

Anthony F. Simone
World War II Notes

19yrs old to Camp Shank in N.Y.C. -When interviewed was asked (being of Italian descent) "If you came face to face with an Italian would you shoot him?" Answered "I doubt it. I'd probably go inside and spaghetti with him." Immediately dispatched to Germany.

Going over on the Queen Elizabeth was a breeze. So huge you didn't even know you were on a ship. Landed in England then on to France after that it was just as fast as we could go - chasing the Germans. Had heard stories of how tough and advanced they were. I saw horse drawn equipment on steel wheels. I was with the 731st Field Artillery/3rd Army/ "C" Battery under General George Patton.

Moving along and stopping at certain locations, setting up the guns and firing at whatever we were instructed to, then moving on and seeing the destruction we did in blown up buildings and dead bodies. In the morning it was foggy. - clear about 2 feet off the ground and then thick fog. As it cleared you saw nothing but dead horses, cows, & people. We had troop coming at the Germans from all directions, even from Russia to help them because the Germans were kicking the snot out of the Russians.

As we moved through Belgium & Luxembourg it was winter and we were sleeping in the snow. We were looking for some wood to burn to keep warm and came upon this garage. Looking in we could see crates piled up so we broke in and found the crates full of cognac. We got warm that night. We left a case at each gun site. We then got orders to move out and the commander discovered

the cognac and ordered us to bury it. We did and then went back to dig it up and take some with us. You could tell if they were German planes coming in - They had a different sound than ours. I heard them coming and jumped off this piece of equipment and into a fox hole and heard the bullets right next to you. When coming out I saw the bullet holes next to my finger prints when entering.

Another time German dropped bombs and I dove into a hole created by a tree that had been uprooted. Shrapnel flew everywhere and saw our tents shredded[shredded] and collapse as though they had the air let out of them. I looked just at the moment a a friend and comrade got hit in his left side chest and blood came gushing out - he was gone. Earlier that day he had given me a letter to send home to his girlfriend to tell of his promotion. I still of course sent the letter.

Some guys had me write their girlfriend a letter and got a kick out of listening to me read them and then signed it themselves. Years later at a reunion some of the wives wanted to meet me and tell me how much they loved the letters I wrote.

German planes called "Bed Check Charlie" flew over at night to keep us awake and tried to tire us by not getting our sleep. Our planes were called "Black Widow" that had night vision sights and picked the German planes out of the sky.

At one point a 6 x 6 rack truck came

3

down the road and when it got to where we could see the back it was full of dead bodies and it stopped and a couple of guys on the ground would grab a dead body, each grabbing a leg & an arm and throw it up on the truck while the two on the truck stepping all over the dead soldiers on the truck would grab the new one thrown on and throw it further up on the truck.

There was not time for proper burial. They dug long trenches for mass burial and planted grass-then set rows & rows of white crosses as though each soldier had a private burial site

One other time at night German planes were shooting tracers (which lit up the sky) that showed our equipment (bulldozers, etc) out in the field. They started to fire and our commander yelled to get that stuff out of there so me and another guy jumped out and ran and jumped on to drive them to the woods for cover. I could hear the bullets coming down all around. This did scare me so much it affected my bowels and as soon as I got it to cover I jumped off and had to squat behind a tree before I filled my pants (behind a tree for my cover also so I wouldn't get shot in the back)

Stripes taken away & given back——

One picky Lt. (always seemed to pick on our group) told me one time to put these two big tires on our gun just to transport them. I told him “Are you kidding, we don’t even have enough room for the material we need. Let the _____ take care of their own stuff. He took stripes away - I didn’t care - more important things to worry about than stripes. He ended up injured by burning gunpowder and take back. Another Lt. came in to replace him and heard about the picky Lt. and gave me my stripes back although I never put them on - we didn’t have time.

It was raining & snowing once and I was polishing our gun and cleaning around the gears where you opened to put the bullets and a General Brown saw me and asked who the soldier was out there cleaning the gun (probably thought I was a nut out in the rain & snow like that) but gave me a citation for meritorious service. Wasn’t until a few years ago (50 yrs or so later) my wife sent info on citation (as I never got medal) and they sent me the Bronze Star.

Zigfried[Siegfried] Line was a joke - there[they] were for[four] lines of concrete posts, staggered, as far as you could see. You could walk between them and by the time we got there our dozers had pushed dirt up on them and made a road we drove over them.

The Battle of the Bulge was so fierce - the order was to fire at will as fast and as much as can and the guns got so hot the barrels expanded and bullets were to[too] loose in them. They had to take these guns back for repair ? and send up new guns. Camouflage of our guns wasn’t much help the guns got so hot they melted the snow all around them which exposed their location. Coming home was worse than the war - smaller ship, the “Liberty” Ship, waves threw it up & down and all over - sicker than a dog - heaving - wanted to die.