

REGT. HQ. CO.

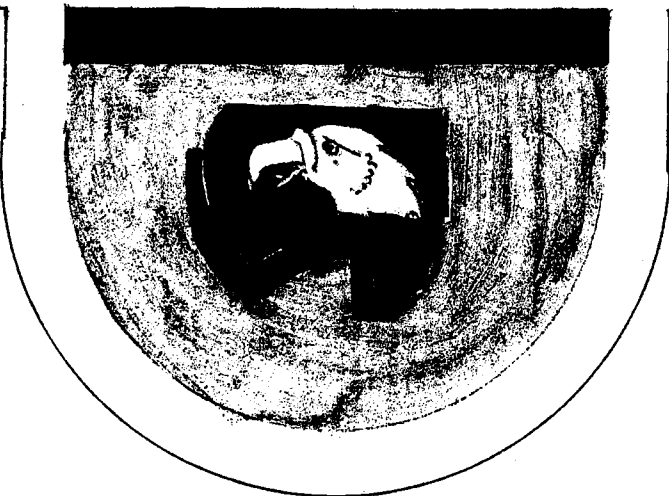


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PART I
 KEY PERSONNEL

Captain Alfred J. Grinnell New York	01315819	Commanding Officer
Captain Charles H. Ewing Kentucky	0354366	Commo Officer
1st Lt Donald J. Claudepierre Ohio	0555932	Executive Officer
1st Lt William W. McMillan Washington	02006172	I & R Platoon Ldr
WOJG James W. Degan Illinois	W2131832	Ass't Commo Officer
M-Sgt Ray B. Bufkin New York	6271457	Commo Chief
1st Sgt James V. Owens Texas	38164897	1st Sgt
T-Sgt Harry L. McKeown Pennsylvania	33793032	I & R Platoon Sgt
T-Sgt Howard W Stemple West Virginia	20544339	Radio & Visual Chief
S-Sgt Franklin R Floyd Kansas	37620472	Mes s Sgt
S-Sgt Hyman Gitlin New York	32106793	Supply Sgt
S-Sgt Ernest B Jacobs South Carolina	14117589	Wire Chief
S-Sgt Clyde F McPhetrige Nebraska	37060150	Motor Sgt
S-Sgt John C Patrick Texas	18006397	M-C Chief

PART II

PLATOON NARRATIVE

By 1st Lt William W. McMillan

I & R PLATOON:

During the middle of May 1943, the Oregon sun was making fitful and feeble attempts to break thru the everpresent clouds of rain that drenched the birthplace of the 70th Infantry Division, Camp Adair Oregon, Swamps Adair as it was reverently nicknamed by former students of its muddy fields.

At that time the Regt'l I & R Platoon consisted of two persons; the dynamic and voluble 2nd Lt Earl H Willis the platoon leader from the bayous of Louisiana and the platoon sergeant, S-Sgt William W. McMillan.

From that time until the arrival of the fillers in the latter part of the following August, the Officers and NCO's spent all their days and too many nights going thru the rigors of cadre training. Close order drill, physical training and the most basic infantry drill. The old army 1st sergeants became quiet proficient in doing a snappy right face and to the rear march. These intricate commands were given by the recently graduated Officers of Fort Benning, Georgia. Having been in the army for six months to a year, these Officers were well qualified to instruct the NCO's, a good many of whom who possessed more hash marks than stripes in their chevrons.

Such was our state when the homesick, bewildered fillers with their new shoes and baggy pants arrived to upset the peace and tranquility of Camp Adair. Basic started off with a bang on the morning of 7 September 1943 with the 1st sergeants' bellows, "Fall out for Revielle", at the ungodly hour of 0545. What a sight that first morning; leggins on backwards (if they had anyon at all), fatigues draping like grandfathers nightshirt. It was interesting to note that some of the men took two or three steps before the movement was noticed in the capious folds of clothing. But the men soon grew to fill out the garments abetted by the secret process of all G I laundries enabling them

to shrink clothing to any size desired. It was also interesting to note how the men become accustomed to take their rifles everywhere but to chow, when Floyd R. Fredrickson fell out one morning for revielle with his rifle.

Constantly dashing from one class to another, close order drill, mastering the art of keeping in step with the man in front, military courtesy, the first awkward salutes, rifle marksmanship, with a weapon that seemed to weigh as much as a field artillery piece at the end of a long day. Those five and ten mile marches with the resultant aching backs and burning, complaining feet. Wearing away a G I brush to nothing but a block of wood cleaning an already spotless mess kit in preparation for inspection. The trip to the coast, during which no girl was left unmolested and no bottle was left unopened. The Monday morning that Gomez fell out for a march with his pack upside down. He had a fair resemblance of an Indian with the handle of his shovel sticking high above his head to say nothing of how puzzling it was to the NCO's trying to figure out how his equipment was hanging on him. Some men learned fast, one was on K P so much his squad leader found him cleaning his rifle with steel wool and consequently was found to be scrubbing pots and pans the next day. The I & R numbered 35 men then, hardy rugged men by this time.

So the end of basic came around on 17 December 1943, accompanied by those long hoped for furloughs. However, the end of basic brought our first POE shipment. Within 6 weeks the platoon strength was reduced to 7 men and one officer and even he was sweating out the next list. Then replacements including a new platoon leader, Lt Harold Rohde from the AAF.

Unit and combined training followed with the platoon conducting no end of raids on the battalion problems. There was quiet a discussion when a patrol got into a battalion C P tent and found the entire battalion staff curled in the dark recesses of their sleeping bags. The Battalion Commander was unaware of the fact that he lost his insignia of rank and cross rifles in

the process of the infiltrating patrol.

Then still another POE list and our third platoon leader, 2nd Lt Cecil F. Branford (now Captain) of the 70th RCN Troop. We were shapped up pretty well as a combat team by this time and felt safe of the men as far as their training had been responded to. Rumors! We were going to Texas, to Alaska, to the Islands and various other comments that all proved you never know what might happen next. On 22 August 1944 we arrived at a train station with the faint music of Oh Susiana being beat out by the 70th Infantry band at Fort Leonard Wood Missouri.

COMMO PLATOON NARRATIVE

By Captain Charles H. Ewing

The account herein given deals with the small group of men that make up a regimental communication platoon. This of course we want emphasize - deals with the 275th Regimental communication platoon that will be remembered more than likely for crossed wires, static on the radio and misplaced messages.

The account - may it be called history since the terms is applied to accounts worthy to be remembered and recorded - begins with the arriving of a certain cadre on the 15 May 1943 at Camp Adair, Oregon. The NCO's who formed the nucleus of the organization were from 91st Division of Camp White, Oregon: M-Sgt Bufkin, Commo Chief; S-Sgt Cade, Radio Chief; S-Sgt Overholt, Wire Chief; and S-Sgt Cahill, Message Center Chief. Other NCO's accompanied the stripes, chief among those being Tec 4th Gr Immerfall. The communication Officer, Capt Ewing (then Lt) arrived 21 May 1943 fresh out of the communication course, Ft Benning, Georgia, all enthused with communications new ideas. The new Commo held his first meeting on the 23rd June with his new charges in a dilapidated CCC building, soon to become improved in appearance with grass cutting and alteration and need were added - a good old fashion G Ing. Grass cutting in the regimental area was right in form for those days and took up most of our time. However the telephone and "dit da dit" boy managed to devote most of their time to the commo building and in a little while there developed a supply, radio repair, class and a code room which all the commos were justly proud.

Our first few days in the field as the 275th Infantry was composed of cadre problems, a combination of all officers and NCO's in the division to make our half size regiment for the exercise. The first such problem introduced was "Prune Ridge" an engagement for which we haven't yet received a combat star.

The division was proudly activated on 15 June 1943 and found the cadre Non-Coms still trying to figure each other out, including the new Commo Officer who by this time had concluded all in the books mastered at Ft Benning was quiet difficult to put

into operation. With more grass cutting and cadre problems, which too soon became monotonous, the glad day the arrival of fillers rolled around on 20 August 1943.

On 7 September 1943 the last of the new G I's arrived and the communications platoon was full strength and raring to get into training. The basic "MTP" training was soon completed but one of the first serious blows was the fall to the platoon. At its completion some twenty-two new men were selected for POE shipment as overseas replacements to battle for their country with the training instilled in them in the last 13 weeks. This put the platoon back to practically all Non-Coms again as in cadre days, but training in the next phase continued as scheduled. Later we were again put up to T/O strength with arrival of Air Corps men who had already had basic rifle training, but still had to have all the fine points of training as communication men.

With the Air Corps men we also received a few men from induction centers who hadn't forgotten, "Greetings" from FDR. With the burden of extra training for these men, in addition to carrying on advance training, we attacked Prune Ridge repeatedly, got stuck in the famous mud of a fall in Oregon while on communication problem and cursed the fact that the army would pick such a rainy, cold locality as a training center.

About this time a "MR" entered our mist, No, not a civilian but just WOJG Mr Degan, assistant Commo Officer. He was well received as a part of the gang and soon was as much a part of us as Portland is of Oregon.

"Alls well that ends well" tho and the RCT's were completed without any casualties except for wounded pride and feelings. Then came the question "Where will we maneuver, if we maneuver?" This soon was answered by the announcement that there would be none. Then rumors started circulating concerning a move to Ft Leonard Wood, Missouri. We reached Ft Leonard Wood, completed training and found out that it was mor' or less a modified staging area. Soon the news came about a "Top Secret" order directing the division to a POE. It was the thing

it was real! We were hot and going overseas! With this, there was too many details to be mentioned here, - inspections of personnel and communication equipment, requisition, and beacoup inspections and parades for brass hats from far away places like Washington. Soon, before we knew it, we were on our way via train to a "secret destination" and after a short wait beside the sea, walked up that last mile into the guts of a big tub which was to take us to far away places where more history was to be written. The officers and men to walk up the gang plank as key personnel of the communication platoon were: Commo O, Captain Ewing; Assistant Commo O, Mr Degan; Commo Chief M/Sgt Bufkin; Radio Chief, T/Sgt Stemple, Wire Chief, S-Sgt Chambers; M/C Chief Patrick.

The boat trip was as you'd expect, (and probably have experienced) crowded, in line for meals 24 hours per day, boat drill, that affliction called sea sickness, time on deck and finally after a week of false sightings - lands, and "the Rock!" No one seemed to feel any better because the 20% had started operating. Then came Marsèilles, CP 2, rain for about a week and finally that pass to see the sights. The French women, wine and song soon took the strain out of the trip and communication problems of arriving equipment, broken wires, fading stations and unfound addresses. It was all too short lived for soon a convoy started north through scenes of destruction and our first glimpse of war. The Rhine defenses was our first mission and not too difficult from a communication stand point. The beer was good and the war seemed far away, yet there was always a reminder that this certainly wasn't home! New Years eve the advance party moved to Phillisberg, France for a bang up party - namely a strong German attack. When the rest of the platoon arrived the next day they experienced communication troubles as never before. The hills were high and wooded and the radio men sweated. Mortar shells were falling on the lines as fast as the linemen could put them in; linemen rarely slept. On the last day the platoon had its first casualty, Cpl Haffner who was wounded while repairing a line outside the CP. Gladly leaving the scenes of combat they moved to static, striking Guebenhouse. The platoon next casualties were incurred in a wreck with a 63rd Signal Company wire truck when the two wire teams working on the same line under strict blackout conditions collided. PFC Edward Breland, killed, Wire Chief, S/Sgt Chambers

seriously injured and eventually evacuated to the states. The last casualty was PFC Thompson who was killed when his wire peep was bracketed by enemy rockets during the Regiments attack on Saarbrucken, Germany. The platoon days of schnapps were over after 87 straight days on the line we entered Saarbrucken. The town was empty, the cellars were full and in time so was the entire platoon. Victory was rewarded with champagne, the sound of combat was replaced by ~~bursting~~ champagne corks! As the platoon moved farther into Germany the areas become larger and the lines longer. They lost resemblance to a combat communication platoon and became the 275th T & T, but this is what division attempted to do Our task now is occupation, - or C B I - who can tell, that's history and can't be told until time takes time to write it with its slow but certain hand. And thus ends the history of the 275th Infantry Regt'l communication platoon. Much remains to be written, details both humorous and tragic, yet never near words can never describe what each individual has lived and thought of during those periods of relaxment and days when ~~one~~ realized God was the one who "giveth and taketh away".

Communications to us in Regiment is still the same slogan as our weather brother of the Signal Corps-"get the message through" - We in the Infantry in the same job who are close to living and dying know the importance of that.

PREPARATION FOR AND OVERSEAS MOVEMENT

On arriving at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, an Engineer basic Training Center, we found our living quarters in a condition that perhaps some form of animal life had inhabited the place. Working after duty hours with a brush and soap we neatly and quickly got our new home the way Camp Adair was left, a decent place to live.

The sun was hot and training was difficult but the Trailblazers couldn't be licked at this stage of the game. Our field problems were many and complicated. We completed various stages of training, including day and night infiltration. Also a certain percent of the company fired most of the Infantry weapons. As training neared its completion, rumors were still circulating and comments about this division going overseas.

We were receiving replacements from various places primarily from the Army Air Force as most men from there were trained in some specialized job and would make an ideal infantryman. ASTP and IRTC also returned some of their enlisted men. This added the college and campus air.

It was here we started to lead the regiment in new Company Commanders. Previously we had two and now our 3rd CO was assigned. Capt Schmeid only commanded the company a short time, then taking a post on the Regimental staff. Major Jean (then Captain) assumed command and steered the company through the rough waters for approximately 6 months. When our training was complete and we were "Fit to Fight and Ready to Go", we began to prepare for our overseas shipment. Much time and hard work was needed to pack and crate our equipment. Everything was strictly secret as far as the move was concerned, but stencils reading "Boston Port of Embarkation" were issued to mark the boxes enabling most G I's to know in what direction we were going. The crating was completed in about 2 weeks when we were whisked out of Ft Leonard Wood, Missouri and arrived at Camp Myles Standish, Mass on 20 November 1944.

Most men will remember their first greeting at this camp as the train arrived a loud speaker beamed forth with "You are

now at a secret base and you cannot write, telephone or send a telegram until notified by your commanding officer." Then a little jazz music and off to your new quarters. Considering all the elements of army life, this was a fair place to stay. On 6 December 1944, 275th Infantry sailed from Boston Port of Embarkation to Marseilles, France.

PART IV COMBAT DIARY

Many of us saw our first sight of war torn Europe, some believing war could not be so destructive, later finding this was only the beginning. We were among those troops fortunate enough to ride to the staging area, frequently spoken about as C P 2. We received the remaining part of our equipment and sweated out the next move.

December 22, 1944: A day to remember as approximately 75% of the company was put on the famous French 40 & 8 cars for a trip north. We figured out the 40 & 8 later on, 40 G I's or 8 horses was the capacity. Not much room was left for a comfortable place to sit when we pulled out of C P 2 area for a destination we had no idea where.

December 23, 1944: Still riding in a northerly direction. We had at this time learned some of the tricks of sleeping and cooking in a crowded place. The mess personnel were selected among which were: Capt Grinnell (then 1st Lt); 1st Sgt Owens (then T/Sgt); and T/4th Williams. This crew did the cooking for the men aboard and also the KP. In getting the men to bed we slept head to foot and got some idea just how sardines feel when they want to turn over to the other side.

December 24, 1944: We experienced our first casualty on this date. At 1100 a can of gasoline caught fire in the car. The fire spreading rapidly over one end of the car before it was extinguished. During the fire Cpl Lawrence become panicky and jumped from the train which was moving about 30 miles per hour, breaking his leg.

December 25, 1945: Arrived at Brumath, France where we could be shelled by artillery fire. We marched 6K with full field equipment in a little snow. Most men wore shoe packs and their feet looked like a peeled onion. We reached Weyersheim, France at 1000 and no chow was available. By courtesy of the American Red Cross Director, Mr Ortalle, our Christmas dinner consisted of one K ration for 19 men.

The remaining part of the company drove the organic vehicles to Weyersheim. The company was quartered in the school house, ordinarily accomidating 50 pupils.

December 26,27,28 and 29, 1944: Most of this time was spent in getting accustom to saying "Wrecker" instead of "Magic" and the radio section was constantly listening for kroust interference. I & R platoon made their first combat patrol during this time.

December 30, 1944: CP moved to Sessenheim, France

December 31, 1944: We were still confused and wondered just what was going on. Elements of the 42nd Division occupied our sector and we were ordered to proceed to Barenthal, France, occupy defend and take the offensive on orders. A celebration was had by some members of the company using wine and alcohol. It was the first New Years overseas, being happy for one night resulted in a terrible headache and weak stomich for most of the men.

January 1, 1945: A portion of the company moved the Regimental C P equipment to Barenthal, France for the first time. We arrived in Barenthal to find the krouts just 1K from the town with artillery coming in like rain. The 14th Armored Division was defending that section. Armored Force S-2 reports showed that 60 Germans were able to break thru the defenses. However those 60 fought until they were killed or captured.

Jan Captain Grinnell (then 1st Lt) was in charge of the troops and commanded them like a veteran. At 1400 the battle had ceased with the krouts still trying to gain possession of the town. Seeing that something was SNAFUY we pulled out of this town and drove back to sessenheim. All personnel of 275th Infantry had moved to Bad Neiderbronn and a Regimental C P was established. I & R platoon did both daylight and night reconaissance.

January 2 to 5, 1945: Some of the most ferious fighting occured

This period with Phillisberg changing hands almost daily. Approximately January 5th Phillisberg fell to the G I's and was secured. I & R Platoon did extensive patrolling. Communication Platoon experienced more trouble during this period than all time previous. The Wire section not only partolled their lines, but were forced out at all hours of the night to repair them.

January 6, 1945: Talking with civilians we discovered both forces had CP's located in the town of Phillisberg with a limited number of buildings left standing. It was estimated that in a 24 hour period 1500 rounds of artillery and mortar shells fell on the town.

January 7, 1945: Pvt Lange was hit in the leg while guarding German prisoners. The prisoners made a dash to escape but was disappointed after the first shot.

January 8, 1945: Moved CP to Zinsweiler, France. Company CP set up in a factory building formerly turning out parts for Mark V tanks.

January 9, 1945: Captain Pence assumes command of Company

January 10, 1945: Major Jean (then Capt) transferred 2nd Bn as executive officer.

January 14, 1945: Moved CP to Guebenhouse, France. There we received replacements, regrouped the Regiment and received our APO 461 back.

January 18, 1945: A blow fell to the I & R Platoon. One of the most efficient scouts was captured by the Germans. While patrolling with Love Company, 275th Infantry.

January 21, 1945: Captain Grinnell assumes command of the Company.

January 22, 1945: T/Sgt William W. McMillan receives a battle field commission and is assigned as I & R Platoon leader.

January 23, 1945: Another casualty befell the I & R Platoon, Pfc Reims stepped on a shoe mine receiving wounds on the arm and leg.

January 14 to ~~February~~ March 15, 1945: This time was spent in preparation for the attack on Spichern heights. This mission was completed on or about 15 March, 1945. The I & R Platoon continuing to do both daylight and night patrols.

1945: Something big was in the making. Daily patrolling and a constant watch from the Regimental OP's proved the Germans were becoming weak. It was believed they would not make a stand in their Seigfreid Line, however preparation was made for such a stand.

March 21, 1945: The 275th Infantry Regiment raced through the line to seize and hold their share of Saarbrucken, Germany. Very little opposition was met and only scattered resistance made any effort to check the onward march of our forces. 275th Infantry occupied Saarbrucken, Germany until 26 March when ordered to Quidersback, Germany.

March 28, 1945: The company's loss this time was the 1st Sgt. 1st Sergeant Byrd transferred to Detachment of Patients, 7th Army and eventually was transferred to the United States.

April 1, 1945: Moved D P to Gau Angelsheim, Germany. Only routine duty was performed.

April 11, 1945: Moved CP to Frankfurt A/M, Germany. Something new, a much larger city than this Regiment had occupied before; more destruction was witnessed here than any of the other towns. Much work was to be done to keep the the zones of communication clear and operating. This was done satisfactorily.

May 23, 1945: Moved C P to Camberg, Germany

Some details have been omitted due to lack of importance, each individual of this organization is to be commended for his devotion to duty regardless of the hour of day or night he might have been called upon to perform such and regardless of danger to his personal safety. The cooks and drivers are especially noted for their duty even tho in a less colorful status. To them we say a job well done.

This ends the history of this organization thus far, but more history will be made in the future by this company. By the grace of God do we hope as American citizens to become better soldiers for the flag and freedom that we love.

PART V

DECORATIONS AND AWARDS

Bronze Star Medal:

For outstanding performance of duty and disregard for personal safety and responsible for the destruction of much enemy equipment while on O P duty at Lexing, France the following EM received the Bronze Star Medal:

Myers, William G Jr.,	CPL	33926969
Dryden, Edward J	Tec 5th	18179633
Esplin, Kay T	Pfc	39926982

Purple Heart Medal:

For wounds received in action against the enemy the following Officer and EM received the Purple Heart Medal:

Claudepierre, Donald J.,	1st Lt	0555932
Myers, William G Jr	Cpl	33926969
Eissler, Bruno	Pfc	39333729
Christensen, Walden L	Pfc	36271976
Prenatt, Lester J	Pvt	16068045