything for the baby yet and they are not providing baby packets anymore. So I ask you if you are able to buy something. Everything is welcome. We don't want to leave you with the worst impression, so I hope you may receive this letter and we may soon hear back from you.

With many greetings from all of us to all of you,
Family Heersema

1947

The following two letters were sent to Charles Boerema. He and Gertrude (John's sister) sent packages to the Netherlands. The letters were written in English by a Jacob van Schelt, and his 18 year old sister Sini.

Dordrecht, 28 January 1947

Dear Mr. Boerema,

I have received your letter of 18 October 1946 and I thank you heartily for your beautiful postcards. You have beautiful buildings in Grand Rapids, all constructed on American wise, but alone the College is Dutch. Please, due to being busy, I neglected to write sooner. The weather is very cold, the road is covered with snow, the rivers are full with ice. This an iccier winter here in Holland, but, I hope, that the cold has gone quickly, the coal is here scarce. The miner does his best and he works voluntary on Sunday. Do you know with Dordrecht? It is an old town, founded in the Middle Ages. We have a beautiful Church, very old. The name of this Church is Great-or O. L. Vrouwen Church. (Ooze Lieven Vrouwe-Our Lady's Church. TF) No picture of our town without the figure of the old tower. The changes in this church are from many signification. They have very fine carve-work and ideas of bible pictures. Dordrecht is the birth place of the Brothers Johan en Cornelis de Wit. We have erected a statue and there is a statue of Ary Scheffer a painter. I shall send you a little book of Dordrecht, here can you read different particulars. This book if from 10 years ago. I hope that you can read the Dutch language. Many factories we have here in Dordt. who manufacturing such as locks, lamps, and so on. Also we have Hes's store, but all clothing and furnishing are yet distulukd. (I'm not sure what word Jacob was searching for. TF) I wear a costum, who bought in the days of 10 Mei 1940. This costum I wear 6 years. There are new costumes, in the black market, but we cannot pay. The price is 400 Dutch guilders. What for religion have you! I am from the Reformed Church. We get here a special meeting, that your Dutch forefathers 100 years ago went to America. Can you write about the festal? Every American has an auto, but every Dutchman has a bicycle before the war. After the war we have no bicycle and no bands. The bicycle factiers make bicycles again, but for the export we have necessary deviesen. Our country is poor, and it shall be always long time before we are mended of the 5 years war and German occupation. At the moment Nederland is in tension, Our Princess Juliana expects a baby. I hope a prince, we have all 3 princesses, and then we get a king. Enclose, you will find a letter of my sister. I ended this letter again, and I hope that this letter liked you.

Yours truly,

Jacob van Schelt

Dordrecht, 28th January 1947.-

DEAR MR. BOEREMA,

I will also write to you a little letter, but I cannot very good the English language. For many words I must look in my dictionary ! So I shall only make with you a little talk.

My name is Sini van Schelt. My bearth-day is 19 Febr. 1928, so I'm now 18 years old.

My trade is type-writer. I'm working in an office-bookshop. I am a member of the Reform Church.

Last year we have had here a great meating of The Youth for Christ Rally. Spencer de Jong was speaking over : ~~Zacheds~~, the tax-official. Don Devos song for us accompanied on the piano by Douglas Fisher. It was very fine. Many young people came to Jesus Christ ! One of the beautiful choirs was : Jesus Christ is the way, Jesus Christ is the Truth, Jesus Christ is the Life and he is mine, mine, mine. THE YOUTH FOR CHRIST is an American movement and arisen in Chicago. It is edified by Dr. Torry Johnson. Is this movement known to you? It is very cold on the moment. On all ditches and ponds the young people (and also the old) are skating. All is white of snow. It is a merry sight.

Dear mr. Boerema, now you know a little of me. I hope you will write again, as soon as you have time !

With many greetings,

*Also many greetings
of my father and mother!*

*Sini van Schelt.
Krommedijk 197 ^{road}
Dordrecht*

18 April 1947 (written in English)

TerNeuzen

Dear John, I thank you very much for what you have done. It was too much. Our John en Bep are now in Nymegen. We will go next week and see where they are dwelling. It was a beautiful town, but there is much damaged. The English had taken Nymegen but could not take Arnhem. And so the English in N. and the Germans in Ar. Both the towns are damaged and a shortage of houses. It was very difficult to get a house or better a part of a house. John has an auto and visites the bakers for selling his products. In summer it is nice, but not always in winter. This winter the roads are slippery in much snow. Some roads were much damaged and it was forbidden for heavy trucks. My brother in Redlands will go to Chicago in June to by brother in-law, not so far from you as California.

We have now fine weather, the flowers begin to flower but all is very late. We have our little farm behind our house with hens and rabbits. In the days you came here a cat had eaten up all the little ones but one. Do you remember it?

What is your work now? All is better than being soldier. We have many soldiers in East Indies. Now you are at home and Sunday you can go to church, but alle people speak of peace but they think, it is possible that a war will come between Russian and his friends again America. I hope not.

God bless you and your family. H. Herrsema

April 18, 1947 (Translated from Dutch)

TerNeuzen

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hazenberg and Family,

It has been such a long time since we heard from you, but now we are ashamed because all three packets and a letter just arrived. That is so much that we are embarrassed. We are overwhelmed by your goodness. Hearty thanks for everything, but you are overdoing it.

With us all is going well, fortunately. My wife has a nerve problem in the arm. When she lies in bed she finds it difficult to sleep. But we hope it will soon be better.

We had a terribly hard winter, the worst in 100 years, long and cold, but very little heating coal. For several months we lived in the kitchen. Fortunately we were able to buy a war surplus heating stove, a small little thing but you can burn everything in it, and it kept us warm. The other rooms were cold, but we had no fuel. Oh well, the winter is past and the last few days we had beautiful sunny spring weather. The farmers are busy in the field again. For awhile it was too wet, too much snow and rain, but after a few weeks of dry weather the fields are getting ready to be planted. You had a strong winter too, we hear, but fortunately you had enough fuel. Here many people were totally without it.

Jannie is busy with a puzzle but hasn't finished it yet. You can spend a lot of time on that, but in the end it is beautiful. Friends of ours had a puzzle of the last supper on the wall. It looks beautiful. The painter is Leonardo De Vinci, his masterpiece.

Much has been written about Michigan and Grand Rapids. Prof. Hyma spoke in our country about Van Raalte at a centennial celebration. The first pioneers sacrificed a lot

for their faith. It takes much faith and courage to remain standing against such hardships. Thank goodness most of the people remain faithful to God and stand firm in their faith. Fortunately the Gereformeede Church remained faithful after the conflict, but in the city of Groningen they lost many members. But at the present we are just about at the same membership as before the war.

In the big cities Communism is on the rise. They promise everything just like in the old Roman times. Bread—games and the people are satisfied. Fortunately we are better off and know that at the end of this life it will be much better—our heavenly paradise. May our eyes be constantly focused on that!

With hearty greetings and best wishes,

H Heersema

April 18, 1947 (Translated from Dutch)

TerNeuzen

Dear Relatives, (or could be translated “Dear Family”)

So it is my turn to write a few lines. What a surprise this week! Everything arrived and it was so well packaged. I was so nosy I hardly had the patience to open the packages. I wish I could shake your hand and hug you for all this. But thanks so much for everything. We are now living in Nymegen, we love to see them and take it along. How happy they will be. We wish you could be with us to share the occasion. The baby of our oldest son will be one-year-old May 20th, and in July they expect a second one. And Jan and Bep are expecting their first one in June. They both hope for a boy and name it after their fathers. That would be Harm. My husband would be proud of that. When you write back again, it would be nice if your son and daughter would also write a few lines. Everything is still bad here, and we can hardly buy anything because of the few ration coupons available. What would we do without you? For them it will be a real help to have received so much from you. When the little one is born, we will let you know. If we didn't do that we would be ungrateful. I cannot write any longer because of the pain in my arm. Nell wrote you about it. It's been a busy time. Jan and Bep lived with us upstairs for seven months. Now they are able to rent some rooms in Nymegen. Hearty greetings from all of us and much thanks for your love.

Family Heersema

April 19, 1947 (Translated from Dutch)

Nymegen

Dear Family Hazenberg,

This week we received from mother the good news that your packages have arrived with one for the coming baby. We are both so happy with the prospects that we cannot neglect to write you a personal letter to thank you for it. Here it is hopeless. You can stand in line for six hours and get nothing, and then you need your ration coupons yet. You don't always get those.

And so how are you doing? And how about John? Give him our hearty greetings, because unfortunately he cannot read this letter, which is too bad. We often think of him. Yesterday Bertha still said what experiences this boy has had so far from home and

God's hand spared his life. That he could stay firm under such conditions at his youthful age, he must have a Groningen heritage, where they stand strong just like my father. Four weeks ago we moved to Nymegen. We are fortunate to be able to rent several rooms near the business, although we were happy at my parents also. But it became too difficult to travel by train every week to Nymegen, leaving my wife all by herself. That is not good. Just like you are not married. When you are married you have to live with each other—otherwise it doesn't work. Did you receive our wedding picture that I sent with my letter? Did John still recognize us on the picture? I am sure he laughed, just like he could really always do.

We saw him so often and found it unfortunate that he was transferred from TerNeuzen so quickly. Just like that he was transferred to France, the country of the Communists, although the Communists are getting a strong foothold here too, which is too bad in our little Christian Netherlands. I am sure you hear about it; it is not like it used to be.

And now the secession in the church with Professor Schilder and the Synod, it is really tragic, because with each succession we have people falling away and real Christian life is lost. And so everything seems to go slowly backwards. The only thing we can do is to continually pray and work, and take a firm stand against these worldly trends.

How is it in Grand Rapids? Better than here? Please ask John to write us a letter too sometime, and a picture of him or all of you. We would really appreciate that. That sure would be nice, since we live so far from each other, to hear from him. America always has been a strong pull for me. Unfortunately emigration has been outlawed. It is too bad that emigration is so difficult and limited, because I don't see a future in our own country, and it is overpopulated.

What work is John doing these days? He is still working, isn't he? And is he already getting acquainted with a girl? He was busy at it at the time he was here, I thought.

Here the relatives are all healthy. So I will end my letter, and again, hearty thanks from my wife and myself. Greetings to all.

God's blessing from your friends,

Bep & John

J W Heersema

Van Oldenbarneveltstraat 15

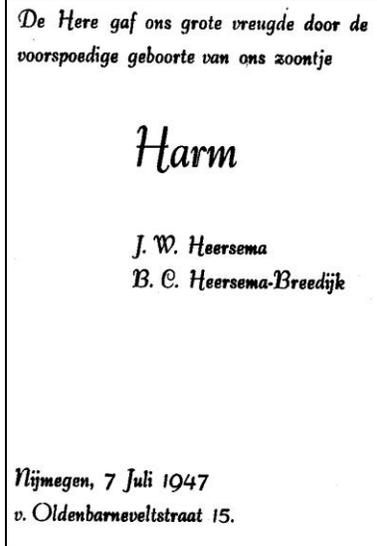
Nymegen

Rev. Schilder visited Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1947.

He is in front of Boerema's Men Store

703 Eastern Ave. S.E. which was my dad's store. TF





Birth announcement from Jan and Bep Heersema

December 16, 1947 (Translated from Dutch)

TerNeuzen

Dear Family Hazenberg,

It has been such a long time since we last heard from you. Time has flown by and we are already standing at the end of the year. It will be around New Years that you will receive this letter. We hope God will bless you in the New Year.

Recently I was at the Hoving family. He is a notary and come from Oldekerk, although originally from Nietap. He did not know what the name of his wife was, but they were neighbors. Nice people. They are Netherlands Reformed. Maybe you still know the parents. How did the centennial celebration go? Did many old Hollanders come to visit? I'm sure it was a beautiful time. Our newspaper had a short report on it. And how was Prof. Schilder received in America? He started a church here, and is fishing everywhere for members. It is not going too well with that church. They thought most of the people from the old church would join, but that did not happen. Some are following the teachings of Heyns, but then some of the ministers are trying to encourage splitting in two. They would rather see everything broken up and act as martyrs. I cannot appreciate their approach. But we are in the middle of the church conflict and its results.

The situation in our country is getting better, but it is going slow. Thousands of homes were destroyed during the war, and reconstruction is extremely slow. There is a people explosion, but emigration is not possible, so the difficulties are just piling on top of each other. They are busy here with construction, but there is not yet a single house ready, and they are built so small they will accommodate no more than two people. In our neighborhood a number of small emergency houses were built, but they still cost 12,000 guilders. Who can pay that? (In 1947 that would equal US \$72,000. The average cost of a new house in the US in 1947 was \$6,600. TF) Everything is so expensive, for example, milk is 21 cents per liter. I still remember that just before the war we could get it for four cents a liter from the farmer. And so it goes. Certain things we can get now, for

example, furniture, but we do not buy furniture every day. But you do need milk and vegetables every day. And we're still settled with the Indonesian question, and that costs a lot of money. If the Netherlands pulls back the whole country will fall to the Communists. These days they have a lot to say, and the Russians are even worse than the Germans were. When the Russians would enter a home in Germany the first question was where was the wife. The wife better be hidden or she would be raped by the rogues. That's Russian culture. This summer our family expanded. Pete was blessed with a daughter and Jan with a son. But they live so far away from us. We tried to move closer, but that effort was not successful. The only way to do that was an exchange of home. We hope to visit them at the end of the year. Well, my paper is full again. Receive our hearty wishes and God's blessings for the new year.

H. Heersema

16 Dec. 1947 (written in English)

Ter Neuzen

Dear John,

We wish you a happy Neuw Year. It is a long time ago you came here in the evening to talk. How are you? Always alone? Or have you found a girl-friend for your life. Tell us something. Our John lives now at Nimegen en he has a little boy of about half a year.

He is very proud of his son. Every week he writes how heavy he is en how he can laugh. With his truck he rides from one baker to another to sell his wares. It is in summer finer than in winter, when the roads are slippery and all is covered with ice and snow.

We are glad that the winter is not strong. We have had no ice nor snow. We have had a very dry summer and therefore the grass was singed en many fruits on the field became dried and small. It was not a good year for the farmers and the vegetables are dear.

What do think of the future? War or peace? It is good that Rusland is not yet ready for the war, else it wood be war time within a short time. Man proposes, God disposes. We don't know what His plans are But the time is not calm. The war has not ameliorated the men. Every day one can read in the papers, how for little money one has died en other striking and revolution in France and Italy. Here the man are calm and we have in our country not so many communists.

You are always on the same office? It is better than to be soldier so far from home.

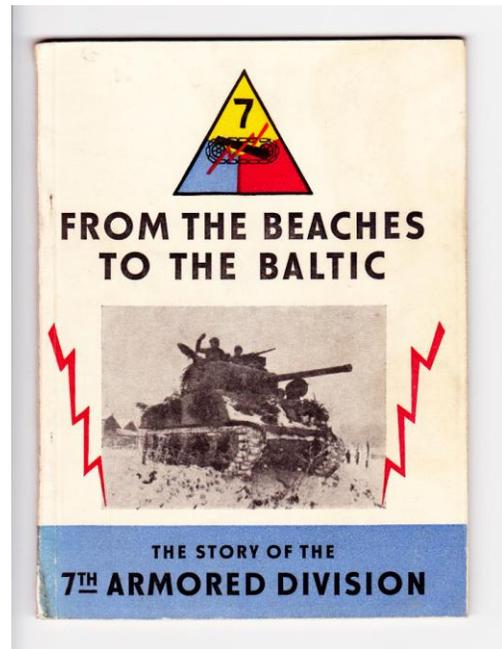
Now write us a letter and write about you en your family and the feast of Grand Rapids.

With hearty greetings also to your family. H. Heersema

This is the last correspondence that was saved by John and his family. TF

7th ArmdDiv Statistics

This 60 page book was printed by the Army right after the war ended and distributed to the fellows. It outlines the history of the 7th ArmdDiv from the beaches of France in 1944, to reaching the Baltic Sea in northern Germany in May, 1945. The last few pages are for autographs, and John has a number of signatures. See page 162.



ENEMY

ARMORED VEHICLES DESTROYED	621
ARMORED VEHICLES CAPTURED	89
MISCELLANEOUS VEHICLES DESTROYED	2,653
MISCELLANEOUS VEHICLES CAPTURED	3,517
ARMAMENT DESTROYED	583 PIECES
ARMAMENT CAPTURED	361 PIECES
(Only pieces larger than 50 mm included)	
PRISONERS TAKEN	113,041

DIVISION

MILES TRAVELLED	2,260
GASOLINE CONSUMED	3,127,151 GALLONS
AMMUNITION EXPENDED:	
105 mm	350,027 ROUNDS
76 mm	19,209 "
75 mm	48,724 "
• 50 cal	1,267,128 "
• 45 cal	540,523 "
• 30 cal	9,367,966 "

AWARDS CAMPAIGNS

- ★ — BATTLE OF NORTHERN FRANCE (14 AUG — 14 SEPT 1944)
- ★ — BATTLE OF GERMANY (15 SEPT 1944 — ?)

THE ABOVE CAMPAIGNS HAVE BEEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED. THE FOLLOWING CAMPAIGNS PARTICIPATED IN BY THE DIVISION, HAVE BEEN UNOFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED AS SUPERCEDING THE **BATTLE OF GERMANY**. NO OFFICIAL REPORT HAS BEEN RECEIVED AT THE TIME OF THIS PRINTING AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE DIVISION WILL BE GRANTED CREDIT FOR HAVING PARTICIPATED IN THEM:

- ★ — BATTLE OF THE ARDENNES (16 DEC 1944 — 25 JAN 1945)
- ★ — BATTLE OF THE RHINELAND (15 SEPT 1944 — 21 MAR 1945)
- ★ — BATTLE OF CENTRAL EUROPE (22 MAR 1945 — ?)

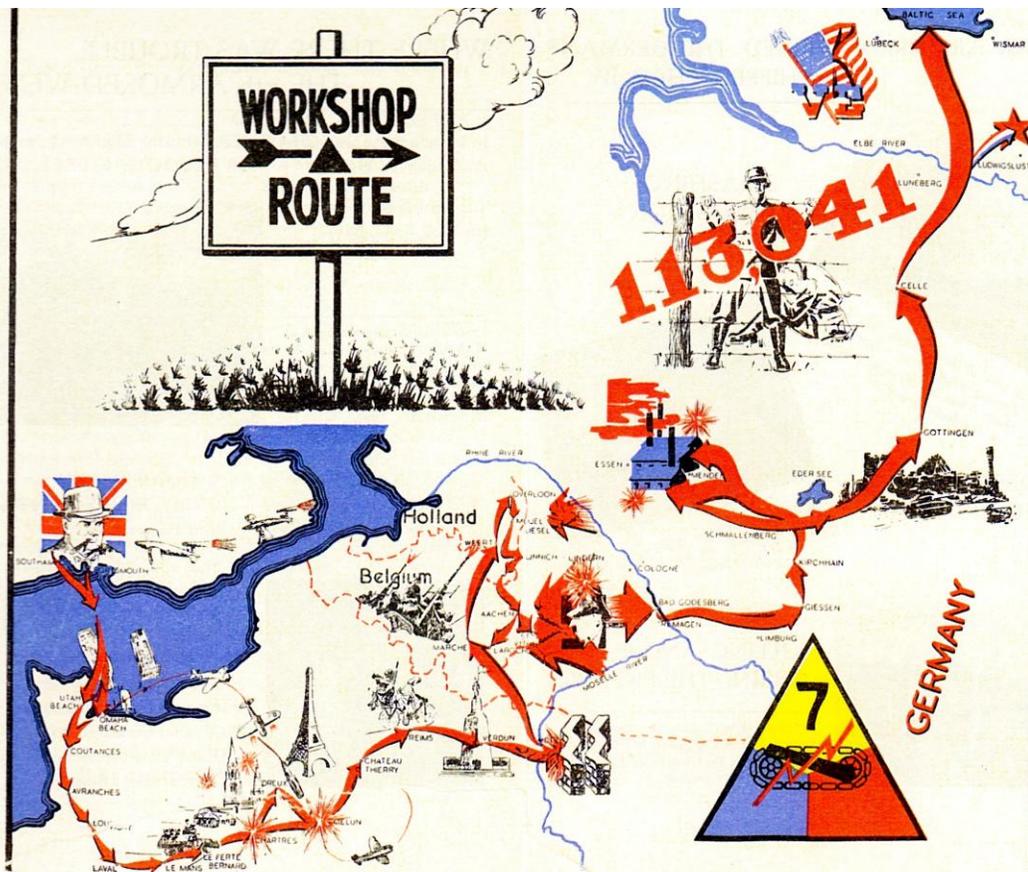
DECORATIONS (Personnel)

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS	9
SILVER STAR	351
BRONZE STAR MEDAL: —	
HEROIC SERVICE	888
MERITORIOUS SERVICE	1,047
PURPLE HEARTS	1,211

(NOTE: ABOVE FIGURE DOES NOT INCLUDE PURPLE HEARTS AWARDED BY NON-DIVISIONAL MEDICAL INSTALLATIONS AND WAR DEPARTMENT)

A FEW DATES TO REMEMBER

- BEACH LANDINGS — 10 AUG 1944
- CHARTRES — 15 AUG 1944
- MELUN — 24 AUG 1944 (Crossed SEINE River)
- CHATEAU-THIERRY — 28 AUG 1944
- VERDUN — 31 AUG 1944
- METZ — 8 SEPT 1944 (Crossed MOSELLE River)
- OVERLOON — 1 OCT to 8 OCT 1944
- MEIJEL — COUNTERATTACK 27 OCT 1944
- ST VITH — 17 DEC 1944 and 23 JAN 1945
- REMAGEN (Breakthrough) — 26 MAR 1945
- EDERSEE DAM — 30 MAR 1945
- MENDEN — 16 APR 1945
- BALTIC SEA — 3 MAY 1945



VITAL STATISTICS

(The following figures apply up to and including VE Day only.)

The 7th Armored Division

(The Division travelled 2,200 combat miles.)

Supply

Gasoline consumed —
3,127,151 gallons

Ammunition expended —

105mm	350,227 rounds
76mm	19,209 "
75mm	48,724 "
.50 Cal	1,267,128 "
.45 Cal	540,523 "
.30 Cal	9,367,966 "

Decorations

Distinguished Service Crosses	10
Silver Stars	351
Bronze Star Medals	
(1) Heroic Action	893
(2) Meritorious Service	1,047
Purple Hearts	1,211

(The above listed number of Purple Hearts is exclusive of those awarded by the War Department and non-divisional medical installations.)

Battle Participation

Campaign of Northern France
11 August 1944 to 14 September 1944)

Rhineland Campaign
(15 December 1944 to 21 March 1945)

Ardennes Campaign
(16 December 1944 to 25 January 1945)

Campaign of Central Germany
(22 March 1945 to VE Day)

The Opposing German Forces

During the course of battle, the 7th Armored exacted this toll against the opposing enemy formations —

113,041 prisoners captured
621 Armored vehicles destroyed.
89 Armored vehicles captured.
2,653 Miscellaneous Vehicles destroyed.
3,517 Miscellaneous Vehicles captured.
583 pieces of armament (larger than 50mm) destroyed.
361 pieces of armament (larger than 50mm) captured.

- **Combat in Continental Europe
(10 August 1944 - 8 May 1945)**

France

- 10-12 August 1944: most of 7AD debarks at Utah and Omaha Beaches; 203 AAA Bn and 814 TD Bn attached to 7AD soon after, for the duration of the war
- **14-15 August 1944: Rapid move to Chartres, France area; Company B 23rd Armored Infantry Bn ambushed at Marboué, France**
- **15-18 August 1944: Liberation of Chartres, France and other nearby areas, including Rambouillet**
- 19-20 August 1944: 7AD moves to Dreux, France to enable 5AD to support first Seine crossing
- **21-25 August 1944: Rapid move to Seine at Melun; crossing at Tilly & Ponthierry**
- **26 August-2 September 1944: Rapid dash to Reims and Verdun; Liberation of many places famous as WWI battle sites**
- 2-5 September 1944: Out of gas, except for feint toward Luxemburg
- **John joins the unit, 15 Sept 1944**
- **6-25 September 1944: Bitter combat, with high casualties, in greater Metz area**

Through Belgium to Netherlands

25-29 September 1944: 7AD passes through Belgium into Netherlands, to bolster corridor created by Operation Market-Garden

Netherlands

- **30 September – 8 October 1944: Bitter combat with high casualties at Overloon**
- 9-26 October 1944: Attack across Deurne Canal by Griendtsveen; canal defense and patrols from Meijel to Ell
- **27-29 October 1944: Bitter combat, with high casualties, defending against German attack at Meijel and nearby areas from Nederweert to Liesel**
- **30 October – 8 November: Liberation of Ospel area with significant casualties**
- 1 November 1944: Gen. Robert Hasbrouck assumes command from Gen. Lindsay Silvester
- 9-22 November 1944: Reorganization and retraining of Division
- **John is transferred to hospital with frozen feet 16 Nov 44**

Germany

- **23 November – 16 December 1944: Elements of 7AD, attached to 84th and 102nd Infantry Divisions, in combat in Gereonsweiler and Linnich areas of Germany;** part of Division remains in Netherlands or out of combat at Ubach

Belgium (second time)

- **17-23 December 1944: 7AD moves to Vielsalm-St. Vith area, to defend against German Ardennes Offensive (Battle of the Bulge); St. Vith is the most critical strategic point for German supplies in the entire front, and it is denied to them far beyond their timetable, effectively dooming their entire offensive and making possible the defense of Bastogne**
- **23-31 December 1944: 7AD defends Manhay and Grandmenil on the northern shoulder of the Bulge**
- 1-19 January 1945: 7AD reorganizes and re-equips, primarily in the Verviers area
- **20-28 January 1945: 7AD retakes St. Vith**

Germany (second time)

Early February 1945: **7AD's Combat Command R attached to 78th Infantry Division for attacks on Strauch, Simmerath, Steckenborn, and other towns in the area of the Huertgen Forest;** rest of the Division is out of combat

Belgium (third time)

Mid to late February 1945: When Germans blow their own dams to block Allies' path, 7AD men are attached to engineers to rebuild roads at Stavelot and Elsenborn; headquarters of 7AD remains in Germany

Germany (third time)

- Late February – 24 March 1945: move up to the Rhine River between Cologne and Remagen
- 25-31 March 1945: Cross the Rhine River and rapidly move to complete the inner southern envelopment of the Ruhr Pocket
- 1-17 April 1945: Attack west to reduce the Ruhr Pocket
- **John rejoins his outfit 20 April 1945**
- Mid-April 1945: Move to Dransfeld, awaiting further orders
- late April 1945: Move north to the Baltic Sea in the Ludwigslust area
- early May 45: Task force moves far to the east to meet the Russians
- 8 May 1945: V-E Day

- March 45: Germany, area of Mehlem and Bad Godesburg on west bank of Rhine River
- late March 45: Germany, encirclement of Ruhr Pocket along south and east
- early April 45: Germany, reduction of Ruhr Pocket
- late April 45: Germany, north to the Baltic
- May 45: Germany: meet the Russians; V-E Day

Post-Combat: Occupation; Return Home (9 May 1945 - 11 October 1945)

- June - 1 July 45: Occupational duties in Dessau and Köthen by the Elbe River, in the future Soviet Zone of Occupation
- 1-3 July 45: Move to the U.S. Zone of Occupied Germany
- 14 July 1945: Large contingent of low-point men departs to train for invasion of Japan
- **John begins this training in the Netherlands.**

Two Bill Mauldin cartoons from WWII



"I'd ruther dig. A movin' foxhole attracts th' eye."



"Why ya lookin' so sad? I got out of it okay."

Morning Report where John is listed as joining Company B, from 53rd Replacement Depot, 15 Sept. 1944.

COMPANY MORNING REPORT ENDING 15 Sep 1944
 STATION France, Yerville, 2 Mi E/ Norda de Guerre
 ORGANIZATION 40th Tk Bn Inf

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
35 285 894	Dlasey (SSN 738)	Tec 4	T
fr dy to sl sk non-battle, and lost to 104th Evac Hosp, 14 Sep 44.			
35 265 482	Stamper (SSN 816)	Cpl	
fr dy to sl sk non-battle, non-duty status, Div Clearing Sta, 14 Sep 44			
38 138 576	Steele (SSN 503)	Cpl	T
fr dy to sl sk non-battle, and lost to 104th Evac Hosp, 14 Sep 44			
35 640 380	Smith, Elmer E. (MOS 511)	Pvt	A
asgd fr 53rd Repl Bn, APO 739, U.S. Army, 12 Sep 44, Jd this date			
31 408 989	Mudrins, Francis (MOS 2736)	Pvt	A
39 924 885	Allison, Glad M. (MOS 2736)	Pvt	A
Above 2 EM asgd fr 53rd Repl Bn, APO 739, U.S. Army, 13 Sep 44, Jd this date			
32 764 360	Wright, Edward J. (MOS 734)	Pvt	A
34 923 182	Gray, Rafe B. (MOS 738)	Pvt	
35 882 982	Barnes, James H. (MOS 616)	Pvt	
35 881 584	Harlow, John D. (MOS 736)	Pvt	
36 286 110	Arneson, Ralph E. (MOS 856)	Pfc	
35 395 625	Ullahner, Stephen B. (MOS 604)	Pfc	

OFFICER STRENGTH	PLD O & CAPT	1ST LT	2D LT	WO	PLD O
ASSIGNED	1	2	1		
ATTACHED UNASSIGNED					
TOTAL	1	2	1		

AVN CADET & ENLISTED STRENGTH	AVIATION CADETS	ENLISTED MEN
ASSIGNED	110	111
ATTACHED UNASSIGNED		
TOTAL	110	111

R	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF RATIONS REQUIRED FOR DATE	DAY OF WEEK	NUMBER
I			
A			
T			
II			
III			
S			

PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES
 RESTRICTED
 SIGNATURE: G. M. HAAS, CPT, USA, 40th Tk Bn

COMPANY MORNING REPORT ENDING 15 Sep 1944
 STATION France, Yerville, 2 Mi E/ Norda de Guerre
 ORGANIZATION 40th Tk Bn Inf

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
36 411 138	Hasebarg, John P. (MOS 531)	Pfc	A
32 423 777	Jacobson, Harry M. (MOS 531)	Pfc	
39 585 087	Jenkins, Norman D. (MOS 531)	Cpl	
38 592 429	Nolan, John C. (MOS 2736)	Pvt	
38 569 655	Rheid, William F. (MOS 2736)	Pvt	
35 697 832	Scharl, Joseph (MOS 853)	Pvt	
38 146 187	Sullivan, William B. (MOS 2738)	Pvt	
34 921 959	Walker, Jackson A. (MOS 604)	Pvt	
39 532 519	Meredith, Howard B. (MOS 604)	Pvt	
35 544 478	Sarchino, Joseph D. (MOS 618)	Pvt	
35 880 210	Robinson, Dennis (MOS 604)	Pvt	
Above 17 EM asgd fr 53rd Repl Bn, APO 739, U.S. Army, 14 Sep 44, Jd this date			

RECORD OF EVENTS
 Left bivouac at 1830, arrived in new bivouac area at 1830. Distance 32 miles.
 No enemy contact.
 Weather, Cloudy. Morale, Good.

OFFICER STRENGTH	PLD O & CAPT	1ST LT	2D LT	WO	PLD O
ASSIGNED	1	2	1		
ATTACHED UNASSIGNED					
TOTAL	1	2	1		

AVN CADET & ENLISTED STRENGTH	AVIATION CADETS	ENLISTED MEN
ASSIGNED	110	111
ATTACHED UNASSIGNED		
TOTAL	110	111

R	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF RATIONS REQUIRED FOR DATE	DAY OF WEEK	NUMBER
I			
A			
T			
II			
III			
S			

PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES
 RESTRICTED
 SIGNATURE: G. M. HAAS, CPT, USA, 40th Tk Bn

Morning Report of 16 & 17 Nov 1944, John is listed as "above 2 EM from slightly sick non battle, Div. Clearing Station, lost to 111th Evac. Hosp 16 Nov 1944."

COMPANY RESTRICTED
MORNING REPORT ENDING 2000 16 Nov 1944
 STATION **VR5917, Nord de Guesnes**
 ORGANIZATION **B 60th Tr Bn** AMC

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
27 618 679	Borman, Lloyd A (108 604)	Plt	
28 120 208	Varney, Leonard L (109 616)	Plt	
33 215 560	Walt, Edward J (105 616)	Plt	
34 273 801	Waller, Raymond R (108 616)	Plt	
above 2 EM from slightly sick non-battle Div. Clearing Sta. lost to 111 th Evac Hosp 16 Nov 44			
61 976 549	Walter, Kenneth F	1st Lt	
Completed on 24 16 and sent to this Co. Retd of rank, 16 Nov 44. Sent to AMC, Div. of Services, Sec. NO1 1202			
82 216 787	Winsky	Cpl	
84 217 136	Wunschberg	Pfc	
above 2 EM from slightly sick non-battle, Div. Clearing Sta.			
11 016 813	Wynon, Eric G	1st Lt	
Completed on 24 16 and sent to this Co. Retd of rank, 16 Nov 44. Sent to AMC, Div. of Services, Sec. NO1 1202			

RECORD OF EVENTS
 Reported in absence case. No enemy contact. Maintenance on vehicles & weapons. Weather. Fair. Morale. Good.

CLASSIFICATION	PRESENT		ABSENT		UNASSIGNED		TOTAL	
	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST
PRESENT	1		2		4		3	
ABSENT								
UNASSIGNED								
TOTAL	1		2		4		3	

CLASSIFICATION	PRESENT		ABSENT		UNASSIGNED		TOTAL	
	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST
PRESENT	1		2		3		3	
ABSENT								
UNASSIGNED								
TOTAL	1		2		3		3	

REMARKS
 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF RATIONS REQUIRED FOR 1 DAY OF WEEK: 107
 MEN ATTACHED TO OTHER UNITS: 3
 TOTAL: 100

SIGNATURE G. H. HAAS, CWO, 1025, 60th TR BDN

COMPANY RESTRICTED
MORNING REPORT ENDING 2000 17 Nov 1944
 STATION **Holland, KILBARK, J Nord de Guesnes**
 ORGANIZATION **B 60th Tr Bn** AMC

SERIAL NUMBER	NAME	GRADE	CODE
82 216 787	Winsky	Cpl	
84 217 136	Wunschberg	Pfc	
above 2 EM from slightly sick non-battle Div. Clearing Sta. lost to 111 th Evac Hosp 16 Nov 44			

RECORD OF EVENTS
 Left bivouac at Gressvold, Holland at 1900. Arrived present location at 1100. Distance traveled 12 miles, no enemy contact. Weather. Cloudy & cold. Morale. Good.

CLASSIFICATION	PRESENT		ABSENT		UNASSIGNED		TOTAL	
	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST
PRESENT	1		2		3		3	
ABSENT								
UNASSIGNED								
TOTAL	1		2		3		3	

CLASSIFICATION	PRESENT		ABSENT		UNASSIGNED		TOTAL	
	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST	PREG	ASST
PRESENT	1		2		3		3	
ABSENT								
UNASSIGNED								
TOTAL	1		2		3		3	

REMARKS
 ESTIMATED NUMBER OF RATIONS REQUIRED FOR 1 DAY OF WEEK: 107
 MEN ATTACHED TO OTHER UNITS: 3
 TOTAL: 100

SIGNATURE G. H. HAAS, CWO, 1025, 60th TR BDN

Promotion of Corporal, August 1945

HEADQUARTERS
40TH AMPHIBIAN TRACTOR BATTALION
APO 562 US ARMY

/jap

23 August 45

SPECIAL ORDERS)
:)
NUMBER.....9)

1. The fol promotions (temp) of EM are announced: (AR 615-5)

<u>Name</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Promoted to</u>
T Sgt Cohen, Walter V.	502	M Sgt
32 249 557 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	821	T Sgt
S Sgt Alptor, Milan K.	542	T Sgt
35 275 346 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	816	T Sgt
S Sgt Popo, John R.	927	S Sgt
36 313 801 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	837	S Sgt
Tec 4 Ponsonby, Leon P.	821	S Sgt
17 156 300 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	542	S Sgt
Tec 4 Blusiewicz, Alex A.	573	S Sgt
35 284 616 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	661	Tec 3
Tec 4 Metcalf, John G.	806	Tec 4
33 148 810 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	060	Tec 4
Cpl Ostaszowski, Frank M.	060	Tec 4
32 257 238 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	256	Tec 4
Sgt Goib, Leo F.	732	Cpl
32 227 830 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Cpl Mork, Edward G.	732	Cpl
39 296 427 Mod Det 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Sgt Kernop, Warren	732	Cpl
6 973 143 Mod Det 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Tec 5 Riviere, Roland A.	732	Cpl
31 293 539 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Tec 5 Skowronski, Joseph S.	732	Cpl
32 253 332 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Plummer, Bill R.	732	Cpl
38 079 402 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Reed, Raymond L.	732	Cpl
37 363 820 Hq-Hq & Sv Co 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Soho, Frank T.	732	Cpl
33 153 240 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Urbin, George C.	732	Cpl
36 879 531 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Brower, Andrew R.	732	Cpl
38 043 820 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Brooks, Horton R.	732	Cpl
17 156 318 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pvt Stanchina, Francis E.	732	Cpl
36 562 637 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Focik, Joseph	732	Cpl
32 206 256 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Armistead, Thomas S.	732	Cpl
33 854 308 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Neargardner, Francis B.	732	Cpl
35 088 323 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Arneson, Ralph E.	732	Cpl
36 296 110 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Artzer, Adam J.	732	Cpl
37 515 307 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Corodomus, James	732	Cpl
42 188 512 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Hazenberg, John P.	732	Cpl
36 411 136 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl
Pfc Marino, Dominic R.	732	Cpl
37 566 492 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn	732	Cpl

30 No. 9 Hq 40th Amph Tractor Bn APO 562, U. S. Army, 23 August 45, (Cont.)

<u>Name</u>	<u>MOS</u>	<u>Promoted to</u>
Pfc Rinsky, Paul P.	732	Cpl
33 931 873 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Stickland, Joseph R.	732	Cpl
32 850 911 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Lins, Willis A.	732	Tec 5
15 024 156 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Thrift, Forrest	732	Tec 5
34 263 315 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Robinson, Ray J.	732	Tec 5
37 180 385 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Locascio, Alexander	060	Tec 5
36 667 321 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Blom, George G.	732	Tec 5
37 319 807 Company A 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Andis, Vernon S.	837	Tec 5
33 275 427 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Burhance, George R.	732	Tec 5
32 227 643 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Dean, Ralph R.	732	Tec 5
39 420 456 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Kennedy, Wilmer F.	732	Tec 5
37 324 272 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Moran, Frank	060	Tec 5
36 146 505 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Reid, Olin H.	732	Tec 5
38 082 715 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Roof, Albert L.	837	Tec 5
37 492 365 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Scott, Charles H. Jr.	732	Tec 5
31 074 363 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		
Pfc Marcinkowski, Thaddous L.	060	Tec 5
32 248 912 Company B 40th Amph Tractor Bn		

2. 1ST LT WALKER, DANIEL J O1 014 965 Cav 40th Amph Tractor Bn is relv'd as Unit Safety Officer.

3. The fol Os 40th Amph Tractor Bn are aptd Unit Safety O 40th Amph Tractor Bn:

1ST LT ALEXANDER, IRVING J O1 015 499 40th Amph Tractor Bn
 2ND LT MEYN, WALTER K O1 012 985 40th Amph Tractor Bn

BY ORDER OF LT. COLONEL BOYLAN:

DANIEL CROTTY
 2D LT AUS
 ADJUTANT

OFFICIAL:

Daniel Crotty
 DANIEL CROTTY
 2D LT AUS
 ADJUTANT

Army of the United States



Honorable Discharge

This is to certify that

JOHN P HAZENBERG 36 411 136 CORPORAL

COMPANY B 40TH TANK BATTALION 7TH ARMORED DIVISION

Army of the United States

is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States of America.

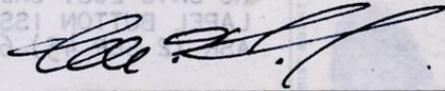
This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at

SEPARATION CENTER
CAMP ATTERBURY INDIANA

Date

28 DECEMBER 1945



E. W. HENRY
MAJOR AC

46-2

ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION

28 24 40 BLR/6

HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL HAZENBERG JOHN P		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 36 411 136	3. GRADE CPL	4. ARM OR SERVICE ARMD	5. COMPONENT AUS
6. ORGANIZATION CO B 40TH TANK BN 7TH ARMD DIV		7. DATE OF SEPARATION 28 DEC 45	8. PLACE OF SEPARATION SEP CEN CAMP ATTERBURY IND		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES 1025 HELEN ST NE GRAND RAPIDS KENT CO MICH		10. DATE OF BIRTH 4 FEB 1922	11. PLACE OF BIRTH GRAND RAPIDS MICH		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT SEE #9		13. COLOR EYES BLUE	14. COLOR HAIR BROWN	15. HEIGHT 5'9"	16. WEIGHT 175 LBS.
17. NO. DEPEND.	18. RACE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify)		19. MARITAL STATUS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SINGLE <input type="checkbox"/> MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify)		20. U.S. CITIZEN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. TRUCKER HAND 9-64.15					

MILITARY HISTORY

22. DATE OF INDUCTION 21 NOV 42		23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT 4 DEC 42		24. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE 4 DEC 42		25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE CAMP GRANT ILL	
26. REGISTERED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		27. LOCAL S.S. BOARD NO. 6		28. COUNTY AND STATE KENT CO MICH		29. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE SEE #9	
30. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. MEDIUM TANK CREWMAN 2736				31. MILITARY QUALIFICATION AND DATE (i. e., Infantry, aviation and marksmanship badges, etc.) TSMG EXPERT; CARBINE MARKSMAN			
32. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS NORTHERN FRANCE; RHINELAND; CENTRAL EUROPE							
33. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS EAME THEATER RIBBON W/3 BRONZE STARS; AMERICAN THEATER RIBBON; GOOD CONDUCT RIBBON; WORLD WAR II VICTORY MEDAL							
34. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION NONE							
35. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES				36. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN			
SMALLPOX	TYPHOID	TETANUS	OTHER (specify)	DATE OF DEPARTURE	DESTINATION	DATE OF ARRIVAL	
AUG 45	JAN 45	JAN 45	TYP JAN 45	14 JUL 44	ETO USA	23 JUL 44	
37. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE				38. HIGHEST GRADE HELD			
CONTINENTAL SERVICE		FOREIGN SERVICE		CPL			
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	YEARS				
1	7	21	1	5	4		
39. PRIOR SERVICE NONE							
40. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION CONVN OF GOVT AR 615-365 RR 1-1 DEMOBILIZATION 15 DEC 44							
41. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED NONE						42. EDUCATION (Years)	
						GRAMMAR	HIGH SCHOOL
						8	4
						COLLEGE	0

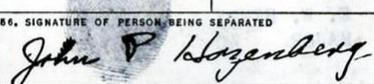
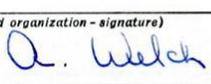
PAY DATA VOU 20460

43. LONGEVITY FOR PAY PURPOSES			44. MUSTERING OUT PAY		45. SOLDIER DEPOSITS	46. TRAVEL PAY	47. TOTAL AMOUNT. NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER	
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	TOTAL	THIS PAYMENT	0	\$ 16.80	178.46 BB CALLAWAY LT COL FD	
3	1	8	\$ 300	\$ 100				

INSURANCE NOTICE

IMPORTANT IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WHEN DUE OR WITHIN THIRTY-ONE DAYS THEREAFTER, INSURANCE WILL LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

48. KIND OF INSURANCE		49. HOW PAID		50. Effective Date of Allotment Discontinuance	51. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 50)	52. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH	53. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nat. Serv.	<input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Govt.	<input type="checkbox"/> None	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Allotment	DEC 45	31 JAN 46	\$ 6.50	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue	<input type="checkbox"/> Continue Only
							<input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue	

54.  RIGHT THUMB PRINT	55. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)
	INACTIVE SERVICE IN ERC FROM 21 NOV 42 THRU 3 DEC 42 NO DAYS LOST UNDER AW 107 LAPEL BUTTON ISSUED ASR (2 SEP 45) 63
56. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED 	57. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) A WELCH CPT WAC 

WD AGO FORM 53 - 55
1 November 1944

This form supersedes all previous editions of WD AGO Forms 53 and 55 for enlisted persons entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which will not be used after receipt of this revision.

Front Side

20-24-40 EJM



SEPARATION QUALIFICATION RECORD

SAVE THIS FORM. IT WILL NOT BE REPLACED IF LOST

This record of job assignments and special training received in the Army is furnished to the soldier when he leaves the service. In its preparation, information is taken from available Army records and supplemented by personal interview. The information about civilian education and work experience is based on the individual's own statements. The veteran may present this document to former employers, prospective employers, representatives of schools or colleges, or use it in any other way that may prove beneficial to him.

1. LAST NAME—FIRST NAME—MIDDLE INITIAL				MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS		
HAZENBERG JOHN P		36 411 136		CPL		
2. ARMY SERIAL No.	3. GRADE	4. SOCIAL SECURITY No.		10. MONTHS	11. GRADE	12. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY
1025 HELEN ST N E	ABF FM	W 5-7		31/4	PVT	BASIC 521
5. PERMANENT MAILING ADDRESS (Street, City, County, State)				28	PFC	MEDIUM TANK CREWMAN
1025 HELEN ST N E				5	CPL	TRACTOR COMMANDER 2736
6. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE				7. DATE OF SEPARATION		
4 DEC 42				28 DEC 45		
8. DATE OF BIRTH				4 FEB 22		
9. PLACE OF SEPARATION						
CAMP ATTERBURY INDIANA						

SUMMARY OF MILITARY OCCUPATIONS

13. TITLE—DESCRIPTION—RELATED CIVILIAN OCCUPATION

MEDIUM TANK CREWMAN - WAS A MEMBER OF 32 TON TANK CREW WITH "B" CO. OF THE 40TH TANK BATTALION IN THE EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS FOR 17 MONTHS. OPERATED PORTABLE RADIO EQUIPMENT IN TANK. FIRED AND LOADED 75 MM GUN AND 30 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS. CLEANED AND LUBRICATED GUNS.

Back Side

MILITARY EDUCATION				
14. NAME OR TYPE OF SCHOOL—COURSE OR CURRICULUM—DURATION—DESCRIPTION				
NONE				
CIVILIAN EDUCATION				
15. HIGHEST GRADE COMPLETED	16. DEGREES OR DIPLOMAS	17. YEAR LEFT SCHOOL	OTHER TRAINING OR SCHOOLING	
4 YRS HS	DIPLOMA	1941	20. COURSE—NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL—DATE	21. DURATION
18. NAME AND ADDRESS OF LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED				
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH				
19. MAJOR COURSES OF STUDY				
PRINTING				
CIVILIAN OCCUPATIONS				
22. TITLE—NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER—INCLUSIVE DATES—DESCRIPTION				
TRUCKER, HAND - TRUCKED STOCKS OF LABEL PAPER FROM STOCKROOM TO PAPER CUTTER FOR THE MICHIGAN LITHOGRAPHING COMPANY OF GRAND RAPIDS, MICH FOR 17 MONTHS. LIFTED PAPER ONTO CUTTING TABLE. STACKED CUT LABELS TO BE TRUCKED TO STORAGE ROOM OR SHIPPING DEPARTMENT.				
23. REMARKS				
24. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED	25. SIGNATURE OF SEPARATION CLASSIFICATION OFFICER	26. NAME OF OFFICER (Typed or Stamped)		
<i>John P. Hargreaves</i>	<i>[Signature]</i>	K.W. CROOK 1ST LT AC		



JOHN P HAZENBERG

To you who answered the call of your country and served in its Armed Forces to bring about the total defeat of the enemy, I extend the heartfelt thanks of a grateful Nation. As one of the Nation's finest, you undertook the most severe task one can be called upon to perform. Because you demonstrated the fortitude, resourcefulness and calm judgment necessary to carry out that task, we now look to you for leadership and example in further exalting our country in peace.

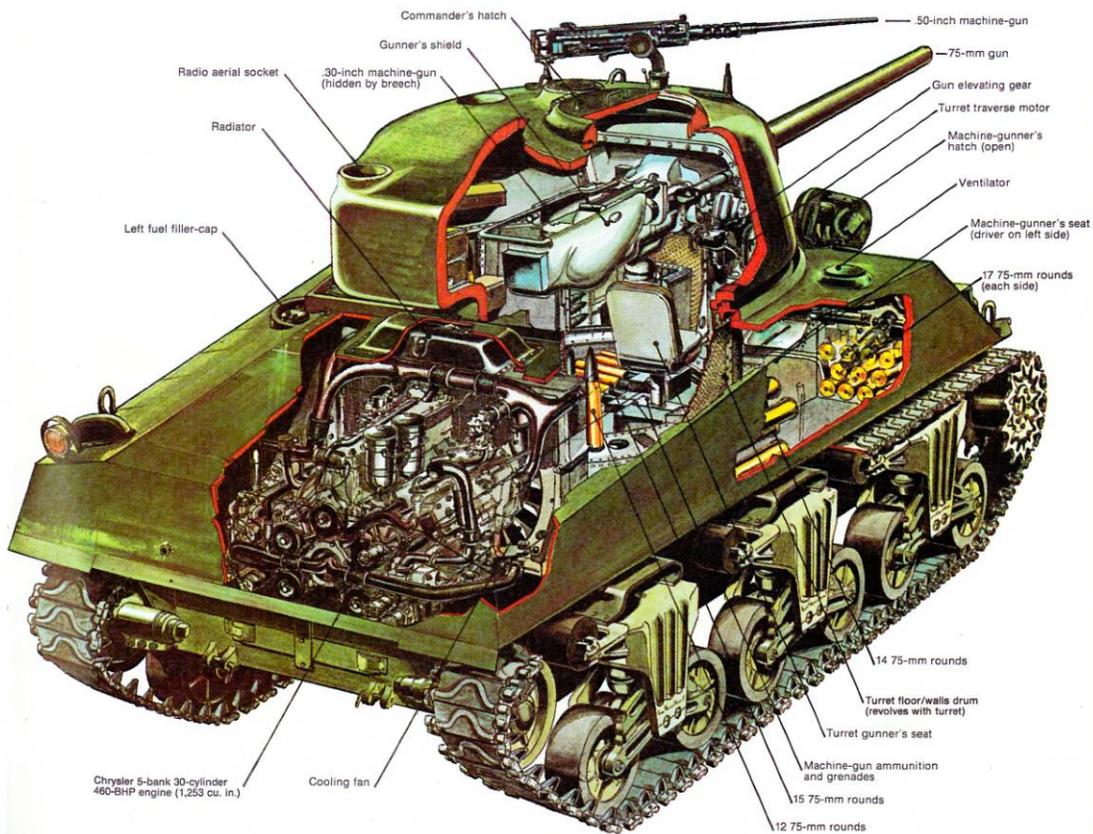
A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Harry Truman".

THE WHITE HOUSE

American army vehicles were typical products of a great nation's wartime output: rugged and efficient, produced in huge quantities. The ubiquitous 'Jeep' was the most famous US light transport vehicle, and earned an almost legendary reputation for coping with tough conditions. In the muck and mire of Italy, this reputation was to be tried to the full—and even the tracked vehicles sometimes churned the shell-softened earth into an impassable quagmire. For the Western Allies, the Sherman had been the heavy tank ever since Alamein. It was truly one of the greatest weapons of the war

The Allied Juggernaut

After the earlier designs of the Grant and Lee tanks—which had themselves performed invaluable services with 8th Army in early 1942—the main American and Empire battle tank came to be the Sherman. Its mass delivery to the Allied armies in North Africa and southern Europe was the result of an unprecedented feat of production. In 1941, American factories turned out 14,000 Shermans; in 1943, this rose to 21,000. And these numbers alone, matched by the virtues of mechanical reliability, gave the Sherman a very significant counter to the German gun and armour superiority. Solidly armoured, formidably armed, this model's most extraordinary feature was its Chrysler engine, built up from five 25-hp truck engines. *Max speed:* 23 mph. *Range:* 80 miles in average conditions. *Crew:* five. *Weight:* 71,900 lb. *Engine:* Chrysler model A57 (30-cylinder, 460-BHP). *Armament:* one 75-mm M3 gun, one .30-inch machine-gun in hull, one .50-inch machine-gun on flexible mounting



1507

Belgian Fourragere Award
I don't believe John ever received his.

GENERAL ORDERS
No. 43

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Washington 25, D. C., 19 December 1950

E X T R A C T

* * * * *

7TH ARMORED DIVISION

Hq & Hq Co, 7th Armd Div
Combat Command A, Hq & Hq Co
Combat Command B, Hq & Hq Co
Reserve Command, Hq & Hq Co
17th Tank Battalion
23d Armd Inf Bn
31st Tank Battalion
33d Armd Engr Bn
38th Armd Inf Bn
40th Tank Battalion
48th Armd Inf Bn
87th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz)
147th Signal Co
Hq & Hq Btry, 7th Armd Div Arty
434th Armd FA Bn
440th Armd FA Bn
489th Armd FA Bn
Hq & Hq Co, 7th Armd Div Trains
77th Armd Med Bn
129th Ord Maint Bn
Band, 7th Armd Div
MP Platoon, 7th Armd Div
(Attached nondivisional units are listed in par. 4a.)

CITED IN THE ORDER OF THE DAY of the Belgian Army, in Decree No. 7253, 13 July 1950, by Charles, Prince of Belgium, Regent of the Kingdom, with the following citation:

During the crucial period of the German offensive of the Ardennes, in 1944, the American 7th Armored Division, attacked by enemy forces estimated at eight divisions, among them 3 SS Panzer and 2 Panzer Divisions, held the important center of Saint Vith, preventing any advance and any exploitation on this main line, thus dooming the German offensive to frustration and, by its sacrifice, permitting the launching of the Allied counter-offensive.

CITED IN THE ORDER OF THE DAY of the Belgian Army, in Decree No. 7253, 13 July 1950, by Charles, Prince of Belgium, Regent of the Kingdom, with the following citation:

Passing over to the attack on 20 January in the Saint Vith sector where it had fought previously, the 7th Armored Division pushed the enemy out of the position that it had been organizing for two weeks, and pushed it without respite seven kilometers beyond the Belgian frontier, inflicting heavy losses on this enemy. During these nine days it captured more than one thousand prisoners.

BELGIAN FOURRAGERE (1940), awarded by Decree No. 7253, 13 July 1950, by Charles, Prince of Belgium, Regent of the Kingdom.

* * * * *

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

OFFICIAL:
EDWARD F. WITSELL
Major General, USA
The Adjutant General

J. LAWTON COLLINS
Chief of Staff, United States Army

NETHERLANDS RESISTANCE CROSS

John was awarded this but did not receive it.



Front View



Rear View

NETHERLANDS RESISTANCE CROSS

October 6, 1982, at the Disabled American Veterans National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Resistance Cross was awarded to the Seventh Armored Division by the Netherlands. Coordinating the presentation was the Netherlands-U.S.A. Association and the Disabled American Veterans Headquarters. Accepting for the Seventh Armored Division Association was President Kenneth R. Danielson and Honorary President General William A. Knowlton. Other United States combat units so honored were — the 2nd Armored Division, 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, the 30th and 104th Infantry Divisions; all saw combat

duty in the Netherlands during WW II.

Dignitaries from the United States were — John O. Marsh Jr., Secretary of the Army; Lt. General James Lee representing General E.C. Myer Army Chief of Staff; Mr. Michael Barry from the State Department; William A. Connelly, Sergeant Major of the Army and Mr. Ed Galion, National Commander of the D.A.V.

Netherlands dignitaries present were — Dr. J.H. Lubbers, Netherlands Ambassador to the United States; Mr. G.H.J.M. Peijnenburg, Secretary-General Ministry of Defense and Mr. van Lanchott who made the presentations.

The Chairman of the National Committee for the Commemorative Cross for Resistance

Considering the Royal Decision of December 29, 1980, number 104, Government Gazette 715, and also the decree, of March 29, 1981, of the Minister of (Internal) Affairs, the Minister of Defense and the Secretary of Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs

awards

THE COMMEMORATIVE CROSS FOR RESISTANCE

to (the)

7th Armored Division Association

Gravenhage, 10-6-1982

The above-mentioned Chariman, W.Ch.J.M. van Lanshot, R.M.W.O. Royal Decision of December 29th, 1980, Number 104

We Beatrix, By the Grace of God, Queen of the Netherlands, Princess of Oranje-Nassau, etc. etc.

At the nomination of our Minister of Internal Affairs, Directorate General of the Internal Committee, Department of Cabinet Affairs, dated December 23, 1980, nr. BK80/w 2217; moreover, on behalf of Our Ministers of Defense and Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs;

Considering that it is desirable to establish, on the occasion the 35th anniversary of the liberation, an award for members of the resistance in the Second World War against the occupiers of the territory of the kingdom.

HAVE ACCEPTED AND UNDERSTOOD THAT:

Article 1.

A commemorative symbol is to be established, which will carry the name of "Verzetshedenkingskruis" (= Commemorative Cross for Resistance)

Article 2.

1. The Commemorative Cross for Resistance will be awarded to:
 - a. anyone who belonged to an acknowledged resistance group named in the Royal Decree dated September 5, 1944 (Stb. F.62) or to another resistance known to the Council on Extraordinary Pensions or the "1940-1945 Foundation".
 - b. anyone who, in accordance with the Law on Extraordinary Pensions 1940-1945, is recognized by the decision of the Council on Extraordinary Pensions as a participant in the resistance, regardless of whether he/she does or not enjoy a pension by virtue of that act.
 - c. anyone who, by the Law on the Improvement of the Legal Status of Resistance Fighters (law of 1/30/76, Stb. 19), is adjudged to have spent time in the service.
 - d. the servicemen who belonged to the Dutch Internal Armed Forces in occupied territory (in accordance with article 2, paragraph 2 of the Law on the Improvement of the Legal Status of Resistance Fighters.)
 - e. anyone who participated in actions during the Second World War in East Asia, in Japanese or Japanese-occupied territory, which after the war were designated by the committee named in Article 4 as resistance of the enemy.
 - f. anyone who, although not covered by the provisions of a, through e. above, nonetheless can be considered as a participant in the resistance in the judgement of the committee named in article 4.

Article 3.

The award may be given posthumously.

Article 4.

The award will be given by a committee considered representative of the former resistance; its composition and procedures will be determined by Our Ministers of Internal Affairs, of Defense, and of Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs.

Article 5.

The design of the medal and attached ribbon mentioned in article 1 will be decided on by us.

Article 6.

1. A person receiving this award may wear the cross or the ribbon separately.
2. A person who is authorized the commemorative cross may also wear a smaller replica thereof.
3. The cross or ribbon may be worn on the military uniform.

Article 7.

A person receiving the commemorative cross will also be awarded an official document in his name.

Article 8

This decree will go into effect on December 31, 1980. Our Ministers of Internal Affairs, of Defense and of Culture, Recreation and Social Affairs, are, each in his own capacity, charged with the execution of this decree, which shall be published in the Government Gazette, of which a copy shall be sent to the Chancellor of the Dutch Orders.

Lage Vuursche, December 28, 1980
BEATRIX

The Minister of Internal Affairs,
H. WIEGEL.

Translation By: John Austin, PH.D. Dept. of Foreign Languages, Georgia State Univ.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE COMMEMORATIVE CROSS FOR RESISTANCE

In the design of the Commemorative Cross for Resistance, the resistance against the occupiers of the territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands during the Second World War has been expressed. The background of this resistance, in all its various forms, is represented by the words on the horizontal bar: "Drive out tyranny"; this is derived from the sixth couplet of the Dutch national anthem, "Het Wilhelmus". The flaming sword on the vertical bar symbolizes the battle readiness of the armed resistance as well as the fire of spiritual resistance. The unions of the ribbon attached to the cross represent the unity of the Netherlands and the House of Orange in the midst of the darkness and mourning which the occupying forces caused to come upon the population of the Kingdom.

Attachment: The official document mentioned in article 7 of the above Royal Decree.



John's tank, the M4A3 Sherman



7th ArmdDiv shoulder patch, Corporal stripes,

Ribbons: top row: Good Conduct Ribbon

Second Row: American Campaign Ribbon, Europe-Africa-Middle East Campaign Ribbon with 4 bronze battle campaign stars, Victory Medal ribbon.

On left shoulder is the patch for the 89th Infantry Division (Rolling W). The 40th AMPH TR BN was assigned to the 89th Infantry Div. for a brief period in late 1945.

The black and white photo shows John's uniform: 7th ArmdDiv. shoulder patch, ribbons, 2 Overseas Service Bars of his left sleeve—one bar for each 6 month period overseas.

The colored ribbons and shoulder patches are on John's heavy Army issue winter coat. The wearing of ribbons on the coat are not to regulation—I think John just put them on, as well as the 7th Armor patch. Perhaps this coat was only worn at Camp Philip Morris where the dress code was not too strict. A few years before John passed away, an unscrupulous “friend” talked John into selling his complete uniform—hat, Ike jacket, pants, boots, ribbons, and medals—for only \$20.00!! That same evening John deeply regretted this, but the “friend” was gone and John never saw him or his uniform again. How sad that someone would take advantage of one America's true heroes!

Camp Beale, CA. Dec. 1942-Dec. 1943, 13th Armor



On tank: Sgt. O'Leary, Branum
Standing: John Hazenberg



The swimming hole.



Camp Bowie, TX
Jan-June 1944
13th ArmDiv
46th Armored Tank Battalion, Co. C
Capt. John Sheffey



George Glass, Union Town, PA; Frank Taylor, Santé Fe, OH; John Hazenberg; Ray Lawson, Garrett, KY; Chas. Cauble, Salisbury, NC



Ray Lawson, John Hazenberg, Steve, Tony



Crossing Colorado River, Ray Lawson in foreground.

More Camp Bowie photos



Equipment Display



KP Duty



Schweinberg, Germany. June-July, 1945



Left to right: Davis, Lipsky, Jacobson,
John Hazenberg
Kneeling: Fred Deadmon



L to R standing: Green, Pollock, Deadmon,
Lipsky, Ralph Arneson. On steps:?, Sawicki,
James Bacher, ?, Steck, ?.



L to R: Goral, ReubenAckley, Deadmon,
Johnson, Shard, Russell Japperson



Left to right: Malone, Lipsky, Deadmon,
Demers, Ralph Lociano



John Hazenberg, Co. B, Tank #2



On top of Hog Hill



Motor Park, Co. B & C



Mannheim, Germany – 1945

40th Amphibian Tractor Battalion
Terneuzen, Holland July-Dec. 1945

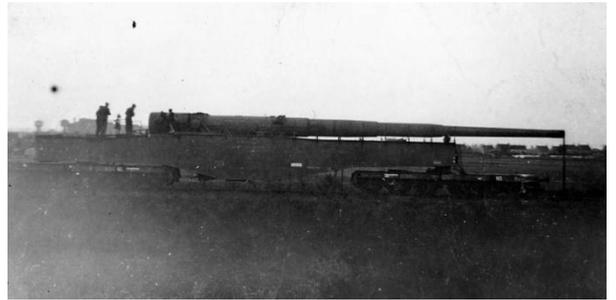


John's tent

Terneuzen, Holland



German Tank, Belgium



German Railroad gun



See John?



Motor Park

Terneuzen, Holland



All unidentified servicemen



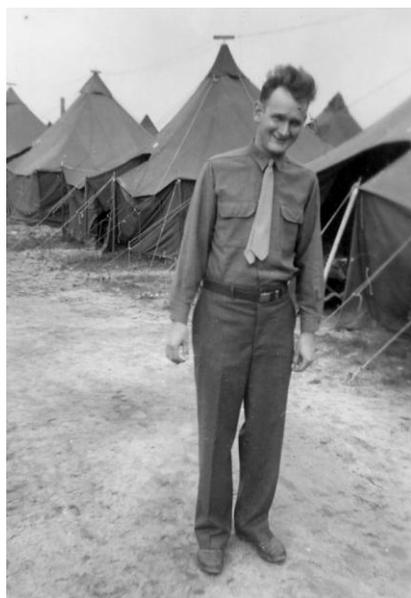
Wright, Hussack, Judkins



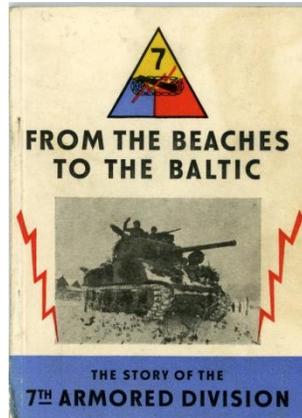
DeWitt, John, Judkins



Neither man is identified by John.



Autograph page in John's book "From the Beaches to the Baltic", which traces the activities of the 7th Armored Div. The names were probably signed while still in Germany. I was able to track down only one name, that of Ralph Arneson in Cornell, Wisconsin.



AUTOGRAPHS ...

Ralph E Arneson
Cornell, Wisconsin

Reuben B. Ackley
Kennedy N.Y.

Henry G. Strabach
P.O. Medford
Wis.

Clarence C. Miller
Route #2 Box 217
Latonia Ky

James (Bozack) Corodanus
Livingston, N.J. New Jersey

Thomas S Latham
Brooksville Kentucky
R. R. # 2.

Who's Who Hazenberg Relatives and Friends of John

The following people are mentioned in John's letters.
Underlined names indicate direct relatives.

Parents: Ed (Etto) & Cora (Jacoba) Smid Hazenberg
Sister: Charles & Gertrude Hazenberg Boerema

Aunts and Uncles of John:

DeVoogd, Adrian & Maggie Smid Brilstra
Smith, Art & Deane, from Detroit
Smith, Jake & Amelia
Stadt, Henry & Susie Smid
Van Wyk, Tom & Deanie Smid

Cousins of John:

Bensema, Herman & Gretchen (Gretty) Stadt
Brilstra, Carrie
Kooinga, Ed & Alice Stadt
Schaafsma, Ralph & Barbara Stadt. Ralph died in 1945, Barbara in 1947.
Smith, Minuet
Stadt, Gerrit & Ella
Van Wyk, Egbert & Elaine
Van Wyk, Tom & Lucile

Nieces & Nephews of John:

Boerema, Bert, Coral, Chucky, Gertrude (Trudy)

Cramer, Irv & Minnie Boerema-sister of brother-in-law Charles Boerema
Son Joe Cramer

Friends and Neighbors

Decker, Walter
DeWitt, Marvin
Evertse, Donna
Fron, Joe
Gary, Smitty & Pearl
Helder, Judd
Lippard, Betty (John's war-time girl friend)
O'Dell, Wilbur
Roetman, Melvin
Tubergen, Al (Ann Hertel)

AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book was made possible with the help of these generous folks:

Cpl. John Hazenberg, a member of The Greatest Generation!

Cora (Jacoba) Smid Hazenberg, John's devoted mother, who saved every letter John wrote.

Ralph Arneson, Cornell, WI, a fellow "tanker" in John's Company B. His autograph is in John's booklet, and I was able to contact him. He filled in many details about tank platoons, towns they stayed in, rivers crossed, living in a tank, V.E Day, training with the Amphibian Tractors, V.J. Day, arriving in New York, and finally the train ride home.

Frerik Noordhuis, The Netherlands, for help translating the Dutch letters.

Calvin Hoogstra, Holland, MI, who also helped translate the Dutch letters.

Wesley Johnston, 7th Armored Division Association, for his help locating Morning Reports.



Gertrude (Trudy) Boerema Fetters, John's niece

April, 2012

Holland, Michigan

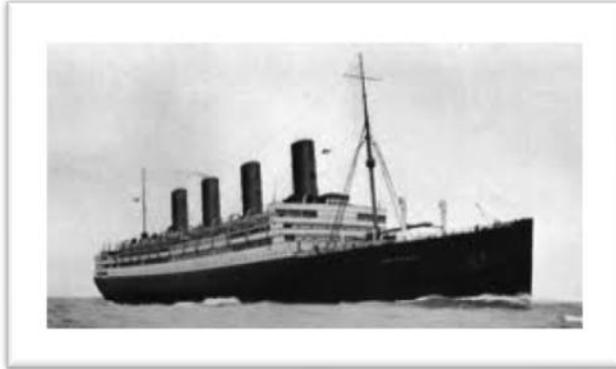
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RMS AQUITANIA

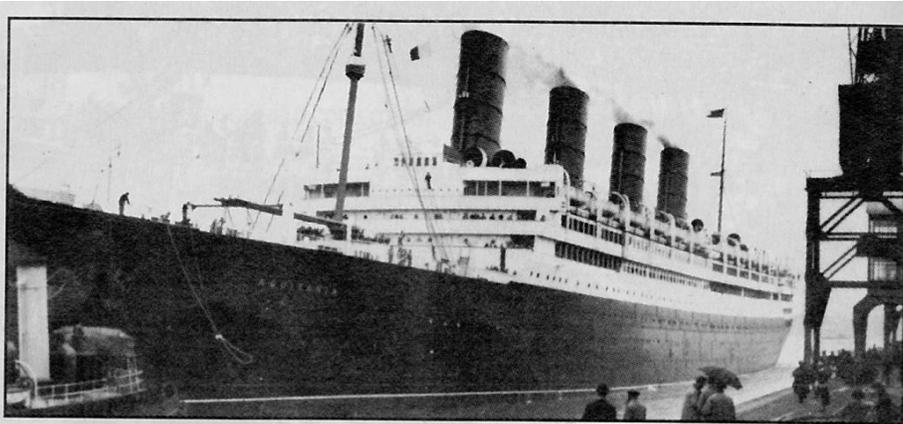


John took this ship in mid July, 1944 from New York to either Greenock or Glasgow, Scotland. From there he would have boarded a troop train to England.

When war broke out in September 1939, *Aquitania* was requisitioned for war duties. She was quickly converted for use as a troop transport, capable of ferrying 7,724 troops. For a time she was based out of Sydney, transporting Australian and New Zealand troops to theatres in the Pacific, and she also served on the Atlantic, transporting American service men to Europe. After the war she repatriated troops and carried war brides back to North America. In 1948 she was returned to Cunard, having steamed some 500,000 miles and transporting 300,000 troops.



She was painted grey during war service, and outfitted with twin 6-pounders fore and aft. She also had numerous stations armed with twin Oerlikon 20mm anti-aircraft guns. All the port holes and windows were covered for “blackout.” A friend, George Kuiper, also took the AQUITANIA across and he said that the men slept in bunks stacked 5 high. They ate in shifts, standing up at metal tables. This ship did not sail with an escort so every three minutes it would shift course to avoid submarine attack. This zigzag pattern continued for the entire crossing to Scotland.



The only four-stack liner to serve in WWII was the veteran 45,000-ton *AQUITANIA*. During her 35-year career she crossed the Atlantic 475 times; carried 1,200,000 passengers and steamed three million miles. She survived two world wars without a single mishap.



This is how the troops lived for the 7 day crossing to Scotland. They had salt water showers, and being a British ship, every meal included a serving of ring bologna.

This Was a Year in the ETO

This was the ETO in Anno 1944—most important year in American soldiers' lives and perhaps the greatest 12 months in history:

The New Year—six months, six days and six hours before H-Hour, D-Day—was greeted with customary English atmosphere. You couldn't get a legal drink after 11 PM and if you missed the last bus or train it was TS. . . .

Gen. Ike had been named supreme invasion commander, but no one knew where he was. Lt. Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, new USSTAF commander, hit England Jan. 1, coming from Africa. . . .

Neutral capitals buzzed with talk of "an enemy glider-bomb." That was before the buzz-bomb era. . . . Forts and Libs opened their 1944 offensive Jan. 4. . . .

Jan. 7 Hollywood's George Raft, USO star, was found dodging London MPs because he didn't have orders. . . . Jan. 10 Maj. Bobby Jones, golfer, was in the ETO with AF intelligence. . . .

Jan. 11 saw Col. Oveta Culp Hobby, WAC boss, in England. . . . Same day 59 U.S. heavies were lost in one of history's greatest air battles. . . .

Gen. Ike's presence in England to direct the invasion was announced Jan. 16. . . . There were rumors of Nazi rocket bombs. . . .

On Jan. 18 the 50-millionth V-letter slid into the machine at the APO. . . . American citizens in Britain continued to sign up for the Army over here. . . .

Jan. 21 ARC announced its "invasion plans" were ready to follow the troops into Europe. . . . flak began to get worse over targets along the "invasion coast."

Jan. 23 found ETO and SOS ETO Hq. consolidated under Gen. Ike, with Maj. Gen. (now Lt. Gen.) John C. H. Lee as deputy theater commander. . . . Talk of invasion mounted as new supply depots began popping up. . . .

In Belfast on Jan. 25 doughboys celebrated the second anniversary of finding roses in Ireland. . . . Next day the world learned that glider and paratroops were training in the U.K. . . .

Jan. 28 the Eighth AF observed its second birthday by dropping its 47,000th ton of bombs on Europe. . . . Mobile units began collecting GI blood for invasion stores. . . .

Early in February Irving Berlin's "This Is the Army" prepared to wind up its ETO

tour. . . . American girls in ATS, WAAF, WRENS and other Allied auxiliary corps began transferring to the WAC. . . .

Allied planes continued to hit mysterious targets at Par de Calais. Neutrals called them V-weapon sites. . . .

Feb. 17 Gen. Ike began a whirlwind tour of every type of invasion outfit in the U.K. . . . Pvt. Ben Violette, an MP from South Bend, Ind., learned he'd inherited \$200,000. . . . Rear Adm. Alan Goodrich Kirk was announced as head of the U.S. naval task force in the invasion team. USOing Jimmy Cagney took a bow in London. . . .

End of February and early March saw the "Baby Blitz" against London (with piloted planes) at its peak, and GIs helped rescue fire-bomb victims. . . . U.S. ack-ackers went into action. . . . U.S. air forces celebrated Washington's birthday with the first joint north-south attack against Germany, from Britain and Italy. . . .

One of the biggest convoys ever to cross the Atlantic brought invasion troops to the U.K. without a whisper from subs. . . . Technicians of Lockheed Overseas Corp., in Ulster, faced Army induction. . . .

U.S. planes made their first Berlin daylight raid March 4. Couple of days later the Yanks hit Berlin in force, but lost 68 bombers and 11 fighters. There was plenty of Luftwaffe then. . . . There were too many GIs coming to London to fit in the ARC beds, and club lounges were packed with chair-bedded soldiers. . . .

U.S. planes began dropping newspapers and "truth leaflets" over Germany. . . . S/Sgt. Joe Louis, boxer, began barnstorming the ETO in April. . . . Pvt. Walter J. Thorpe, Abilene (Kans.) farmer, dropped in to see his one-time neighbor, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. . . .

April 17 S and S was two years old. . . . "Old Blood 'n' Guts Patton arrived in England to command an invasion army. . . . Britain became a moated fortress as a pre-invasion travel ban sealed the U.K. from the world. . . . April 28, London's Stage Door Canteen opened. . . . May 4 WARWEEK was born. . . .

Aerial attacks against the invasion coast mounted. . . . Every type of unit stepped up assault training. . . .

Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt,

who opened up again two weeks ago, was announced anti-invasion commander May 19. . . . Two days later the 100-millionth V-letter cleared the APO. . . .

May 28 and five tons of bombs hit the Westwall every minute. . . . D-Day fever mounted. . . . June 4 brought the now-famous "false-flash" of invasion. . . . Same day, Forts began shuttle-raids to Russia. . . . June 6, D-Day. . . .

June 16 VI began to hit England. . . . Yank fliers and ack-ackers helped fight buzz-bombs. . . .

July 4 Stars and Stripes began publishing in Cherbourg. . . . Next day the WD authorized the gold overseas hashmark. . . . American names began to appear on robot casualty lists and four WAC victims got Purple Hearts. . . . War Secretary Stimson showed up in the U.K. . . . Bonuses were announced for expert infantrymen. . . .

Lt. Gen Leslie J McNair, ex-chief of AGF, was killed by enemy action in France. . . . Late July found WACs on the Continent. . . .

In August Paris was liberated and Fred Astaire arrived with USO. . . . Pick-a-back robots began hitting England. . . . Stars and Stripes moved to Rennes, then to Paris. . . . Dinah Shore began wowing 'em. . . . GIs began piling up points under the Demob plan. . . .

The Ninth Army joined the First, Third and Seventh in the West. . . . Marlene Dietrich showed up. . . .

Gen. Ike was 54 Oct. 14. . . . Late same month GIs began getting 48s to Gay Paree. . . . Nov 2 Stars and Stripes celebrated its second anniversary as a daily. . . .

The Luftwaffe reappeared early in November, suffered heavy losses. . . . V2 rockets began hitting England. . . .

Nov. 20 butt sales were halted to U.K. non-combatants. Later Joes began getting five packs per week. No explanation given. . . . Thanksgiving brought turkey to GI messes and ARC. . . .

December, and combat men began going home on rotation. . . . Ike and six others got five stars. . . . Christmas: Turkey, but gloom over German counter-attack. . . . Glenn Miller was reported missing on England-France flight. . . .

And this morning, GIs in the ETO are waiting for the New Year, thankful the enemy attack has been repulsed by the sacrifice of doughboys in the line. . . .

Row With Patton?

**Silvester, Tank General,
Demoted, Returned to U.S.**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10 (INS)—Maj. Gen. Lindsay McDonald Silvester, who commanded the 7th Armored Division in its drive across France, has been relieved of his command, demoted to the rank of colonel and brought back to Washington.

Friends of Silvester, an Army officer for 33 years and well known in Washington, made this disclosure today. Silvester himself would make no comment. The War Department made no public announcement other than the statement that the 7th Armored, a part of the 3rd Army, now was commanded by Maj. Gen. Robert W. Hasbrouck.

A lifelong friend of Silvester's, declining use of his name, gave this explanation: "Silvester didn't believe in tearing up the countryside uselessly. If a wheat field or a fruit orchard could be spared by a slight detour of his armored advance,

or if a little careful planning could spare a village from demolition, he would spare them.

"After his sweep across France, people in many towns and villages expressed their gratitude. Silvester has quite a collection of such messages.

"But he didn't get along with Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. The official charge against him is that he lacked aggressiveness in attack."

Asked for confirmation of this, a War Department spokesman said, "If he has been demoted, it was for just cause. We are not going to add to his discomfiture by making a public announcement."

Silvester, 55, a Virginian, was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1911. He is a graduate of the Infantry School, the Command and General Staff School and the Army War College. In the last war he won the DSC, Silver Star and Purple Heart.

Maj. Gen. Robert W. Hasbrouck, new commander of the 7th Armored Division, yesterday was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action near St. Vith in the German breakthrough.



SILVESTER

The Worm Turns

It's always "me nichts Nazi"
Or "Hitler was nichts goot!"
And we won't fight in twenty years
'Cause Deutschland is "Kapoot."
All have "Uncle in Chicago,"
And "most Germans are Okay,"
But mention Landsberg and
Dachau—
It's always "nichts fershtay!"
Their son was "kein SS man,"
You can rely on that—
He couldn't get in the party
"Cause we Social-Democrat!"
Just poor misguided people—
But don't fall for that line:
It wouldn't be fair to the other
guys
Who lie beyond the Rhine.
—T-5 James Frey, Co. K., 274th Inf.

*This happened after I left the
1st Armored for the hospital*

U.S. Units in Ardennes Bulge Identified

Troops That Stopped Enemy Push—And How They Did It—Revealed



By Russell Jones

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

WITH THE U.S. FIRST ARMY, Jan. 8—American forces taking part in the fierce assault on the northern flank of the German salient in Belgium today were revealed to include three corps, two armored divisions and eight infantry divisions.

The corps are the 7th, under Maj. Gen. Joseph L. Collins; the 18th Airborne, led by Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, and the 5th, whose commander was not disclosed, the armored units are Maj. Gen. Ernest H. Harmon's 2nd Division and Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose's 3rd.

The infantry divisions announced are the 2nd, Maj. Gen. Walter M. Robertson; 9th, Maj. Gen. L. S. Craig; 30th, Maj. Gen. L. S. Hobbs; 83rd, Maj. Gen. Robert C. Macon, and the 1st, 84th and 99th, whose commanders were not identified. An airborne division in action on that front is the 82nd, under Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin.

Action Summarized

Units involved in the stemming of the German counter-offensive in the Belgian Ardennes from Dec. 16 until the drive was halted also were revealed in a summary of the action.

When the enemy assault began, it struck the 112th Regiment of the 28th Infantry, the 99th Infantry and 7th

These are among the American generals directing units north of the German salient in Belgium. Upper left: Maj. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway. Upper center: Maj. Gen. James Gavin. Upper right: Maj. Gen. Louis S. Craig. Lower: Maj. Gen. Joseph Lawton Collins.

Armored Divisions. After fighting against overwhelming odds, these units withdrew to the north where, together with other U.S. forces coming down from the north, they helped to prevent German attempts to swing north from their initial breakthrough.

The 7th Armored, for example, is credited with holding St. Vith for three days longer than expected, thereby contributing materially to the eventual stopping of the counter-offensive.

The 9th Armored, also hit by the initial

German assault, withdrew to the south to join other forces.

While the enemy drive was still pushing westward, the 1st, 2nd, 9th and 99th Infantry Divisions prevented a breakthrough in the Monschau area, the 30th held the La Ambleve River from Malmedy to Stoumont, and with a 3rd Armored unit wiped out a German pocket at La Lieze.

Command Lateral Roads

The 82nd Airborne and 7th Armored, together with other elements, meanwhile held a line west through Manhay to Grandmenil. Each of the towns commanded lateral roads needed by the swift-moving Germans for supplies, as well as for direct route approaches to Liege. The Nazis' westward progress was marked by a series of attacks northward, which, when beaten off, skidded to the west. This movement was brought to a halt when the 2nd and 3rd Armored, 82nd Airborne and 83rd Infantry swung in front of the onrushing enemy.

The 83rd captured Rochefort, the 84th took Marche, the 2nd Armored stopped and almost annihilated an SS panzer unit, and the 3rd Armored hit the line at Hotten.

The 18th Airborne Corps, at the time of the breakthrough, controlled the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, but 24 hours after being alerted, Dec. 18, Ridgway and his staff directed the 82nd to Werbomont, north of Manhay, while the 101st was dispatched to Bastogne.

Man Spricht Deutsch
Warten Sie einen Augenblick,
Varten Zee alien Ogenblick,
Wait a moment.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces in the European Theater of Operations

Ici On Parle Français
Je suis aviateur,
Juh SWEE Ah-viah-TYUH,
I am a flier.

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Thursday, Nov. 23, 1944

7th Army Sights Rhine

No Holiday But Turkey Is Plentiful

Americans on the Continent today observe their third Thanksgiving of World War II, their first on the Western Front. For almost all of them—as Armistice Day—it is a day of war.

For the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps it is a day of reckoning. Exactly six weeks ago, Maj. Gen. Robert M. Littlejohn, ETO chief, promised that there would be turkey for every man here.

Yesterday's news that 1,604 tons of plump bird had been distributed on the Continent indicated that he wasn't taking any chances.

Keynote to the solemn aspect of this year's Thanksgiving Day was a message to the men of the U.S. First Army by Lt. Gen. Courtney H. Hodges. He said:

Message from Hodges
"Let us join together in giving thanks to God that our efforts in this struggle with evil and oppression have been blessed with success. I know of no words that could express to you the gratitude I feel so deeply in my heart. It is enough to know that because of you the free peoples of the world are today giving thanks to God Almighty who has made possible your vast achievement. Let us call upon Him to strengthen our hearts against the odds that he ahead, that we may assure the final success of our arms. Let us, in remembrance of our comrades who have passed on, give thanks to Him that we live to see sure that lasting peace for which they died."

Services will be held in some of Europe's most famous cathedrals, including Notre Dame in Paris, cathedral at Rheims, and Westminster Abbey in London.

350 U.S. Fliers Missing in Raid

More than 350 American airmen—the crews of 35 bombers and 13 fighter pilots—are reported missing from Tuesday's 1,250 Eighth AF Fortress and Liberator attacks on oil plants in western Germany, during which 1,100 escorting Eighth and Ninth AF fighters shot down 75 enemy fighters.

Following up the day attack, more than 1,300 RAF Lancasters and Halifaxes heaped bombs on the synthetic oil factories at Sterkrade and Castrop-Rauxel in the Ruhr and on the railway yards at Aschaffenburg, 25 miles southeast of Frankfurt.

Six-pound cannon, fitted under the fuselage of the RAF Mosquito, have been blasting German U-boats and surface vessels for more than a year, it was revealed yesterday. The secret weapon, first used in Nov. 1943, has been extensively employed since D-Day against U-boats attempting to hinder Allied cross-channel traffic, it was announced.

Oesel Island Garrison Periled by Red Attack

Russian land, sea and air forces in a combined attack threatened yesterday to wipe out the German garrison on Oesel Island commanding the Latvian port of Riga, one of the last German footholds in the central Baltic. The Germans fought in a dwindling pocket barely four miles deep against the new Soviet drive.

Thanksgiving, 1944

In the town of Eschweiler, which is in Germany, mortars burst about the battered house and plaster dust sifted down from the ceiling. Frank Iuliano, a T/S radio operator from New York City, looked up.

"I'm thankful that roof is strong," he said. "I'm thankful I'm still kicking around."

All day they'd fought in the rubble which had been houses along the streets of the German town. Some of them had died, and some of the other people, and there was all the smell there that had been in all the other towns since Normandy long ago. Pfc Mike Arviso, a C Co. medic from Lordsburg, N.M., was bandaging a fellow's hand in a doorway sheltered a little bit from the mortar fire.

"I'm thankful I'm alive," Arviso said. "I'd like a big turkey dinner, but I'm thankful for C rations." He went on with his bandaging.

From the company CP, Jerry Hooker, a first lieutenant from Eugene, Ore., stared out into the November weather.

"I'm thankful," he said slowly, "that we're getting into Germany and getting it over. I'd be more thankful for clean clothes and dry shoes and for a shower."

The lieutenant looked down at the wetness of his clothes, and the mud on his feet, and stared again at the November weather.

Now and then a 60mm. mortar coughed at the Germans and the muddy men around it twisted their heads a little as they waited for the noise of the explosion. S/Sgt. C. A. Little, the Elizabeth, N.J., weapons platoon sergeant, said:

"I'm thankful we're fighting in their fatherland instead of our home or in some other country." He told a man to move over a little bit in the mud.

The fellow went up to S/Sgt. Len Lindberg, from Beverly, Mass., and asked him what he was thankful for this day in the town of Eschweiler, and the sergeant said:

"I'm thankful all the frontline troops are getting turkey: I've seen them."

"I'm thankful the mail is good," said M/Sgt. Henry Traman-tano of Brooklyn. "The APOs kept their word and delivered the Christmas packages."

The mortars picked up their beat again; plaster was slammed from the houses of the town, and the mud and stone mushroomed now and then around the men who were spending Thanksgiving eve in Germany.

10th Armored 'Tigers' Prowl Reich Despite Traps, Mines

By Earl Mazo
Stars and Stripes Staff Writer.

WITH TENTH ARMORED DIV. IN GERMANY, Nov. 22.—This division has smashed through Germany at several points, and a column this morning was tackling one of the outer defenses of the Siegfried Line west of the Saar between that river and Luxembourg. The Tenth Armored "Tigers" were the first division of Patton's Third Army to reach Germany.

While there has been opposition aptly from German troops and artillery, tankers and armored doughboys of this outfit figure their biggest obstacles so far have been of an engineering nature. Mines of every description, including concrete "plastic," bounding, and boxwood, enclosed Reifel mines, tank ditches and traps at every turn and advantageous spot, blown bridges and craters are everywhere in the path of the advancing Tenth. At one point a tank slipped on the road shoulder, apparently on a double-up mine. It was blown up and fell over on

(Continued on Page 4)

French-Built Plane Given to Eisenhower

The next time Gen. Eisenhower visits units of the French Army under his command he may fly in an airplane bearing the tricolor circle of the French Air Corps.

The monoplane, of the design the French built for the Germans during the occupation, was presented to Gen. Eisenhower yesterday by Gen. René Bauscat, chief of operations of the French Air Corps.

The monoplane, of the design the French built for the Germans during the occupation, was presented to Gen. Eisenhower yesterday by Gen. René Bauscat, chief of operations of the French Air Corps.

40 Yanks Held and Saved an Army

Fifty yards away, the German Tiger rumbled toward the 40 Yanks of an armored infantry platoon, well dug-in in the marshy earth of southern Holland. Quickly, a few Americans, led by T/Sgt. Harold F. Brown, of Dallas, Tex., thrust forward the long snouts of their bazookas and fired. The tank fell back.

For two days and a night, this tank and seven other Tigers had been firing at the small group from point-blank range, never from more than 100 yards away—never nearer than 50.

S/Sgt. Raymond Malonowski, of Detroit, was directing artillery fire on a Nazi position 50 yards from

his own—good shooting distance, too. He killed eight Nazis with his rifle fire. Then an 88 came hurling at him, and his leg was broken in three places. T/Sgt. Joe Delchamandy, of St. Louis, took a platoon from Co. A of an armored infantry battalion and wiped out a company of German infantry.

The Americans held.

If they had not, the German counter-attack would have swung behind the British-Canadian forces, and out the supply lines, bringing possible disaster to Lt. Gen. Miles C. Dempsey's campaign for Antwerp in late October.

Details of the battle, with official praise from the British for the men

French Advance 15 Mi. Northward; All Metz Captured

U.S. Seventh Army troops pushed through the outer ring of German Vosges Mountain defenses to within sight of the Rhine River yesterday, while below them the French pushed 15 miles northward along the west bank of the Rhine from captured Mulhouse to Colmar, pulling an Allied loop around the southern flank of the Nazi West Wall in Alsace.

Northward, spearheads of three more American armies—the First, Third and Ninth—thrust deeper into the pine forests and dingy towns of the Reich and the capture of Metz, Europe's mightiest fortress, was announced officially.

Gen. Eisenhower sent a congratulatory message to the XX Corps which took it.

The Seventh Army advance across the Vosges Mountains brought elements to 25 miles west of Strasbourg, toward which the French were pointed from the south, and threatened to encircle thousands of enemy troops in Alsace. The advance to Colmar, south of Strasbourg, was announced by Gen. Charles de Gaulle, according to Paris Radio.

Nazis Cut French Corridor

Stars and Stripes Correspondent Dan Regan, with the Sixth Army Group, reported that German heavy weapons—counter-attacked. French forces near Dannemarie, west of Mulhouse and Altkirch, and cut a section of the corridor the French hold to the Rhine.

Armored elements of the First French Army which took Mulhouse, Alsatian industrial city, captured more than 1,000 prisoners, including part of the 19th German Army staff, Regan said.

Regan reported that French armored forces with the Seventh rolled well beyond the Saverne Gap defenses eight miles east of Sarrebourg which fell Tuesday.

The breakthrough brought some Seventh Army elements to 18 miles of the Rhine, which constitute the

(Continued on Page 4)

U.S. Fly Bomb Tops VI in Test

WRIGHT FIELD, Ohio, Nov. 22.—The Army Air Forces have developed a robot bomb which has been making test flights since Oct. 11, it was officially disclosed today.

It is considered better than the Germans' because its launching ramp can be built in four days, while the German ramps were said to take 14 days to build.

"We may never need a robot bomb," said Maj. Gen. Bennet Meyers, "for the AAF does not go in for indiscriminate bombing attacks. But if we do need it, we've got a good one."

CIO No-Strike Pledge Renewed at Convention

The CIO convention in Chicago yesterday unanimously adopted a resolution renewing its no-strike pledge for the duration of the war after President Philip Murray urged it to "live up to its promises."

From Verdun, the Seventh, which had spearheaded the Third Army's drive across France, went on to Metz, and forced a bridgehead across the Moselle south of the city. That was in early September.

Orders came transferring the division to the U.S. First Army, then storming Aachen.

The division moved up to southern Holland and was clearing the

(Continued on Page 4)

This is where I joined them.



More People Like You

The editor of November 7 was such as to bring a lump to a dog's face's throat. It is more than touching to be told you are made of good stuff by somebody who ought to know...

We men were not given the choice of working on the battlefield or the homefront. We cannot take any personal credit for being here. We are here because we have to be.

It does not matter that we lie in mud—yes, crawl in it, while you only "wade ankle deep," or that you possibly enjoy a few more conveniences over here than we. The important thing is that you could be home, soaking yourselves in a bathtub every day...

I'd better stop now, because I'm getting sentimental, but I want you to know your "editorial" did not change, but only confirmed my deep respect for you modern Florence Nightingales.

Hash-Hound

How to make C-Ration hash eatable: Mix onion and flour with the hash and fry it in small thin patties.—Sgt. W. B. Clint.

World War III Blueprint

I've been a soldier 44 months, 24 spent overseas. I never failed to obey an order. Recently it has been circulated down through channels that we must not fraternize with the German civilians.

THE STARS AND STRIPES Printed at the New York Herald Tribune plant. It is published for the U.S. Armed Forces under auspices of the Special Service Division.

Hash Marks

Quip of the Week. A soldier stationed in the wilds of New Guinea was griping about Frank Sinatra. He observed, "If gals back in the States like guys with that lean, hungry look—just wait till we get home!"

GIs of the medical detachment of a field artillery battalion over here agree that T/S Oscar Sheriff has the best plan for punishing Hitler—have Adolf personally wallpaper every house that has to be reconstructed because of Nazi aggression.

We like Lt. P. J. Bernheim's definition: "Chivalry" he says, "is when a man wants to protect a girl from men who have ideas because he has the same idea himself!"



Our Own Sports Corner. For years sports writers have dreamed of the four-minute mile. Sez H. V. Wade: It looks like a man with a good chance of doing the perfect mile would be a homesick Hun with a strong wind and a Russian at his back.

Squib from the Classics. Hundreds of years ago in the Lowlands of Scotland, commanding officers had a hard time making their Ems wear helmets in the battle zone.

He belted on his gude braid sword. And to the field he ran; But he forgot the helmet good That should have kept his brain.

Sgt. Dave Kerten, a guy who is really on the ball, has reached a conclusion which leaves no corner in which to hang our head. He says, "When you copy from one source, it's plagiarism. When you copy from five sources, it's research."

And then there was the guy who proposed to "Miss America" through a Lonely Hearts Club only to discover that she had won her title in 1902.

Running Comment "What's out there on that hill?" a 90th Division captain asked a runner. "Germans," the runner said. "I can't see any of them."

Up Front with Mauldin



"Me future is settled, Willie. I'm gonna be a professor on types of European soil."

Something to Be Thankful For



TODAY—every day—we are thankful for this: For our villages, towns and cities still intact. For quiet fields and for houses with roofs and walls. For schools and churches that teach the truth.

worn clothed. Able to sleep throughout still nights. Able to awaken each morning, unafraid. For the chance to learn to rule ourselves—to continue our quest for an ever better way of life.

SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE

He Wasn't Color Blind!

A Third Armored Div. motor sergeant's quick eye for color harmony resulted in the capture of seven Germans and the recovery of a peep. When Third Armored tanks were rumbling through Belgium, S/Sgt. Herman B. Delaigie, of Waynesboro, Ga., by-passed a peep on his motorcycle.

Running Comment "What's out there on that hill?" a 90th Division captain asked a runner. "Germans," the runner said. "I can't see any of them."

Wild West(ern) Front

Many Germans speak English, but it took a Third Div. doughboy, Sgt. Warren C. Holton Jr., of Philadelphia, to find one who spoke Injun. Out on battle patrol with his Seventh Inf. section, Holton surprised a Nazi in a foxhole and got the Wild West surrender offer of "Hands up, hands up, Big Chief in next hole!"

Relatively Speaking

Lt. William D. Eisenbauer, of Denver, Col., is supreme commander of an Eighth Infantry Division quartermaster laundry platoon. He's a fifth or sixth cousin of another supreme commander named Eisenhower.

Great Thing—This Mail

It was a nice French farmhouse with thick walls, so a squad of 35th Division combat engineers made it their front-line home. One night, when they went on a mission beyond the American lines, they left Pfc John J. Famiglietti, of Glen Cove, N.Y., behind as "room orderly."

Nazis Play 'Dirty Pool'

Old hands at new tricks in the finer points of war, the Germans are playing dirty pool with the French in fighting along the Swiss border, the French claim. The Nazis back their artillery into pockets along the frontier and then fire. The

Another News Sheet

A couple of months ago, S/Sgt. Bill Hinton, of 5th Division's 47th Infantry and Crafton, Pa., originated one of the newest Army newspapers in the theater. Appropriately, he named it "The Overfried Gazette."

OPA at the Front

When an armored unit commanded by Lt. Col. Robert M. Booth took over a town he ruled it with a firm hand. Booth decided that beer prices were too high, so he ordered a uniform price of three francs a glass. All of the places agreed to co-operate except one. That place was closed.

Out of the Frying Pan

T/S Otto Ridgley, of 4th Infantry Division's 70th Tank Battalion, knows what it means to hop out of the frying pan into the fire. Ridgley was putting his shoe on when a 240mm shell burst close by, slashing off the heel of the shoe.

To Jerry, With Love

The "Wehrmacht Ammo Section" is the title given a group in the 90th Division's ordnance company. As the name would suggest, the unit provides ammunition for the Reich. Since October, it has returned, without POW charges, more than \$300,000 worth of captured ammunition.

Once Over Lightly

By Gene Graff
Sports Editor

JACK CARBERRY, sports editor of the Denver Post, didn't think patriotism would be such a costly gesture when he offered to give up his pressbox seat for today's Colorado-Denver football game to the purchaser of \$50,000 in War Bonds. But last night Carberry was slinking through Denver streets, trying to conceal his blushing face and also looking for a philanthropist who could be induced to buy \$75,000 worth of bonds.

Carberry, who will set up his typewriter this afternoon in the grandstand near one of the goal-lines, neglected to reckon with his past when he announced the magnanimous offer. But Alfred J. Bonfield, a Denver banker who came up with the \$50,000, didn't, and that's when the trouble began.

GALLANT Mr. Bonfield presented the expensive pasteborder to one of his girl employees. Not because he didn't want to see the game himself, but because he remembered Carberry had led a successful campaign last year to have women barred from the sacred confines of the pressbox.

Unless a better offer is received before game-time, Carberry not only will have to cool his heels in the grandstand—he'll see a pretty female face every time he glances toward the press section. And all because he wanted to lend a hand in selling bonds.

"I want someone to bid \$75,000," Carberry moaned last night, "and I want it to be a man who will sit there himself."

THE homefront experts who prognosticate for The Stars and Stripes each week during the football season are vacationing over Thanksgiving Day, so we'll have to crawl out on a limb to "assist" GIs who like to bet on football games.

For gullible people only, this is how today's games look from here:

- Tulsa 27, Arkansas 7.
- Missouri 7, Kansas 6.
- Wake Forest 19, South Carolina 0.
- Colorado 13, Denver 7.
- Drake 40, Wichita 13.

DiMaggio Denies He's Up for CDD On Return to NY

NEW YORK, Nov. 22. — S/Sgt. Joe DiMaggio, former New York Yankee outfielder who enlisted in February, 1943, is in town, but he refused to comment on his presence.

DiMaggio denied he was up for a CDD and refused to comment on his hospitalization in the Hawaiian Islands and in California. He said he had no plans about re-joining the Yankees.

Ed Barrow, Yankees' president, declared he knew nothing about the slugger's plans or whereabouts, adding he had not heard from DiMaggio since he went overseas.

Help Wanted —AND GIVEN

Write your question or problem to Help Wanted, The Stars and Stripes, Paris, France, APO 837.

- APOs WANTED
- SGT. Bernard Labasse; Sgt. Edward Lasser, N.Y.; Capt. Leo F. Le Gault; Col. Harry V. Lewis, Elizabeth, Ill.; Martha McClure, Philadelphia; William McKee, Cocoa, N.Y.; Lt. William Mabey, Springfield, Ohio; Col. Robert Mains, Bronx; Capt. James L. McShaffer; M/Plt. Thomas A. Moore; Capt. David Miller; Pvt. John W. Miller, 25914198; Maj. Paul Moore; Maj. Robert L. Moore, New Castle, Pa.; M/Plt. Porter Nelson, Leesville, Ill.; Capt. Woodrow E. Nichols, Fresno, Cal.
 - WAD Frances O'Boyle, Chicago; Pvt. Estanor M. O'Neil, Philadelphia; Pvt. John C. Ornelas, 37707889; Pvt. Peter Orvan, Worcester, Mass.; Pvt. Otto E. Parker, New Waterly, Tex.; Capt. Leonard Pepper, Daytona Beach; Pvt. Henry Phipps, Bay Minnieton, Minn.; Pvt. Ernest Rivera; Lt. Jessie Roberts, Ward, Tex.; Lt. Fredrico Roberts, Ft. Augusta, Robeson, N.C.; Lt. Mary Francis Rufener, Little Rock; Monty Rybicki.

Puck 'n' Goalie Hit Net



Ranger Goalie Ken McAuley (above) sits inside the cage after failing to stop the puck stuck by Herb Cain, of Boston, during a meeting in front of the net. Game ended in 5-5 tie. Left, Walter "Ants" Atanas, rookie Ranger right wing who spends his summers working in a restaurant, practices his off-season vacation across the street from Madison Square Garden.

Canucks Whip Bruins, 4-1, To Tie for Hockey Lead

BOSTON, Nov. 22.—The Montreal Canadiens collected two goals in each of the second and third periods here last night to defeat the Boston Bruins, 4-1, and gain a first place tie in the National Hockey League with the idle Toronto Maple Leafs.

Although he failed to score, Bill Cowley, veteran Boston forward, remained knotted for the scoring lead with Gus Bodnar of the Leafs.

Hockey Standings

Team	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Toronto	8	2	0	16	41	23
Montreal	8	2	0	16	41	23
Detroit	5	3	1	11	41	26
Boston	3	6	1	7	39	43
New York	1	5	2	4	24	41
Chicago	1	7	0	2	32	49

Leading Scorers

Player	G	A	Pts
Cowley, Boston	6	12	18
Bodnar, Toronto	4	14	18
Schriner, Toronto	11	6	17
Care, Toronto	7	9	16
Riske, Montreal	8	8	16
Smith, Chicago	4	8	12

Va. State vs. Morgan For Negro Grid Title

GREENSBORO, N.C., Nov. 22.—Virginia State declared the leading contender for the Negro Intercollegiate Athletic Association football championship by defeating the Greensboro Aggies, 25-0, in its last game.

Virginia State and Morgan College, both undefeated in league competition, will meet for the title in December.

Fight Pilot Fined

HARTFORD, Conn., Nov. 22.—Boxing Commissioner Frank Coskey today fined Tommy Die, manager of featherweight Cabey Lewis, \$50 for claiming publicly that Lewis had been short-counted out of a key victory over Champion Willie Pep here last week.



Georgia Tech to Play Tulsa in Orange Bowl

MIAMI, Nov. 22.—Bill Alexander's Georgia Tech eleven will face Tulsa, coached by Henry Frnka, in the Orange Bowl here New Year's Day, the sponsoring committee announced today. Last year Tech beat Tulsa, 20-18, in the Sugar Bowl at New Orleans.

Raiders Tackle Maroons Today

A GI Turkey Day gridiron dish will be served up to furloughing combat troops and permanent personnel in Paris this afternoon when the Engineer Raiders play the Engineer Maroons at the Red Star Olympic Stadium. Kickoff time is 2 P.M.

Lineups:

MAROONS	RAIDERS
Mellett	Alison
Desert	Orin
Krasznoski	Andrej
Deser	Lea
Kieler	MaYra
Chen	Thao
Wojcik	Turner
Fudowski	Tott
Paulaski	Overfield
Dunne	Zell
	Kieniski

Browns Sign Pitcher

ST. LOUIS, Nov. 22.—The St. Louis Browns have signed Southpaw Clyde Humphrey, formerly with Dallas of the Texas League. Humphrey, 32, recently was given a medical discharge from the Army.

Cadets Retain AP Poll Lead; Navy Second

NEW YORK, Nov. 22.—Navy, which scuttled Purdue, 32-0, in its final tuneup for the annual service classic against Army a week hence jumped from third to second place—right behind the Cadets—in the Associated Press' weekly poll of football writers.

Randolph Field's sturdy band of All-Americans and pros skidded from the second to fourth slot, despite a convincing 58-0 romp over Southwestern. Ohio State's unbeaten all-civilian eleven, which finishes its campaign Saturday against Michigan, hurdled over Randolph Field to occupy third place.

The Trojans of Southern California, virtually certain to represent the Pacific Coast in the Rose Bowl, appeared among the top ten for the first time this season, being eighth on the week's list parade.

The first ten teams, with first place votes and total votes:

Team	First Place Votes	Total Votes
Army	67 1/2	888
Navy	5	613
Ohio State	5	736
Randolph Field	11 1/2	686
Bainbridge Naval	4 1/2	412
Michigan	6	392
Iowa Pre-Flight	2	316
Southern California	1	242
Marsh Field	1	184
Georgia Tech	0	141

Tulsa Opposes Razorbacks

NEW YORK, Nov. 22.—Tulsa which today accepted a bid to play Georgia Tech in the Orange Bowl is the host to Arkansas' Razorbacks in the feature game of brief Thanksgiving Day collegial football program.

Other games scheduled for tomorrow are Kansas at Missouri I, a Big Six headliner, Wake Forest at South Carolina, Wake Forest at South Carolina, Wake Forest at Denver and Drake at Wichita.

Army-Navy Is Sellout

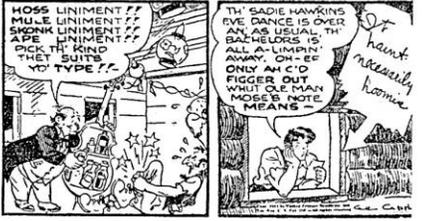
BALTIMORE, Nov. 22.—The Maryland War Finance Committee announced today, just 24 hours after the mail order ticket sale began that the supply of tickets for the Army-Navy football game here Dec. 2 had been exhausted. Tickets sold for \$4.80 each.

Goal-Line Scramble



Gridders pie up as Bill Paschal of the New York Giants carries the ball to Boston's one-inch line and, with a hand on the goal post, tries to haul himself the rest of the way. Teammate Len Calligaro plowed across on the next play for the first touchdown as the Giants overpowered the Yanks, 31-0.

By Al Capp



Plenty Smokes Sent Overseas, Is WD Claim

By Carl Larsen
Stars and Stripes U.S. Bureau.
WASHINGTON, Nov. 22.—A War Department official expressed the view today that any cigarette shortage in the ETO was due to distribution problems within the theater rather than to any procurement snafu on this side.

"There are sufficient cigarettes going over, there's no question about that," said the official, who declined to be quoted by name. "What happens after they get there is another matter."

The official added that no large cigarette cargo had been lost in transit and expressed the opinion that priority given to the unloading of munitions rather than cigarettes might have resulted in "a certain piling up" of shipments.

'An Unsolved Mystery'
At the same time the New York newspaper PM said that "what happens to cigarettes set aside for shipment to the armed services is one of the unsolved mysteries of the war."

It cited Internal Revenue Bureau figures as showing that 53,000,000-600 cigarettes, more than one-fourth of the total U.S. production, were withdrawn from warehouses in the first seven months of 1944 for the armed forces. Figuring 5,000,000

Officials Here Blame Scarcity of Gift Kits

A Com Z official in Paris last night denied that the shortage was due to distribution problems within the Theater. The official stated:

"The cigarette shortage is due to the lack of RAC gratuitous kits which have been the means of supplying combat soldiers with smokes. These kits have not arrived in sufficient quantities from the United States and as a result it has been necessary to draw upon cigarette bulk stocks of the Army Exchange Service to supply the combat troops."

men overseas, this total would provide more than 40 cigarettes a day per man. In addition, friends and relatives have purchased many cartons in retail stores to send overseas.

Cigarette production currently is at its highest level in history, PM reported. On the basis of production figures for the first seven months of 1944, the year's total production should reach 329,000,000, some 20,000,000 more than last year.

The newspaper also said that only a negligible proportion of U.S. cigarette production is sent abroad for customers other than U.S. troops and that "it is not true that the shortage was caused by lend-lease or other exports."

Col. Roosevelt Saved GIs From MPs, Civvie Charges

NEW YORK, Nov. 22.—A civilian's statement that an Army officer he identified as Col. Elliott Roosevelt, second son of the President, intervened in an early morning Broadway brawl over a taxicab and enabled four soldiers to leave before MPs arrived, was under investigation today by Army authorities.

Max Huddle, floor manager of a dance hall, said he fought the soldiers for 20 minutes after they dragged him from a taxicab which, he said, they wanted to use.

"I was still holding my own when a taxi drove up and two officers got out," Huddle said. "One was Col. Elliott Roosevelt and the other was a major whose name was not learned."

"The major took hold of me while Roosevelt pushed the soldiers aside and told them to scram. I moved toward the colonel to protest, but the major put his hand on my shoulder and said I was under arrest. Just then someone in the crowd said the MPs had arrived. "The colonel got into his cab

Pipe the WAC



Cpl. Josephine Cebula

WAC Blows Cigarette Troubles Away With Pipefuls of Tabacco

When WAC Cpl. Josephine Cebula didn't get any cigarette rations last week she started smoking a pipe. The tobacco was given by a friend who had saved a couple of extra packages. "I've been getting a lot of kidding but I don't mind," Cpl. Cebula said between puffs. "I enjoy smoking and I can't get cigarettes so this is the next-best thing."

The pipe is a small model with a stem three-inches long. The bowl holds about a cigarette-full of tobacco.

Cpl. Cebula works at the command desk in the file room of Com Z Ordnance section. Before enlisting 19 months ago, she was a hat-check girl at Toots Shor's restaurant in New York.

Eschweiler...

citizens—four women and five men. The civilians said, as German civvies always do, that SS and Gestapo had beaten the men, women and children in an effort to make them leave and that about 3,000 stayed behind, hiding in cellars and some in nearby woods.

This particular group had been told to leave by a Jerry Leole, but he left before he could see whether the order had been carried out. And again, like all Jerries, they said they had been waiting anxiously for us to come since they knew the war was lost. This line of talk didn't gather any great amount of sympathy from the interrogator, Cpl. Joseph Raffelli, of New York City, who has seen "too damned much damage and death caused by the Jerries," he said.

Rationed Arms Costing Lives, Says Roosevelt

Stars and Stripes U.S. Bureau.
WASHINGTON, Nov. 22.—President Roosevelt said yesterday that American soldiers' lives had been lost because of the necessity of rationing shells in Europe and joined in Gen. Eisenhower's urgent plea for increased production.

Soon after Eisenhower declared that he and his soldiers want "more supplies than we are getting," the President discussed the situation at his news conference. It is perfectly clear, he said, that not enough shells are being sent to the other side, that rationing resulted and this had been costly in life.

Urges War Workers Remain
Part of the trouble, the President said, is that people are quitting jobs in war plants because they want to get into civilian production as a hedge against post-war unemployment. Asking workers to stay on war jobs, Mr. Roosevelt expressed the opinion that conversion from war production to civilian production will be much quicker than most people expect.

Chairman J. A. Krug of the War Production Board revealed that Eisenhower, while still charting his drive on Germany, had sent word to production officials: "You tell us what you can deliver and we'll tell you when the war will end."

"We have tried to tell him," Krug said. "He has used the information to plan the attack. Now it is up to us to make good."

Labor, Industry to Aid Ex-GIs
WEIRTON, W.Va., Nov. 22 (ANS).—The Weirton Steel Co. and Weirton Independent Union have established a veterans' bureau at the Weirton steel plant to handle the re-employment of service personnel.

Teamsters End Strike
BOSTON, Nov. 22.—More than 2,000 striking truckdrivers voted today to return to work, ending a nine-day walkout. The strike arose from an AFL intra-union dispute.

40 Yanks...

Germans out from west of the Meuse, when it was assigned to protect the right flank of the British Second Army.

In Holland, the division's armor was stretched precariously thin over a 22-mile sector around Meijel. On Oct. 27 the Nazis aimed a counter-attack squarely against the U.S. sector.

The attack was launched against the town of Meijel, held by 43 men in all. Against them came rushing 200 German infantrymen, backed by Tiger and Panther tank formations.

While the Americans were holding their ground, the Nazis' major offensive developed to the north at Hettich.

When the Seventh moved away after this engagement Lt. Gen. Dempsey wrote to Maj. Gen. Lindsay M. Sylvester, commander of the division since its activation in March, 1942:

"... You were heavily outnumbered, but by holding firm as you did, you gave me time to bring up necessary reserves. I appreciate the high fighting qualities which your division showed." But greater praise came from the German radio. German forces, Berlin said, were engaged in "very heavy fighting with numerically superior forces."

Some More Tired Old Supermen



Exhausted German prisoners of war, worn out trying to halt the Russian armies' advance toward the Reich, stolidly await shipment to internment camps. By September, the Red Army had captured 41 Nazi generals and hundreds of thousands of Wehrmacht troops.

Rhine Sighted Jeeves' Creator Jailed in Paris

(Continued from Page 1)
German border at that point. At a number of places along the Seventh's advance, organized German opposition was falling apart into pockets of resistance.

West of Saverne, the 44th Division advanced eight miles northeast of Siewiller, 10 miles northeast of Sarrebourg, while the 100th Division met a counter-attack thrown in to cover German withdrawals. The 103rd Division entered Metz, north of St. Die, and the 36th Division neared the Bonhomme pass.

In Lorraine, the Third Army's 96th Division cut across the German border after about a ten-mile gain northeast of Metz.

All Resistance Ends
Stars & Stripes Correspondent Earl Mazo with the Third Army reported that Metz was officially turned over to French authorities yesterday morning by Maj. Gen. Walton H. Walker, XX Corps Commander, and at 1435 hours all resistance in the city ceased with the surrender of Germans in the Moselle River islands.

Mazo said that several forts outside the city, including Driant, still held out. On the U.S. First Army front northeast of Aachen infantry cleared Eschweiler, Durwiss and Lohr, and gained along the entire front, but fighting was stubborn on the army's right flank in the Hurtgen Forest, Stars and Stripes Correspondent G. K. Hodentfield reported from Germany.

British Scientist Dies
CAMBRIDGE, Eng., Nov. 22 (Reuter).—Sir Arthur Eddington, 61, a leading authority on the application of Einstein's theory of relativity died today.

'Tigers'...

(Continued from Page 1)
a passing jeep and occupants of the jeep.

In one small field by a road block engineers uncovered more than 150 mines. During the first part of the advance one armored engineer lieutenant commanding a platoon in the 55th Eng. Bn., enraged by the danger to his men of German mines, ordered the GIs into ditches and went alone ahead of the tanks with a mine detector. Later he rode the lead tank of the column and at every suspicious spot stopped and jumped off to work the mine detector ahead of the tanks.

With columns of the division branching off at one point, the signal men had a hellish time. They worked a straight 36 hours, laying over 300 miles of telephone lines alone.

Terry And The Pirates



By Courtesy of News Syndicates.



By Milton Caniff



By Milton Caniff



How They Took Metz

Since the year 451 AD when Attila's Huns came roaring down from the north to pillage the Lorraine capital, the ancient city of Metz has lain like a rare stone in a jeweler's window, secure within its twin necklaces of fortresses. Recently an era ended. The last of the Metz fortresses, Jeanne d'Arc, fell to our maddy infantrymen in the cold December twilight of this winter war. Metz, for the first time in 20 centuries of immunity to every type of warfare in history, was taken by storm.

The assault on Metz will become required study material for future students at West Point. Here, they will find, is a beautifully planned, superbly executed battle—a battle conceived by Generals who plot their victories with red and blue pins stuck in huge wall maps and speak in terms of pincers movements. They handled divisions like a fine conductor at the podium of the New York Philharmonic, expertly blending several elements to achieve a desired effect.

Most of all, however, they will be struck with the remarkable performance of the dripping, cursing GIs who beat the mud, the weather, and the enemy and wrote a bright new page in military history.

By Ed Wilcox
Warweek Staff Writer

IN the heyday of the Roman Empire it took a man with a cart a day and a half to travel from Thionville to the Gaulic commercial center of Metz. In 1944 it took the XXth Corps, packed with martial might, 72 days to traverse those 41 kilometers.

The Roman traders found the journey an enjoyable one over the broad roads lined on either side with green forests, and the crossing of the Moselle at Metz was simply a matter of walking across the bridge.

The 1944 winter march of the XXth Corps was a bitter trip over muddy thoroughfares lined on either side by dense woods which hid German snipers. Innocent hillside turned out to be formidable fortresses and the ribbon-like Moselle, became a bridgeless barrier of swift-running, icy water.

The trek of the XXth Corps into Metz is the story of an army which became the first in 2,000 years to achieve a military knockout of the most extensively fortified region of Europe.

In the early days of September, after the record Third Army sweep across France which had sent the Wehrmacht reeling back against the Siegfried Line, Patton's men pulled up at the Moselle, waiting for gasoline, supplies, and plans.

Attacked Across Moselle

On the morning of September 8 a battalion of the 11th Regiment of the Fifth Division opened the drive for Metz, attacking across the Moselle south of the city at a town called Dornot. They crossed in assault boats under heavy fire from the opposite bank—small arms, automatic weapons, and artillery.

During the ensuing 48 hours the muddy infantrymen were under constant fire from every side and their only weapons were what they had been able to carry with them in the frail assault craft. The Dornot bridgehead became a miniature Anzio and the Germans launched 36 separate vicious counter-attacks in the two days, coming in with terrifically superior fire-power.

The Yanks dug in, dug deeper, and tried to fight back with what little they had—small arms and grenades. Their position was hopeless and the Germans kept coming in, wave after wave of them, spraying the narrow bridgehead with machine-gun fire, rocking the pocket with 88s mounted on Tiger tanks.

The Germans Wheeled

September 10 the Tenth Regiment, supported by elements of the Seventh Armored Division, threw another bridgehead across the river 2,000 yards to the south of Arnville. The Germans wheeled and directed their fire upon the new threat and the Dornot men—those who were left, pulled themselves from their foxholes and got back across the

Moselle—some in boats, others swimming in the icy current.

The Arnville bridgehead expanded as the armor fanned out. The fighting was heavy, but it was not the lop-sided battle which had been fought during the abortive landing at Dornot. The Fifth was solidly across the Moselle to stay.

Because of the incomplete maps of the Metz terrain, which failed to show the true extent of the fortifications surrounding the city, losses in the division were especially great as attacks were sent against the Metz forts.

Fort Driant, probably the most heavily armed of the double chain around the city, was attacked twice. The first attempt to take Driant was thrown back before the infantrymen reached the summit of the hill. Fire from Jeanne d'Arc on a neighboring ridge supplemented the guns of Driant.

The second attack on Fort Driant came late in September. The weather was rainy and wet and the infantrymen slipped in the ankle-deep mud as they made their way up the steep, wooded hillside and along the ridge to hit at the fort.

Upon reaching the top of the hill they were stopped by a moat 40 feet wide and 30 feet deep. They hadn't expected that. Tanks supporting the attack moved up and blasted away at the stone and steel entrances in the hillside and tore gaping holes in the twin aprons of barbed wire along the bottom of the moat.

The infantrymen who managed to escape the lethal cross-fire of German machine guns trained from every angle around the fort swarmed over the hilltop, searching for an entrance to the fort. They dropped heavy charges down the ventilation shafts and many died trying to reach the entrance to the rabbit warren of tunnels where the garrison held out. When Driant finally fell on December 9 bodies of American dead still lay unburied on the Driant approaches and burned-out U.S. tanks told the grim story of the failure of the major attack in force on the underground bastion.

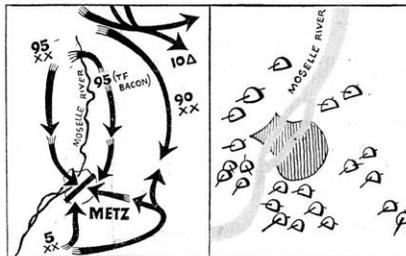
A Story of Men

That was the story of the frustrating, early unsuccessful efforts to crack the toughest nut attacked by an Allied army in Europe to date. It was a tale of bitter, uphill fighting in miserable, cold weather. A story of men who were killed in finding out how to take Metz. It was through their sweat and blood that the final plan for the Metz operation was made possible.

Acting upon a Third Army order to "take Metz and eliminate the German resistance in the Saar Valley," the XXth Corps staff conceived a historic "Field Order," which was, by means of co-ordinated attack, to take the fortress city. Planned by Maj. Gen. Walton H. Walker, XXth Corps commander, and his staff, the Field Order called for the use of the Fifth, 95th and 90th Divisions, the Tenth Armored Division and the Sixth Cavalry Group.



MARCHING THROUGH METZ—Grim struggle which preceded march isn't indicated in these three shots of Fifth Infantry Division warriors in action. (Top) Lone Yank passes American anti-tank gun parked at side of road on outskirts of town. (Left) Footsloggers halt a moment before proceeding with street cleaning job. (Right) Fingers on triggers, "Diamond" Division Doughboys march captured German gun crew off to prisoner of war pen.



DIVISIONAL ROUTES (left) show how Metz was attacked, and pillboxes (right) show the defenses that ringed the fortress-city.

The job delegated to the 90th Infantry was the destruction of the Maginot Line fortifications running north to south to the east of Metz. At the same time the Fifth was to drive out of their bridgehead south of Metz, swinging northeast around the city. The 95th was strung along the Moselle in a thin line and was to make a diversionary attack across the Moselle at Uckange to force a commitment of German forces for what would appear to be the main effort.

German officers captured after the fall

of Metz said that with the Moselle on the rampage, swollen to a 25-year high, they had figured that only madmen would have attempted a landing operation by assault boats. The Field Order had made provision for the German wrong-guessers, too.

A Task Force

Two landings near Uckange, north of Metz, made by the 95th Division met little enemy opposition so the two forces, consisting of men of the 377th, 378th regiments, of the 95th, the 80th TD Battalion, the 920th FA Battalion, the 320th Engineers, the 95th Recon Troop, and a company of light tanks from the 728th Tank Battalion, were combined as a task force.

This group, labeled "Task Force Bacon" was put under command of a silver-haired, mild-mannered little colonel from Texas, Robert L. Bacon. He looks about like the guy who taught you algebra in high school, or the man who was treasurer of the Rotary Club back home—he looks like anything but a conquering lion, but Colonel Bacon's achievements with his task force are probably among the most colorful of the many heroic episodes which cram the days that took Metz.

Using tank destroyers to blast out snipers and firing his 155 self-propelled guns at pistol range, Colonel Bacon swept along the east bank of the Moselle directly toward Metz, riding hard on the weary Jerries like a Texas cowboy at a Madison Square Garden rodeo.

After three days of sporadic messages from the colonel, General Walker sent a lieutenant down to find out what Colonel Bacon was doing. Before the junior officer could open his mouth, Colonel Bacon had said, "Just the guy I've been looking for—get over there where those men are clearing those mines and get to work." The lieutenant was too surprised to protest. Four days later the harried lieutenant returned to Corps, older, wiser, and with a Purple Heart. "Damned good man," Colonel Bacon said, and telephoned headquarters, "Operation going well—send me a new staff."

On Nov. 19 Task Force Bacon, the 5th, 95th, and 90th entered Metz to begin the house-to-house cleanup of the city. Two Fortresses, Jeanne d'Arc and Driant, still held out, but those were simply islands of resistance. Metz had fallen.

On Sept. 22 all resistance in Metz had ended and a huge celebration was underway. The young girls of the Lorraine city came out into the streets to cheer the Yanks in brightly colored costumes and every general and colonel in the Corps became an honorary private or corporal in the French Army—a gesture of thanks from the French for the liberation of their city.

Once called La Pucelle (the "Virgin") by the French because it had never been taken by storm, Metz and her fortresses, despite the centuries of fortification and face-lifting, had fallen.

The Joes themselves had done another job. They paid little attention to the historic background of Metz. To them it had been just another hard, bitter fight on the way to Berlin.

They walked through the streets of the ancient city, guns thrown over their shoulders, and were surprised to encounter bilingual "gum chums"—kids who could beg for candy and gum in either French or German. The Yanks, as usual, laughed and gave their rations away.

Many of the doughs visited the antique Gothic cathedral in the heart of Metz. They removed their steel helmets as they entered and crossed themselves before the altar. And they knelt together and prayed silently, Catholics, Jews, Protestants alike. They all felt that it was important there. Then they stood up and left the church, set their helmets at a rakish angle, and ambled through the narrow streets, smiling at the pretty girls, and trying to remember the things that they never learned in that French Phrase Book.

"I saw a young German first
 because of this - this. Dec. 1944"



CONSOLIDATION OF BRIDGEHEAD—First bridge across Moselle insured supplies and reinforcements for troops who had established bridgehead below Metz, ancient Lorraine bastion.

In the margin John wrote:
 Joined them just before this. This, huh, was my 'baptism' of combat.

Grand Rapids Press Wednesday, 19 Dec 1945
List of homeward bound servicemen.
(See letter page 110 about watching the lists of names.)

Homeward Ho!

Only two Grand Rapids soldiers and two from western Michigan communities were named on Tuesday's and Wednesday's passenger lists of veterans returning from overseas.

The local servicemen, who landed Tuesday aboard the USS Bernard Carter at Boston were T/S Charles E. Kregel, 1018 Benjamin-av., S. E., and Pfc. Edwin Zylstra, 641 McKendrick-st., S. W. Arriving on the same ship was Pfc. Norman L. Dole of Hudsonville.

T/4 Andrew L. Peterson of Kent City, due to dock at New York Wednesday on the USS Richard Rush, rounds out the brief roster of returnees.

Past arrivals include:

On the USS Eurcna which landed at New York Monday were Sgt. Leonard S. Hilaski, 750 Chatham-st., N. W.; Cpl. John P. Hazenberg, 1025 Helen-st., N. E.; Cpl. Edward L. Razmus, 835 Bridge-st., N. W.; Cpl. John Chase, 335 Grandville-av., S. W.; Cpl. Raphael Ambrose, 864 Butterworth-st., S. W.; Cpl. Paul W. Cook, 1120 Kalamazoo-av., S. E.; Sgt. Nicholas T. Assaley, 336 Cass-av., S. E.; Pfc. Max A. Lewis, Pfc. Lawrence S. Duley, Pvt. Clarence F. Baker, Cpl. Walter F. Sruba, Warrant Officer John H. VanDenBosch and S/Sgt. Bruce B. Bodine for whom no local addresses could be found.