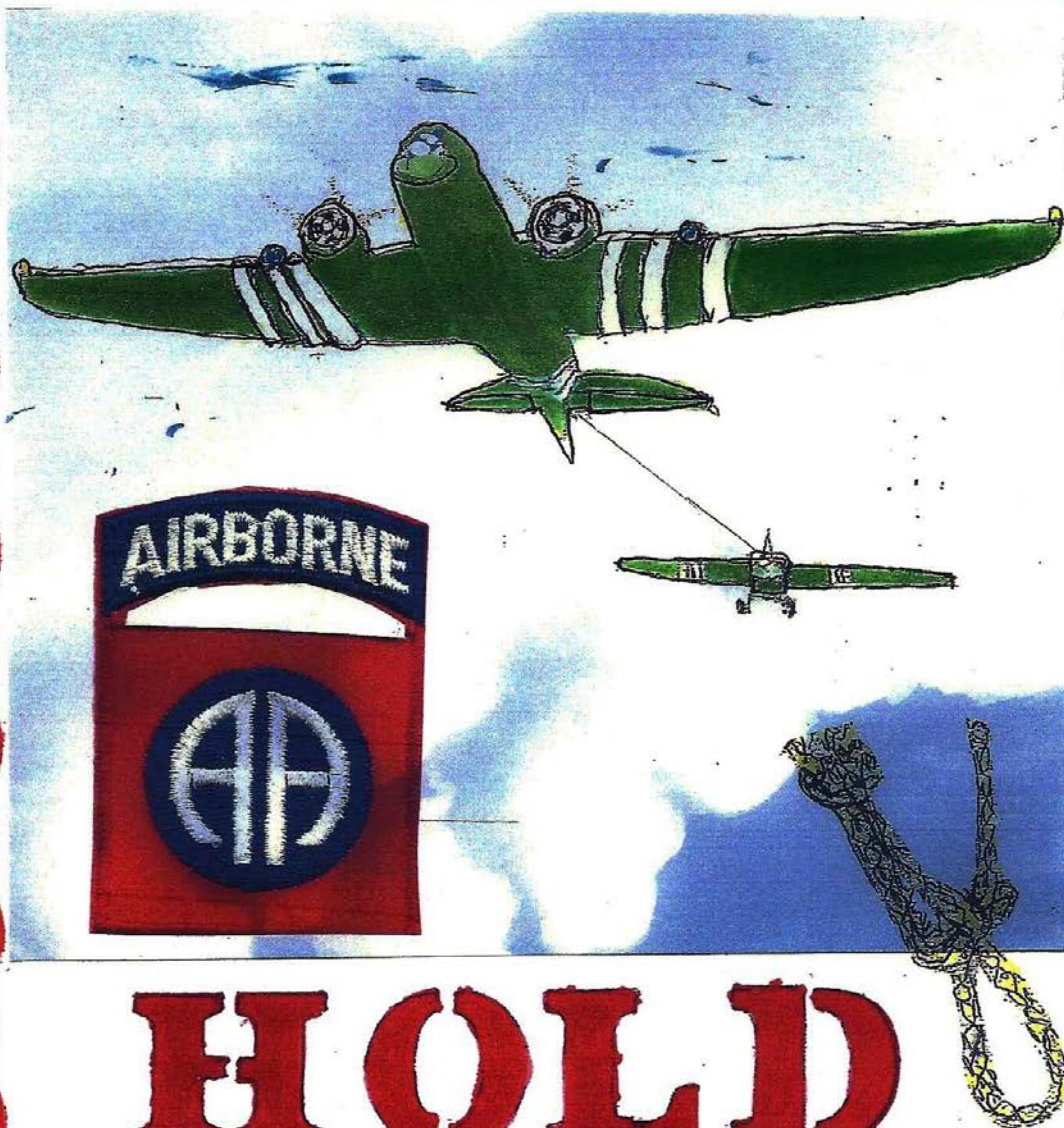


THE KNOT WILL



HOLD

By Sgt Walter K Tuzeneu
320th Glider Field
Artillery Battalion
82nd Airborne Division

DEDICATION

The Knot Will Hold 4 the 320th is lovingly dedicated to my wife, Marguerite, Saint Marguerite deSante. As someone said, "She had to be a saint to put up with you!" However she taught me, "Love never stops and true love casts out fear".

James Anthony, my oldest son, was named after his maternal grand father, Anthony Aloysius deSante. Jim, Jimmy we call him, had more talent and abilities and an awesome memory. These capabilities, determination, and persistence enabled him to follow through whatever he decided to do to completion.

Stephen Edward, Steve, was named after his great grandfather, the patriarch of the clan. He inherited from his mother -- an intelligence, kindness, and patience toward others and never said an unkind thing about anyone.

Msgr. Ken, Kenard, was named after me, his dad. I learned never to say I was his father because some would always ask me, "Are you a priest?" So I would say that I was his dad or father of the 'Father'. He had the beautiful thoughts like his mother and inherited her kindness and love for others -- preaching and writing for his flock and that love never stops.

Paul Leon was named after his paternal grandfather, Elwood Leon Tuzeneu, and was always called Paul Leon by his family. A boy, who was from France, was called 'Leon' but did not have a middle name, and so Paul, said that he was, 'No Leon'. He benefited from his mother's brilliance and genius for assimilating knowledge and disseminating that wisdom where appropriate. He had an understanding and appreciation of airborne status, love of freedom, the spirit of man, and the duty we owe to God, our country, and ourselves. His thoughts, words, and action inspired me to write this rendition of my army experience.

Jean, Jean Anne, followed the tradition of Paul's double name, and only the family calls her Jean Anne. She is the love of my life -- my beautiful ballerina, my songstress, and she dedicates her singing to choir, and I love to hear her singing in church. She inherits her mother's gift and talent for music. She has a master's degree in biology which I think is one of the most difficult subjects for a master's degree.

Jim has a degree in elementary education as well as a certificate in Montessori education which I think is the equivalent of a master's degree and, also, associate degrees in mathematic and computers. Steve's master's is in electronic engineer. Ken's master's is in Theology. Paul's master's is in foreign language, and he teaches French, German, and Spanish at an all girls' high school.

Can anyone be luckier or more blessed than having such a wonderful family?

THANKS BE TO GOD!

PROLOGUE

I decided and became determined to write the account of the 320th GFABN of WWII (Glider Field Artillery Battalion of World War II) when two grand daughters and a student asked me to help them with their assignment to interview a WWII veteran. One granddaughter lived in Williamsburg and the other in Nashville. The student in Williamsburg was tutored by my daughter-in-law.

Matt, Mathew Weber, said to Becky, my daughter-in-law, "I don't know anybody that old." I enjoyed the humor of the thought and was not disturbed. I realized that all three, as well as the young, could not understand or appreciate the problems, vicissitudes, wrong or errors, of WWII. This is not a question of wrong, but rather what comes and grows out of reporting and dissemination of news. It comes from the bias, distortion, miss-information, and prejudice of the cloistered scholar or academia. It comes from their thrust, their creed, their greed, thirst for power, and the granting of indulgences to man.

What must be understood and realized is, no country, form of government, civilization has ever survived that denies God or defies God. Many have had multiple gods and deities and forms of worship both male and female. The truth is there is only one God. It is not necessary to have more than one God for all. The Romans had more than one and the Greeks had multiple gods. The curse on the United States of America is not how many gods, but how many deny and defy God. They are the 'SS', socialists and secularists, who must be stopped!

Since our Independence in 1776, America has survived every crisis: Our Revolutionary War, The War of 1812, The Alamo, The Civil War, WWI, Pearl Harbor, WWII, Korean War, Viet Nam War, The Persian Gulf War, and others.

The enemy from within denies God and defies God. The enemy from within is the socialist and secularist. It is the avowed purpose of this 'SS' to kill our democratic republic.

What are you willing to stick your neck out for?
What is your spirit?
How strong is your spirit?
How strong is your faith in GOD, your neighbor, or yourself?

That will determine whether your children, your grandchildren, or great, great, great grandchildren live in hope, freedom, and in the pursuit of happiness! How many others are yearning to be free and want a choice in living and a government that guarantees rights?

PREFACE

This is the story of the 320th GAFBN (320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion). It is also the story of virtue of the 105 mm howitzer. The 320th Battalion was one of several battalions in the 82nd Airborne Division. There was the 319th, 320th, 325th battalions as well as the kitchen and headquarters battalions. Also, included in the 82nd Airborne Division were several paratrooper battalions numbered in the 500's.

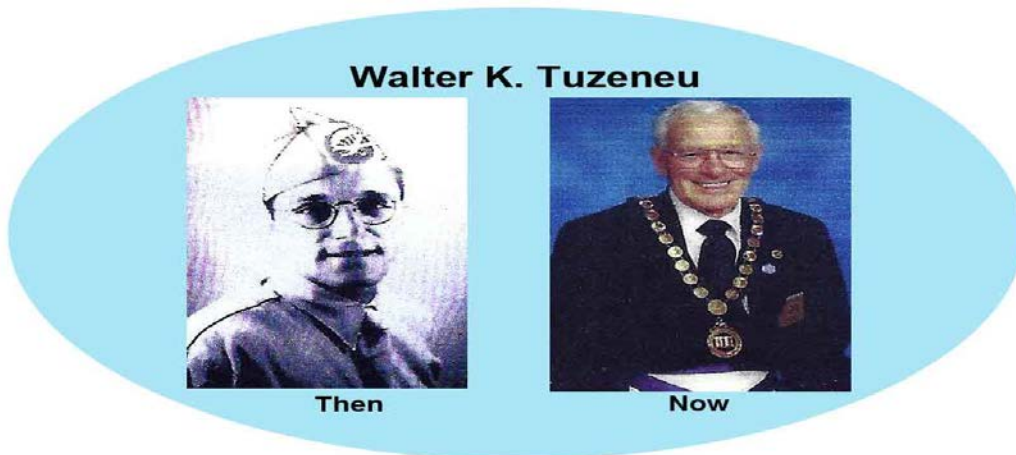
The 320th was composed of six gun crews to man the 105 mm howitzers. Each crew consisted of a gun crew chief as well as five or six crew members. The 320th gun crew chiefs were: Sergeant Tuzzie, the first gun crew, Sergeant Sackett, Sergeant Swain, Sergeant Sword, Sergeant Parker, and Sergeant Reinquest. In each crew there were two breech men and a soldier in charge of the lanyard.

There were several sizes of howitzers. There was the 75 mm, pack mule, howitzer, the 105 mm howitzer, the 155 mm howitzer, and the 220 mm, long barrel, howitzer. The 105 mm howitzer was the only one adapted to fit a glider to make it airborne. It was shortened to fit into the glider. It was at the infamous Mt. Casino in Italy, which had a sharp cliff with a drop of about nine hundred to a thousand feet, that the snub nose 105 mm howitzers were dug in with their barrels pointing almost straight up. This cliff gave the enemy a complete view and control over the valley below. Their positions along the top made it almost impossible to shoot or hit either the men or emplacements. The small arms fires or shells would go over the ridge and land beyond their positions. From this angle at the base of the cliff the artillery shells of the snub nose 105 mm howitzers could be landed along the ridge which made the Krauts, as they were called, scramble to get away from the devastating fire so accurately hitting their positions. It was learned later the Germans had no idea where the shelling came from or why it was so accurate.



(Figure 1: Sgt. Walter K. Tuzeneu, alias Sergeant Tuzzie)

(Figure 2: Sgt. Tuzzie as an enlisted man in the 1940's and as a civilian in the 1990's)





(Figure 3: The 320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion of the 82nd Airborne Division, Sgt. Tuzzie enclosed in red)

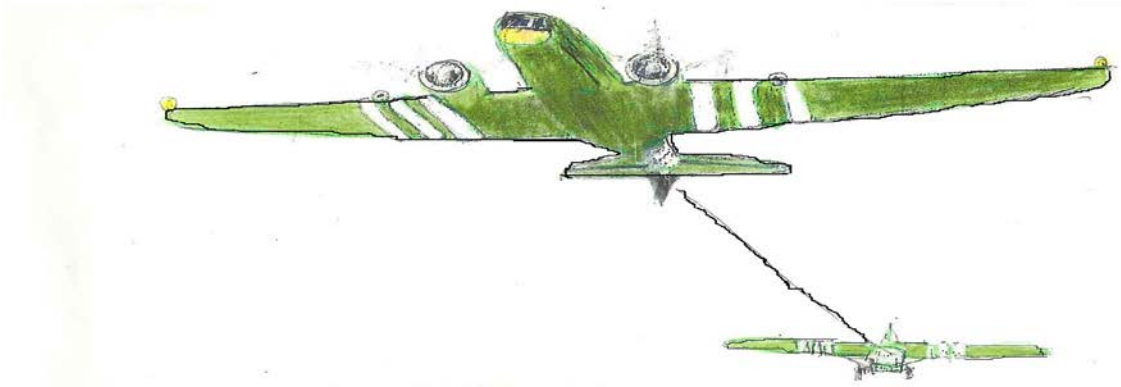


(Figure 4: Sgt. Tuzzie, enclosed in red, and his gun crew)



(Figure 5: Sgt. Tuzzie as a civilian in 1996 at the 82nd Airborne Museum comparing the size of a person to a 105mm howitzer)

Chapter 1: In Africa



Reveille was an unwanted bugle call. Sergeant Tuzzie threw off his blanket and stretched his arms and legs. He thought we go to sleep at lights out and wake up to the bugle. Maybe that was better than stop your clocks and grab your socks back at the barracks. The latrine ditch was lined up with early and urgent GI's but you didn't have to flush afterward – a small consolation for an open air dry wasteland.

He turned over on his back and stretched his arms and legs and rolled out of his pup tent. He took his steel helmet to fill it with water from the garbage can by the cistern and walked back to his tent. He filled his canteen cup half full to brush his teeth and then put soap on his hands to wash his face and hands. He rinsed with the water and combed his hair. He tossed his wash water on the dry sand and put the helmet on his liner and was ready for chow. As he walked toward the kitchen, he felt an uneasy feeling he couldn't understand. Chow was not much different than usual what with flapjacks, sugar, syrup, and coffee. "That fills the hole," his dad said. His dad always came out with some cryptic saying. He remembered that when anyone asked him, "Elwood, how you feelin'." He would always say, "Fair to middlen or sore as to be about." Whenever he remembered his dad, he liked to think of it, and said, "That fills the hole," as he finished his coffee. He hooked his fork and spoon on his mess kit and sloshed them up and down in the soapy water and rinsed them in the hot water by the kitchen tent. When they were dry, he snapped them together and tossed them in his tent and then sat down to wait for the first sergeant's whistle.

First Sergeant Chandler's whistle interrupted his thoughts on the uneasy feeling he had when he went for chow. Present and accounted for from each group chief was followed by relax. "Oh, men ... a few of you were late and that kept me from giving you some good news. The plane and glider will be here tomorrow. We will load a gun in the glider and fly it for the first time. A gun has never been airborne. We will finally know whether all the design, testing, engineering, and production of the howitzer with the glider will meet the best hope of all the brass and engineers. Now all the sore thumbs and fingers you got from practice will pay off. Someone showed me his fingers

... they were so red and sore he said that he couldn't even hold a pencil."

"Colonel Albright has picked two sergeants to be the first to fly with a gun and we all know those knots better be ... they WILL be tight. If they come loose, they can't blame anyone else. I will let Colonel Albright announce the names that are his choices which is really an honor for this auspicious occasion. I can assure you I won't be the one tying any knots and my fingers aren't sore," he laughed. "After Colonel Albright does announce his choices, ... I think he wants to do that now before I dismiss you ... "

Sergeant Chandler hesitated, " ... if all goes well ... that is ... I want to believe that nothing but a good flight will be accepted, and you know what I mean. I think Colonel Albright is waiting to know when to name those he selected to secure the gun, tie it down, and observe how well it does in flight. Sergeant Sword will you go tell Colonel Albright ... ask him ... no tell him we are waiting, and he can announce the names before dismissal. Thanks," he said as Sergeant Sword double timed toward Battalion Headquarters. "At ease men," he said.

They became more like a mob as they drifted apart and milled around rather than the usual precision formation.

Sergeant Sackett walked toward Tuzzie and said half to himself but so Sergeant Tuzeneu could hear, "It seems like we just did get our howitzers. Weren't there four crates for each gun? And the wood used ... good stuff ... it looked like good LUMBER to me." He emphasized lumber.

"It was good lumber. They used 'two by four's' for the edge of the boxes and flooring. Really clear planks for the top and bottom. God, they sure wanted them to get here in good condition."

"Tuz, you're right. I remember the forklift dropped one of them, and it didn't do a damn thing to it."

"They sure wanted them to get here in good shape. We had a hell of a job prying them open," Tuzzie said.

"Yeah, I remember the motor pool took everything; after they helped us with the barrel, line up the fittings, and assemble it to the cradle."

"How many did it take to hold the trails steady so the mechanics could bolt them to the axle?" Tuzzie said quizzically.

The whole battalion," Sergeant Sack laughed.

"I do remember that damn 'cosmoline' we had to scrape off after we unwrapped each part. What a sticky mess ... and I hated the smell."

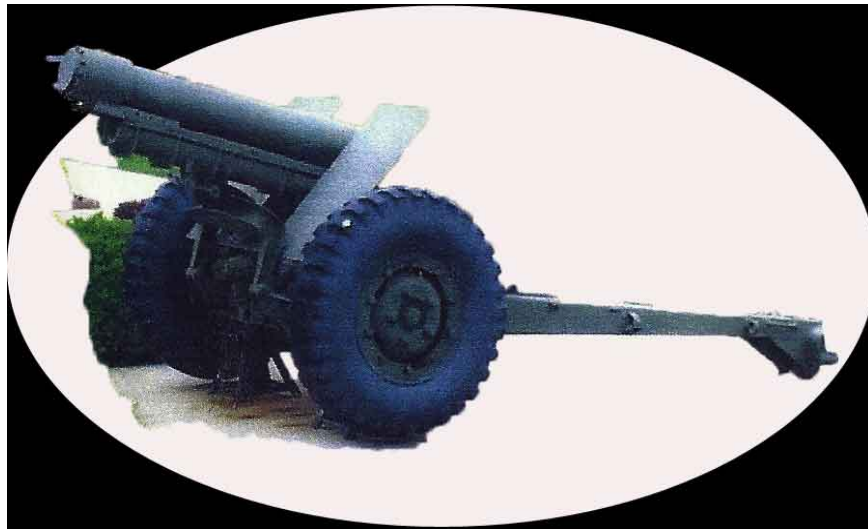
“How many rags did we use; and how many gallons did we use to clean all the moving parts and oil them?” Sergeant Sack asked.

“Everybody in the motor pool accused us of using their `rag allotment for a month.”

Their chat was interrupted when all heads turned at the same time to see Sergeant Sword returning followed by the Colonel in his jeep. The dust following behind drifted toward the area as the men began to assemble in formation.

Sergeant Chandler snapped to attention with the men as the colonel stopped in front of him. He did an about face and saluted as the colonel returned the salute. The dust seemed to stop and settle at his order, “At ease, men.”

The colonel’s voice was precise and loud. He could be heard without the need of a loudspeaker. He changed his order and said, “At rest, men.” Their response was to spread their feet and clasp their hands behind the back in a firm stance. “I have selected Sergeant Sackett and Sergeant Tuzeneu to be the first to fly with the howitzer.”



(Figure 6: The 105mm howitzer, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

There was a slight stir within the formation at this announcement. “I see by indication that you approve of my selection. I, too, think the choice is a good one. They will secure the gun and ride in the glider over this desert in this hot climate, with thermal and down drafts, which will be a good test run for man and gun.”

“Sergeant Chandler,” he continued, “you can give the men their flight times, necessary, to qualify for the flight pay. That should be good news for them. Carry on.”

They gathered around to slap them on their helmets and shoulders in good fun

and as a gesture of good luck. Relief and excitement was evident as they walked back to camp. They sat on the benches by the kitchen and waited for Sergeant Chandler to put the schedules with the times on the bulletin board.

Sergeant Sack and Tuzzie walked toward headquarters and could see no one was in the tent -- only the clerk with the radio and the field phones. They spotted the colonel talking to his staff, and after saluting, waited for his response.

"Yes," he said with a casual salute.

"May we use the tent to discuss what we have to do and get things straight for tomorrow?" Sergeant Sackett asked.

"Hell, yes. I won't be back until late this afternoon. Take your time." His smile was warm and his casual manner a pleasant surprise to them.

The corporal, by the radio and field phone, waved and pointed to the colonel's desk. He was a good observer and had a keen sense of all the activity in the battalion.

"You want a 'Lucky'," Sack asked as he took out his cigarettes.

"Thanks, I don't smoke," Tuzzie said.

"You're one of a few who don't. Hell, they don't cost anything."

"I tried it once when I was just a kid. It was a 'Lucky Strike'. I didn't like it. It made me gag."

"You know, Tuz, the timing is right for this. We got the crates and put our howitzers together; we learned how to use them, drag them, maneuver them into position, and fire them."

"That's a fact," Tuzzie butted in, "my crew is pretty near perfect. They all are. How many bivouacs have we set up or night marches and maneuvers, simulated enemy attacks, or dry runs have we taken? God, I remember the day we drove ... in midday ... it was hot as hell and for what -- to practice convoy travel that was over a hundred miles. The army will surely find the worst place in the world to setup a camp!"



(Figure 7: Covered with dirt and dust after the convoy travel of 100 miles, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

Sack laughed, "I recollect that when we reached where we were supposed to be the dust was so thick we couldn't tell one from another. That is, truck or man. Talk about the uniform -- every thing was either 'dusty brown' or 'desert tan'."

"That's what you call uniform," Tuzzie said.

"You know, you could see men were standing by a truck and some geese. You couldn't tell which was which -- truck or GI."

"We laugh now, but damn it ... the dust ... Oh, hell, it was sand. It was in your ears, down your neck, in your nose. You couldn't lick your lips or teeth. Somebody said, 'You'd grind your teeth down if you tried to chew.' One of them took off his helmet and you could see his forehead. It was white. You remember the Sunday paper had a section called 'Rotogravure' -- it was a faded, red color -- somebody's picture was in an oval shape frame. Well, that's what he looked like from the brown dust with an oval head and a white spot. You had to laugh," Tuzzie shook his head to emphasize the humor.

"Don't they say an army travels on its stomach or a convoy travels at the speed of the slowest vehicle," Sack said. Now, the convoy travels at the distances between the dust that they leave behind or drifts away. You and I are lucky we ride in a jeep. Those in the trucks say no matter where you are, dust swirls around and covers everybody -- no matter how far back they sit. That's one day's assignment we won't forget," Sack grunted to exaggerate the event. "It was sooo bad because we drove sooo far without stops. Here we don't have to go as far, and it ain't as bad."

"We have done enough with ... over night hikes, maneuvers, practice, missions. Remember, Chandler called an emergency combat mission in the middle of the afternoon. Hell, this is the right time!" Tuz clenched his fist and pounded his hand in a gesture of finality.

"Tuz, I'm glad my gloves are soft and broken in. They SHOULD be after all the ties we practiced. I'll have them with me for sure. I thought we could discuss what we had to do and make any plans for tomorrow, but we really know what to do. We tied enough knots so I see no reason sitting here."

"I agree," Tuzzie said.

They left the corporal by the phone and walked toward those waiting around the bulletin board. As they approached, they heard a heated discussion and loud voices of objections and comments.

"What's up?" Sack asked.

"We're talking about us killing the Arab woman and donkey," Swain answered.

"Didn't Sergeant Swain tell those in that little village," Sack turned around to look at him, "not to cross the open space where we would be using it for our practice range and target area?"

Sergeant Swain heard Sack and said, "Yeah, what about it?" with a sarcastic tone.

"I couldn't remember the name," he said, "That's all."

"I can't pronounce it, but it was a little town with just a few buildings and mostly tents. There was a little sign with the name 'Oujda'. I can't pronounce it."

"Did you see any broads?"

"No. The women I saw were all covered up and about as scrubby as you could get. Hell, they looked so dirty I wouldn't touch one of them with your prick. I remember they had a little table with stuff drying in the sun – a few apricots and a fish, I think – but what blew my mind were the bananas. Flies were all over them. They looked black. Barrish gave them a dime for one."

"Holy Shit, he ate that?" Galamoski asked.

"Yes, he said it didn't taste too bad," Swain said, "Just a strong banana taste."

"Didn't we kill a woman and a donkey and a couple of chickens that came from that village?" Galamoski said as a statement rather than a question.

"Yes and when Colonel Albright said he wasn't going to tell his wife that she was only worth twenty-five dollars, everybody laughed like hell," Sergeant Tuzzie said. "The Colonel said we were not responsible and would not be charged, but we had to pay the man for his wife, donkey, and two chickens. The donkey was worth more than the woman at one hundred fifty dollars, the chicken's ten dollars each, and the woman only cost twenty-five dollars and she had to walk in front of all his possessions. That's why the Colonel said he wasn't going to tell his wife that or that she had to walk in front of him."

"What do they clean with sand? I know they don't use water to bathe in," Sack said, "You said they were scrubby."

"They don't use water to wash ... but did you hear we can take showers in a couple of days," Galamoski called out loud enough for everyone to hear him.

"Galamoski, we have heard that so many times. It is bullshit," Swain said.

"What bothers me," Tuzzie continued, "is we take Atabrine, salt tablets, and shots for everything, and an inoculation for God knows what? And then who would think of fooling around with some dumb broad. You can't tell whether she has syphilis, clap, or whatever."

"I always said that I don't want a girl that fooled around," Sack said, "so why should I. That doesn't make any sense to me. I'll tell you, that film we had to see about venereal disease sure scared the hell out of me."

Silence was noticeably 'loud' like the quiet after firing a gun. The silence settled on the scene and one by one a GI would slowly get up and mutter a thought, an excuse, or have something to do like: write to mamma, do a wash, read the 'Army Times'. Some just went back to their tents. The 'event' exaggerated the fear associated with disease and the chance that comes from a lonely soldier and the question of what will kill him -- a bullet or a disease.



March 2, 1943

Dear Mother,

What I need is some one to give me a good swift kick in the right place. I have written just enough plain language. I have been getting on a mail quite regularly too, so it is no wonder that my mail has been two days coming which is really good here. I have letters from Jane, Bob, and Mrs. Duffell. Aunt Ethel, Alice, David, and Mrs. Duffell and I got two cartons of cigarettes from the bank and I don't want a one. I'll wait some day if I can't get it all.

Since I've been in England, it seems like like you, I've tried to learn and read about everything. I could, I think, I had a good opportunity in hearing, and I found to be a woman to be a woman, give a talk to our British, or English, British, and the air of the, I think, well, and I think it up. It was typical English in that he was afraid he would say something that might offend me. I was rather dry and uninteresting to most but I got paid a lot of it. It closed up a few points and also I don't think I saw other. One thing, he said about the way the government works was quite amusing, but very true. He said it was like a big game of cards that had a high in it that his mother had to play. Then a second hand a second hand, a third hand and a third hand and so on until the top a new game of cards.

He said that a patch in the government was but one, the most, by far, and was not a patch for a period of time. He said that a patch in the government was but one, the most, by far, and was not a patch for a period of time. He said that a patch in the government was but one, the most, by far, and was not a patch for a period of time.

The chief, engineering, and some socials were cancelled and cancelled for about twenty things that were to go before Parliament and a report made on it. That seems to have quite a bit in the way of things at least that was the impression I got. All in all it was interesting and too not the situation.

We are in the usual run of things with, but a little more, closer to that all help give me a good appetite. How can't be but I am a good group cooking well, going, one until I get used to it again. I got a lot of food packing with the marshmallows and the marshmallows. The marshmallows, I got a lot of food packing with the marshmallows and the marshmallows. The marshmallows, I got a lot of food packing with the marshmallows and the marshmallows.

I got a lot of food packing with the marshmallows and the marshmallows. The marshmallows, I got a lot of food packing with the marshmallows and the marshmallows. The marshmallows, I got a lot of food packing with the marshmallows and the marshmallows.

day don't tell me about all the guys at home. I don't think I like all the news there is.

The longer you talk, the more I like to hear. I don't think I like all the news there is. The longer you talk, the more I like to hear. I don't think I like all the news there is.

I had a good night sleep last night. I don't think I like all the news there is. I had a good night sleep last night. I don't think I like all the news there is.

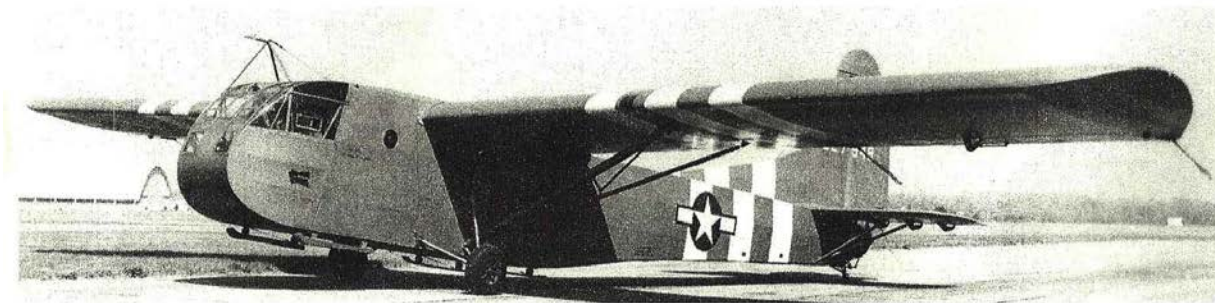
I had a good night sleep last night. I don't think I like all the news there is. I had a good night sleep last night. I don't think I like all the news there is.

(Figure 8: Sgt. Tuzzie's letter to his Mother, circa March 2, 1943)

Time passes with ease and quiet in the dry, desolate land with the sameness of a dull and changeless scene. The time of practice, marches, physical conditioning, beginnings, and routines of washing, showers and laundry becomes the trend in the boredom that is the life in the army or any military service or responsibility. So, too, is hurry up and wait, first light, taps and reveille, roll call, and a three day pass. The time comes when the dull and routine life in a soldier's purpose is shattered after the morning assembly; "Today we fly." This day has been a long time coming. We have waited long enough. We will become airborne. Three cheers -- loud and clear: "Hip, Hip, Hurrah! Hip, Hip, Hurrah! Hip, Hip, Hurrah!"

“Let me add,” Sergeant Chandler said, “Cook said, ‘If we are successful, he will celebrate with corn fritters.’ He comes from the south so you know they will be goooooood. Dismissed.”

Chapter 2: The Glider Arrives



(Figure 9: Waco Glider, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

An easy and quiet settled on the camp with an aura of contentment at the anticipation that permeated everyone's thoughts. The lazy efforts and activities were varied and conducted with a sense of humor if not in a joyful mood. The atmosphere and spirit emanating from the camp was awakened by the sound of Colonel Albright's jeep returning from the air field where arrangements were finalized for FD, that is Flying Day or Flight Day, and it is not what some might think

The Colonel went directly to his desk and began to write in his log book the final arrangements and schedule necessary to complete the mission. He called out, "Sergeant Chandler," and when he heard his, 'Yes Sir,' said, "Have Tuzzie and Sack to see me."

Chandler chuckled at hearing him call them Tuzzie and Sack. The Colonel had never been that informal, and he was surprised to hear this, and he smiled and smiled, as he went to tell them to report to the Colonel.

They saluted correctly and in unison said, "Yes Sir."

His salute was relaxed as he pointed to two chairs, "Have a seat. Have a seat." Colonel Wilson, air field commander, and I have decided it was a good idea to land the glider; I call it our glider, tonight before dark. It should be a little cooler, and the wind should have died down by then."

Both responded, "That's a damn good idea." Then they looked at each as if to think did we answer too fast? "We can help and we can get there early tomorrow," they said in order recover from their quick comment.

The Colonel responded just as quickly, "That's what I like to hear. You can help tonight by going to the air strip to pull the glider back to the beginning of the runway."

"Why do we need to get it back?" Tuzzie asked.

"Tuzzie that is a good question. I didn't know either." But Colonel Wilson explained that the air strip is eighteen hundred to two thousand feet long, and the glider when it lands only needs about six or eight hundred feet. It would end up in the middle of the runway.

"Of course," Tuzzie affirmed the necessity, and then realized what procedures had to be followed.

"Colonel Wilson told me he had to pick up the glider pilots at the far end of the air field and then fly back ... taxi really ... to hook up the glider we needed." He laughed as he said, "That might work better since the glider doesn't fly by it self yet." He chuckled as he seemed to enjoy his nonsense.

Sergeant Sackett quickly added, "I'll join the marines. I won't stay airborne if that happens". He felt smug at his comment and nodded his head.

He continued, "Colonel Wilson said he would phone me when they took off which should give us enough time. My guess is ... it will be between eight-thirty and nine o'clock. Oh, God, pardon me. I should have said 21:30 or 22:00. Isn't it amazing how you can lapse into pre army time?"

The quiet was shattered by the field phone ringing which was loud and could be heard throughout camp. The Colonel's conversation was not loud but understood by Chandler, Sack, and Tuzzie. They notified the crew and told Downs to get his jeep.

When Downs returned, Sergeant Chandler, Sack, Tuzzie, and Galamoski, who volunteered to go with them, slowly drove to the air strip and waited patiently and for the plane and glider to land. They sat in the jeep to watch as the time dragged slowly as they waited; then they all turned after hearing the flight approach camp. As they watched, all could see the flight was circling the camp, and they heard the noise from those shouting as if cheering at a game. They watched with interest as the plane circled the camp, and then made a wide turn to line up with the runway for the glider to be cut loose. The tail light turned red, then yellow, and then green to signal the glider pilots to release the toe rope. The glider went just about half way as Colonel Albright had explained.

Downs jumped on the jeep, and the three doubled timed toward the glider. Downs turned the jeep around to back up to the tail. They easily tied the rear strut under the tail of the glider. They strained as they pushed and pulled the tail to set it firmly on the end of the jeep so it could be towed easily. The operation and toeing went

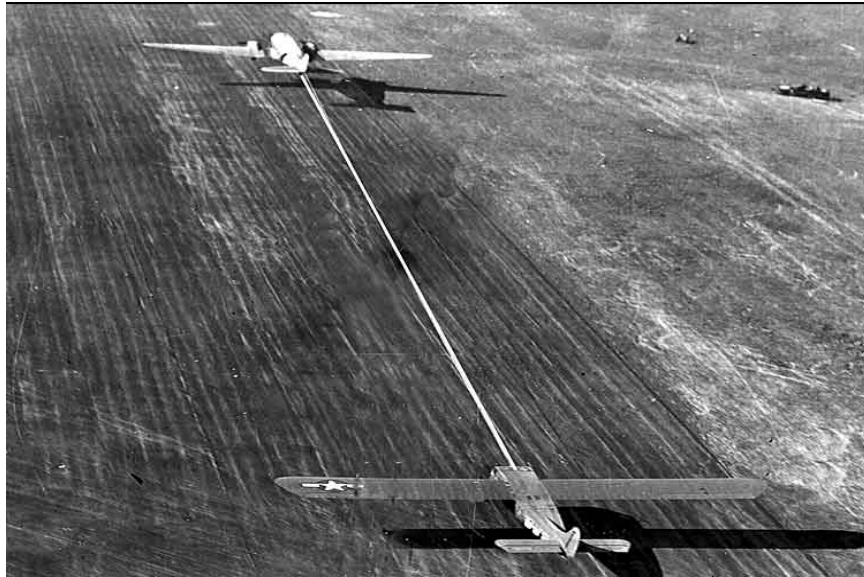
smoothly and in plenty of time before the tow plane stopped at the beginning of the runway. It was loud and close overhead and kicked up dust from the props. It slowed and stopped at the end of the runway.

The glider pilots waved to the pilots and then walked toward the plane at the end of the runway. Two airmen opened the door and stepped off the ramp just as the glider pilots got to the plane. They all dragged the tow rope back to the hard surface and coiled it up and tossed it through the open door and climbed aboard.

The plane turned around, taxied to the beginning of the strip, then revved up the engines, and quickly took off to return to their base. They returned to their camp with more than three hours of daylight before dark. The drive back was short, and the atmosphere in camp had settled into an idyllic scene of peace and quiet. It was the result of the success of completing the most important step to become airborne for men and artillery. Artillery was the new gun, covered with cosmoline, so carefully crated and then assembled now ready for the ultimate test of meeting the expectations of military authority, engineers, technicians, and the soldier's spirit of free thinking that recognized correct and good equipment.

The free spirit of free thinking that defeated the most evil, onerous despotism that rose to eminent power in World War II. A spirit can be crushed. A spirit can be exhausted, but a spirit can rise above adversity and become as one. The purpose of the cheerleader is to raise the spirit of the team as the cheering heard coming from the camp as the flight circled those below and returned to their base.

Chapter 3: The Test Flight

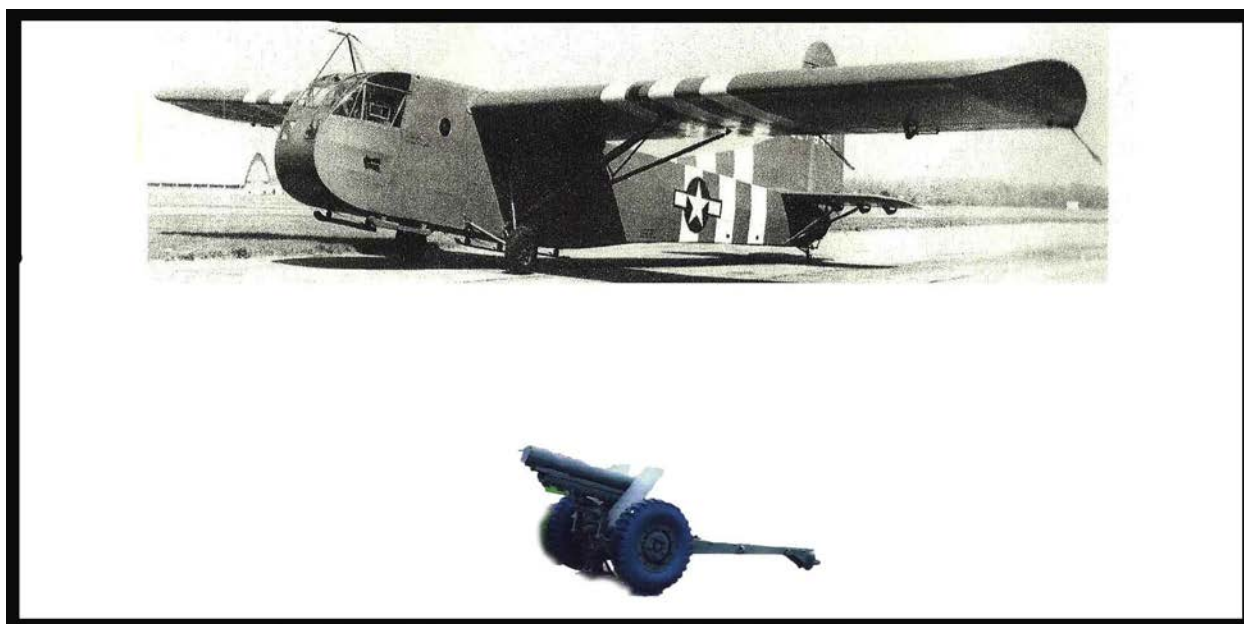


(Figure 10: Glider and C47 tow plane, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

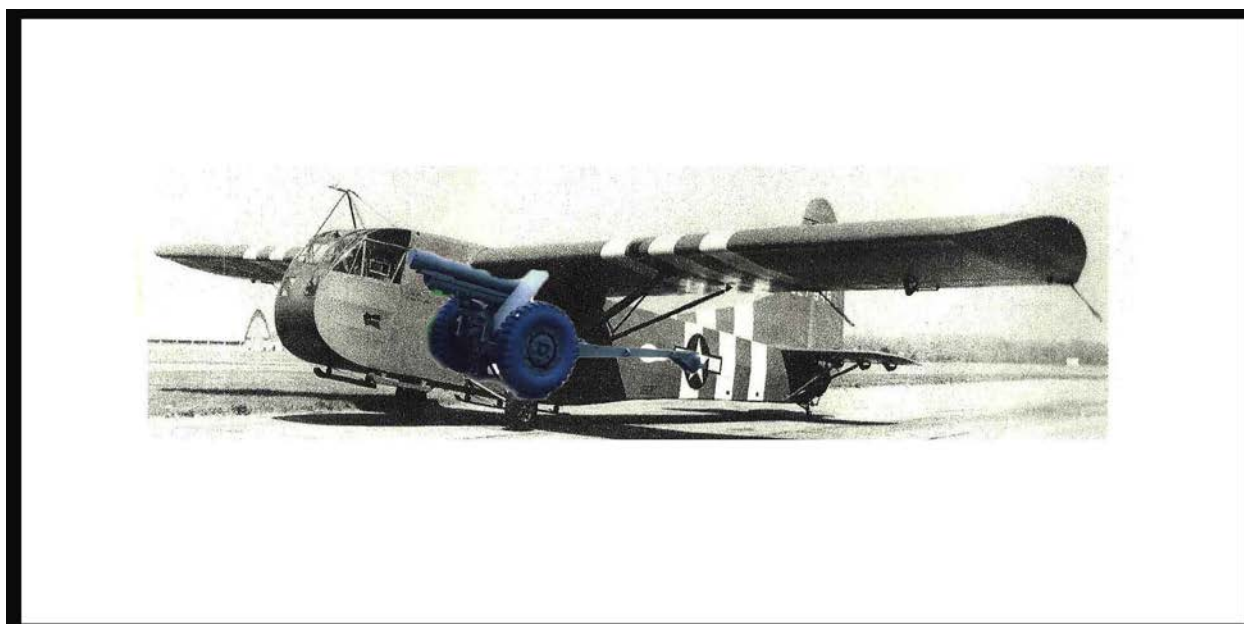
Sergeant Sackett and Sergeant Tuzzie walked toward their glider sitting on the far end of the air strip. Marched would better describe the approach to the new, bright, and shining shape silhouetted by the vast emptiness all around. Tuzzie heard the truck that was pulling the howitzer approach the glider as he opened the side door.

The smell of canvas and paint was a sharp and pungent odor that could be expected from a new piece of army equipment designed to be in the air and not on the ground. That thought would soon be a thing of the past since the order to tie the howitzer securely for a test flight had to be completed by 12:00 hours in time for chow at noon.

Sergeant Sackett and Tuzzie were hand picked by Battalion Commander Colonel Albright to secure the four thousand pound howitzer in the glider for the test flight at 13:30 hours. The new glider, the new howitzer, and the two men, new to the project, were finally brought together for this historic moment when everything would depend on the success of this initial flight. The hot, dry air would certainly increase the danger of violent updrafts they would fly through. Would the nylon rope hold? Would they slip or stretch too much? Would the howitzer weigh too much? Could the pilot and co-pilot 'fly' the glider? Could they control the 'flight' tethered at the end of the tow rope? Could the men, the equipment, and the light weight, flimsy-looking craft withstand the shock and savage lunging caused by the severe thermal and down drafts? These questions would soon be answered. (See Figures 11 and 12)

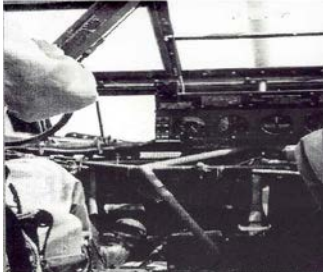


(Figure 11: Waco Glider and 105 mm Howitzer, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)



(Figure 12: Comparison of Waco Glider to 105 mm Howitzer, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

Sergeant Tuzzie was a good example of the ideal airborne soldier. His modest height was an appropriate size and proportion for this muscular body. His light brown hair and alert blue eyes made him attractive and his fatigues could not conceal his excellent physical conditioning. He was a good representation of every member of the battalion. His alertness and training showed in the manner in which he surveyed and observed everything around him as he noted the vehicle in the distance coming toward them from the end of the runway. He turned toward the door and bent over to step inside. The sharp aroma of canvas and paint was intensive. The heat trapped inside was indeed oppressive from being closed up and made the smell sharp and pungent. He hesitated and then quickly moved toward the nose and sat in the pilot's seat.



He looked along the floor at his feet and found a latch and unsnapped it and moved to the copilot's seat and unsnapped the second latch which enabled him to open the nose and push up to lock it in place. The warm air gave some relief from the stuffy interior.

(Figure 13: In the pilot's seat, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

"Hey, Sack," Sergeant Tuzzie asked, "These ropes are stiff. We goanna be able to pull them tight enough?"

Sergeant Sackett turned to look at Tuzzie and then slowly replied, "We've practiced enough. Your idea of towing a jeep gave us good practice, so we should be able to make them tight. They'll stretch a little."

"Captain Tyler got the idea when one of the jeeps wouldn't start."

"Heh yeah, that's how we got picked for this job?" Sackett asked.

"Naw, Colonel Albright did the picking. He said you and I were the most dependable and gutsiest type. 'The quiet kind that does what has to be done' is the way he announced his decision."

They stood looking at each other absorbing the impact of their selection as the Colonel's choice and realizing it as an honor and privilege to be a part of this significant event. They turned together as if given an order and walked to the nose of the glider. They watched the jeep coming down the air strip. The howitzer behind appeared to be large and almost too big, too heavy to be towed by the tiny jeep. They coiled and uncoiled the short pieces of rope they held in their hands and pulled at the loops at one end to make sure they were tight. Dust billowed behind the 'parade' -- the parade consisting of two figures in the jeep pulling the howitzer and four in the jeep following a short distance back to avoid as much dust as possible. The first jeep turned in a wide sweep in order to stop with the gun nose pointed toward the front of the glider. Its nose

suspended above the fuselage left a wide gap as if to swallow whatever was put in front of its mouth.

The four figures jumped out of the second jeep and marched toward the gun. Two stood on each side of the gun as Sergeant Sackett walked over and instructed them. "OK unhook the piece and move the jeep out of the way."

The driver jumped in the jeep and spun across the front of the glider and then curved around to follow the tracks leading away from the area. The churning wheels kicked up a cloud of dust which drifted away from the spot. The desert air created hot gusty winds that blew the dust in swirls and quickly dissipated the cloud of sand.

Sackett yelled at the driver, "You kick up dust like that again and you'll eat it. Know what I mean?" He turned to the men standing near the gun, "Swing it around with the trails heading in and the muzzle pointing out," he gestured away from the nose. Tuzzie walked over as Sackett motioned to the driver to help turn the gun around so they could shove it into place. The two on each side of the trail, Tuzzie on one wheel and Sackett on the other and the driver pushing at the muzzle made the maneuver an easy task.



(Figure 14: Putting the 105mm howitzer into the glider, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg)

"I wonder if four or five could swing this around?" one of them looked at Tuzzie and then Sergeant Sackett as he asked the question.

Galamoski, a blond, heavy set farmer from Wisconsin quickly said, "Two can swing the trail around on level ground. Easy."

"Well, I'm betting four can do the job unless it's in mud or some hole," Sergeant Tuzzie spoke with authority. "We trained with long nose 105's and they are bigger and heavier. We could heave them around with four or five guys unless it was stuck in mud or a hole, then the whole battalion had to bust their guts to move the damn thing."

"Set those chocks on each wheel," Sergeant Sackett ordered.

The men quickly set the chocks and rocked the gun to settle the wheels in place. Sergeant Sackett handed Tuzzie a chain and said, "Here, you know how to secure the trail hitch to the ring," he indicated the loop permanently welded to the center of the frame.

Sergeant Tuzzie threaded the end of the chain over the loop in the frame, up through the hitch in the trail and then slipped the end onto the hook of the ratchet. He moved the lever on the ratchet until the chain was taut. He checked the tension by pushing down on the chain, and satisfied it was tight enough stepped back to look at it from the side. His nod of approval prompted Sackett to ask, "Is that a little too loose?"

"No," he answered, "If it's too tight it could snap just like that," he snapped his fingers to illustrate.

Galamoski piped in while leaning over the wheel watching, "Heh, yeah, we hauled logs from the woods and chained them on the truck just like that. I remember one time we were heading back to the barn; it was almost dark. We hit a hole or rut in the road and the chain snapped so quick it sounded like a shot gun going off. Those logs rolled all over like splinters. We had a 'hell-of-a job' loading them back in the dark. Ma was mad at us as we were so late getting home to supper."

"Galamoski, that's interestin'," Surefoot, a Cherokee from Tulsa, Oklahoma said grinning from ear to ear. All stopped to look at Surefoot knowing he would have something to add to this as he always did. "We tied our poles at the top of the tepee with a chain and every time somebody sneezed that tepee would fall all over us," his grin widened as he talked.

"You can't tie anything with a chain," Galamoski answered with pretended mockery.

There was no animosity between them. It was well known they enjoyed bantering back and forth and their antics and jibes were in good fun.

"Here," Sergeant Tuzzie said as he picked up short pieces of rope from a pile on the floor. They were already knotted at one end and bound with string at the other end to keep the strands from unraveling. "You practice tying?" he asked each GI without calling their name as he handed each a rope for them to use. "OK, get busy. I want a tie on each wheel at the front and back. Find the closest latch and make them tight. I'll check when you think you're done."

The temperature was climbing steadily and the heat inside the glider was almost unbearable. The hot breeze was no help inside since it came from the wrong direction. The fatigue clad figures looked like spiders spinning a web at each side of the gun.

The new nylon rope was stiff and unforgiving and retained the curve of the spool it came from. It was exasperating and tedious to thread the knot through latches and rings on the gun and then try to pull them taut. To pinch and hold the rope at the knot with the thumb and finger while forming a loop which then had to be pulled up to secure the quick release knot strained patience and fingers. When finished it looked like one loop on a shoe lace.

After the tie was completed, both Sergeant Sackett and Tuzzie inspected tension by pressing down in the middle of each rope. Approval or rejection was determined by how much play or movement exceeded about half an inch. Three were considered too loose and had to be retied amid moans and groans by those responsible. Disappointment was relieved when it was noted these were the shortest stretches between latches and rings. The shortness was the reason these particular ties were so difficult to keep tight and securing in place while keeping the loop close enough to the latch. By pulling on the end of the rope the loop can be pulled out and it becomes a quick release and the rope can then be removed.

The sergeants on cue as if by an order glanced at each rope and pushed and shoved at the tires and the muzzle to satisfy that the task was complete and the gun secure.

"Where did I leave my log book," Sergeant Sackett asked to no one in particular as he glanced around and then turned to look toward the pilot's seat. The back of the seat was horizontal since the nose was still in the open position. "Leave the nose open as long as you can. It'll be hot enough as it is without shutting it now. Pick up any ropes we haven't used and see if there is anything lying around to take back. You guys can head back," he nodded to the four that came in the separate jeep.

"What time did we get started?" Tuzzie asked.

Sack flipped a page back in his log and pointed to the time jotted down and then stated firmly, "09:15 sharp. That means we took an hour," he twisted his wrist to see the time and added, "and twenty-five minutes."

"Bet we can do it in half to three quarters of an hour," Tuzzie said expressing a tone of optimism which was more a feeling of confidence in their ability than of bragging. "When we get the routine down ... maybe a little under an hour. Not bad. Not bad."

"We're heading back," the driver half saluted as he shifted into gear and drove off with a cloud of dust billowing up behind the jeep. It was difficult to see the four figures hunched against the hot breeze blowing in their faces with dust swirling around and lazily drifting across the open space. Maybe the dust could be used as a camouflage Sergeant Sackett thought, but then he realized a smoke shell already did a more effective and better job.

He stepped over the trail as he took a pencil from his pocket to continue jotting down pertinent information and facts needed for a critique to improve the loading procedure when loading other guns and equipment. "Corporal Fuller drove the others and Downs the gun?" he asked Tuzzie as he paused in his writing. "They left at 11:10, make it fifteen, right?" he again asked Tuzzie.

"We should leave too," Tuzzie answered, "and get chow so we can get back here before the tow plane. You don't think we have to lower the nose?" he looked at Sackett. "It'll just make it hotter inside. We can latch it before they hook us up. They have to land, turn around, and drop the tow rope before we can hook up. That will give us plenty of time."

"It'll get hot. That's for sure," Sackett said. "Heh, uh, ... do you remember ... weren't the pilots ... weren't the glider pilots scheduled to get here before the tow plane so they could check out the pedals, ailerons, the steering wheel or stick? Sort of ... uh ... a check sheet?"

"Yeah, your right. We better drop the nose and secure everything."



(Figure 15a)



(Figure 15b)

(Figure 15: Putting a jeep and a howitzer in a glider. Showing how the nose of the glider must be opened to put equipment into the glider, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

"I'll help," Sackett said. "It's not heavy. It's just that we have to push up to get the props out so we can let the whole thing down."

"OK, lift up. Ah ... got it. Ease it down. I can latch it. Now you can finish your log."

The nose dropped easily into place and Tuzzie quickly closed the latches. It did feel like it became hotter immediately and he shut the two side doors as fast as he could and walked away as if to put some distance between him and the heat inside.

Sackett shut his log book just as Tuzzie reached the jeep. It was a signal he was

done, and he settled himself into a seat. "Wanna drive?" he asked.

"Naw, you drive. At least we can get dried off it not cooled off. The wind should make us feel a little better as it blows over us," he said.

The ride back to camp was hot, dry, and in a cloud of dust. The dust from the dry desert seemed to hang in the air behind them as a mark of their progress and then lazily floated away before finally disappearing. Their camp came in view after cresting a hill at the end of the runway. The headquarters and command tents dwarfed there tiny pup tents and Sergeant Sackett slowed to a snail's pace to avoid stirring up any more dust than they had to and slowly stopped along Battalion Headquarters. All the sides of the tent were rolled up and as they jumped out of the jeep, they could see Captain Knight coming out to meet them.

"How did it go, Sergeant Sackett?" he asked. He stopped in front of them and placed the back of his hand resting on his right hip with his fingers dangling loosely backward. It was a peculiarity that made it easy to know him and recognize him in any crowd. He acknowledged Sergeant Sackett's salute, and before he could answer his question said, "I just talked to Major Cowan, Army Air Corp., who confirmed the glider pilots assigned to us for this exercise will be at the strip at 13:00 sharp. Get some chow and get back there as soon as possible. Now, how did it go?"

"Everything went well!" Sackett said at attention.

Captain Knight waved his left hand indicating he could stand at ease. He kept his right hand on his hip as he nodded his head for him to continue.

"Satisfactory, Sir. All secured and with more practice we will be able to take about half the time. My report shows one hour, twenty-five minutes, but for the first time with new rope and new guns, we did a good job. Tuzzie and I are very satisfied," he said in a military manner.

"Good. Good. Get some chow," Captain Knight shook his head with approval and moved his right hand to return their salute.

By the time they returned to the mess tent there were only a few in line. The menu, consisting of a baloney sandwich, beans, applesauce, bread, and coffee, did not excite them. This prompted Tuzzie to express the thought that, "With the chances of a very rough ride over the hot desert terrain, in a hot glider I sure hope everything stays where it should. You know what I mean?" he said. He looked at Sackett gingerly biting into the baloney sandwich, "I can see that it's as good as your mother made. You look like you're really enjoying it."

"Taste the beans if you want to know what's good," Sackett said and leaned back to straighten up and emphasize his retort.

"Thank God for applesauce," Tuzzie said and put a spoonful in his mouth while exaggerating a feigned delight.

"Hey. The coffee's good."

"Yeah. You sure need something to wash the beans and baloney down," Tuzzie said.

"Did you guys hear the engineers are putting up a shower?" Galamoski asked. He walked over and sat down beside them and put his mess cup on the table. "Yup," he added, "Over there," and pointed toward a hill behind them. "It's a little valley. Kinda like a big bowl -- a high ridge all around."

"Where'd you get this scoop?" Sackett asked.

"I heard Sergeant Bower tell Corporal Roger to fill the water truck and empty it in a barrel ... like a water tower. Hey, that ain't no rumor," Galamoski informed them with mock indignation.

"When will it be ready?" Tuzzie asked.

"He said it was about done. Dumping the water was just about the last thing. Like, maybe tomorrow," Galamoski said.

"Wow! No more helmet dips," Sackett said. "Hell, getting rinsed was the worst part."

"I hate brushing my teeth. Rinsing toothpaste out using your canteen just ain't no fun," Galamoski said.

"You don't use water out of your helmet to brush your teeth do you?" Tuzzie asked with a laugh.

"No! No! I just meant at least we won't have to wash like that any more," Galamoski defended himself, "just brush our teeth."

"Who's driving us back to the glider?" Sackett asked him.

"I don't know. Maybe Downs," Galamoski said. He picked up his cup and swallowed the last drop of coffee and left.

Both Sackett and Tuzzie finished eating and drinking their coffee, and walked to the garbage can to dump and empty their mess kits, and then slosh them around in the hot soapy water. They carefully dipped them in the boiling rinse water and walked to

their tents while shaking and waving the hot utensils to cool them and then drop them at their tents. A wide space separated each gun crew and their tents that made it easy to find an individual's 'private' ground. Most were sitting on their helmets writing, reading, or just smoking and waiting accepting the axiom 'what a GI does best.'

The hot sun and the hot dry wind made thoughts of a cooler night breeze seem like eons away. Beads of perspiration formed on the face, head, and neck, and then trickled down to soak into fatigues forming dark blotches. White salt stains outlined the wet spots and was proof that the mandatory salt tablets were swallowed. It was a better proof than a check mark as each one checked his own name on the roster.

Suddenly, a sharp piercing whistle carried throughout camp that was followed by an equally penetrating command, "Fall out." The combination signified an important announcement that generated excitement and intensified anticipation. The hot, lazy scene changed to one of rapid activity with GI's putting on helmets, filling canteens at the cistern, snapping on belts and straps and slinging carbines over the shoulder. All converged to form lines in front of Battalion Headquarters ready to snap to attention. First Sergeant Chandler usually just ordered each chief to assemble their crews and when everyone was present and at attention simply repeated the order for the day's activity listed on the bulletin board. A murmuring rippled through the ranks as the rumors and guesses added to the frenzy and excitement. The quiet seemed as stifling as the hot air at the command, "ATTENTION!"

The response to the command was instant and precise – a pleasing sight to the satisfaction of any authority or commander viewing the formation. It was a positive indication of the superb training, high spirit, and the excellence of preparedness which is essential to a quick and complete response to an order or command; be it stand up and hook up, prepare for landing, or the assault command, 'Move Out'. Quiet settled over the formation which did not stop or dampen the excitement or anticipation expected. This mood emanated from the entire formation just as the heat danced in waves and rose from hot, dry ground.

Colonel Albright approached the battalion and stopped at attention to accept the salute and report from first Sergeant Chandler, "Present and Accounted for, Sir." His return salute, snappy and precise, was an indication of the pride he felt for his men and his voice echoed those feelings as he expressed them in his response, "Thank you, men. At ease." The tension eased as the entire battalion relaxed to the command. Colonel Albright recognized that the tension of this moment had been anticipated since when the camp was first set up in this dry treeless place. "That was as crisp and sharp," he continued, "as any commander could want to see. It is a good indication of your enthusiasm, your cooperation, your training, and it makes it easy for me to explain and direct your attention to some very important changes and events scheduled for the next few days." He hesitated as he glanced at papers in his hand, turned a page, and continued, "Oh, yes, I have some good news to start with. The shower facility you heard rumors about are completed. Beginning at 10:00 hours tomorrow, headquarters

will be first to try the contraption. Sergeant Chandler will post the schedule and by 17:00, tomorrow everyone will have enjoyed the latest, most fastidious bathing facility in the whole theater.”

A surge of approval went through the formation sounding like half laugh and half consent. Colonel Albright waited a few minutes while they savored the thought and then waved his hand for quiet, “At ease,” he continued, “I hope you do enjoy your first shower.” His demeanor changed to reflect the seriousness of his next instructions. “We have now reached a very important event, point, milestone in our development into a truly airborne unit. We will fly the first howitzer ... ever ... in a glider to prove it can be done. We will succeed! This test run will prove all development, everything we have worked for, all we have done; all we have trained for will be accomplished. **AND THAT IS: LANDING IN FORMATION BEHIND ENEMY LINES TO SURPRISE THEM AND HELP SHORTEN THIS WAR!** We are going to give our jumpers support right where they need it most – right with them – wherever they are. We’re going to blow them to hell ... and ... now we have our guns to do it!”

His strong voice ended in a pitch more suited to a team rally. It generated a spontaneous yell like a hurrah as enthusiastic as a cheering crowd. “Let’s hear it again,” he encouraged them and flexed his arms in wild excitement.

The crescendo was instant, intense, and louder each time he flexed his arms. It was as a single voice. It was a cheering response of acceptance and approval. The sequence was repeated three times. Each time Colonel Albright moved his arms and then he dropped them to his side signaling that it was enough.

“At 13:00,” he said and waited to be heard. “At 13:30,” he corrected himself, “two of our gun chiefs, Sergeant Sackett and Sergeant Tuzzie have been picked to test fly one of our new guns. They have already secured it in the glider. It is ready for flight. Test flights have been conducted, back in the States, with equipment, jeeps, personnel, ammo, seventy-five mule pack howitzers but not one of our 105’s. The glider pilots assigned us is excellent. They did the entire test flying back home, and we are lucky to have them.”

While this test is in progress, all other personnel will be assembled on the flight strip at the opposite end of the field. Sergeant Chandler will instruct you and help you familiarize yourself with the gliders. I believe there are six on the strip for our use. No, there will be six tomorrow.”

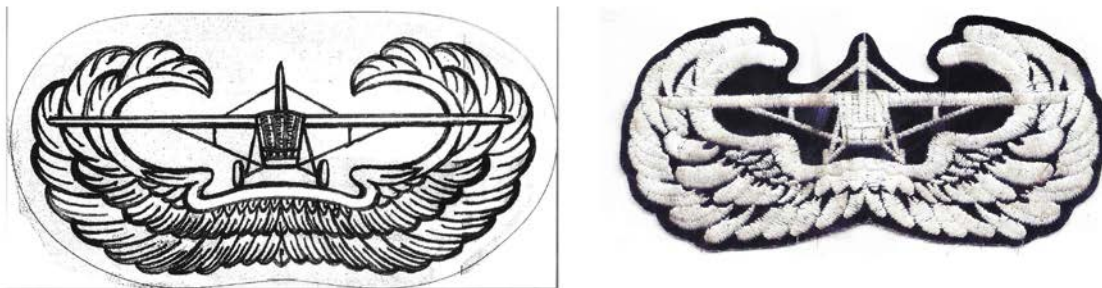
“Now, in addition to the roster for showers, Sergeant Chandler will post a schedule for your initial qualifying flights for flight pay. To qualify for flight pay, six flights and a total of ten hours air time are required to satisfy flight status.”

Colonel Albright hesitated as he noticed the men moving back and forth and talking to each other. Excitement increased as did the sound of their voices at the significance of this announcement. The jabbering and movement said better than words the thrill of a ride in a glider, long awaited and anticipated, was soon to be

realized. It was clearly evident he was equally pleased at the acceptance by everyone. He realized he shared their feelings since him, too, would be flying and accompanying them to earn glider wings.

He stood erect and at attention as he raised his hand for quiet. "I have seen specifications and the drawings for our wings. They are impressive. Yes, they are beautiful. YOU, WE can wear them with pride. You will have earned them by the time they reach Battalion supply. This should be July 18. They will be presented at a special ceremony by General Gavin."

(The certificates authorizing an individual to wear the glider wings were not issued until June 2, 1944 after the Normandy landing – D-Day One. The glider wings were handed out unceremoniously approximately two months later after a noon chow. Glider Field Artillery Battalions, the men, the guns, the training was proof of their worth and value after Normandy.)



(Figure 16: Design of the Glider Wings)

Colonel Albright glanced around at the troopers satisfied that 'his' men were tops, in fine shape, and were prepared, and that they were especially enthusiastic about the flights that would make them airborne. He slowly straightened up into a position of attention and ordered the first sergeant, "Carry on, Sergeant Chandler." He returned Sergeant Chandler's crisp salute and with an about face walked quickly back to the Headquarters' tent.

After Sergeant Chandler's 'At Ease', they settled into an easy attention. "Sergeants Sackett and Tuzzie, fall out, get your driver, Private Downs, and get back to the glider." He glanced at his watch, "You should have enough time before the pilots get there. They should complete pre-flight by 13:30. The C47's should be there about that time." At his return salute the three got into their jeep and drove off in the direction of the glider. The ever present dust marked their progress until they disappeared over the hill.

At the bottom of the hill they made a right turn onto the air strip and followed the edge toward the small object at the far end of the runway. The haze and shimmering heat waves made it difficult to clearly identify the outline of the glider. The slow pace they chose to avoid raising any more dust than necessary was agonizing and tedious. The dark olive brown color of the glider appeared to remain the same size, and the slow pace added to the illusion of not getting any closer. The hot air evaporated any moisture on the face or neck exposed to the hot wind blowing against them. Only the damp patches on fatigues indicated that perspiration was possible in the arid area which was so barren and desolate.

"Hey, we beat the glider pilots here," Sackett said as they drew near enough to see that there was no activity, no vehicles, or personnel around the lonely object that seemed to be squatting like a bird ready for flight.

Downs drove around to the tail to be out of the way when the glider was towed down the runway for the test flight. He stopped the jeep in a swirl of dust that drifted around them as the two quickly jumped out to get beyond the reach of the dusty cloud. They walked together toward the glider and hesitated as if they were about to open a furnace door. The air inside was stifling and hot from being closed tight while they went to chow. They pulled at some ropes to test tension and assure that they were taut and secure enough for the flight about to begin. Both glanced down the runway as they heard a jeep approaching and stepped out to wait for the glider pilots. The shape of their caps clearly identified them as air corps.

They walked toward the jeep and stopped at the edge of the dust that enveloped the two glider pilots. They greeted each other and shook hands, after saluting, and exchanged first names in the informal way of air corps personnel.

Both glider pilots were tall and slender, and both had dark hair. Their uniforms did not conceal their lean and slim frame which was a contrast to the muscular, solid build of the troopers. Their clean crisp uniforms also were a contrast to the salt and sweat stained fatigues of the combat soldier. Their differences were the physical appearances that did not conceal the attention, training, and interest that was apparent in the manner in which they proceeded to inspect the glider.

Tuzzie and Sack followed them around watching them feel the canvas, move the flaps, and gently turn the tail right and left. They stopped at the door and as the glider pilot, who introduced himself as Lieutenant Newman, opened it and looked in, exclaimed, "Oh my naked ass, oh my naked ass, what the hell is that?" He looked at the howitzer and covered his eyes in mock surprise. "The end of that thing almost touches the nose. That sticks between us. We can't see each other. Hey, Steve, look," he stepped aside to let the glider co-pilot see what was inside.

(Figure 17: The 105mm howitzer in the glider, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

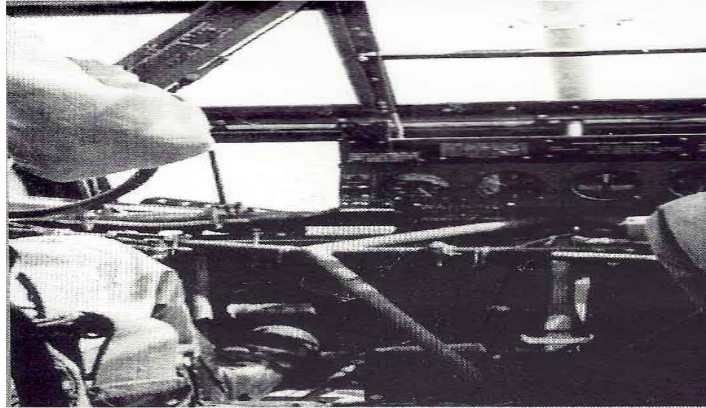


“Holy shit, how much does that thing weigh?” He was as much in awe at the sight as Lieutenant Newman. He stepped in and climbed over the trail and wheel to get to the glider co-pilot’s seat. Lieutenant Newman, too, stepped over the trail around the left side to get to his seat. They were like ducks bobbing their heads up and down as they tried to see over or around the end of the muzzle between them. It became a comic routine throughout the flight and ‘Oh my naked ass’ added

to the idea of concern and the potential danger, if the huge object separating them broke loose, that it could cause severe damage.

Tuzzie and Sack stepped inside and closed the door. Tuzzie moved to the left side over the trail and pulled a seat down that would leave enough room for him to sit behind the wheel. Sackett sat on a seat opposite him, and both reached down to check the tension of the ropes nearest to them. Newman and his co-pilot began checking the movement of the rudder and flaps. As they pushed a pedal or turned the control, one would say “Left flap”, “OK”, and then “Right flap”, “OK”. As one or the other would look under the muzzle to see movement, an “Oh my naked ass” was exclaimed instead of “OK”. The routine they followed did not take much time. Just before they finished, the noise of a plane overhead interrupted the procedure.

The ‘crew’ and ‘passengers’ watched as the tow plane landed amid the dust stirred up and blown away by the propellers. They watched as it came to a stop, turned around, and then slowly approach them to minimize the amount of dust trailing behind. It turned around again some distance from them as though keeping a safe amount of space between the glider and the plane. The distance was about the length of the tow rope that would link them together in flight. The side door opened and a ladder was lowered. A hatless, khaki, clad figure jumped from the last step, which seemed to dangle in mid air, onto the ground. Another figure backed out and stood on the top step and then turned to hand a coiled rope to the serviceman on the ground. He went back inside and returned with a small ladder, as the first man dropped the rope on the ground, to reach for the ladder. They walked to the tail, and one stood on the ladder as the other handed him the end of the rope. The end was inserted into the latch at the lowest part of the fuselage and snapped into place. He then yanked on it to make sure it was properly secured. The other GI picked up the loose end and dragged it toward the glider. Little puffs of dust rose from the rope as the two men pulled it along the runway toward the glider as if it was waiting there to come alive. The same airman snapped the end into the latch centered in the front of the glider. He glanced at the glider pilot through the Plexiglas window for approval.



(Figure 18: The C47 pilot looking into the pilot's seat through the Plexiglas window of the glider, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg NC)

He then gestured with his hand held up, and then quickly dropped it in a sweeping motion, signaling him to pull the lever and release the tow rope. The end almost shot out as he pulled the lever and signaled approval with the okay sign. The airman again snapped the end into the latch, and he, too, signaled okay after yanking on the rope signifying it was secure. He then turned around to walk along the rope toward the C47 as he checked to make sure it would not get tangled when the glider followed the plane in flight.

The two pilots from the C47 stopped to chat with the airman inspecting the toe rope and then continued toward the glider. They acknowledged the glider pilots as they looked at the latch in the nose and nodded approval. They ducked under the wing as they felt the canvas and pulled at the wing struts before opening the side door. As the C47 pilot looked in, he quickly moved his head as if taking a second look, and at his exclamation, "Oh, my God, what's that?" the C47 co-pilot quickly looked over his shoulder. "Shit, do we have to toe this thing? Hell, we'll need ten runways to get off the ground?" "Hey, you half baked glider jockeys; you going to follow us? I bet you can't", he laughed as he reached over the gun to shake their hands. He dropped his hand on the muzzle and patted it in a gesture as if telling a little boy to behave.

The C47 co-pilot reached around to shake hands and announced, "I'm Paul, Paul Garner. Geeze, you guys got guts to fly this thing. Where did ya train, Homestead?"

Lieutenant Newman acknowledged his query, "I started there. Wound up in Plainview."

"I was in Lemoore, then Plainview, and Mackall, North Carolina," the C47 co-pilot interrupted Newman.

"You're Steve?" Paul, the power C47 co-pilot, looked at him. "You did double tows?"

Lieutenant Newman butted in, "We're not double towing this thing. No, how. No way."

"I don't think we could get two of these off the ground," the C47 co-pilot added.

"Well, you guys ready? Shall we get to it? No sense wasting any more time," Lieutenant Newman said.

"The thermals are going to be bad enough as it is over this damn hot place," the C47 co-pilot emphasized the danger.

The two turned and stepped out, shut the door, and patted the side in a gesture of good luck. They headed back to their plane with little puffs of dust rising from each step. Newman, Steve, Tuzzie, and Sack watched as they reached the plane, and climbed in, and pulled the door shut. The beads of sweat trickled down their face and neck. The heat was almost unbearable. They wiped their face on their sleeves and watched the dust blowing toward them from the props. The sound of the engines, as they revved up, reached them, and they watched the increase in the dust from the prop wash. Suddenly, the plane started to move just as the sound increased, and excitement mounted as each one observed the toe rope straightening out in front of them. Tension stiffened their muscles as the toe rope became stiff and taut, and for some few seconds the rope appeared to be a straight line. Then just as suddenly the nose of the glider dipped down, and the tail jerked up before they started to move and follow the plane. It seemed an excruciating long time that they bounced down the runway behind the cloudy object in the distance ahead of them. It was difficult to feel a sense of being tied to this vague dust shrouded plane. The noise of travel on the ground ceased, and the quiet of flight was proof the glider rose above the runway just before the plane. The glider, lunged from the turbulence, and gave a violent jerk, and then righted itself again in level flight. The plane continued to gain in height and slowly curved to the left to follow the desert floor between two mountain ranges. Another violent lunge downward and a falling sensation caused slack in the toe rope. Again the glider jerked forward and upward as the toe plane took up this slack. Even though they reached the altitude of the flight plan, the hot rising air from the desert floor made the glider twist and jerk and lunge continually to look more like a kite on the end of a string on a windy March day. The two 'passengers' nervously watched the ropes as they tightened their grip on the seats to keep them from being thrown about and tossed around with each lunge and jerk. Tuzzie reached for a rope to test the tension and grabbed the wheel to stop a violent thrust forward that could have tossed him over the gun. He grinned at Sack and nodded his head indicating the tension was good and the rope still tight.

The flightless 'bird', tethered to the plane ahead, constantly pitched and swerved from the thermals and downdrafts. The heat rising from the desert floor made the mountains shimmer and appear opaque in the distance. The twisting, swinging motion of the glider aggravated a queasy feeling in the stomach especially when fixing

attention on the horizon. Sack shook his head and directed his gaze at the glider pilot. He noted that his back and arms were stiff which indicated the effort he exerted to compensate and to control what was necessary to smooth the roughness of the flight.

Tuzzie raised himself up to look over to the glider co-pilot and saw the blue of the Mediterranean just a short distance away. He glanced out the small round window that was like a tiny porthole and noticed the shadows of the tow plane and their glider. The shadow of the plane suddenly disappeared as it crossed the line between the shore and the sea. Just as quickly their shadow followed, and just as suddenly their flight was as smooth as if riding on an absolutely flat surface like a pool table. It was a surprise to all, and the tightness and the tension disappeared from muscles, neck, and back. A relaxed feeling replaced the stiffness with one of casual enjoyment, and they moved around touching the ropes for tightness and proper tension. Their faces displayed the change with smiles, and their bodies settled into a comfortable slouch. The time of flight over water passed quickly, and the Island of Malta, the designated point for turning around to head back, appeared as a tiny spot on the sea below them. They made a wide sweep before the speck of land, and the plane ahead rose ever so slightly, and as the glider reached the same spot, it too rose, and then returned to the smooth level flight enjoyed by all.

Land quickly came into view, and the time to return seemed to take half as long as it did to reach the turn around at Malta. The smooth flight ended abruptly as they crossed from sea to land. Again, the plane and glider lunged and lurched and seemed to drop more violently than before. The heat from the late afternoon increased the strength of the thermals, and the jerks, lurches, and constant movement brought back the strain to muscles, necks, and backs. Sight of the landing strip increased the anxiety and concern for a reasonably safe return to the wind and dust the flight took them away from over the water for a short time. As they made a gradual turn to line up for a straight run onto the runway, a red light appeared from the plane. The glider pilots moved about to adjust themselves for a rough touch down just as a yellow light appeared next to the red. A violent drop, even more than any previous one, increased the strain to the point of fear in the 'occupants'. Just as the green light replaced the red and yellow, the tightening of the tow rope jerked them upright with a snap that could have broken bones if they had not been fastened in their seats. The quick release from the tow rope made them drop in a steep path toward the runway. The surprise was in the quiet and smoothness of free flight and was not expected by anyone. The time to touchdown was but a few minutes or more nearly seconds. At touchdown the ride was bumpy, rough, and noisy, but short amid a cloud of dust that swirled around them from the wind. It formed into a cloud resembling a dust devil or a small tornado. No one moved. It was as if they were trying to believe the landing was finished. The equipment was secure. The glider was intact. No injuries. The mission was a complete success.

The 'team' moved together as one. The heat inside increased almost instantly. The noise of the plane over them indicated it, too, would land in a swirl of dust that

would follow it down the runway. The two troopers and the glider pilots emerged out the side door like logs popping out of a chute. At the same instant the wheels of the tow plane touched the runway and came to a stop at the far end of the air strip. After turning around, it slowly approached the figures standing in front of the glider. Silence returned to the area as the engines coasted to a stop, and the C47 pilots went through their procedures of switching off various controls. In a short time the side door opened, and they climbed down the steps extending from the door. They all came together gleefully shaking hands and patting each other on the back to acknowledge the successful run and safe landing.



(Figure 19: Now we know! -- public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

"How did you like that for a ride?" Lieutenant Newman asked Sergeants Tuzeneu and Sackett.

"For a roller coaster it wasn't half bad," Sergeant Sackett laughed.

"You'd never get me on ride like that, let alone to pay to do it," Tuzzie said as he vigorously and enthusiastically shook hands with Newman and Garner.

"Don't forget to log in your flight time," Lieutenant Newman said. "You'll get," he glanced at his watch, "an hour and twenty minutes credit. Hell, how easy can it get?" He laughed as he saluted in a snappy crisp manner and turned toward their plane. He stopped after several steps and turned around to look at them, "Maybe we'll see you again tomorrow. We're scheduled to fly flight training for you to qualify for flight pay, right?" he asked. "Look for us. We can find some thermals for you to enjoy. Hell, after today there shouldn't be anything to it!"

The door closed and the plane's engines started quickly, and then moved down the runway for a short flight to return to their home strip. Tuzzie and Sack climbed into their jeep and headed back to base. They could see the C47 turn to land before they even reached the end of the runway. Again at the top of the hill overlooking their bivouac, the increased speed downhill, drove the breeze against the face and sweat stained fatigues, and the wind felt cool and was a welcome relief. They slowed abruptly

as they neared Headquarters so as not to stir up a cloud of dust. Already, it covered every tent and piece of equipment with a dull tan in the same monotonous shade of khaki. Several figures from Headquarters stirred and rose to approach them for an informal report of the flight. The formal written report would soon follow and require precise, accurate, and complete detail for a thorough critique of the event.

Captain Knight returned salutes and then assumed his characteristic pose. It was said to be as sure as death and taxes.

"So, how did it go? How did it go?" he asked.

"It was a very good flight. A great success," Sergeant Tuzeneu said.

"After that fight, we know we can fly anywhere," Sack added.

"Nothing loosened up? All the knots held tight?" Captain Knight acknowledged the importance of what they said by shaking his head in approval. "How long were you airborne?"

"An hour and twenty-three minutes," Sack quickly responded.

"Was it a bad ride? Rough?" Captain Knight asked.

"It sure was over ground," Sack said, "but over the water, it was as smooth as glass. We couldn't believe it. The difference!"

"The glider pilots, could they fly the thing if it was that bad?"

"You're right. It was hard. You could see them straining. Their arms and neck ... muscles were tense and stiff," Tuzzie said.

"Well, OK, get cleaned up. Sounds great. Mess will be a little early," Captain Knight saluted with satisfaction.

The two walked together to their sites. Their steps were the measured cadence acquired after many drills and double timing between activities of each day. Each grabbed a canteen cup and went to the liter bag for a drink. The water was quite cool from the evaporation and slacked any thirst even with the slight taste of chlorine. With thirst quenched, each went back to the five gallon water cans to fill their steel helmets for washing hands and face. It was easy to see the enjoyment from the splashing and dripping of water down neck and arms. A quick swipe with a towel was all that was needed to dry off. A slosh of water on the hair and a comb completed the cleanup job before chow. Tuzzie twirled the water in his helmet, and then tossed it on the ground, threw the towel on a tent rope, and dropped on his blanket to rest. His helmet liner served as a pillow after he rolled up the edge of a blanket under his neck. Various

noises of the activities around camp floated by that blended together into soft murmur. It was easy to drift off into a quick nap for a little 'shut eye'. The brief rest, although refreshing, was short lived, and the entire camp woke simultaneously to the sharp whistle announcing chow was ready.

The routine never changed with the chow line unmilitary winding snake-like toward the mess table. The cooks stoically dropping globs of potatoes, meat, peas on mess kits and then pouring gravy over everything was no different than at any meal. Coffee, hot enough to burn lips or mouth completed the menu. It left only the task of finding a place to squat without spilling and which required a juggling act of the grandest order imaginable. Enjoying what was served was another matter. Enjoyment was not considered essential. Consumption was necessary. How else could an army move, but on one's full stomach?

The routine after mess was to check the bulletin board for announcements, duty roster, and schedule for the next day. This day's excitement made more soldiers linger and wait for a chance to get close enough to see the flight times for each group, and the amount of qualifying time each man had accumulated toward flight pay. Tuzzie and Sack noted they had the most as a result of their test run. They had only completed their report of the task prior to chow. Both were surprised their times were posted so quickly. It was evident the list was just posted since their names were last on the roster. The qualifying times averaged thirty-two minutes with a few posted at eleven minutes -- trouble with a tow rope aborted the flight and made it necessary to release early and prevent serious damage and injury. Everyone commented on two makeup rides and how lucky those guys were! "Heh, they'll beat Sergeant Tuzzie and Sergeant Sack's hour and twenty-three minutes." The notice that anyone, not flying, could shower created as much commotion and was enthusiastically welcomed since trucks would leave every half hour for the site which was just over the hill.

Quiet gradually settled around the area. The air, too, in typical desert fashion diminished to a slight breeze as the sun dropped below the horizon. The heat dropped with the wind and made any activity a more pleasant effort whether writing a letter, reading, playing horseshoes, or a few innings of baseball in the fading light. Even guard duty was more acceptable in the relative cool. The response to a name assigned to each post was firm but with a softer, "Here, Sir." Noises of footsteps and guards climbing in the truck were crisp and precise in the quiet evening as faint light gave way to the dark of night. The sound of the truck quickly faded, and only placing of the guard at each post could be heard. Quiet again reigned for a short time until the truck returned after delivering each guard to his post. The pleasant sound of taps signaled: 'Day is done gone the sun, and the time to rest for tired men.'

Chapter 4: Flight Training

The sound of reveille was as unwelcome, as taps was reassuring, and effective in the transformation from peaceful rest to the hustle and bustle of facing the day's activities. These included dressing in the sweat stained fatigues, a morning wash of splashing water on the face, combing hair, and some brushing their teeth. Assembly for the morning jog required helmets, belts, and canteens always filled with water, and occasionally a full pack and rifles. This day was light drill, and the double time jogging would only take half an hour -- just enough time to spike the appetite. The tightly packed squads moved in a smooth rhythm and counted cadence as one voice. "I can't hear you," signaled a response to satisfy the demand. The return to Headquarters ended in a crisp stop that showed the effect of well trained airborne troops. Each faced his helmet, belt, and shirt stacked in the rows where they placed them before the morning run.

"Dismissed. Chow is in fifteen minutes," gave everyone enough time to put on fatigue shirts, helmets, and belts, and return to their tents for mess kits. All 'designated' chow hounds rushed to be first in line while others slowly sauntered back. The line remained about the same length as those served first moved on allowing others their turn and keeping about the same number waiting. The stragglers coming later found no waiting necessary, and only the clinking sound of tin cups and spoons on mess kits disturbed the quiet.

"Full packs, canteens, chin straps, and carbines," Sergeant Chandler announced as he moved among the men. "Fall out at 08:00," he said loud enough for everyone to hear. He tipped his cup to finish his coffee and briskly walked over to the command tent, ducked under the flap, and sat at his desk. He slowly ran his finger down the list of names, and after checking the roster slipped the sheets under a clipboard. He settled back in his seat and folded his hands behind his head to wait for roll call which was in only a few minutes. He turned his head to see 'his' men gathering in the area where crews assembled for roll call. He, then, stood up and fastened his belt with canteen and forty-five and hooked his backpack onto the belt. He shrugged his shoulders to settle the equipment into place, put on his helmet, fastened the chin strap, and made his way toward the assembly. The last of the men settled into their places just in time for the order, "ATTEN-HUT". Captain Knight, Lieutenant Clark, and Lieutenant Becker walked together and came to attention behind Sergeant Chandler just as he called out, "Report". Each crew chief announced, "Present and accounted for," with snap and precision and a brisk salute. When all chiefs had properly reported, Sergeant Chandler did an about face to report to Captain Knight, "Present and accounted for, Sir."

Captain Knight returned the salute. "At ease men," he said. "Today we will continue flight training in order to qualify for flight pay and complete requirements in flight and record times for each man. Guns, jeeps, and equipment will be properly

secured in this exercise. All crews when flight times have been met will unload in combat simulation. You will proceed to the designated gun positions as indicated on the maps distributed to all gun chiefs. It is expected all guns will fire sufficient rounds on the target as a reference point to assure accuracy of each weapon. Any adjustments necessary will be made at this time. After each gun is certified, crew chiefs will secure their weapons and return to base. Today's schedule should be finished by 17:00. Combat practice should be completed, and every man should have had a shower." He saluted Sergeant Chandler, "Carry on Sergeant," he said. He and the Lieutenants turned and marched back to the Headquarters tent.

"ATTEN-HUT," Sergeant snapped. "Crews mount up. Get jeeps and guns from the motor pool and assemble in formation heading toward the air strip. Head up and move out will be at 08:45. That should give you plenty of time. Carry on."

Each crew climbed into the heavier weapons carriers used only at a base camp for the short trip to the motor pool. They jumped out by each gun while the drivers went to get jeeps used in airborne operations. They hooked up howitzers; put six rounds of ammunition on each jeep and five gallon cans of gas -- all of which had to be secured in the gliders before the scheduled flights. The operation went smoothly and was proof of good training, enthusiasm, and good moral. Each crew finished about the same time, and exiting the motor pool was an example of team work and cooperation. Sergeant Chandler made a mental note of the crews as they formed in line facing the direction of the air strip.

Each crew with jeep and howitzer in tow stopped by the side of a glider. The nose of each glider pointed across the strip at an angle of about thirty degrees. In this configuration the tow planes for the ten gliders could form in a line with as small a space as possible between them. The third tow plane was opposite the first glider, and the tenth plane lined up with the eighth glider. This arrangement made it possible to snake the toe rope from plane to glider preventing entanglement. In this way the take off would be one behind the other with no time wasted and the entire 'armada' could be airborne in but a few minutes.



(Figure 21: Gliders and C47's lined up, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

It was a busy scene with the crews stopping by a glider almost at the same time. A driver with one seated beside him, two sitting on the flat spot over a rear wheel, and two squeezed between them comprised a crew. They dismounted quickly, unhooked their gun, and swung it around in order to push it to the front and wait for the nose to be opened. The men in the weapons carriers dismounted as quickly to unload the gas cans, ammo, and equipment necessary to complete the flight training and simulated combat mission. Captain Knight and Sergeant Chandler, standing in the middle of the runway observing, nodded and shook their heads with satisfaction and approval of the scene which clearly displayed the ease and precision that comes from good training. Noise of vehicles approaching diverted their attention to see the power and glider pilots arriving in good time enabling them to meet flight schedules.

Unlike the GI's they arrived in a random fashion. The relaxed manor expected of Air Corp. personnel. Several jeeps had to turn around to go back to a plane they had just gone by to drop off the pilots at assigned places. In a similar fashion, the glider pilots sauntered toward their assigned positions stopping only to chat with the crew chiefs before beginning their inspections. At the same time, the pilots and the crews buzzed around the C47's, the work horse of the Air Corps, stopping only to mark an item off the check list. One by one the engines started slowly coughing and sputtering while gradually gaining speed. As they revved up, the noise became as unbearable as the dust that swirled around the entire area. The noise of the engines continued for several minutes through the necessary warm up period, and then gradually diminished to the hum at idle until take off.

While the pilots of each craft performed their checks, the members of each crew, settled into assigned positions, and anxiously and nervously awaited flight. The crew did what soldiers always had to do, hurry up and wait. The wait, too, as always, seemed to be an unbearably long time while the seconds ticked away in a cadence that induced a trance. The spell was broken when all eyes followed Captain Knight as he walked briskly along the runway and stopped opposite the first plane. He raised his arm, and made a circular motion, and then finished by pointing a finger down the runway indicating that it was 'OK' for take off. The pilot responded with a salute, and the ground chief signaled his crew to remove wheel chocks just as the sound of the engines once again became loud and annoying.

Sweat trickled down faces and soaked arm pits as the men watched the lead plane slowly move along the runway dragging the tow rope behind. It unwound until finally becoming straight and stretched to the point where the glider suddenly jerked nose down and then lurched forward to follow the plane into flight. It rose in flight a few feet above ground just before its tow plane rose above the runway.

Sergeant Tuzzie for the second time experienced the excitement of flight in a glider. He found that he was exhilarated by the sensation more than his first ride when he and Sergeant Sackett flew the test run. Since it started earlier in the day, it was not

yet as hot nor was it as windy which enabled him to be more relaxed, and the thrill and fun of it all surprised him. Maybe, he found himself thinking, since it would be a shorter flight, about half an hour, he was not as uncertain or as scared as he had to admit. Even the thought of a second flight everyone would have to complete by late afternoon, did not cause him to feel queasy or dread another one. He glanced out the nose and noticed the plane beginning a left turn. They followed the 'leader' as the glider pilot turned to fly the same pattern and not end up at the far right of the tie between them that would make it look like they were going off in a different direction. Again there was turbulence and jerks from the thermals but they were not as threatening or as violent as before. The same mountains off to the right appeared clear and bright. They were a definite brown, and the sky was a deep blue not the hazy opaque purple that made them seem so far away the first time. It did not feel as hot or stuffy, nor did he feel as tense or need to hold onto a handle with a vise-like grip. He glanced at the ground below and saw a cloud of dust trailing behind a truck heading toward the mountain. He could see the other planes and gliders off to his left following their route and in the distance a pair just rising off the runway. They looked so small and so close together. He counted four pair in the air and the one just getting off the ground, but he could not see immediately behind them whether there were one or two more in the pattern. He could not see or distinguish if any remained on the ground that had not yet taken off. He looked at his watch and realized they were about half way, and he had no sense of the time.

His mind wandered or meandered around many thoughts, and then he realized the heat was not as bad as the test run that he and Sack had endured only a short time ago -- or was he getting used to it -- acclimated to the semi-arid desert living. He felt the damp from his perspiration under his arm and down his chest, but it did not run down his face and neck to be absorbed by his fatigues. He glanced ahead and off to the right; he could see the Mediterranean. The blue hue of the water silhouetted the tow plane. The rope between them appeared to end at the sea, but seemed to disappear over the brown desert floor, and then reappear a few feet in front of the nose. Just then the plane made a slow turn to the right, and he knew they would not fly over the sea or enjoy a smooth ride over the water.

The flight so far was not as bad, not as rough, not as violent, as the test run. The lurches and lunges were much less abrupt and the sudden drops were not as steep. He centered his attention on the pilot and co-pilot and could see they were not as stressed. Their arms were firm but not stiff or rigid when responding to any movement that had to be overcome. They seemed to anticipate trouble and made any necessary corrections to control and lessen the shock of drops, lunges, and lurching that resulted in a better and smoother flight. His thoughts were interrupted by a sudden rise and a steep drop, more severe and much farther, than any so far during this flight. He noted a ridge of mountains just below them that paralleled the edge of the Mediterranean. The cooler air from the water made the hot desert wind rise sharply creating peaks and valleys of turbulent masses through which they had to 'fly'. The glider pilots anticipated these movements by watching the plane ahead and made

corrections needed to minimize the effect of the rough spots. He noticed a line in the terrain off slightly to his left and then looked again to study the area. He realized it was the runway -- a dirt strip that did not seem long enough for them to have taken off nor nearly long enough to land on. As they neared the air strip, it appeared to grow wider and longer each minute. They made a slow turn to approach from the far end to land into the wind. They descended gradually in order for the glider and plane to be in a straight line with the runway. At this time a red light from the plane signaled the glider pilots to get ready to release the latch for landing. In but a few seconds a yellow light came on to the right of the red and the runway was just below them. A green light signaled time to release, and as the red and yellow light went off, the co-pilot reached up to pull the latch to cut the tie between them allowing the glider pilots to begin the task they were trained to do – control the flight and land as perfectly as possible.

The sensation of falling continued until they were close enough to the ground to see that were moving along the runway. They wobbled and bumped along after touch down. The noise and rumble vibrated through the frame; the men and equipment secured within. They stopped as near to the end of the strip as possible to give the gliders coming behind them room enough to land and stop in line to be ready for the next flight. The stop was abrupt amidst the dust that surrounded them, and the quiet enveloped them just as abruptly.

Sergeant Tuzzie glanced at his watch to note the time. He looked again to verify that forty-three minutes was correct, and that the flight had taken that long. He realized his time was more than enough to qualify him for flight pay. Of course that was the reason for the training and the flights. One more to go, he acknowledged, and crawled over the gun to follow the pilots out the door. They could use a well-deserved rest before the next flight.

“Tuz,” Sergeant Sackett called as he walked toward him, “What happened to the two off the end of the runway?”

“I don’t know,” he answered, “I didn’t see anything.”

“They’re just over the ridge,” Sack pointed down the runway in the direction the flights had started. “I can’t make out ... see ... anything from here. I did see them just as we were about to land though.”

“No, I can’t either,” Tuzzie said, “Could you tell how far they got?”

“Not really, but it wasn’t very far.”

“Hey, here comes Chandler. Maybe he knows. He should,” Tuzzie said.

“Hey, Sergeant, what happened?” Sackett called out loud enough to be heard.

Sergeant Chandler continued to walk toward them until he was close enough so that he did not have to yell to be heard. "One pilot got scared and cut loose. It was his fault. The other one – the damn latch snapped open," he said, "Neither got very far."

"Did anyone get hurt?" Tuzzie asked.

"How about the gliders? Any damage?" Sackett asked.

"I haven't heard, but I don't think so," he said, "Now we'll have to spread the men around ... put them in the remaining gliders ... without overloading."

"We calculated the loads pretty carefully," Tuzzie said, "There wasn't much leeway for adding more weight."

"There were only five. I think just five ... five men ... we have to worry about. The equipment we can do without," Chandler said.

"What was the equipment?" Tuzzie asked him.

"We can complete the exercise, luckily, without those two particular gliders," Chandler said. "The first one," he paused as he flipped a page, "had a jeep and gas cans with Sergeant Givens and Hannish ..."

"What was in the other one?" Tuzzie interrupted him.

"The jeep," Chandler raised his hand up with a pencil held as if he was about to write, "the gas cans, and Sergeant Givens, Hannish and Guterman."

"Hannish and Guterman aren't heavy. We can take them with us," Sack said, "What was in the other one?"

"That had ammo, some of it, about half, and Corporal Smith and Atari. That's OK," he continued as he nodded toward Sergeant Sack, "Hannish can go with you. Guttermen can go in Sergeant Sword's flight. That leaves Sergeant Givens, Corporal Smith, and Atari. They can ride with Sergeant Parker's flight. That will total twelve instead of nine for one, and ten for the other in Nowak's flight. Wait. NO! NO! That means Hannish is with you, and Gutteman is with Nowak. That should do it."

"Where's everybody going?" Tuzzie looked away from the air strip and indicated the men heading toward two figures standing by a table.

"Oh, that's coffee. The cooks came out with coffee and doughnuts. Get your selves some, but make sure they save enough for me," Chandler said, "I'll be there in a minute. I have to check with Captain Knight. We got almost an hour." He turned and walked back toward three figures standing in the middle of the runway. It was easy to

recognize Captain Knight in his usual pose with his right hand bent backward and resting on his hip and fingers dangling in the air. The two others were probably Lieutenant Kalfe and maybe Technical Sergeant Moreno.

Tuzzie and Sack joined the line for coffee and a doughnut. They could smell the aroma of the coffee that the breeze carried to them long before they reached the pitcher, cream, and sugar. The Red Cross nurse in her crisp grey uniform, clean fresh look handed each a doughnut. After a thank you, the doughnut, and hot coffee, they walked over to join a circle of troopers sitting on their helmets. With a doughnut in their mouth, they dropped their helmet on the ground and carefully squatted down in order to eat the doughnut and sip the hot coffee. It was a lazy quiet scene. The usual afternoon breeze, hot and dry, went unnoticed more a result of being acclimated to the arid desert weather. The motionless scene was disturbed by several figures standing up and lighting a cigarette. The breeze wafted the smoke through the group, and soon others joined in the process of accepting the offer of a 'butt'. An order to turn could not have been more effective in getting everyone to watch Sergeant Chandler walking toward them. His purpose was understood before he was close enough to say, "Fall in. Assemble on the runway."

Tuzzie and Sack quickly gulped the rest of their coffee and dunked their cups in the rinse water. They slatted the water off and waved their cups in the air to dry before putting them back on their belt.

The men assembled quickly with the precision expected from well trained soldiers. No time was wasted for the command, 'ATTEN-HUT', which was executed as a single movement with the snap and precision to delight any commandant or officer.

"At ease, men," Captain Knight said, "Sergeant Chandler will explain the changes necessary as a result of the lost of the two gliders. I'm happy to say there was no damage. They will be back in service for our use shortly. Fortunately the equipment in these two will not keep us from completing our assignment ... err ...exercise. After the next flights, that will be at 15:00," he glanced at his watch, "In about nineteen or twenty minutes. Sergeant Chandler," he said and returned his salute. "Carry on."

"Yes Sir," Sergeant Chandler saluted and did an about face, "At ease! You can see our gliders are in formation. Toe planes are lining up," he glanced over his shoulder, "The last one is just now turning to get in line. We will load up in a few minutes. After this flight, all equipment will be unloaded simulating a combat situation, and all crews will move out when ready, and assemble in the area marked on your maps," he held up his hand while waving it briskly to get their attention. "Understand?" he asked. "Chow will be after completion of this exercise, simulating field conditions. Cooks and kitchen equipment will follow after all equipment is unloaded and setup during the exercise. We should be able to chow down about 17:00. Any questions? Yes," he acknowledged Sergeant Parker.

“Sarg, will we have enough ammo,” Sergeant Parker asked.

“Yes. About half of what we need. Not enough to fire more than about three salvos from the battery but enough to saturate the field as planned to observe any wild scatter or irregularities because of malfunctions, bad ammo, error in gun sights, elevation, azimuth settings etc, etc. But we should be able to detect any serious problems. That’s our goal. That’s what this exercise is all about. Good question. Any others? Fall out. Line up by your glider. See me if you don’t know. Everyone has been told of any change especially for those from the two that failed to complete their flight. Dismissed!”

A flurry of commotion followed the command that looked more like a rout of utter confusion than a disciplined activity as men broke the formation and scattered in different directions to walk to their positions. In only a few seconds they stood by the side of their gliders waiting the order to load up. The direction of the wind changed from the earlier flight and blew dust along the opposite side of the runway away from the formation.

Suddenly, at a signal given by the starter, the engine speed increased and the noise almost drowned out the order, ‘Load up’. It was a chain reaction as those closest heard the order and moved while others followed in succession. Just as those in church in the front row stood up first as each succeeding row behind them would stand up until the entire congregation did the same.

The air crewman turned and walked from the first plane to see down the row of gliders and satisfied that all was ready waved the pilot to take off. The scene of the take off was that of deja-vu accept that the entire flight was smooth -- no lag time between planes and no troubles. The added time in flight to meet qualification requirements was easily satisfied. Landings went smoothly and unloading of men and equipment was completed expeditiously which set in motion the success of the mission.

Chapter 5: Combat Simulation

Tuzzie's crew efficiently followed the commands for elevation and azimuth settings. One round was fired to establish a reference point and was quickly followed by two rounds to fix the bracket area. Then all guns fired one round at the initial setting.

"Hey, get this," Corporal Wellings said as he repeated what he heard over the phone, "Parkers crew ... check your elevation ... your way over by 100 yards, at least, call back when ready."

"Who's the gunner?" Private Whelan asked.

"I don't know," Wilson said, "Maybe Kirk."

"Maybe the calibration's off. Ain't that why we're here?" Whelan said.

"That's better," Corporal Wellings repeated after the sound of the shot from Parker's gun. "Sergeant Sack, swap your sight with Sergeant Parker ... and ... when ready ... call in." Wellings dropped his phone and repeated what he heard, "They are firing another round with Sack's gun sight."

"Smart," Tuzzie said, "We already corrected for the wind speed, direction, temperature, pressure."

"If it ain't the sight; it's gotta be the gun, right?" Whelan said, "What d'ya do then?"

"Send the gun back to ordinance. They'll have to check it out?"

Wellings held his hand up as he listened to the conversation between Sergeant Chandler and Parker, "They are about ready. Fire," he snapped out to beat the sound of the shot.

The sound of it exploding took only a few seconds to reach them and Corporal Wellings jumped up waving his left hand, "It's good. It's good," he repeated the excitement as much as the fact that the round hit the mark. "It will be easier ... to adjust the gun sight ... than send it to ordinance ...for fixing," he finished repeating what he heard and dropped the phone in the cradle.

"What'll we do now?"

"They will ring us back, Sergeant, when their ready," Wellings said.

"How man rounds do we have left," Tuzzie asked. "Just the three?" he pointed to

the ammo by the trail.

The ringing from the phone, a wavering whine more like a siren than a field phone, alerted the crew. They assumed their positions to quickly follow any command.

Wellings listened and crisply announced, "Ready, Sir! Three rounds left, Sir," ... he hesitated, "HE (High Explosive), one round, elevation: 143 ... azimuth ... repeat ... 115, report when ready." He repeated each command in a clear, crisp tone and watched the crew execute the order. "I want ... it to ... sound ... like one gun ... make sure you pull the lanyard together ... when I drop my hand." He stood up and raised his left hand and waited. "Ready," he cautioned. "Fire," he snapped as he dropped his arm. The sound of all the guns firing at the same time was almost perfect. There was a slight delay from one gun that could be detected but a satisfactory, "GOOD, GOOD," was repeated by Wellings. "Sarge said," his pause was interrupted by explosion of the shells, "It was just about perfect. That's what Sarge just said."

The crew waited in anticipation for quickly firing the last two rounds. Atari squatted on the edge of the trail while Gutterman rested his foot on the hitch. Cliff checked the bubbles on the sight and turned the knob to adjust the cross hairs on the reference stake. Tuzzie walked over to the shells resting across the ammo crate and brushed at the casing to make sure there was no sand or dirt that could cause a problem. The seconds ticked away, and the time seemed to drag along bringing up the thought, 'what was the delay?'

The ringing phone broke the spell as Wellings raised his arm to signal an order was coming ... "Rapid fire ... both rounds ... HE ... elevation: 135 ... azimuth ... repeat ... 115 ... report when ready ... ready sir ..." Wellings closed a finger as he counted off each crew reporting they were ready. "Fire," he shouted.

The sound of the shots was loud and penetrating. A sharp and piercing, 'KA-BOOM' was followed by the acrid smell of powder and a sharp, penetrating, and ear shattering explosion. Only covering both ears with hands minimized the sound and prevented injury to the ear drum. The clang of the brass casing hitting the ground and ramming the second shell into the breech was hardly noticeable. Snapping the lanyard sent the second shell to the target just as the first round exploded. The third shell was fired as the second explosion echoed as if in answer. So, too, the fourth shell was fired just before the third explosion and then silence followed after a cadence of one, two ... space ... three, four ... space ... five, six ... space ... seven, eight.

Just then Wellings said, "Hey ... Parker say's he's got another round. He wants an OK to fire."

The sound of Parker's gun answered his question.

"All rounds fired, sir," Wellings responded to the unheard question. Secure your

position,” he hesitated, “Report when ready to move out. We chow down before we head back to camp,” he added as he put the phone in its cradle.

He joined the others in securing the ‘piece’. They removed the elevation and azimuth sight, and strapped it in the box on the side of the trail, and lowered the barrel to lock it into the traveling position. Four men raised the trails to swing them together and lock in place while two others threw the cover over the muzzle and pulled the straps tight to keep out the dust. Downs drove a short distance to line up for convoying back to camp. The others picked up the casings, containers, and policed the area to make sure no debris or trash would be left on the site. He jumped out of the jeep and followed the others toward the kitchen set-up just a short distance from the battery head quarter’s tent.

Suddenly, Atari stopped and pointed off to his left,” What’s going on? Somebody’s fighting?”

They all stopped to look in the direction he was pointing. A cluster of GI’s made it difficult to see how many were bunched together. They were moving around in a flurry of agitated commotion.

“Hey, here come Sarge,” Wellings said. “He’s walking pretty fast. Almost running.”

No one moved as they watched Sergeant Chandler slow up a few steps before he reached them. He took two slow steps, and stopped beside the circle of men, and as he stood there the movement and commotion ceased. Tuzzie and his crew observed the scene and saw the figures gradually move apart until only two men faced each other. It was easy to recognize Sergeant Chandler since he was a head taller.

‘I can tell Sergeant Chandler,” Atari said, “But I can’t see who ... I can’t make out the short one.”

“That looks like Barrish,” Downs said, “I’m not sure, but he does have a short, stubby neck. It looks like him.”

“Ain’t he trouble?” Galamoski asked.

“He comes from New York ... Brooklyn, I think,” Tuzzie said, “He isn’t trouble.” He chuckled and then continued, “He gets flustered because he gets lost in the field. He can’t find his way. He doesn’t recognize bushes, rocks, hills, anything that doesn’t have a street sign on it.” He told Parker, “I’ll take you to Brooklyn, and you won’t find your way no where and sticking toilet paper on something didn’t mark nuttin’.”

“I know that,” Galamoski butted into the conversation, “I was in Chicago waiting to go to Fort Bragg for basic training. I had six hours to walk all over. I damn near got

lost what with all the tall buildings, and traffic lights, and cars, and buses. I can see how come he can't find his way," Galamoski snorkeled.

"Evidently he never was out of Brooklyn until he got into the Army," Tuzzie explained, "A condition many GI's from cities experience. Barrish might feel lost more than others. I feel sorry for them. Some catch on quicker than others."

Sergeant Chandler and Barrish turned and followed those walking toward the kitchen, and Tuzzie and his crew headed in the same direction.

The only noise was that of utensils as the men settled down to 'enjoy' the chow. The enjoyment was the result of eating late and being hungry. At almost 22:00, more than three hours later than regular chow, would make bully beef, carrots, potatoes (dehydrated at that), bread, and coffee almost palatable.

There was enough daylight after eating to see and to arrive back at base camp before dark. The kitchen was the last to leave. Clean-up and packing could only be completed after the last chow hound had finished. It was a good half hour behind the convoy in arriving at the motor pool after first unloading kitchen equipment at the mess area in order to be ready for breakfast.

The flurry of activity and commotion was intense but business-like. The howitzers had to be parked in the correct position opposite the rows of vehicles. The empty shell casings, canisters, and boxes had to be returned to the salvage area, gas cans returned to the fuel dump, and all vehicles returned to the columns and rows from whence they came. The walk back was made short by walking directly toward the tent area rather than the long way by following the road. The noise and activity soon ceased as everyone settled in only a few minutes before 'Taps' signaled the days end.

Chapter 6: The Critique

Reveille brought another hot and boring, dry day. The only 'bright' spot in the days schedule was a shower after all equipment was cleaned and inspected and a critique of the exercise completed. As Captain Knight said, "Probably right after noon chow."

Cleaning vehicles consisted of wiping off dust and dirt inside and out. There was no water for hosing down. Brushes and rags had to do the job. Howitzers were something else. The barrels and breeches cleaned with fluid and thoroughly oiled as well as all moving parts, race ways, carriage beds, cranks, and elevation and azimuth sprockets. Occasional horse play did not disturb or interrupt the peace and camaraderie of the men.

"Hey, you dust rats," Galamoski said as he returned from the latrine area, "The critique is at 10:30, so we got another half hour. I gotta do some wash." He walked off with fatigues, towels, socks, and underwear cramped under his arms toward the scrub board and water truck. The scrub board consisted of a plank laying on two barrels near the tank truck which supplied all the water for the battalion. Large buckets near the scrub board were filled with water and carried to the washing area. Brown soap, GI soap, and brushes were on one end of the plank where everyone left them when finished with their laundry. It was no easy tasks to drop as many items in the bucket as it could hold to get them wet and then toss them on the board. After stretching them flat, soap was rubbed all over, and scrubbing with the brush was the only easy way to get them clean. Extra effort was needed on neck, collars, sleeves, knees and salt stains. Rinsing wasn't so easy either. A good rinse took at least two buckets and a lot of dunking up and down. It was never necessary to wring them 'dry'. No matter how wet they were when placed out over tent ropes and bushes', drying was the easiest part of the whole routine. It was a simple task to pick them up and toss them in the pup tent to fold up or put them away at a leisure time.

When Galamoski returned with his wet clothes, Sergeant Tuzzie called after him, "Did you clean your piece and equipment? Inspection's in a few minutes."

"I'll do it now," he answered, "It won't take me long."

"OK, but make it snappy," Sergeant Tuzeneu said. He knew Galamoski wasn't one he had to worry about. His thought was about to be interrupted by the whistle for inspection.

Captain Knight came to attention to return Sergeant Chandler's salute. He noted the order for clean fatigues had reached the men and willingly followed after the long sweaty flights and field conditions.

Sergeant Chandler's, "Present and accounted for, Sir," turned his thoughts to the business and duties of the day.

"At ease men," His order gave them a chance to relax from the firmness of attention, "I have to say I'm very pleased, and you should be too, at the success in everything we did yesterday from the flights, the bivouac, combat simulation, the firing, chow, and convoying back to camp. Everything we have worked for, trained for, hoped for was proven -- was a great success. When you fall out, gun crews will assemble over here," he pointed to his right -- a level area with relatively few bushes or scrub growth that looked like dried stubble or grass. "The motor pool, here, by the battalion tent," he waved his hand to his left, "and kitchen crew in the chow area," and nodded his head toward the space a short distance from the battalion tent and just behind the formation. "We will continue the critique with each crew. Sergeant Chandler and I will point out the mistakes and problems, but ... but ... do not think we are picking on anyone in particular. As I said, it was a good show. We want to point out some rough spots and improve the routine to make everything as smooth as possible. I think, as we bring your attention to these mistakes, you will recognize that they are just that -- mistakes that can be corrected."

"Sergeant Chandler," Captain Knight snapped his heels together and came to attention, "Dismiss the men and have them assemble in the areas I pointed out and we will continue the critique and training."

They saluted with the snap and precision of well trained soldiers. Sergeant Chandler did an about face, "Assemble in the sites Captain indicated: motor pool by the battalion tent, kitchen staff immediately behind, and gun crews to the right. Dismissed."

The breakup of the formation was characteristically undisciplined as they separated and wandered toward the areas selected for each and then automatically sat down into appropriate groups whether gun crew, kitchen help, or motor pool personnel. Lieutenant Roque went with the motor pool; Second Lieutenant Lamont went with the kitchen staff; First Lieutenant Allan Henry Harrelson, Captain Knight, and Sergeant Chandler went with the gun crews.

Captain Knight stepped in front of Lieutenant Harrelson and Sergeant Chandler, and after placing his right hand on his back with fingers dangling in the air, he glanced down at the ground and kicked at some dirt. For a few seconds he shuffled his feet back and forth and then straightened up and looked around at the crews.



(Figure 22: *The Critique*, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

"Men, I'm looking at you, who are the most responsible for our effectiveness in doing what we are supposed to do, that are to support our infantry and hit the enemy where it hurts and do the most damage. I said to you the operation went well, however, that doesn't mean we can't improve. We can pin point our mistakes and figure out how to correct them. That's what Lieutenant Harrelson is about to do. While you were busy this morning in clean up, Lieutenants Harrelson, Roque, Lamont, and Sergeant Chandler, and I reviewed the entire operation and made notes of the corrections that have to ... that should be made. Your cooperation and suggestions are most welcome. Sergeant Chandler and I will return but we want to look in on the other sections. Lieutenant Harrelson, carry on. Call us if you need anything."

Lieutenant Harrelson returned the salute and turned toward the crews and then glanced at a small pad he held in his hand. "At ease men. Sit any where you want and make yourself comfortable. I have to tell you first off that everything went very well. This won't take very long. You can ask questions any time." He glanced at his watch and then looked off in the direction at Captain Knight and Sergeant Chandler as they reached the next section and again turned to face his gun crews. "Let me begin by emphasizing how well ... uh ... it all went. Mostly the things I will mention ... are ... refinements not criticisms ...not harsh fault finding. Like a diamond, the more facets the cutter can strike on the surface, the greater the value of that stone ... uh ... diamond. In this sense, that's what this is all about ... refinement -- refinement in procedures and practices."

Lieutenant Harrelson's clean, bright colored, and new uniform made him stand out in contrast to the dull, faded, and sweat stained fatigues of the crew members surrounding him. His appearance testified to the fact he had just arrived at the 320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion camp and just in time to participate in the exercise and

critique the operation

"To start, Sergeant Tuzeneu, you are chief of number one gun. Your operation must be swift, the fastest, and precision perfect. You must be set-up, leveled, gun sights ready, and oriented for reference firing. The other crews will orient after you. This is critical. Your crew ... in this operation was sluggish. It lacked the rhythm of a smooth operation. YES, yes this was a training exercise, and yes everyone is unfamiliar with the terrain and convoying especially after flight landings. And, yes, with the loss of a jeep and supplies ... ammo mostly, screwed up the whole plan. But ... but ... in a combat situation it could get, could be a lot worse -- casualties ... equipment destroyed, and useless, and terrain a hell-of-a lot more strange and unfamiliar, also, in the dark, with no where near as much daylight as we had this time. In a way the loss of the two gliders with the loss of the cargo was a good thing. It served to make us aware of the realities of airborne assault mishaps and accidents that could occur -- losses of men and material. What then do we do? That's the importance of what we're doing now! Criticizing what happened. I hope we can schedule another operation quickly ... very soon ... a night flight in the dark to set up. We have learned a lot all of us, Captain Knight, Sergeant Chandler, Lieutenants Roque and Lamont, and me how important practice, practice, practice are and should be. Sergeant Tuzeneu has not been singled out ... picked on ... as the only crew needing improvement. Every crew needs to work harder at getting better. In a combat situation, if he or his crew is killed or destroyed, another gun crew should be able ... any gun crew ... to jump in and orient the battery. Are there any questions? Yes, Sergeant, I am sorry I don't know all your names yet ... but I will. Yes, your name is?"

"Sergeant Swain, Sir."

"Sergeant OK, Sergeant Swain."

"We used our markers to orient ... but I heard on the phone that Tuzzie's crew should sight a rock just ahead of us ... on the crest of a hill. Yet we didn't use this to sight on. Why didn't we sight on it?"

"OK, yes, a good question, Sergeant Swain," Lieutenant Harrelson welcomed the question as a turn away from criticism, "We could not identify that spot ... that crest on our maps. There really wasn't any specific object or mark to positively pin point on the map or anything on the terrain around us."

After a short period of silence, Sergeant Swain said, "Wasn't that what we were trying to do? Spot something to sight on for practice."

"Oh, yes, when we planned the maneuver the first time we could find a definite object that we could pin point on the map for a reference. That is necessary. We need something that we can spot -- a positive object such as a church steeple or a tall building. There is no tall building in this country. We need something that we could pin

point on the map ... something that could be or would be easily spotted by the crews. However, we could not see a clearly identifiable spot to mark on our map. I expect that there will be times we can pick out ... such things as a steeple ... a bridge, maybe a power line, a tower, a mountain peak ... something that will give a good reference for accurate fire.” Lieutenant Harrelson shuffled back and forth on first one foot and then the other while he flipped a sheet on his pad. He ran his finger down a sheet and turned that page back under the pad.”

“OK. Good question ... Sergeant Swain.” He exaggerated pronouncing his name as he looked directly at the Sergeant to help him remember. “Are there any other questions? No!” Again he shuffled his feet and hesitated before continuing, “There was another situation ... and I don’t know all the particulars, not yet, or the names of those involved. However, I can say this ... a personality quirk, a flare up, or stubbornness or obstinacy was the cause of it AND this will NOT BE TOLERATED. We are here because we, you, chose to be. We were accepted as competent and as volunteers. And I can tell you this, COOPERATION, SUPPORT, AND ENTHUSIASM WILL BE MAINTAINED. WE WILL WORK TOGETHER. Understand.”

“Let me continue a thought here, a few of you older members were cadre from the 82nd Division. It has been called Sergeant York’s division. The division was not full strength but, what or how many there were was divided in half. One half became the 82nd Airborne Division and the other half formed the 101st Airborne Division. At the time you were given the chance to transfer to another unit or accept the change and you were willing to become an airborne soldier. Your acceptance was considered voluntary just as certain as the newer members in our division. I, repeat, the flare up I noted will not be tolerated. You volunteered.’

He looked out at the men and noticed that each one was looking directly at him. There was no movement. No shuffling around. They were as still or stiff as if called to attention. Later, when he recalled this scene in his mind, he detected a determination, a dedication on their part with no hesitancy. He wondered many times if he should have made a note of this at the time and said so at that moment.

He took a step closer and brought his heels together as if coming to attention. “That’s about it. That’s the sum and substance of what we must strive for. What we must accomplish. You’re dismissed, but don’t disturb those that are still in a session. Keep it quiet and walk around them ... Thank you men for a good performance ... Dismissed.”

They moved as one as they stood up and settled their helmets on their head. The chin straps dangling from the right side and swinging loosely in rhythm with their steps as they sauntered back toward the head quarter’s tent. The line thinned out as some staggered along slowly while some bunched up in a jam. Those in front hurried to settle at their tents to wait for the next assembly.

Gradually, the other sections completed their critiques and they too returned to wait. The quiet moments gave each soldier the chance to do his ‘thing’ whether a drag

on a butt, write a letter, or flop on his bed roll and think his own thoughts. The few short minutes of rest drifted slowly as if wafted away by the lazy breeze. There was the hot, dry breeze that daily developed early in the morning just after chow and continued throughout the day until the sun dipped below the horizon. The predicable wind, so regular and so routine, went unnoticed.

Chapter 7: The Shower

This staid, predictable, and boring routine was interrupted by Sergeant Chandler's shrill whistle just short of noon chow. The response to the whistle was slow. It was more a question of why just before chow rather than a reluctance to comply with the sound of the whistle. A few stragglers finally arrived at the formation and Sergeant Chandler cautioned them about their tardiness.

"The longer it takes you to assemble the less time you will have to get in line for a shower. Right after chow, about 13:15, the first fifteen in line will load up. The ride takes about fifteen minutes ... return will be a little longer, a little slower so the dust won't get you dirty after a luxurious shower. Again, there are fifteen spaces under the pipe and fifteen minutes to shower. So, fifteen is the magic number: fifteen after, fifteen minutes in the truck, fifteen minutes to soap with the first squirt of water, and fifteen minutes to rinse so there is enough water to get the soap off and get dry. Don't forget clean fatigues, soap, and a towel. Some of you have a towel in front of your shelter. You may want to take it to stand on while getting dressed. No sense getting your feet dirty standing in the sand."

"There are two vehicles that will rotate between the shower and bivouac. The first one will wait for everyone to finish and will leave after the second load arrives. So every fifteen minutes will give everyone the chance to enjoy the 'Waldorf' splendor. Chow down and get ready for the luxury. Dismissed."

The routine menu for noon chow did not delay the eager ones hoping to be first in line. The trucks arrived together and waited side by side for the lines to form behind them. Their tailgates were down for easy climbing into the truck. The side canvas rolled up to keep the dust from swirling around and settling on those in the back seats. The tarp would shade them from the sun.

Time was ignored by some who chowed down early and were lined up behind the first truck as someone said, "We're doing what we do best. Hurry up and wait! That's a soldier's life."

The hurry up and wait was no more the soldier's life than a bull session which generated many a lively discussion. Those waiting to take a shower gave Sergeant Sackett the chance to question Sergeant Swain about killing an Arab woman on the practice range. He walked toward Tuzzie and said half to himself but so he could hear, "Didn't Sergeant Swain tell those in that little village," he turned to look at him, "not to cross the open space where we would be using it for our practice range and target area?"

Sergeant Swain heard Sack and said, "Yeah, what about it?" with a sarcastic tone.

"I couldn't remember the name that's all."

"I can't pronounce it, but it was little with just a few buildings and mostly tents. There was a little sign with the name, 'Oujda'. Hell, I can't say it"

"Did you see any broads?" Galamoski asked.

"NO. The women I saw were all covered up and about as scrubby as you could get. Hell, they looked so dirty I wouldn't touch one of them with your prick. I remember they had a table with stuff drying in the sun ... a few apricots ... a fish, I think, and what blew my mind were the bananas ... flies all over them. They looked black. Barrish gave them a dime for one."

"Holy shit he ate that?" Galamoski asked.

"Yes. He said it didn't taste too bad – just a strong banana taste."

"Didn't we kill a woman and a donkey and couple of chickens that came from that village?" Galamoski said as statement rather than a question.

"Yes and when Colonel Albright said he wasn't going to tell his wife that she was only worth twenty-five dollars, everybody laughed like hell," Sergeant Tuzzie said. "The Colonel said we were not responsible and would not be charged or rather accused but would have to pay the man for his wife, donkey, and two chickens. The donkey was worth more than the woman at one hundred fifty dollars. The chickens were ten dollars each, and the woman only cost twenty-five dollars but she had to walk in front -- ahead of all his possessions. That's why Colonel said he wasn't going to tell his wife that she had to walk in front of him wherever they went!"

"What, do they clean with sand?" Sack asked. "I know they don't use water to bath in."

Sergeant Tuzzie hesitated, "What bothers me is Swain said the woman was so scrubby. I wouldn't touch one ... with your ... you know what. Good God ... we take atabrine, salt tablets, shots for everything you can imagine and inoculations for God knows what, so who would think of fooling around with some dumb broad you can't tell whether she has syphilis, clap, or whatever. I always said I don't want a girl that has fooled around ... so why should I? That doesn't make any sense to me. I'll tell you that film we had to see about venereal disease sure scared the hell out of me."

Silence was noticeably loud -- like the quiet after firing a gun. The silence settled on the scene and one by one a GI would slowly get up and mutter a thought as an excuse for something to do: write a letter to mamma, do a wash, or maybe read the 'Army Times'. Some just went back to their tents. The 'event' exaggerated the fear associated with disease and the chance when the lonely soldier asks the question what

will kill him a bullet or a disease.

Sergeant Chandler's whistle interrupted the thoughts in their minds as he called out, "The first for a shower. Mount up. Count off," and then checked their names on his roster. "Sergeant Rhenquist, are you riding with this batch? Are you going to tell them what to do at the shower?"

"No. Someone from the quartermaster or maybe the engineers, who the set up contraption, will," he said.

"Okay, you can go," he waved to the driver.

The fifteen miles to the shower 'room' was slow as the driver followed the tracks made by those going to and from the site. As soon as the truck stopped, the men jumped down to see nothing but a dry, barren landscape and a water tank. The water tank was propped up at the back so the water would flow down the two inch galvanized pipe that followed the slope of the hill, and it looked like a cup. The long pipe was held up by three, 'two by fours', at each section, and every four feet, three holes were drilled for the 'sprinkler'.

The corporal standing by the tank called out so all could hear him, "Okay, let me tell you; there are holes drilled every three feet in the pipe. There are fifteen places for each to stand under. The last one at the end will have to wait for the water to reach that spot. When I open the valve it will be for you to get wet while soaping down. When everyone is as bare as the day they were born, I'll open the valve. After everyone gets enough water to get soapy, I'll turn the valve off. Then when everyone is ready to rinse, I'll turn the water on again. When you're rinsed, I'll turn the water off. It's twenty miles, that way, to get filled up," he pointed in a haphazard direction. "Okay. Hop to."

When each spot was taken, they undressed and put their dirty clothes on the sand and the clean ones on a towel. When they were ready and waiting for the water to reach them, someone yelled, "Hey, look at that," he pointed to the ridge that surrounded them. 'Where did they come from?' He pointed to several figures watching them, and then three or four more appeared from nowhere. While they waited for the water to reach their spot, the ridge became lined with figures as more appeared from nowhere.

"It looks like Indians waiting to attack the wagon train. God, look at them all."

Someone else said, "Where the hell did they come from?"

While they soaped themselves, they saw some squatting and some just stood there to watch the Americans wasting water. Arabs on the hill, someone dubbed them.

“They only drink water. Shit, they don’t use it to wash with!” another said.

“How the hell, did they find out we were here in such a short time and so many had to walk here.” ‘That beats me,’ highlighted the amazing situation.

As they stood there waiting for the rinse water, the wind, made the air feel cold to their soapy bodies.

Just then the corporal yelled, “OK, rinse fast. You ain’t got much time or water.”

When they finished drying and started to dress, the next truck arrived and stopped by their truck, and the ride to camp followed the ruts made by those who set up the shower facility.

The activity, after the luxury of a bath, was the flurry that goes with laundry. One by one the wet clothes were spread out and draped over tents and bushes to dry.

The dry, the dull, the sameness of a dessert or semi-arid landscape blends the days into a blur that the soldier can not separate or remember the time, the event, or the activity into a moment, a day, a month, or a record in his life.

The events announced at ‘Assembly’ establish an order that must be followed which becomes a firm point or fix in the mind or recorded in the archives of history. Such an event was announced as an order from Colonel Albright that an all day overnight tactical maneuver would begin at 08:00 tomorrow. The purpose was to complete the practice cancelled after the accident.

“Everyone knows about the accident, and this will give us a chance to assemble, orient the battery, and fire our guns. The kitchen will maneuver with the battalion, and Cook has promised a good meal tomorrow as a celebration. Remember, it can get cold after dark in the desert so take a jacket just in case. Sergeant, have the men get all necessary equipment, supplies and vehicles ready by 15:00 before chow. Carry on.”

Chow was a ‘fill-the-hole menu’ what with the kitchen preparing as well as everyone else. A spontaneous gathering in the quiet that settled around camp near the tents, which attracted just about the entire battalion, occurred with soft sounds of a guitar and harmonica playing a song. The bugler joined the group and sat down to join the ‘band’ with his trumpet. As more and more joined the gathering, Corporal Hanley brought his banjo and Barrish began to sing. Some clicked their toes in time with the tune, and some tapped their hands on their knees.

Someone called out, “Hey, do you guys know the artillery song. We can sing that.” The band, off key and beat, gave everybody a chance to moan and groan at the discordant sound.

Hanley said, "Start over with a one and two and three and four." The 'band' was better, and one by one, they joined in singing as the 'Caissons Go Rolling Along'.

Before they could sing again, Galamoski yelled, "Hey, Barrish, where the hell did you learn to sing like that? You are good."

A chorus, approving the thought, said, "You were good."

They all turned to look at Barrish as they raised their voices, "Sooooo?"

"I was an altar boy," he answered.

"You learned that because you were an altar boy?" Galamoski asked. "Hell, I was an altar boy, but I didn't learn to sing at all."

Sergeant Sackett said, "I was an altar boy, and I didn't sing at all either. So, how could you learn to sing and be that good?"

"Sister Elizabeth taught English and did all the plays. She made me sing the lead in the 'Mikado'."

"Damn, you should keep singing. You're good!" Sergeant Sackett said.

Sergeant Tuzzie said, "I went to Sunday school. I'm Baptist. I liked it, but the only singing I ever did was 'Jesus Loves Me This, I Know, for the Bible Tells Me So'. I wasn't good so I stopped for the good of mankind." His laugh was a good chuckle.

The 'band' rested, and just as spontaneously, they drifted away as they had gathered when they began.

They wandered back to their tents with thoughts on the maneuvers in the morning and the importance and necessity of the firing practice. Sergeant Chandler's whistle at first call was instead of the bugler to give them a few extra minutes of sleep. Roll call was a little earlier so the Colonel could give the order, "Head 'em up and move 'em out," at exactly 08:00.

Chow was nothing to brag about, and 'fill-the-hole' was about all you could expect with a choice of 'Corn Flakes', 'Rice Krispies', or oat meal, and coffee. It was easier for the kitchen to pack the night before and to be ready with all the others.

Sergeant Chandler revealed after roll call, "I think, I see a bunch of recruits. I see only clean fatigues and laundry spread out to dry. Fresh and clean hasn't been seen at the same time for a long time. I enjoy both at the same time as much as you recruits." He laughed when he emphasized recruits. "On a more ordinary note, Colonel has asked me to read this report from the local authority; I won't read the whole report.

It exonerates us from any wrong in the death of the woman who was killed crossing our practice range. You learned earlier a proper compensation was accepted by the authority and the man for his possessions. That puts closure to this incident and we can continue training.”

“The Colonel has also informed me that a two-day tactical maneuver will include the set-up, arriving at the check points as scheduled, followed by tactical maneuvers, and complete training and firing of our weapons. That puts closure to this incident and now we can continue with this exercise. Proper preparations and the schedule will be explained by Colonel Albright precisely at 10:00 hours. That’s all. Dismissed.”

The men loaded quickly, and Lieutenant Clark checked each vehicle and waved his arm in a circular motion to give the signal to start their engines. He walked briskly back to his jeep, which was the lead for the convoy, while Lieutenant Harrelson pointed to each vehicle to go that would allow enough space between them to avoid as much dust as possible. The schedule and route was followed with precision and times to arrive at each check point. The final destination for the day was the site for the practice range, and with enough time to select the spot for each gun, each machine gun, and radio equipment.

The tactical maneuver went smoothly, as they arrived at the check points on time as scheduled, and was considered and recognized by everyone as a success. The satisfaction with the result of the practice was evident in the pride all showed by doing and knowing they were proficient. As they reached the practice range, at the appointed time, it was proof of their excellent physical condition and proficiency.

Colonel Albright called to Lieutenant Harrelson, “Can you see the weather balloon to sight on?”

“Yes,” he said, “and it’s over there and away from the sun. With the field glasses, I can just see the top of the plane. I pointed it out to Sergeant Tuzeneu and gave him the coordinates. We should be ready to fire any time you give the order.”

“Have you selected the spot to get set up and to place the guns?”

“Not yet,” he acknowledged, “but I will now.” He walked over to Sergeant Chandler and said, “Have them follow me.” He took one of the stakes he held in his hand and waved it at Sergeant Tuzzie to follow with his gun. He stuck the stake in the ground and pointed in the direction for him to aim his gun. The spot was on a slight rise that was enough to give a clear view above the ground. Each spot was selected for the maximum space between each howitzer for the most effective fire power possible. Each Sergeant set up on his assigned position and then pointed to the area for the machine guns to protect the site against an attack.

Chapter 8: Lessons from Sicily

The celebration with corn fritters after the success of the simulated combat mission was short and sweet. The sound of the bugler blowing 'Assemble' instead of Sergeant Chandler's whistle alerted them that the day's activity would be different. It was the first time anyone heard the bugle call, 'Assemble', but, it did command a quick response. Sergeant Chandler blew three short blasts on his whistle rather than the one before roll call. After "all present and accounted for", Sergeant Chandler announced, "Men we have received secret orders by courier from Allied Headquarters for a mission to invade Sicily within forty-eight hours. At ease", he added, "After we receive the exact day and time, all airborne units will have sufficient time to assemble and load up" Interestingly he continued, "We will fly around Malta, which is about half way between Africa and Sicily. The drop zone for our jumpers is a flat open area and a hard surface for our landing zone. The navy will be anchored off the coast and give us support and protection."

The planes turned at Malta and headed toward the drop zone just after two German fighter planes strafed the ships and then turned and flew back to their base. Unfortunately our planes were spotted as they approached the coast, and the navy thought the Germans were going to strafe them again. It was easy to shoot down the C47's that were slow and helpless against their guns. The sailors were as new and inexperienced to combat as we were. Several planes were shot down, and those troopers that tried to jump landed in the water. They drowned before they could swim safely to the beach. Their heavy load weighted them down and it was impossible to dump their chutes and swim to shore.

The number of planes returning to tow the gliders made it impossible to tow all the gliders at the same time as planned. Two flights would be needed to complete the glider mission. It was necessary to unload the first glider in the line and reload all the equipment from two gliders into one plane. The plane was overloaded and the lesson learned was not to exceed the weight limits of any plane or glider. The second lesson learned from the Sicily campaign was clearly understood by airborne command and Allied Headquarters; the vulnerability of the low flying and the slow speed of the C47's was a precaution needed for the invasion of Europe and to recognize friendly aircraft became an absolute necessity.

Accuracy in judgment was learned from the glider pilots who trained at the Homestead Air Base in Florida to learn and recognize enemy planes, ships, and ground equipment. The course and procedure consisted of flashing pictures of enemy planes and equipment on a screen for a very short time -- a matter of seconds. On a sheet they marked opposite each screen a one or two for friend or enemy. The entire class moaned and complained that there was not enough time to make a judgment. A technician realized he had to convince them that they could quickly tell the difference. He selected pictures of Betty Grable, Ester Williams, and Shirley Temple. When the

class realized they could tell the difference in half the time they were flashed on the screen, the efficiency improved from 70%, or a 'C', to 97% or 98%. It was called a miracle. It proves an ordinary man solves more problems than a boss, a General, an engineer, or a professor.

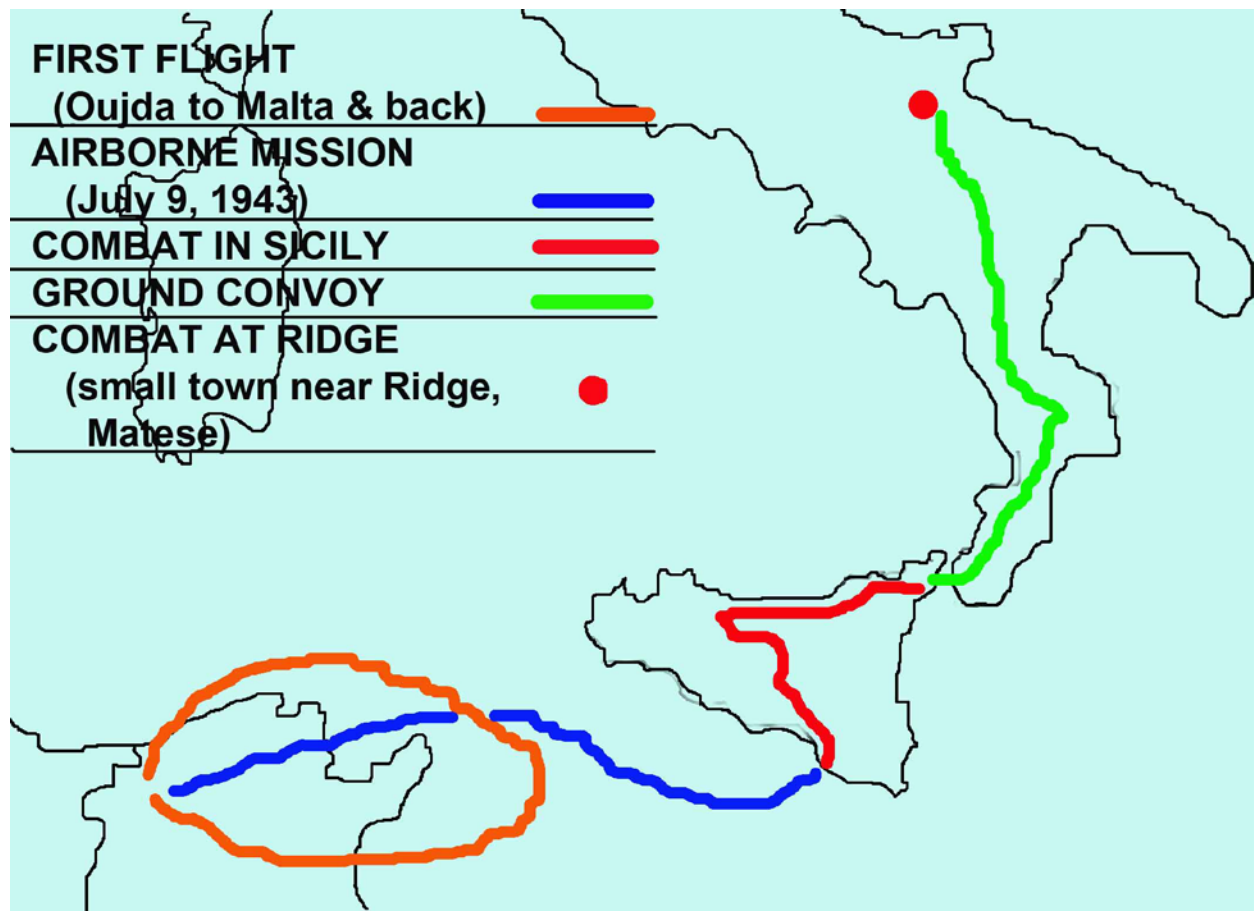
The first plane struggling to lift off missed a calamity by inches. Every ounce of power was exerted as it reached the end of the runway. At the end was a bluff with a sheer drop of several hundred feet and a strong hot air rising up the slope that helped the plane to gain enough altitude to fly and reach the landing area. However, it was necessary for each plane to make two flights to complete the glider mission.

Combat with the enemy was recorded as three days and only 13 days for the campaign. The American forces struggled to follow the Germans and Italians who were retreating as fast as they could. They reached Salerno ahead of General Montgomery, the British general, and he wanted the honor of reaching Salerno first and beat the Americans. He never forgot or forgave the Americans for denying him that pleasure.

The 82nd was preparing to return to Africa for an airborne mission to land on the Rome airport. Observation and intelligence was received that the Germans in their retreat used the area for tanks, trucks, and ground troops, and they occupied the airport. This mission was canceled which turned out to be the first of three airborne missions which could have become potential disasters: Rome, Paris, and Berlin airports.

The plan was changed and the division was moved by boat and LST's (landing ship transports) to the boot of Italy. It rained the first time since the division arrived at Casablanca, and the water flowed down the slope and soaked everything whether tent or soldier. There was only one dry spot under each pup tent, but drying clothes or blankets was quick and easy in the hot sun. The trickle of water enabled everyone to sponge bathe in the ice cold water that came from the high mountain above their bivouac.

The 320th was then moved north to a small town and wended its way through trees and around rocks and boulders just below the mountain ridge along the east coast of Italy that sloped down to the Adriatic seashore. The battalion was about to learn the second lesson that would make them proud of their 'piece' -- their howitzer. The first lesson proved it earned its wings as airborne. Secondly, not only did it earn airborne status, but it would prove to be an extremely accurate and destructive weapon in the airborne arsenal.



(Figure 23: Map of Sicily and Italy, showing the routes from Africa)

Chapter 9: The Ridge Advantage

Not far south from the infamous, or famous, Mt Casino, there was a sharp cliff of nine hundred to a thousand feet along the east coast of Italy. This mountain ridge gave the Germans a complete view and control over the valley below. Allied movement was easily seen, and it was almost impossible to launch a massive force across the flat open terrain. Their positions along the top made it almost impossible to shoot or hit either the men or emplacements. The small arms fires or shells would go over the ridge and land beyond their positions. It was here at the very base of the cliff that the snub nose 105 mm howitzers were dug in with their barrels pointing almost straight up. From this angle artillery shells could be landed along the ridge which made the Krauts, as they were called, scramble to get away from the devastating fire so accurately hitting their positions. It was learned later they had no idea where the shelling came from or why it was so accurate.

The 320th, after drying from the rain, left the cold water to flow from the mountain that sloped down into the Adriatic Sea. They drove slowly between trees, around boulders and gullies, and settled on a small open field not far from this ridge. The bivouac was as unorganized and as helter-skelter as it could get and just short of a total mess.

Colonel Albright ordered Chandler to assemble the battalion near his tent. He announced that he had received a request from the commander of the area asking, "Can your small guns help dislodge the Germans from their position along the ridge?" He laughed heartily and said, "He called our 105's 'small guns'," and shook his head at the misunderstanding the Lieutenant had. "Does anyone have any ideas or a way to complete such a mission? I will send out a scouting party to find an area we can use for our 'small guns'." Again he shook his head in amazement. "Sergeant Chandler, get Downs. He's a good driver. Maybe Sergeant Sack ... and anybody else you want."

"I'll take Galamoski," Sergeant Sack said.

"Yes, he'd be good. He will volunteer for sure," Tuzzie answered.

"You're right," Sack said, "He comes from the country where there are a lot of farms and mostly dairy farms. They are quick to help each other especially with all the animals on a farm. God, the horses, cows, pigs, chickens, and what else? Hell, they get sick, broken legs, or stuck in mud out in the cold unless they are sheltered from the bitter winters they have in Wisconsin."

"I see what you mean," Tuzzie said in an understanding tone.

"You know he doesn't think of helping as dangerous, but he will pitch in, in a

hurry, and help anybody, anywhere."

"When do you think you should leave?" Tuzzie asked.

"As soon as I can," he acknowledged Tuzzie's interest and concern.

"Will that give you enough time?"

"You mean before it gets dark?" Sack answered. "I think so. Colonel said it ain't too far. We can almost see it from here except for the trees. It doesn't get real dark until 24:00. That's a good six almost seven hours. That should be more than enough time. I think more than enough time".

Sergeant Chandler and Sergeant Sack left as Downs went to get his jeep, and the others wandered back to their tents. The scouting party disappeared into the trees, and "Good luck" came from all those watching them leave. The noise from crashing through the brush and trees ended abruptly. Those left behind settled into a time of waiting and patience needed for their return.

During the lull and throughout the night the Germans fired random shots at the plain below to harass allied forces trying to speed across the flat terrain and at designated sites on the roads along the route. The quiet was interrupted when the scouting party was seen coming through the trees and by a gathering of those anxious to hear Chandler's report.

The salutes were casual in anticipating the report. The Colonel asked as he rubbed his hands together, "What have we got? What did you find? "

Sergeant Chandler clenched his fists and shook his arms with exuberance, "We found a good place just below the ridge where the dirt has settled all these years. It's a mud slide really."

"How can we get set up to lob shells on the ridge," Lieutenant Harrelson asked?

Tuzzie quickly butted in and excitedly claimed, "We can dig holes in the dirt, the mud slide, and then let the trails slide back so the end of the trails will elevate the barrel enough then we can point the gun almost straight up."

"What good will that do" Swain, as usual, questioned everything.

"You would ask that," Tuzzie quickly answered, "but then we can unlock the carriage and elevate the gun as much as necessary so we can land the shells on the ridge and then it won't come straight down and land on us."

"Sergeant Tuzzie," Colonel Albright said enthusiastically, "That's a good idea!

How far is it?" he said as he looked at Sergeant Chandler.

Chandler thought a little and then answered, "I'd say as the crow flies -- straight across from here about fifteen hundred meters. By jeep more like five thousand meters. It will be slow and hard to get around all the trees and rocks."

"Can they see us?" Lt Harrelson asked".

"Not at all," Chandler said to reassure him.

"How many guns can we set up?" Lieutenant Clark asked as he should since that was his responsibility.

"Two," Chandler said, "It's a very small area -- a mud slide really."

"I'll call in," Colonel Albright said, "and give them my decision and explain my plan to Headquarters ... to Colonel ... no General Meagher. He will write an order to cover my butt," he said to reassure himself.

An occasional shot from the Germans through the night did disturb many of those asleep. The question asked was this one of their tactics to annoy and aggravate, and could they hear the guns?

The morning activity was not the usual involvement for everyone since only two guns and the jeeps were necessary to complete the order. As the party disappeared through and around the trees every one left behind relaxed into the soldier's life of hurry up and wait. The effort and journey to the ridge took over two hours and all the man-effort and muscles tested the ability and strength of man and jeep. It could not have been done without the four wheel drive and every ounce of power of man and equipment. The time, the power, and the strength of men to push, pull, and shove guns into place in the mud slide were a daunting task. The thought of digging holes to lower the trails also tested the spirit and determination of the crew. Their reward was how easy it turned out when the trails settled into the holes and the barrels of the two guns was at a perfect elevation. It could be cranked up enough to load the shells and fire them when ready.

"What a bitch of a job," Downs said, "Old farmer boy knew how to get the job done. Galamoski, we couldn't have done it without you".

They all rested to catch their breath and renew their strength beyond the army's ten minute break each hour. Like the ten minutes between classes in school, it stretched into thirty minutes before they resumed their effort. It was necessary to pile rocks and stones around the four trails so the guns would not jounce around or bounce out of the holes. The jolt from the barrel as it recoiled would be a violent shock at that angle.

Two of the crew unlatched a gun barrel from its position for travel and elevated it until it was almost in its vertical position. Tuzzie sighted along the barrel and advised them, "Better crank it down a little. If we fire at that position the damn shell would fall right down on us. That's not too good an idea."

"That's better," he said when they asked, "How's that?"

When he was satisfied with the elevation as he checked his bubble, since an azimuth setting was not needed, he said, "OK, ram a shell in. Let's see where it lands." The recoil from the barrel jarred trails, but they remained in the position, and the explosion reverberated against the cliff and the noise was hurtful to the ears. It was too late to cover the ears because the sound bounced back so quickly. Everyone looked up at the ridge and waited to see and hear the explosion. The time waiting to hear the explosion or see any smoke or debris seemed to be in slow motion. It was easy to see the shell had landed too far down the slope as sound was muffled and very little smoke could be seen.

Tuzzie stepped back to estimate and correct his settings and then said, "Raise elevation a little ... about two degrees ... load and fire." They waited what seemed to be a long time, but a "WOW" came from everyone as they saw black smoke and debris scattered throughout the dark cloud. He said, "That's about right. Get all the ammo ready ... Fire again." He said as he moved his arm as if pulling the lanyard, "Set elevation at sixty-three." He called out to Sack and added, "Fire when you're ready," and waved a twirl of his arm.

They saw the heavy smoke and debris on the edge and cheered their success. Again he called Sack, "Move azimuth two degrees right. We can land each shot along the edge." Sergeant Sack acknowledged he understood and continued loading and firing after adjusting the two degrees necessary to cover the extra distance needed to keep the shells landing along the edge. Smoke came from gasoline bursting into a flame with a heavy black cloud.

Then Tuzzie happened to see a small plane, a piper cub, high above them on an observation mission. Just then as he watched, he saw the pilot wave his wings and made a few short turns to get their attention. Then just as suddenly the piper cub flew straight to their left and then a sharp drop on their side of the ridge. He disappeared below the trees and just as quickly climbed straight up and turned to fly back over the ridge.

"Hey, Tuz," Sack yelled, "I bet he was showing us where command is and where he radios his observations".

Then Chandler, who was sitting in a jeep to stay out of the way, came running toward them with his hand held radio and stopped to cover one ear. The noise and static could be heard as he called out to them, "Command Central just got the word ...

the pilot radioed them ... the Germans are abandoning ridge ... and we have secured the hill. They are retreating as fast as they can. Good job! Thanks. We can cease firing. Over and out."

Their yell and response at this news was loud and clear and almost as one as they jumped up and down on the trails of the guns. Removing the rocks around each trail and raising them high enough to lock them together used all the strength and energy they had left. It was necessary to use the four wheel drive to back up the slope in order to close the latch on the jeep and then pull the gun down to solid ground. It was a slow trek back to their bivouac. When they reached the area, it was there they learned orders were received to go to Naples and board ship to sail to Ireland.

The convoy left from the bivouac just below the mud slide where their success routing the Germans gave the allies the chance to advance full force and change their tactics. One tactic was to attack at Anzio to curb behind the German forces and to convince them the 82nd Airborne was still in Italy.

The stay in Naples was free of fleas with the freedom of wandering around the city without a pass. Excursions to downtown and a watered down spaghetti sauce and Italian bread was the result of the shortages caused by war. The wandering became a sightseeing walk up the hill above the harbor and the streets to see the houses which were clean, attractive, and the flowers and gardens still growing at the end of summer.

The view of the harbor from the hill above the wharf was that of the ship that they would board for the trip to Ireland. The three days of freedom became tiresome and lackadaisical without formations or the routines of exercise and activity. It was necessary to alert the battalion for 'Assembly' by sending word to several buildings they had to use for their stay.

'Assembly' and roll call was from a small park near their quarters and gathering was haphazardly drifting in and a wayward attitude unbecoming of a seasoned combat soldier. At roll call two were reported absent. After questioning revealed they were in an apartment by themselves, Sergeant Sword was sent to rout them out in a hurry. The wait was a few minutes. They ran to get into formation and said, "Sorry," to Sergeant Chandler, "We didn't get the word."

"Don't do it again. You were almost AWOL. We have order," he began in a loud voice, "to board the ship you see at the dock tomorrow at 10:00. There will be no transportation. You march in formation since your duffle bags have been delivered and will be loaded while you are boarding"

"The order further states you will remove all insignia and division patches and new fatigues will be issued. All fatigues will be turned in tonight for disposal. The move is classified 'SECRET'. The quartermaster will be here in about half an hour," he said as he looked at his watch. "You will get your size from the truck and change immediately. That's all. Dismissed."

The trucks did not arrive as scheduled and while during an aggravated attempt by Colonel Albright to find out the reason for the delay the time was used to remove patches and insignias while waiting. "Well that's two," Galamoski said, "What's the next thing going to be. Everything comes in threes. Don't they?"

Little did they know the shackle on the crane lift would break and the net would open up and all the duffle bags in the net dumped into the water. No attempt was made to retrieve them. Their duffle bags contained all personal belongings (letters, family pictures, records, etc.), uniforms, an army issue of blankets, mess kits, and pup tents, and gas masks. Eight would miss their belongings including the special pair of good, formal jump boots.

Chapter 10: After Leaving Naples

The ship after leaving Naples encountered a violent storm on the Mediterranean Sea. The meteorologists' name for this storm was Sirocco. They likened it to the storm Jesus calmed to save the fisherman. The ship was one step better than the cargo supply ship, the Keiser. It had more room around the bunk beds, was longer, and better chow. The ship pitched and lunged so much even the sailors were sea sick. The side of the ship was covered with the sticky mess and had to be scrubbed off when the water was calm. After they sailed around Gibraltar, the open sea was smooth but swells were easy to see and the ship rolled with a slow move from side to side. The motion was more of a pleasant sway rather than an unpleasant feeling.

The entire battalion was issued new winter overcoats and an inspection was made to assure the authorities that no identifying patches or insignias remained on any clothing. The ship arrived in Belfast, Northern Ireland, at 04:00 in pitch black. Sergeant Tuzzie on watch or guard duty told everyone he could barely see his hand. He told everyone that when the harbor pilot came on board to take over the ship he spoke Gaelic and with a heavy Irish brogue. He couldn't understand a word. He added that we could understand and make the French, Italian, and German understand us but not anyone that spoke Gaelic

The battalion disembarked after chow precisely at 08:50 and immediately walked through an open doorway to a warehouse on the docks into a dimly lit but empty space. Only one light bulb hanging from the roof gave enough light to see the Red Cross nurses serving coffee and donuts. As they moved slowly along in line, Tuzzie heard a nurse ask one of those ahead of him, "Where did you come from?" It was dimly lit so he could not see who she asked.

He said, "We're Americans."

She returned with, "I know that." Her tone was with a disappointed and miffed annoyance, "But where did you come from?"

He heard him say, "We are Yanks. We're from the states."

Then she really snapped back, "I see your new overcoats. I see your scuffed shoes, boots, and your faded pants. So I know you are seasoned soldiers. Where did you come from?"

Tuzzie laughed when he heard someone farther up in the line say, "Tell her we are Ukrainians."

"Smarty," she called out to him. "Look, I never saw troops unload as quickly, smoothly, and perfectly. So I do know you came from somewhere and you were you in

battle?”

“We came from Italy. Nobody should know,” was said. The line then quietly moved along, and they walked into an opening between sliding doors to board the train on the side of the warehouse. The thought on the mind of those who heard the Red Cross nurse talking was, “So much for fooling the Germans”. The 509th battalion was left in Italy to land at Anzio to make the Germans think the 82nd was still in Italy.

The train went through farmland and small villages and then stopped on the outskirts of Belfast to where they would be stationed. The area had four Quonset huts surrounded by a low fence.



Three were used for barracks and one was for the kitchen and small office and infirmary. They arrived in early afternoon in dim light that became pitch black between quarter and ten to four. They were so far north it was difficult to see the sidewalks, and there were only two dim light bulbs between the huts.

(Figure 24: Quonset hut)

They learned later about the, ‘oh the green of Ireland’. They learned the children’s rosy, red cheeks were not because they were healthy but because of the constant, damp, cold, and long winter. They learned the bogs were both green and soggy. The bog defies anyone to cross the moors, and the bogs will trap any foot or wheel in a wet, soft, spongy surface.

The routine of tactical maneuvers was almost impossible since the heavy guns and the jeeps could not move if they slid off the hard surface that was the way to reach an area to harvest the bog. The hard surface was made with the ashes from the coal stoves and furnaces. The roadway was made and used to reach the area where a fresh harvest could be cut into squares and carted back to a hard surface and spread out like bricks to dry.

The time in Northern Ireland was ended after Christmas and New Year’s when they crossed the open sea to Scotland. They wended their way through the Scottish hills and stopped in a small town. Some enjoyed scones and some enjoyed the fish and chips. They made a special note of the Scottish lasses and their beauty.

Before they ended their drive through the Highlands of Scotland, they stayed one night at a dog racetrack. One section of the stadium was boarded up against the wind and cold. The concrete benches were a challenge to sleep on and impossible to find a comfortable way to rest.

A skirmish occurred when some Brits just entered the stadium after downing a few drinks. They were rowdy and looking for a bout with the Yanks. One leaned on the partition, made a grab at a Yank, and in a drunken stutter yelled, "You damn, yanks. Ya come over here ... take our wives ... give them candy and smokes and now they don't want us. You get paid too much. You should get your bloody asses out of here and go back to where you came from."

It was a long tirade, and the Yank he attacked was not one to let anybody hassle him or swing at him. He grabbed the Brit, and shoved him back off the partition. "You do that again, and I'll send your bloody ass back to where you came." Both the Americans and the British joined the melee and a real fight became very dangerous.

Military police and guards from both sides rushed in and stopped the fight in time to prevent serious injury. The British were moved to another place and quiet returned and only the struggle to keep warm and a way to get comfortable remained.

The journey from Belfast and then the boat ride across the Celtic Sea and then to the highlands of northern Scotland was an open air excursion. It was a cold experience, night and day, and every issue of winter clothing was needed and put to good use. The six by six truck and the jeeps, with their canvas shuddering against the wind, were not first class accommodations for top brass or the private. The gloves, the full length of winter overcoats, scarves around the neck with the collars turned up, and the knitted caps under the helmets were absolutely necessary. The frequent stops were essential for the youthful to jump down and to mill around and flag their arms and flex their stiff joints and muscles.

The first opportunity Sergeant Chandler had to assemble for a 'roll call' was along an open road and then marched the soldiers at double time for one hundred yards and mount up. It was routine to double time wherever stationed and exercise and do their calisthenics for one hour. There were no grunts or groans, and it was appreciated for the effort and the camaraderie of the battalion.

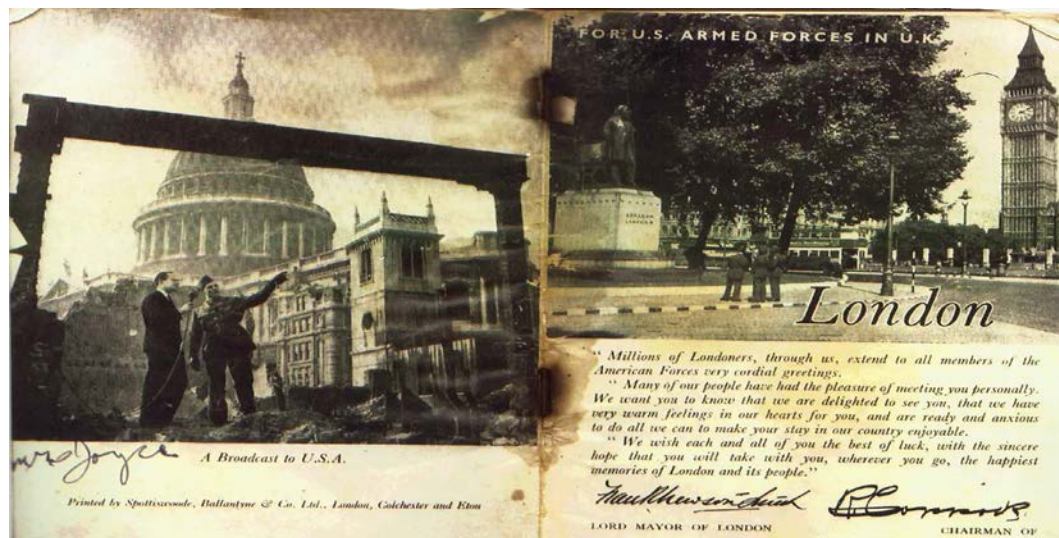
The journey was at a snail's pace since a convoy travels at the speed of the slowest vehicle whether a tank, a heavy maintenance truck, or a half track. The route south went through towns, twisted and narrow streets, through small villages, and along stretches of the train track. The route went between the cities of Liverpool and Manchester and through the busy manufacturing city Birmingham. It was a circuitous road east and through, or out into the country, and between dairy farms and hay fields. They were pretty farms and buildings but the smell of manure was an ever present aroma from the dairy farms. A right turn through the town Leicester, which was a very large city, was about the end of the journey. The city was busy and excitement became frenzied with gawking and calling, "Hello," to the many girls and broads, walking and shopping, in the interesting shops and businesses on Main Street. It would become the short ride to town from their compound.

It was just under ten kilometers or five miles from camp. The entire convoy went through a gate, and by the farmhouse and barns, to a small area fenced in and with enough open ground for all the trucks, jeeps, and equipment. The compound had four Quonset huts as in Belfast -- the three for barracks and personnel and the one for kitchens, mess hall, and headquarters.

The routine settled into the normal activities and procedures of any army unit which included roll call, an hour of calisthenics, double time everywhere, lectures and bull sessions, maneuvers in the farm country, and a truck waiting after chow to take as many as wanted to go to town. The usual pass was not needed, but Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursdays were not an unreasonable restriction.

One routine that was not a pleasant event was the night bombing with Lancaster bombers that used the air field barely twenty kilometers behind them. Their take-off and landings were loathed since a high pitch sounded and the engine's speed increased and wheels screeched when they landed. Occasionally, a plane would explode after the damage from anti-aircraft guns.

The three day passes were not routine and were issued sparingly but were enjoyed, and the demand made it necessary to schedule the dates and names to give all a chance. The variety of sights to see and experience and the visit to the many historic buildings, temples, cities, and the areas devastated by bombing were almost unlimited. The most passes were to London, quite naturally, which included Westminster, Trafalgar Square, Tower of London, Piccadilly, Hyde Park, Botanical Gardens, and Windsor Castle. A must was also Stratford-Upon-Avon with the statue of Falstaff and Shakespeare's cottage. All became very fond of the memories.



(Figure 25: A postcard from one of the three day passes to London. The Mayor of London welcomed the soldiers visiting, was appreciative of what they did for the war effort, and signed the postcard. The message on the postcard read:

"Millions of Londoners, through us, extend to all members of the American Forces very cordial greetings.

"Many of our people have had the pleasure of meeting you personally. We want you to know that we are delighted to see you, that we have very warm feelings in our hearts for you, and are ready and anxious to do all we can to make your stay in our country enjoyable.

"We wish each and all of you the best of luck, with the sincere hope that you will take with you, wherever you go, the happiest memories of London and its people."

One memory that did not become a routine occurred after a tactical maneuver or exercise; it was a confrontation with one farmer who became stubborn and just short of belligerent. It was a necessity, and as a contracted agreement we had to restore the field and property of the farm we used to the original condition after our practices and maneuvers. That was accomplished satisfactorily except for one instance. All the jeeps and guns had gone through the gate while the farmer watched them raking and tamping the ground. He became testy and used a stick, or it was more like a staff, and pointed to one spot. "That's not good enough," he growled. His tone was fierce; his face twisted in a grimace, and the look in his face was anger.

Those working diligently to do a good job, which was more difficult, because the farmer's ground was wet and soggy and torn up. Many jeeps and equipment had to squeeze through the small opening. Those working stopped, stood perfectly still, and held their shovels and rakes, and all stared at the farmer. Nothing was said. The farmer noted their stance and the blank stare from them, and glanced around and then waved around before pointing to one place. "Just do that," he mumbled, "then it will be good." He turned and walked away as they quickly tapped the spot and shut the gate. That was not a memory for them to enjoy.

Chapter 11: The D-Day Orders

The time passed and again became a blur in the activities between battles and skirmishes. The days of February, March, April, and May ended with Sergeant Chandler's whistle and the second time the bugler played 'Assemble'. The response was like into the moment after an intense game of poker when all players wait, and the question goes through their mind, "Does he or doesn't he?" The winner raises his hand and hesitates to enjoy knowing he has an unbeatable hand. The other players relax as they realize that they know what the result would be.

They assembled quickly and came to attention knowing what was to be before Sergeant Chandler's order. "Attention," he continued with the familiar phrase, "We have received orders from Supreme Allied Headquarters and Colonel Albright will read the command." He turned and saluted the colonel with a firm and determined response.

The colonel returned the salute with a brisk and just as determined response. "This is classified secret and will be followed with great care and concern. That is vital. It is my opinion the event will be in a matter of days not months. It is necessary to continue what we do in a normal fashion and routine. We will assemble in the mess hall to discuss this event and answer as many questions as possible and ... accomplish all routines and make them look as normal as possible, Sergeant," he said to Chandler and saluted.

Colonel Albright's opinion was more prophetic than a guess that specific orders would be received within days rather than months. Again, Sergeant Chandler's whistle and bugle call to assemble sounded after noon chow on a Wednesday in May. The third alert of the whistle and bugle was not a disturbing alarm but rather a response to accepting of what was to become a momentous event in World War II.

Colonel Albright began to read the orders, "You are to proceed ...," he stopped and glanced at the pages he held and said, "I will give you a brief run-down of the important dates and time. Since I don't have a map to point at the route, we have to follow on the airfield we will use. At 17:00 we will assemble in the mess hall where Sergeant Chandler is setting up a display, with a map and chart, listing specific requirements and responsibilities." The facts and specifics have faded with the lapse of time and only a short stay at the airfield before the D-Day minute remain fresh in memory.

The 320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion arrived at an airfield in an open farmland with only a compound for their stay. It had a double fence with eighteen inches between the inner and outer fencing nailed to fifteen foot poles and coiled barbed wire around the top. There was only one opening -- eight feet wide and ten feet high. It had two heavy sliding bolts that went into holes drilled in a steel door jam secured to the left

side of the fencing. A heavy metal plate hinged at the edge of the door, when closed, slipped over a swivel hoop. A padlock was snapped over the hook and could only be unlocked from the outside. When it was opened, it looked like a huge lobster crate. There were eight flood lights -- at each corner and two on each side of the opening and two between the left and right side of the compound. It was on the edge of the runway on hard ground with some grass patches growing in the gravel base.

The lights remained on the entire time and loud, very loud, Sousa marches recorded by a military band was played from 07:00 until taps at 23:00. The entire battalion remained locked inside and only allowed out to be escorted to load equipment into the gliders that were already in a tight formation along the runway. Guards were



stationed at the gate that was opened only to go to chow and for loading and tying equipment items needed for the mission. All personnel were allowed to walk to the kitchen set-up at the side of the compound for chow and then immediately return to the compound.

(Figure 26: Gliders lined up in a tight formation, ready to be loaded for the D-Day invasion, public domain and courtesy of 82nd Airborne Museum, Ft. Bragg, NC)

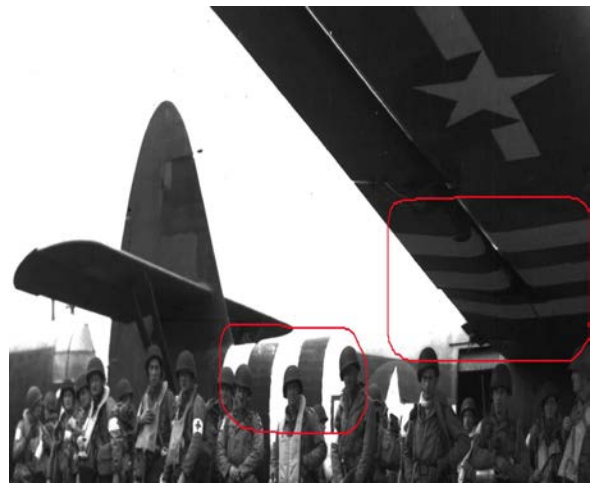
Chapter 12: D-Day Minus One

Several days were spent tying and securing everything in the gliders and then to check and double check everything again. The night before the night was a mob scene that formed around the 'lobster gate' that opened for chow with everyone standing and looking at their planes and gliders on the runway. They saw an army of ants, in faded fatigues, swarming all over the planes and gliders. They carried pails, brushes, ladders, and ropes.

Every wing and fuselage had two GI's marking the places where three white stripes would be painted to identify the Allied airborne invasion forces. It was to prevent the mistake that happened at the beginning of the invasion of Sicily. Every plane or glider used for the airborne operation on all the air fields and runways across the English country would be painted at night and would be completed by 'dawn's early'. The crews, doing the job, returned to their base, taking all pails, brushes, ladders, and ropes, leaving only the white stripes they painted visible.



(Figure 27)



(Figure 28)

(Painting the three white stripes on all the planes and gliders to identify the Allied invasion forces, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

The work started after the compound lights were turned off and the music stopped at 22:00 hours. They used flashlights where and when they were needed. Every plane and glider on every airfield, runway, or pasture was painted the same time, completed at the same time, and all items used were removed at the same time.

The magnitude of this awesome task included planes and gliders for the 82nd, the 101st, and the British Parachute Brigade for approximately 1000 aircraft used in the Normandy invasion. The project had to be completed in one twelve hour period that began at 22:00 hours and finished at 07:00.

What turned out to be the last day they would spend in the compound erupted

into a heated, loud, and angry discussion when the lobster gate was locked after the noon chow. Swain stopped and turned to stare at the gate with his mess kit loosely hanging in his hand. Suddenly, he shook it violently and banged it on the gate and scraped across the wire fence, "I never hated any place I had to sleep as much as I hate this place and hate this damn compound -- the noise, the lights ... the damn dirt. God damn it; the dirt has a curse on it. Even a dog couldn't find a spot to settle down -- it never could find a place to lie down."

Sergeant Sack ran over to him, "Hey, you OK?"

"Yeah, I just can't wait to get the hell out of this damn place. No place is worst."

Barrish said to Swain, "Shit, what about that Italian jail. Hell, it looked like a jail. There were more fleas in that dirty straw than on a hundred dogs."

"I agree," Tuzzie said quickly, "We looked like ghosts after sick call with all the calamine daubed all over us."

Sergeant Rhinquist, one of the cadres from Sergeant's York's 82nd was quick to add, "The line was longer than waiting to see Les Folies Bergere."

Gateau, who came from Louisiana and Rhinquist's driver said, "We looked like the Klu Klux Klan without the hoods."

The laughter broke the tension, and then Lieutenant Clark said, "OK, break it up and get some sack time, NOW."

The men scattered around and settled into a lazy mode on blanket or helmet to waste away the time. The eerie wait and silence was suddenly disturbed by a jeep hurrying toward the compound. It stopped abruptly in front of the guard at the gate. The courier held an envelope with red stripes around the edge and marked 'SECRET' for the guard to see. "To be signed by Colonel Albright only."

"Colonel Albright," the guard called.

The Colonel had heard the jeep and was at the gate just as the courier arrived. He waited for the guard to open the lock and swing the lobster gate wide enough for him to accept the envelope and sign the receipt.

"Thank you," he said, and as he drove away, Colonel Albright opened the envelope as he stepped back into the compound. He walked a few steps and stopped as he took the single page and read what he knew the message would be and nodded his head as a 'yes'. "Sergeant Chandler," he called but did not have to say, 'Assemble'.

Sergeant Chandler's whistle stopped the music and the quiet was shocking in anticipation of the order that would be read. The bugler did not have to sound,

'Assemble', as every GI in the compound was stiff and rigid in an 'as is' formation.

Colonel Albright began and read the message in his loud clear voice easily heard in the quiet, "You will load and be prepared to take off at 21:45. The squadron will circle the field until the last glider is airborne, form into a tight formation, and proceed to the landing zone assigned behind Omaha Beach on Normandy. All gliders will land at 22:45 just before dark." Colonel Albright added to the message, "Squadron commander will give the signal for all gliders to drop at the same time. Good Luck."

Sergeant Chandler instructed them to gather their gear, check their backpack, their carbines, ammo, and grenades for combat, water, and chocolate bar supplements. "We have approximately two hours. That's all."

Their activity and actions included: jumping up and down and twisting to settle their pack comfortably on their shoulders, tighten the straps, and snap their belt together. They pulled the cover over the mess kit and hooked it under the left arm, and checked the canteen for water and hooked it on the belt under the right arm. Two clips of ammo for their carbine was put in each front pocket, a hand grenade snapped on the shoulder strap below each pocket and the hunting knife was hooked on the web belt behind the canteen.

Barrish said to no one, "The last time I carried this load was the overnight forced march in Angola." He sat down and rested his pack on his helmet to ease the heavy, cumbersome load on his shoulders.

This time the hurry was not the problem; it was the burden of the wait. The quiet and motionless scene was like of the herd resting and only chewing their cud. This quiet was shattered as Sergeant Chandler, checking his watch, blew his whistle exactly at 21:20. Column of twos in order of flight assignment by glider number," his command was crisp and clear. His order, "Double time – Hup," was a transformation both amazing and precise as they moved together as one and he nodded his head with approval as he checked his roster since he was familiar with everyone.

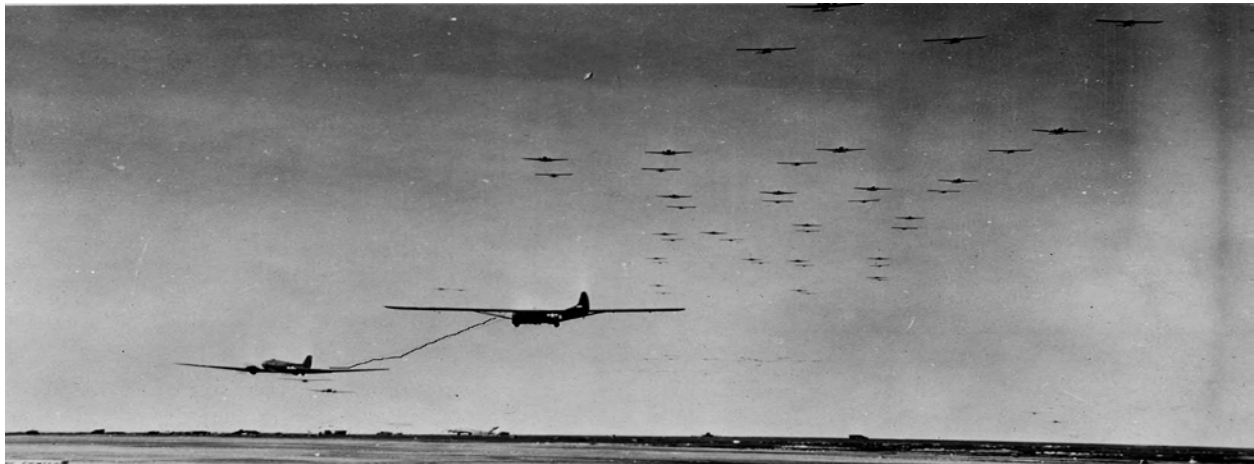
He followed in step of the last twosome to split into the left or right column of gliders, and each stopped at the door of their glider. Lieutenant Harrelson signaled Chandler, who blew his whistle, and like magic the doors opened and all disappeared at the same instant.

Sergeant Chandler and Lieutenant Harrelson walked to their gliders behind the first column of planes and saluted the airman the 'okay to go.'

It was an amazing sight for the airman as he checked the scene. There was no noise and no movement as he looked at his watch, then took a sharp step toward the first plane and twirled his arm in a circular motion to signal the flight commander, "Start your engines."

It was exactly 21:30 when the engines starting was like a set of dominoes falling behind each other and the toe planes revved up to full speed. The airman leaned forward and threw his arm as if throwing a ball to give the flight commander approval to take off and lead the flock behind him.

The precision of 21:30 was not imperative since the entire squadron had to circle the field several times to form into the tight formation needed to land at the same time.



(Figure 29: The last plane and glider in the formation to takeoff for the D-Day Normandy Invasion, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

The moment to fly directly to France was well planned and executed. They flew over the ground below and over the shore line over the English Channel. It was an awakening sight to see all the ships of every purpose, caliber, duty, size and shape, assembled to begin the assault the next day. They were linked together as if holding each other by the hand and as the mother held her ducklings under her wings for safety. The patches of ships were spread in a line about half way between the English soil and the Normandy coast. The scene evoked many thoughts and questions of what was ahead that they had to face.

The Normandy shore and land was half light just before morning and quiet, until suddenly, red tracers floated toward them and then they seemed to speed up. A ping could be heard as the bullets penetrated the canvas on the wings. The tracers were tiny red spots between the bullets compared to the red light on the tail of the toe plane. Like waiting at a traffic light, the yellow light was a signal to get ready as they flew over hills and bushes below. The green light was a shock and the signal to the glider pilots to release the toe rope and quickly pick a spot to land just before dawn. It was a very difficult task for an instant decision since the heavy weight in the glider made it fall rapidly that only allows a few seconds to land. A roller coaster takes about three seconds from the highest pinnacle to the lowest level which is safe and controlled. A glider has about six seconds with no safety or control.

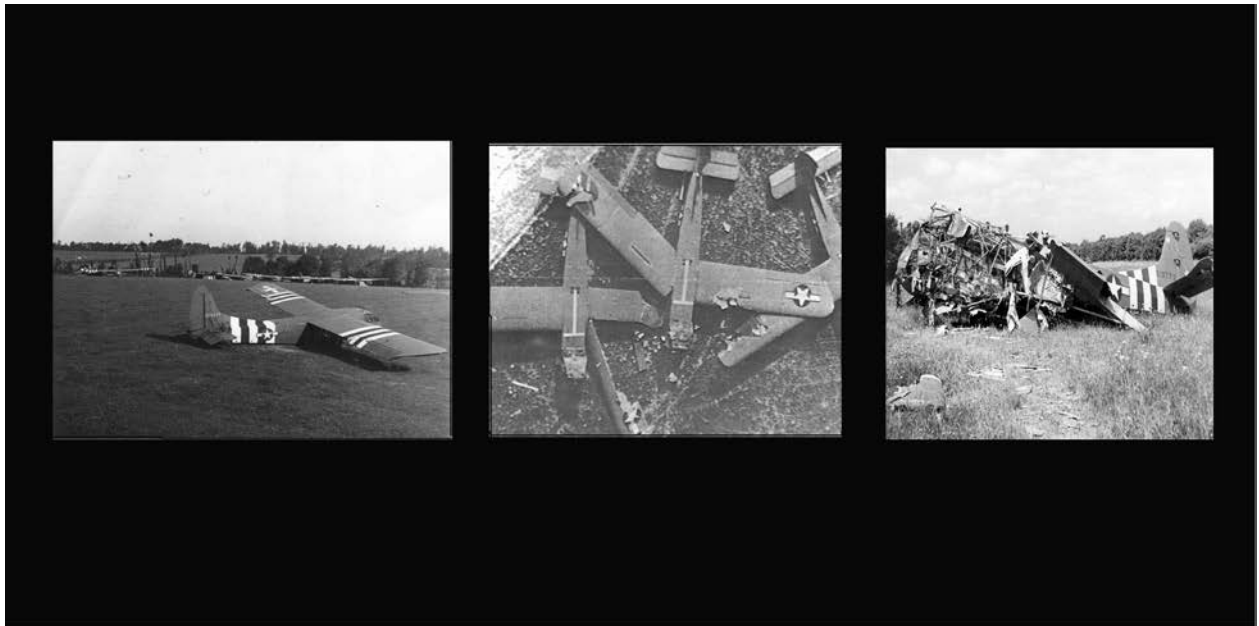
The squadron for the 320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion had twenty-two gliders that landed. They crashed into the poles, the trees, the hedge rows, flipped and turned over, and broke the wings, their landing gear, and the equipment broke loose and slammed into the sides and the men.



The squadron of twenty-two gliders crashed except two that landed safely. Sergeant Tuzzie was in one, and four others with the ammunition, were in the second glider. All the others crashed into hedges and trees and the poles the

(Figure 30: Gliders that crashed into the hedge rows, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

Germans erected in the open fields. No one was killed in the crash, but there were many broken bones, legs, arms, shoulders, head injuries, and concussions.



(Figure 31: The glider crashes, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

A footnote to this commentary from a veteran of yesteryear is that one of the interesting lessons and important facts learned from combat in Normandy was that an airborne operation was an effective means to defeat the enemy. A corollary to this is that the 105 mm howitzer, used by the airborne artillery, replaced the seventy-five mm. The airborne operation with gliders, like the pony express, was a success and necessary at the time. The 105mm airborne gun was designed to replace the 75mm

gun, which was carried by mule or donkey, took time to assemble before it could be used and fired. There are two good points or factors that were unknown and could not be appreciated until combat experience in Normandy. It was extremely accurate within five miles and could hit a target of twelve miles away. The caliber of the gun, 105mm or three inches in diameter, was considered heavy artillery. Therefore, heavy guns, 105mm, 155mm, long barreled, long range artillery had to be kept back from the front lines farther than the twelve miles the airborne 105mm could reach. The safety factor was that the enemy fire always went overhead to the rears where the heavy guns were set up. At the same time we could stay just behind our infantry to be able to give them close support and out of the range of machine guns or rifle fire, but we were always in the open and exposed and easily spotted.

Chapter 13: D-Day

The pilots, after landing, went to the nose of the glider and one exclaimed, "I can't believe we stopped two inches from this branch. That tree must be twenty feet and at least eight in diameter. My God!"

The pilots turned and walked, as they looked at a map, to find the area assigned to them to assemble with strict orders not to engage the enemy under any circumstances. They were not combat trained and had very little training shooting the '45's' they were issued. Sergeant Tuzzie never knew where they went or what happened to them.

He ducked under some branches and squeezed by some brush to get to an open space to see what he could see. He listened for a minute, and then walked along the hedge row to find an opening with enough space to get to the farmer's field on the other side of the hedge row. He heard a noise and could see someone coming toward him. He called out, "Hello, who's there?"

"320th," he said and then he heard a cricket. He immediately answered with the prescribed two crickets.

"Is that you, Downs," he said, "You okay?"

"I think so," he answered, "My arm and shoulder hurts, but I don't think it's broken."

"What happened?"

"We hit a pole and spun around. It threw me against my jeep. It hurts like hell, but I can move it."

"Get the medics to check it," Tuzzie said.

"If I can find one," Downs added with the skepticism of the situation.

"Let's see if we can find a spot to get to the lane. It will be easier walking anyway," Tuzzie said just as he ducked under a huge branch.

"OK, we're in luck," he said. "Hold this out of the way so I can get through. You pull it back. I can't," Downs said.

They straightened up after stepping into the lane and looked left and then to the right. As they started to walk to the right, they heard a noise and could make out some figures coming toward them.

They stopped and one of them called, "Gold."

Downs answered, "Tie."

"Shit, that ain't the password. You must be 82nd. No one could be that dumb. They changed that after midnight. Here, let me give it to you," he spoke softly into his ear.

"We had no way to know or get the change. We have no phones or know where our radio is right now," Tuzzie explained.

"Where you headed?" one of them asked.

"We're looking for a jeep," Downs answered.

"I think there's one back a ways," he pointed behind them.

They walked away and one of them said, "Watch out. We don't know where the Krauts are yet. So be careful."

"Thanks," Tuzzie answered.

They spotted the jeep and someone walking around it as they looked between the branches. Tuzzie called out, "Manue, is that you?"

"Yeah, Tuz, he said. "I got the jeep this far and was trying to figure out where to go from here."

"Can you drive? Downs almost got his arm broken in the crash," Tuz told Manue.

"I'm okay," Downs said. "I used the morphine in my first aid packet. It has eased the pain."

"I still have mine if you need it," Manue offered as he tapped his first aid pouch.

"Thanks, I'm better. I can move my arm," he said and twisted it around to show he could.

Manue started the jeep and Downs motioned him to let him drive. They wended their way in and out and around the bushes as Tuzzie followed their progress while looking for an opening in the hedge row.

Manue said to Tuzzie, "Look here ... This must be where the farmer can get in

and out of the field. It's plenty wide enough for us to get through."

Downs drove back into the lane and turned left onto another lane and the area where many gliders had crashed and spotted a crowd that had gathered in an open field. The crowd was other members and crew of the battalion.



(Figure 32: Driving into the lane where many gliders had crashed between the hedge rows and finding some other members of the battalion that had gathered in an open field , public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

Lieutenant Harrelson said, "Tuz bring your gun and follow me. This field is a good place to set up and find a site that we can locate on the map for a reference and get oriented. Get someone to cut that tree down," and pointed to the only one in the field that was in the point of Sergeant Tuzzie's gun.

Galamaski, again a volunteer, got an ax from a jeep and with a farmer's precision and only a very few swings with the ax, it crashed to the ground completely out of and below the muzzle of the gun.

Azimuth and elevation were set on the quadrant and the first shot was fired for observation. Shots were heard from south of the perimeter, the southern shore of Normandy, and exploded near the small arms fire; they could hear – just in front of them.

Lieutenant Clark yelled, "Get my radio. Let me see if I can see where those shots are coming from."

The corporal settled the load on his back and followed Lieutenant Clark and disappeared into the trees ahead of them.

"Fire, mission, Fire, mission," was easily heard from the radio and the azimuth and elevations settings were quickly set on the gun. At the, 'ready', the guns fired as one and all the training and practice was proof of the precision of a good crew. The rounds exploded, and black smoke and debris was more there, than that was seen on the ridge in Italy.

They heard Lieutenant Clark, "Down two. Fire at will." The black smoke and debris seen was cheered with the exuberance of a good team. Left two, down two, became the pattern after each round and was changed to right two, down two, to sweep the area. The guns were loaded and fired so rapidly the crates and casings, thrown in a pile, were six feet around and over two feet high. The barrels got so hot that it was necessary to stop and soak and swab them with water to cool the barrels.

Sometime passed before they heard Lieutenant Clark announce, "The Krauts are moving out – what's left that can retreat." A loud shout answered his report. It was late that afternoon. Sergeant Tuz saw three troopers coming through the hedge row and approached him and stopped. He said, "Is that thing any good?" and pointed to Tuzzie's gun.

"What do you mean?" he was puzzled at the question.

"There's a tank up here in the cross road. We can't get by it."

"Okay, be right there," Tuz said and to Downs, "Get the jeep and then tell the crew to latch the trailer and bring three 'AP's (armor piercing shells)."

The cooperation and precision was again evidence of a good crew, and they followed the troopers down the lane. Sergeant Tuz signaled stop when he could see the tank just above the low in the hedge. The barrel of the '88' on the tank was pointing to the left away from them. He gave the signal to swing the gun around and set his sight on the tank and motioned to ram the shell in the breach and said, "Fire." The smoke and debris was seen as the shell hit the tank just above the treads. He called for the second round and said, "Fire," after he checked his sights. The shot hit the turret gun and the barrel drooped down and could not be used. The third shot hit a Kraut as he opened the hatch, and the task was finished.

"Thanks," the sergeant said and quickly disappeared beyond the cross road.

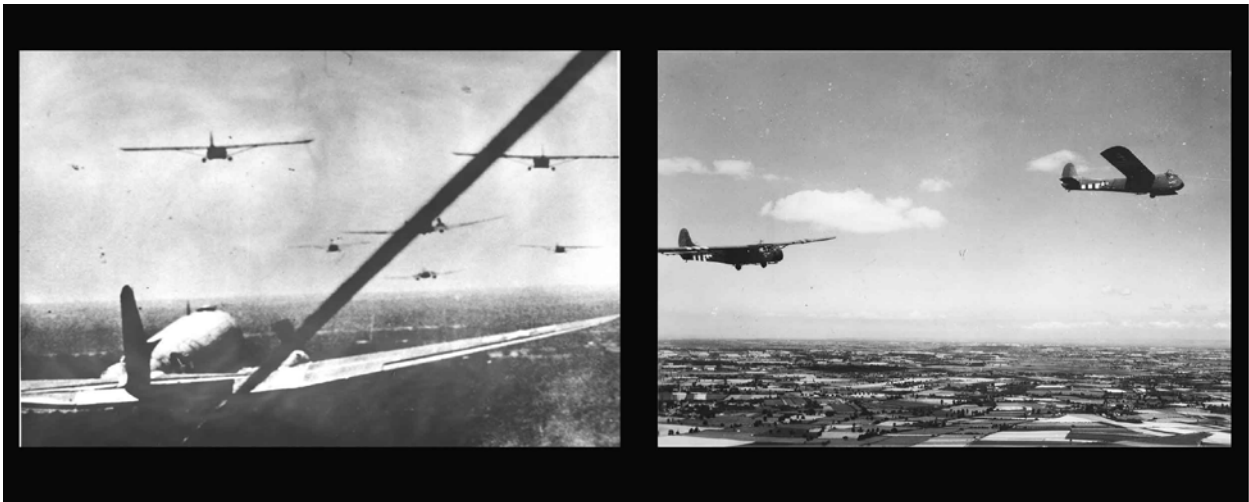
Contact with the enemy and combat was recorded as thirty-five days.

Chapter 14: The Bridge Too Far

We were returned to England and preparing to land on the airport in Paris. This was the second time that Germans used an airport for tanks, trucks, and soldiers while they were retreating. This mission, too, was canceled. We did not have to go to Paris.

We were then relocated to an airfield that had been used for Spitfires -- the famous fighter planes in the Royal Air Force armada. The Spitfires were used often to escort the Lancaster's (bomber planes) back to the field near our camp in Leister. There, we prepared to land in Holland to secure the 'bridge too far', code name, 'Market Garden'. The weather had been warm and dry the month of September and flying conditions were ideal.

The flight to Holland was a single file approach rather than the tight formation used on Normandy, D-Day minus one. The formation was a column of two by two with one plane and glider slightly behind the other and to the left of the other. Those following were bumper to bumper since the landing zone was spread over a wide field. One was a plowed field and the other was a field of sugar beets.



(Figure 33: Gliders being towed into Holland, public domain and courtesy of the 82nd Airborne Museum in Ft. Bragg, NC)

The distance over the open water of the North Sea between England, just north of the White Cliffs of Dover, was much farther than over the channel between England and France. Just after they crossed the delta in Holland they could see puffs of anti-aircraft guns (Ack Acks) ahead and well above them. Mustangs and P-38's strafed and circled around the anti-aircraft guns (Ack Acks) and then circled around the bumper to bumper of planes and gliders to protect us. Their circles and dives were reassuring and fun to watch.

In a few minutes and a little ways over the delta, the red light from the plane, the signal the release was soon, signaled the drop zone was just ahead. They flew over the dykes and channels, and could see the flat land when in a few seconds the yellow gave the pilot notice, and he reached up to pull the knob, and then pushed it down to drop the toe rope at the green light. Some landed on the feather bed without any resistance from the Germans. Sergeant Tuzzie's glider landed in the plowed field that was dry and soft. It was as easy and soft as if landing on a down pillow or feather bed. Those landing on the beet field went skidding across the patch as if their runners were greased. The distance traveled was more than twice the length of a runway or normal field. There was only one pilot for each glider, and Tuzzie sat in the co-pilot's seat on a flight jacket. The pilot said, "Let me have the flight jacket. If I get hit, you couldn't take over." Although Sergeant Tuzzie knew that made sense, he was a little taken aback.

A comedy of errors or the fortunes of war, a tragedy happened similar to the mish-mash error or mistakes during the invasion of Sicily, when gliders flew over the Rhine River and landed in a German bivouac that was way beyond the drop zone. They became prisoners of war. Among those captured was the First Sergeant, Chandler, admired and respected, who was a great loss to the battalion and the mission. Those captured were lost to antiquity and greatly missed personally and for their talents, abilities, and to the force and fame of the 320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion.

The howitzers were spread wide apart in the flat open land of the Dutch terrain. It was necessary to give each gun separate azimuth and elevation coordinates in order for all to hit the same area or target. Fire was directed across the Rhine River to drive the Germans back so the bridge could be secured by our tanks and men. An order to cease fire was given to allow boats to cross the river downstream and then circle behind the enemy and the bridge. The Americans were so easily seen by the Germans and just as easily forced back to retreat behind walls and buildings. It became the stalemate of the 'bridge too far'. The stalemate remained until the Brits finally were able to break through and reach the area. The battalion had to dig and 'hunker down', as Galamoski called it, with only sporadic fire between the Germans and us.

The lull was tedious and enervating, and the energy bars were gone and with no rations or anything to eat. A few days' later two figures were seen carrying a huge kettle between them. Two GIs recognized them as nuns and ran to give them a hand. They brought the only thing they had to offer which was boiled potatoes and apples. The kettle was still hot and everyone did get a potato and an apple. 'I never had anything taste so good' was heard and thanks became 'danken schoun, danken schoun' like a staccato of explosions. They were appreciated was the understatement of the campaign and the nuns returned regularly until the British finally broke through and we were relieved, and they took over.

Our kitchen came after the tanks reached our area and just before dark. It took the kitchen staff most of the night to set up in the dark, and then they started cooking

flap jacks before regular chow time at about 06:00. The flap jacks did more than just 'fill the hole' and the coffee was as welcomed as a 'taste beyond compare'.

Other interesting facts and statistics were: we landed September 17 and departed November 14, engaged the enemy 58 days, had 662 missing in action with no break down by unit. The number captured reduced the strength of the 320th by one third of allotted personnel. The effectiveness had to be achieved by those remaining, and the work load shared by everyone.

Chapter 15: Refurbished Full Strength

After we were relieved by the British, the excursion south by convoy was a slow and tedious journey. It was necessary to pick the best way around shell holes, blown bridges, culverts, small villages and buildings completely destroyed that was like a circuitous route through a maze to find the exit. The route from Holland could not be planned and no map could be followed as in a 'trip'. It was necessary to stop in Brussels that became a sightseeing tour. A guide authorized, by the mayor, greeted the 'visitors' and suggested the best way to see the sights of the city were the beautiful cathedral, the opera, the civic center auditorium, and other impressive structures of the Belgium capital.

The unplanned stop and sightseeing tour of Brussels was about half way between the start in Holland and a small town on the outskirts of Rheims in France. The convoy drove by the cathedral in Rheims, one of the most beautiful in Europe, and then arrived at the dark military quarters where the battalion was assigned to 'lick their wounds and prune their feathers'. The building, a U-shape or a square horse shoe would be a better description, had a carriage entrance onto a quadrangle with walkways between buildings and a parade ground. It was dark, the buildings dimly lit, and only one light bulb in the carriage way. There were sleeping quarters on each floor. The stoves, kitchen, and the dining area were on the first floor in the back. The officers' quarters and offices for staff functions were on the second floor. It became the soldier's task of 'hurry up and wait' while Colonel Albright and Lieutenant Clark checked the rooms to assign them as quickly as possible so the men could locate a bunk and settle as easily and quickly as possible in the dim and poor lighting in the whole compound.

The quarters replaced the training with the opportunity to do maintenance, repair and refurbishing to clothing and material, and replacing lost or broken items. The scene was that of the proverbial beehive and busy industry of cleaning, scraping, painting of equipment, guns and vehicles as well as the maintenance of changing oil, tuning all the vehicles, greasing joints and fittings, and replacing broken head lights, wind shields, repairing dented doors and fenders, and painting them to look like new. The delicate instruments on guns, field glasses, radios, and telephones were cleaned and adjusted to specifications and accuracy.

All personal items and clothing were inspected, washed and replaced if necessary, and returned to the duffle bag. At the same time Colonel Albright and his staff compiled data, completed the log, checked invoices and work requirements and job orders. All requisitions were checked, signed, and approved to meet TA's (table of allowances) that met military regulations. The interest and excitement in cleaning and maintenance was a pleasant change until replacements arrived. It was both pleasant and formal as the replacements unloaded and set their duffle bags at the edge of the parade ground. They assembled in a formation that faced the battalion for a formal ceremony which began with the division band playing a rousing march and the National

Anthem. The exchange of greetings and hand shakes and a few remarks from Colonel Albright concluded with Cook's special menu of corn fritters that was way beyond 'fills the hole'.

Shortly after replacements were gradually assimilated, Colonel Albright announced at assembly, "I have received official notice accepting my report that we are completely prepared and available for combat when needed." The applause was not enthusiastic but was a sustained acknowledgment of the reality.

"Allied command was quick to accept the report," he continued, "and I have received a confidential order to prepare for an airborne operation within three days. We are prepared, and I can assure you, the mission is of the utmost importance and very good strategically. I have only a hint, a suspicion really, of what it might be. We are at full strength and a capable force to be reckoned with, and we will succeed. Passes will be available today and tomorrow provided you return within thirty minutes. I say thanks for what you have completed and I am very proud of each and every one of you. No one could have a better battalion at his command. Dismissed."

The relaxed and quiet time, after the hectic and tedious cleaning and maintenance, was a welcome change, and naps were taken and appreciated. A late morning discussion turned into a bull session after Tuzzie had to see Colonel Albright and Lieutenant Clark about him getting a purple heart.

"Hey, Tuz, did they recommend you for a purple heart?" Schenninger asked.

"Al, that's the first time you ever got interested in a subject about medals," Galamoski said, "I can't believe it. Are you serious?"

"Actually I had to see Colonel for something else," Tuzzie explained. "We did talk about the only one who got a purple heart from direct enemy action was Novachs. We will never know if some Kraut accidentally fired his '88' or whether it was a random shot just to see and by luck just hit something. The shrapnel landed all around us, but Novachs was the only one hit. He had his hand behind his back and said, 'OH! OH!' and fell down. We yelled for a medic who asked us if any one else was hit and then carried him off on a stretcher. The medics told us that a piece of shrapnel cut his spinal cord and he died instantly."

"What was that cut you got?" Manue asked.

"I don't remember telling you that," Tuzzie sounded a little embarrassed. "It was a tiny scratch on my left leg through my fatigues about an inch long. It was nothing. I had brier scratches that were worst. It didn't even bleed. I didn't even need a band-aid."

"Oh you're entitled to a purple heart. You're brave," Barrish mocked him.

“I’ll give you brave,” Tuzzie raised his fist. It was a gesture in jest.

Chapter 16: The Hurry Was Out, the Wait Was In

Thus began the wait without the hurry of most missions. The question in their minds that came after three days: 'Was could it be Berlin?' The Rome airport mission was cancelled. The Paris airport mission was cancelled. Both were cancelled because the Germans were retreating. There was no news of German activity, and the lull and static showed no signs of retreat or renewed action.

The afternoon drifted slowly by and the quiet continued with only the noise from the shower and drying of hair with a towel and a flop on the bunk. Galamoski interrupted the lazy scene when he suddenly sat up and said, "Hey, Tuz, this village is so small I haven't seen any madam ... mademoiselles ... ain't that what you call them?"

Sergeant Tuzzie sat up and turned toward him, "I think you're right. I saw, 'une jeanne fille' that's my high school French, she was helping her 'mon pere' she called him. I went with Cook when he wanted to swap flour from our kitchen for some wheat flour. Cook said that he gave too much for the little sack he got in return."

"You went with him, how come?"

"He thought it would be too heavy for him to carry it alone so he asked me to help him," Tuzzie explained.

"OK, but I was talking about the time you met that madam ... mademoiselles ... you met in the village. You called it a green stamp in a brown patch. You remember," he asked.

Sergeant Swain called over, "Who was that chick in Memphis? You said she was sex. Didn't you say she was all hepped up?"

"I didn't say that," Tuzzie snapped at Swain.

Galamoski said, "Tuz, I was asking you about the one you met in the village ... the green patch. You said she was different."

Sergeant Tuzzie crossed his legs and folded his hands and stared at the floor for a minute. He looked up and said to Galamoski, "She was different. She was beautiful. Yes, she was sexy; she had all the right things in the right places. Yes, very shapely, but she made me feel peaceful, kinda serene, a feeling of ...tenderness ..." he hesitated and observed Galamoski's reaction and to explain so he would understand. "You know that green stamp, as you call it; it was a refreshing sight. It had a fresh sweet aroma ... a perfume ... that came from the vines over the 'la rue' ... street, that's high school French ... and from the flowers and 'les jarden' ... garden ... also, high

school French ... behind each house.”

“It was pretty,” Galamoski interrupted him, “It was much bigger than you could see. It was square. I can remember it was nice compared to the brown dust and dirt we saw every day.”

Tuzzie shook his head in agreement and explained,” Just beyond the fountain in the center of the village there were some small shops: a bakery, a butcher shop, and a fromagerie ... cheeses ...” He noticed several listening and had moved closer to hear him. “I bought a loaf of French bread and some cheese. It smelled good. I stuffed the cheese in my pocket and tucked the bread under my arm. I turned and walked along the street and started to enter a narrow alley by a church just as the door opened and a puff of cool air from inside hit me as I bumped into her. Her name was Renee she told me latter. She smiled when I said, ‘Pardonez moi’, and giggled a little and then said, ‘Ces bonn. Tu parle la Francaise? Voule vous une tache avec moi dans la boulevard?

‘Une petite,’ was all I could think of.

“Oh, high school French,” Manue called over from his bunk.

“Yes, you’re right. God, she was beautiful,” he added. “Her smile would melt you. It was prettier than Jean Craine or Bette Grable.”

“Tuz, you better hurry. It’ll be chow time before you get done.”

He raised his hand, “OK, OK,” he said, “But when we turned to walk along the boulevard our hands touched and we held hands the whole time we were together. We kinda swung them as we walked. We went east ... under the vines and arbor over head which made it cooler ... the smell ... was nice very fragrant. I bet we walked over a mile when we reached the east gate.”

“You mean the village was more than a mile square?” Galamoski asked.

“At least, at least,” Tuzzie commented, “Maybe even two miles. It looked like a key hole in a huge door. You’ve seen big latches with a round hole in the center with a slot below that. The round hole was like the fountain in the center of town and the slot was ... we walked away from the fountain that was the wide street, the boulevard.”

“Oh, you’re killing me,” Barrish said, “If you don’t snap it up we won’t get to chow before Reveille.”

“I was just going to explain,” Tuz said as he raised his fist in defiance, “The fountain is fed by a stream that flows along the edge of the village behind each house. That’s where they get their water for the house and to water their farm. It’s like a farm. They grow everything they need.”

"We walked along a narrow alley, a street, and she stopped and opened a gate to show me her garden and where she lived. She pointed out her zucchini and squash. Then she pointed to maize, her corn with pride, and as she turned around we bumped each other and came together and embraced each other. We hugged each other in a tight ... clasp ... that was the most wonderful feeling I ever had in my whole life! We kissed. As we kissed, I felt a ... warm glow ... an intimate feeling ... an exchange between us. I felt we were as one ... a spirit ... a blessing ... maybe."

"When we separated she turned and wended her way through the garden and went into the house and never looked back. I stood looking at the door for some time and then picked up my bread and walked back to the fountain. I never saw her again. I recalled this many times when I was scared." A quiet returned for a few minutes. The quiet as it was before Tuzzie began to explain about the only young girl he saw that was in the bake shop helping her father.

Swain said again, "Ahhh, that's so sweet. I mean real sweet, but what about that chick you said was hot stuff in Memphis?"

"Yeah, you would ask that," Tuzzie said. "What happened," he continued, "We had a delay in Memphis for over twelve hours. We had the whole time to ourselves to do anything or go anywhere, but the threat was if we weren't back by 23:30, the train would leave, and if we weren't on it then we would be AWOL, and in deep trouble!"

"So you met the chick at the station waiting for you," Swain said sarcastically.

"Oh, bug off!" Tuzzie yelled, "A bunch of us walked along Main Street and found a hamburger joint and ... "

"Hey, Tuz," Manue said, "You better hurry. We only got about an hour before chow." He laughed to taunt Swain rather than being worried about the time. There was a commotion as they squirmed around and turned to look at Sergeant Tuzzie.

"I was on a train to Fort Sill for officer's candidate school ..."

"You went to officer's candidate school," Manue asked a little surprised.

"Why ain't you an officer," Swain asked with derision that was meant to be sarcastic.

"Swain some times you strain the patience of an Aunt Sarah let alone a saint," Tuz said with an anger he usually did not display. "I was recommended by an officer at Fort Bragg. So you will know, there were three on-going classes at the time. My class was about three quarters full and another class was about halfway full when four hundred ROTC college graduates arrived at Fort Sill. That was way over the quota and two classes were cancelled immediately. One was allowed to continue since they were almost finished. That's when Novachs, he was from Freehold, and I saw recruiters for

the 82nd looking for good artillerymen to meet their quota to complete their battalion.”

“What has the hot chick got to do with that?” Swain blurted out.

“Yeah, you would ask that,” Tuzzie said. “What happened was,” he continued, “we had a delay in Memphis for over twelve hours and we could do or go any where we wanted, but the threat was if we didn’t get back to the station by 23:30, actually it would leave at 24:00 sharp, and if we weren’t on it we would be AWOL and in deep trouble! Any way, a bunch of us walked along Main Street, and found a hamburger joint ... I had the best burger in a hell of a long time. After we took our time gawking at all the stores, boutiques, and shops we spotted a sign in front of a church: ‘Soldier’s Dance, Eight Until Ten’. We all agreed to let’s give it a shot. That’s where I met this hot chick you wanted hear about. It was a Catholic Church in their recreation or gym room.”

“As we walked in, they greeted us nicely and the Sisters that ran the dance gave each of us a pin with a little card to write our first name on it. It was like our name tag. There were quite a few girls lined in a bunch along the wall. God, some of them were pretty young. Heck, my youngest sister was older.”

“After the music started, hell, it was jute box but it wasn’t too bad, I had a short dance with one and then I took her back to the lineup along the wall. I don’t think she thought I was a very good dancer. I did spot another girl. She’s the one I was talking about. The music was a slow tune which I liked and I danced pretty well. While we were dancing, some couple bumped us and when we came together. She held on pretty tight, and I can tell you I felt sex we were so close together. Hell, I ain’t no different than anybody else.”

“When the music stopped, I heard a Sister bang a stick or a cane on a desk near the door in a corner. She pointed that stick at a couple and waved it at them to separate. The girl I was dancing with, her name was Sue, I think, moved away from me. She said, ‘I have to change and dance with some one else. Sister Martha won’t let us dance with the same soldier all the time.’ I said, ‘OK, I see what you mean.’ She gave me a look as she walked away. I stood there a minute and the thought occurred to me the Sister had the right idea. It taught them to be careful and to avoid making a mistake. It was a wise precaution that would prevent a whim or a momentary excitement and a serious problem. They would never see them again so why seek sex just for pleasure.”

“When it was ten o’clock (22:00), Sister Martha banged her desk and motioned with her cane for all the girls to stand near her at the door. When a car pulled up, she would point to those she knew should get in that car. The other Sister stood looking and watching to make sure they got in and then the car drove away. God, you think the army is strict. That’s strict!”

“We had plenty of time to walk back and even stopped for ice cream. I will remember that as a good thing.”

Chapter 17: The Battle of the Bulge

The question became two or three days after Colonel announced he received the confidential order: 'Was it for an airborne mission to the Berlin airport?' The specific order made it necessary to arrive where the planes and gliders were before daylight. The landing was scheduled for 21:00 just before dark. The beehive came alive as everything that was needed was assembled on the parade ground where all vehicles in rows could form the convoy to the airfield.

The long wait to 'move out' was shattered by the loud speakers as they squeaked and squealed alive, "Attention. Attention all personnel. The mission is cancelled. Repeat. The mission is cancelled. Intelligence has been received and reported that a large concentration of railroad cars loaded with long range guns, tanks, halftracks, artillery, and combat ready divisions completely cover the airport. Repeat. Mission is cancelled." Was it a question of: 'Is it everything in threes or the fortunes of war?'

If it was everything in threes and not the fortunes of war, then it was that after three days the same speakers blared, squealed, and squeaked the frantic alert, "ATTENTION. ATTENTION. The Germans have broken through the allied forces. The massive force is rapidly moving toward Brussels. Get ready to move out immediately. Report when ready. That is all."

The entire 82nd division moved north and the last vehicle passed the crossroad before the advancing spire ahead driving toward Brussels. The division reached the northern sector and formed a line of defense like the letter 'S'. The 101st reached the area below the German thrust and the skirmish line was like the in-bulge of the letter 'S'. The 101st held the line or down bulge of the 'S' which was opposite or below the 82nd area. The 101st needed twenty-four hours to get ready since they were unable to respond as quickly. They were delayed because of late delivery of supplies and equipment. They reached the area below the German thrust and were surrounded and trapped at Bastogne. Thus the Battle of the Bulge began.

This gave Montgomery (the British General), after he was assigned task commander, the opportunity to get his revenge for the Americans reaching Salerno ahead of him. That always stuck in his craw. He ordered General Gavin (the 82nd Division General) to move back in order to have a smooth skirmish line. General Gavin replied, "We never give up ground we have captured".

Montgomery said, "That is a direct order," and then mumbled what sounded like, "or else." General Gavin reluctantly obeyed the order, but the area had to be retaken when the assault began to drive the Germans back across the river. We captured Germans wearing jump boots and summarily stripped them of the boots and sent those Germans to a prison compound. There was no record of those prisoners.

The German advance was stopped and the skirmish line was established. The weather changed and it began to snow. It started to snow a steady downfall that piled up and covered equipment, guns, and men. It continued through the night and the only way to withstand the dead quiet was to wrap a blanket around the shoulders, hold your gun upside down, wrap a scarf around the neck and face, and stand or lean against a jeep or howitzer. A figure resembled a marshmallow on a stick. A cat nap was possible after shaking snow off helmet and shoulders. The night was spent in misery with the agony of no relief from Mother Nature. The morning light revealed that snow covered everything in a thick blanket. It was a slow and treacherous trek to the kitchen for a cup of coffee. The bitter cold made it necessary to change damp socks to keep toes from getting frost bite. First you had to take off galoshes and jump boots, then replace the damp socks with dry and warm ones from the back pocket. Fold the damp socks in half and put them next to the body. With both socks warm and dry it made the cold bearable.

Near late afternoon the weather changed, and the low clouds cleared, and the high thin layer made the white snow a bright glare. The sound of planes in formation was a welcome sight knowing the bombers would again bomb their targets. It was only a short time later, a better sight, that the C47's were dropping supplies and ammunition to the 101st in Bastogne. A cheer came from all those who could see every effort were resumed to fight back.

Word was received that General McCuleff told the German general, "Nuts," when he asked them to surrender. The German general did not understand the American word 'Nuts'. Shortly after, all hell broke loose, when Patton's armored division launched a fierce attack and the bastards of Bastogne reached, and it was the beginning of the end of the Battle of the Bulge.

The weather again launched a blow of misery and discomfort on the front for every soldier out in the open without tree or shelter. An early thaw enveloped the snow covered terrain in fog and drizzle that penetrated cloths, gloves, and boots. A cup of coffee got cold before a soldier could take two sips. The rain dropped off the helmet into the cup that diluted the taste, and the feel of any warmth for the hands around the cup. It was the most miserable condition the weather could impose on man or beast or good or bad. The cold, the fog, and drizzle penetrated every bone and every nook and crevice in clothing or tarp. The misery from this atmosphere was second only to the stench of the concentration camp. The good that followed was a stalemate and a lull that gave the Germans a chance to retreat across the river and stop the allied advance.

Chapter 18: 'R and R'

This stalemate at the Battle of the Bulge gave the division the opportunity to get three day passes of 'R & R' to Paris. A truckload would drop them off at the base of Mount Royal, the highest point, and from there they could see all of Paris.

The three, Tuzzie, Galamoski, and Manue, walked down the boulevard from the cathedral, sauntered would better explain their excitement, spiffed-up in their Sunday best to find a café for a cognac. They spotted a café opened with wooden shutters propped up and everything painted white. The shutters were white; the stools around the oval bar were white; the ceilings and walls were all white. It looked like a good, clean place to get their cognac. The bartender, a woman asked, "You wish something?", and after she brought their drink she walked to the back of the bar.

They raised their glass to toast Paris, luck finding a broad, and their good luck so far! When they put their glass down, they noticed two women just at the end of the bar; there were two immediately across from them, and two others at the other end. All of them were standing and glaring at them with an angry and fierce look. They had picked a lesbian establishment accidentally and agreed to drink up and get the hell out of there. They then downed the cognac. 'We were safer at the front', Tuzzie said as they continued along the boulevard, "Hell, we didn't know we were intruding on them".

Galamoski said, "That's for sure. Let's find a dirty bar. We'll make out better for everything."

The 'R & R' was enjoyed by everyone in the battalion which was accomplished by the experience and discipline of the command and each soldier. The 'R & R' continued after their return to the front with the announcement that anyone who wants to fly to Nice should sign up by 04:00. Those selected would be taken to a nearby field at 10:00 in the morning. All those selected easily reached the capacity of the C47. The morning ride to the field was in a heavy fog and the hurry up and wait tested the patience of the happy passengers. As the sun rose higher and higher, the fog began to burn off and anticipation rose as the clearing appeared.

An airman signaled the passengers to climb aboard as the engines came to life at about 14:00. The rough and bumpy field was no concern to the seasoned airborne. The flight to the Mediterranean was short, and the rough landing on the stony beach along the shore did not chill the spirit or the warmth of the resort or beauty of Nice.

The vacation became an effort to see the secretaries change dress and put on bikinis while sitting on the beach. The gathering of gawkers, lining the fence, and all the gawking, twisting, turning, and climbing on the fence did not reveal the pleasure of a 'sight'. The perfection and the practice of the process were acceptable and equal to that of the veteran in battle. This was fun!

The visit was ended with the notice the return would be by train since the plane was not available. The event was a noticeable change in some thoughts and values for the train had wider seats and aisles than the plane. It was easier to get together to play cards, roll dice, or shoot the breeze, or some to read. The time, the place, or space, or opportunity to talk about making out with a 'broad' was never a difficulty or a problem. The train ride was no exception, and Swain had the opportunity to throw the first cliché that exploded into the soldier's subject of sex and finding the 'broad'.

"Santelli," Swain asked, "did you see anything when those gals changed on the beach?"

"Well no," Santelli was quick to say. "What about you Barrish? What did you see?"

"I didn't see nothing, but your Italian ain't you? Don't ya pinch every senorita there is?"

"Nah, that's Hollywood propaganda. I tell you, you better watch it; some Mamma will whack you so hard you won't know what hit you. My Papa told me he pinched some young senorita and her mother hit him so hard he saw more than stars."

"That isn't what I heard," Galamoski butted in, "I heard they love it because it makes them feel flattered."

"Good God, you guys are all the same," Farley said".

"Hey, wait a minute. Don't you come from Louisiana?" Swain asked. "You told us we looked like the Klu Klux Klan without the hoods, right?"

"Yes, I did, but that was when we were covered with calamine lotion from all the flea bites."

"Yeah, I know, but weren't you studying to be a minister?"

"Yes", Reverend Farley said, "I was in a seminary in Baton Rouge to be a Methodist minister."

"That's what I heard. How did you get in the army? Don't they exempt you if you are in college?" Swain added.

"Yes, sometimes, but you can volunteer you know," Farley said.

"OK, but why did you volunteer," Swain asked with a slight sarcastic tone to his question.

"Well, Swain, you tend to be a little antagonistic in some respects. Let me explain some very good reasons for why I volunteered. We had a professor, a preacher, who explained to everyone at a seminar about the debauchery and the debasing caused by fighting and war. He was very commanding and convincing in his 'preaching'. I venture to say almost half the students did volunteer for the army, navy, marines or air force."

"What did he tell you?" Barrish wanted to know.

"If you really want to know," and then he hesitated.

"Yeah, yeah," several quickly responded as they settled into a position to listen carefully.

"He told us," he began, "At the start, he was a Chaplin in the army and then the National Guard, and learned the thinking and the mentality of a soldier. He said the atmosphere of training, discipline, routine, and monotony of a soldier's life brings out the desires including furloughs, passes, and wine, woman, and song. It does not bring out or enhance the value or the worth of a man's word. That is the honor or in the power of 'he keeps his word!'"

Are you going to give the whole talk? We ain't got enough time for that," Swain said.

"I can stop any time", Farley said to him, "but, this is, I think, very important. To strengthen the character and the courage you will need to be a part of the effort to destroy the evil we face -- be it communism, socialism, Nazism, Devil, Beelzebub, Satan, Lucifer, or what President Lincoln said was the enemy within. All combined explains what we must face."

"Where did you get all those names from?" Manue laughed.

"They are the opposite of good. They are in the Bible and throughout literature. These absorb the love that never ends. The love that sustains the brave -- the bravery that is no greater gift a man can give than to lay down his life for another. A man's spirit filled with the love that never ends can not be crushed. Remember a soldier can be killed by a disease or a bullet. Your strength and your character decide the difference! The lecture is ended," he said.

Quiet settled around them, and Manue said, "This train is quiet."

Chapter 19: The War's End and the Last Mission

The return to the quiet that gave them the change and 'R & R' was short lived when they moved north to some farm houses in Belgium. The quiet there ended abruptly when they settled into an empty building in Cologne. The Germans were across the river and we began a house to house, room to room, drawer to drawer, nook and cranny search for weapons, grenades, pistols that were hidden and could be a danger. There we learned that President Roosevelt died, and Truman became president. The attitude was nothing changed but to continue as usual.

We left Cologne clear and free of small arms and moved north through the Black Forest. It was necessary to cross an open ridge through a wooded area where the Germans could take pop shots at any vehicle they spotted. We succeeded in crossing without any trouble and at random spurts at the speed of each truck or vehicle. A quartermaster supply company followed behind us, and although they did not usually deliver to or through a combat area, made the excursion with the attitude – 'damn the '88's' full speed ahead'. It was the spirit of those truckers to deliver whatever was needed, wherever needed, with courage and dispatch.

The sweep continued toward the north of Germany along the shore of the Baltic Sea. As we moved east, we located and liberated a concentration camp which was boarded up against the weather or an escape just outside a small German village.

Tuzzie and Galamoski stepped into the compound and stopped dead, still, when the stench hit them in the face! For seconds they did not move. Tuzzie waved his hand in front of his nose as if he could wipe away the fowl smell.

Galamoski said, "We knew about this but never really understood it until now!"

Tuzzie agreed and said, "If we had If I had, I can tell you there wouldn't have been any prisoners."

They stepped over a body; the only one on the fifthly matted straw on the floor. He blinked, and they knew he had not died. They quickly left the compound, and waved their arms as if they could shake off the stench. They saw a ditch between two rows of houses with the bodies uncovered that looked like a pile of rubble just dumped there. The inhabitants did flee the area to escape, so no one could find them and know what they had done.

More and more joined Tuzzie and Galamoski, and stared at the ditch, and wiped at their nose as the wind blew the smell toward them. They walked around the houses and stopped in disbelief as they saw old and tired refugees walking toward them, and brown uniforms of the Yugoslavians with horses and wagons hoping to surrender to the Americans. The Quartermaster Corp. and medics began to process them and check

their health and medical needs.

The battalion turned back, and found several empty cottages, and settled down to sleep and eat, and sleep and eat. They did not realize how tired and exhausting their ordeal had been. Their regimen of sleep and eat was shattered when Sergeant Sack blew the whistle and said, "All hands assemble with guns and grenades."

He stopped as he heard the grumbling and cursing. "What the hell is this? We will guard," he continued, "the remnants of some 'SS' prisoners that were guarded by fresh troops from the states. The guards are green and slow in realizing what they face, and that the prisoners will attempt to escape as their duty."

At Sergeant Sack's command of 'double time', they reached the open area where a single wire circled the prisoners who were agitated and defiant. Their defiance turned to a look of: 'Who are these soldiers?' as the 320th surrounded them with guns at ready. One 'SS', who was tall, blond, and a perfect Aryan specimen, looked at Swain and asked him, "What are you going to do?"

Schellinger, a recruit after Holland, snarled at him and said, "Sit down and shut up or you'll find out." His threat was understood, and the Aryan specimen sat down, and all the others sat down, too, like a wave coming down at the same time.

The fresh troops immediately stepped back, and their expression showed the relief they felt. It was an amazing sight in such a short time to see three trucks arrive with 'MPs', who hustled the prisoners into the trucks, and snapped the tarp shut to prevent their escape.

The 320th completed their last mission successfully.

Chapter 20: Announcement of the War Effort Comes Home

In June 1944 'Life' magazine published an article about the D-Day, Normandy invasion. The magazine was going to print the article on June 5, 1944, the day before the invasion was to take place. The army command told and convinced them to wait until after the invasion was started so as not to reveal any plans to the Germans.



(Figure 34: Cover of 'Life' magazine about the D-Day, Normandy Invasion)



(Figure 35: The article in 'Life' magazine about the D-Day, Normandy Invasion)

On a more personal note Walter Tuzeneu, Sergeant Tuzzie, wrote a letter home to his mother at the end of the war about liberating a German Concentration Camp that was published in the local newspaper, *'The Asbury Park Press'*, during the year 1944 or 1945. The content of the letter read:

Soldier Writes Home

Walter Tuzeneu
Box 470 Megill Rd.
Farmingdale, NJ

Hi, Mom,

I am in North Germany. We liberated a Concentration Camp. The worst thing I ever saw or smelled. The stench was so bad we just stood still and did not breathe. One body was still on the floor. He blinked. We saw a ditch between two rows of houses with bodies stacked like cord wood. The Germans had run away so no one could see what they did. I will never forget that stink. I am good. Saw a good movie with Bette Grable.

Love to everybody



Soldier Writes Home

Walter Tuzeneu
Box 470 Megill Rd.
Farmingdale, NJ

Hi, Mom,

I am in North Germany. We liberated a Concentration Camp. The worst thing I ever saw or smelled. The stench was so bad we just stood still and did not breathe. One body was still on the floor. He blinked. We saw a ditch between two rows of houses with bodies stacked like cord wood. The Germans had run away so no one could see what they did. I will never forget that stink. I am good. Saw a good movie with Bette Grable.

Love to everybody

(Figure 36: Sergeant Tuzzie's letter written to his mother at the end of the war that was published in 'the Asbury Park Press')

EPILOGUE

What are the lessons of World War II?

One: Hitler's 'SS' were so indoctrinated with the superiority of the Aryan race they willingly followed the insanity of Hitler who did the work of the devil. Their concept of superiority, and the hate instilled in them resulted in the persecution that killed almost six million Jews.

Two: Hitler was not German. He was an Austrian. He was not blond. He had brown hair. He did not have blue eyes. He had dark-brown eyes. He was INSANE.

Three: An explanation of insanity: a man had a flat tire at the corner of an insane asylum with double fencing, curled barbed wire across the top, and a storm drain at the corner of the property. An inmate was watching the man take off the five lug nuts and put them into the hub cap. He reached over to remove the wheel and accidentally hit the hub cap with his knee. Three lug nuts fell down the drain, and he realized he could not get or see them in the debris at the bottom. He leaned back and said, "What the @\$%^&*#@ can I do now?"

The inmate heard him and said, "Take two lug nuts off the other wheel then you can go to where you can have it fixed."

The man was surprised and said, "How did you think of that?"

The inmate replied, "I may be insane, but I'm not stupid." Insanity is the determination and steadfast resolve to complete the purpose of the irrational behavior or crime. It does not prevent doing every day chores.

Four: The 'SS' of America is socialism and secularism. The socialist is filled with hate, anger, and wants to kill our democratic republic. Our forefathers had a vision and the wisdom to learn from the past. They pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their honor, and did form a more perfect union for ourselves and our posterity. We now have, and live with guaranteed rights, and the best form of governing by man for man. This is being attacked by the 'SS', the socialist and the secularist.

Five: The United States of America became possible because sixteen thousand out of fifteen million remained steadfast and firm at Valley Forge and marched to Yorktown and our democracy was born. At the time the population of the colonies was approximately 45,000,000. Of those 15,000,000 did nothing, 15,000,000 remained loyal to the British Crown, and 15,000,000 wanted separation. Only the 16,000 secured our freedom and rights.

Six: A monument dedicated to those who fought in the Battle of the Bulge was first dedicated in May 2001 at Fort Monmouth at the end of the Avenue of Memories. It was attended by over 150 veterans, wives, and friends. When it was announced that Ft Monmouth would close by 2011, the original committee and others concerned formed

another committee to decide what could be done.

An excellent decision was to remove the monument and relocate it onto the lawn of the Thorn Elementary School in the Port Monmouth section of Middletown Township, NJ. A rededication ceremony was planned which comprised the principal, school staff, students, neighbors, officials, and veteran groups. The entire program was one of the most auspicious ceremonies of a lifetime. The program was planned, and it exemplified the 'American Way'. The students reflected the excitement, interest, and performed a skit with song depicting the value of each letter in 'PRIDE' – the school's motto. The entire procedure and ceremony reflected the demeanor of the soldier; they did it because it had to be done. The same purpose was that they, the committee, did it because it had to be done. Over ninety veterans attended that came from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, New York, and Maine. The mayor of New York had his car drive a disabled veteran from Long Island to witness and be a part of the celebration. A veteran selected to speak, encapsulated the fear.

"We who live today hope and pray that those who paid the supreme sacrifice did not die in vain. We can warn America we will never be destroyed by a foreign country. We will be destroyed by the enemy from within as President Lincoln prophesied".

There was a thunderous applause. The ceremony began at 8:30 AM and ended at 12:30 PM with 'Taps'. The beautiful sound ended in silence.

Seven: Compare the 'SS' of 1943 with the 'SS' of 2013. Compare the 'SS' of German Nazism and the superiority of the Aryan race with the 'FS', which is Free Spirit. 'SS' referred to as the storm troopers -- Hitler's Body Guard, Aryan finest. 'SS' -- Schutzstaffel; meaning, protection echelon; 'SS' – Schutz -- defense, Staffel -- echelon which can be compared to a man's word.

All Americans give their word to protect and defend against all enemies foreign and domestic in an Oath; "I swear", and give their name in full _____ "so help me God." The 'SS' give their word to protect Hitler and preserve the Nazi party. They were steadfast and remained firm in their dedication -- six million Jews died! The United States of America faces the 'SS' of socialism and secularism. These, the socialist and secularist curse America. They gave their word to remain steadfast and determined to destroy our democratic republic. If you can not comprehend this, you can not comprehend the bad, the wrong, and evil of WWII. That makes you a part of the problem. Read The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America.

Appendix A: Pins, Patches, Medals, Emblems, and Certificates



(Figure 37: Pins, Patches, and Medals of the 82nd Airborne Division including the prized glider wings)



(Figure 38: A 82nd Airborne Division patch usually worn on some article of clothing as the sleeve)



DISTINCTIVE UNIT INSIGNIA

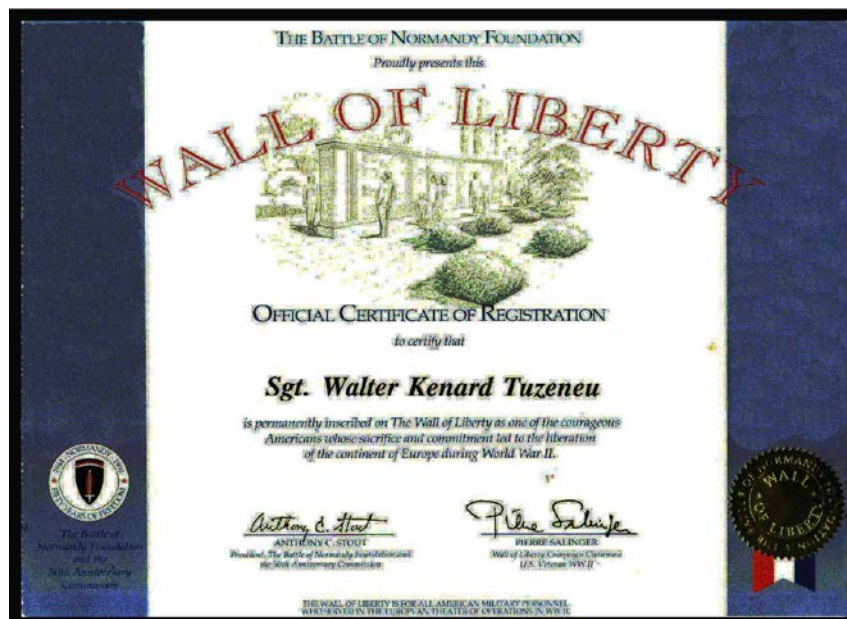


COAT OF ARMS

(Figure 39: The insignia and coat of arms emblems of the 82nd Airborne Division)



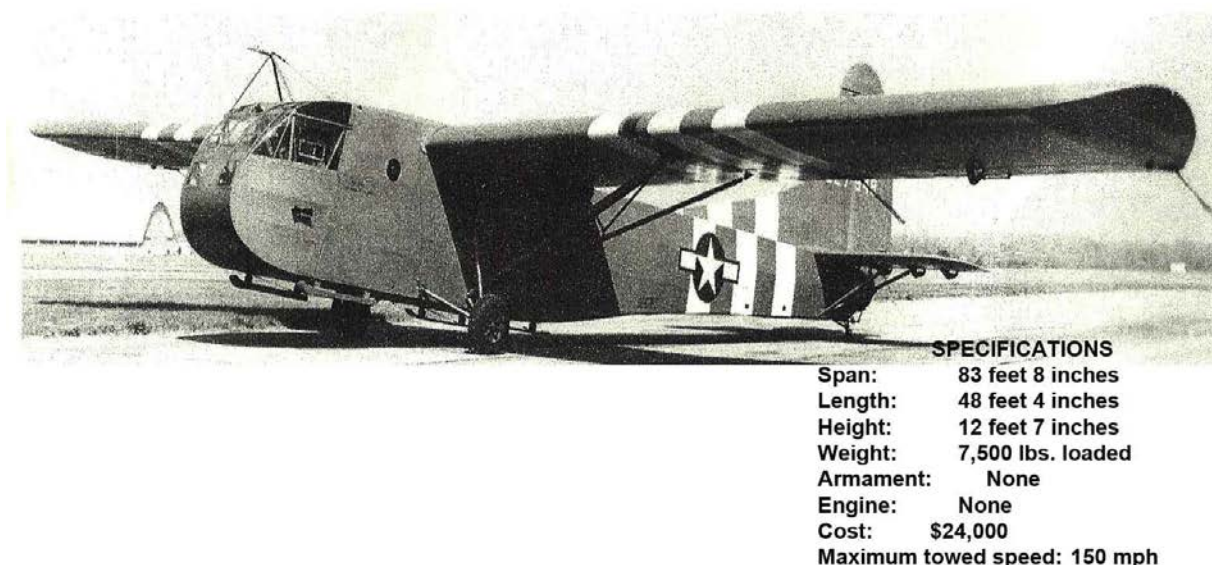
(Figure 40: Sergeant Walter Tuzeneu's Glider Qualification Certificate. The certificate reads: Having satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of instructions in knots and lashings, loading organizational equipment in airplanes and gliders, and safe loading principles; and having participated in glider flights under tactical or simulated tactical conditions, Corporal Walter K. Tuzeneu (32 270 517), a member of the Eighty-Second Airborne Division, is hereby entitled to wear the Glider badge.)



(Figure 41: Sergeant Walter Tuzeneu 'Wall of Liberty' certificate; it reads: Sgt. Walter Kenard Tuzeneu is permanently inscribed on The Wall of Liberty as one of the courageous Americans whose sacrifice and commitment led to the liberation of the continent of Europe during World War II.)

Appendix B: Waco Glider Statistics

WACO CG-41 "HADRIAN"



(Figure 42: Waco glider and its specifications)

The CG-4A was the most widely used U.S. troop/cargo glider of WWII. Flight testing began in 1942 and eventually more than 12,000 CG-4As were procured. Fifteen companies manufactured CG-4As, with 1,074 built by the Waco Aircraft Company of Troy, Ohio.

The CG-4A was constructed of fabric-covered wood and metal and was crewed by a pilot and copilot. It could carry 13 troops and their equipment, or a jeep, a quarter-ton truck, or a 75mm howitzer loaded through the upward-hinged nose section. C-46s and C-47s usually were used as tow aircraft.

CG-4As went into operation in July 1943 during the Allied invasion of Sicily. They participated in the D-Day assault on France on June 6, 1944, and in other important airborne operations in Europe and in the China-Burma-India Theater. Until late in the war, gliders were generally considered expendable in combat and were abandoned or destroyed after landing.

Appendix C: Statistics of Days in Combat

Summary of Days in Combat Areas				
Operation	Front Line Positions	Corps Reserve	Army Reserve	Total
SICILY (HUSKY)				41
(1) July 10-14, 1943	5			
July 15-16, 1943		2		
July 17-24, 1943	8			
(a) July 25 - Aug 19, 1943			26	
Sub-Totals	13	2	26	41
ITALY				163
Naples*Foggia (Avalanche)				
(Giant)				
Rome-Arno (Shingle)				
(2) Sept 14-18, 1943	5			
(3) Sept 16-15, 1943	10			
(4) Sept 18-24, 1943	7			
(5) Sept 25 - Oct 2, 1943	7			
(6) Oct 4-7, 1943	4			
(7) Oct 27 - Nov 25, 1943	30			
(8) Dec 7, 1943 - Jan 1, 1944	27			
(9) Jan 22 - Mar 23, 1944	62			
(10) (b) Oct 3 - Nov 19, 1943	(net)		21	
Net Sub-Totals	142		21	163
NORMANDY (NEPTUNE)				38
June 6 - July 8, 1944	33			
July 9-11, 1944		3		
July 12-13, 1944			2	
Sub-Totals	35	3	2	38

(Figure 43: Summary of the days in combat areas.)

Note: The term "front line positions" is used above as any period of time in which a regimental combat team or larger group of the Division, whether or not detached from the Division, was in direct contact with enemy troops.

Information provided by 'Saga of the All American 82nd Airborne Division'

Albert Love Enterprises, Atlanta, GA ©1946

This is in essence a yearbook of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Summary of Days in Combat Areas

Operation	Front Line Positions	Corps Reserve	Army Reserve	Total
HOLLAND (MARKET)				58
(Rhineland)				
Sept 17 - Nov 13, 1944	58			
ARDENNES				63
Dec 18, 1944 - Jan 13, 1945	25			
Jan 12-27, 1945		16		
Jan 28 - Feb 4, 1945	8			
Feb 5, 1945		1		
Feb 6-18, 1945	13			
Sub-Totals	46	17		63
CENTRAL EUROPE				59
Apr 4-16, 1945	13			
(c) Apr 17-25, 1945		9		
Apr 26-27, 1945			2	
Apr 28 - May 8, 1945	11			
(d) May 9 - June 1, 1945		24		
Sub-Totals	24	33	2	59
Grand-Totals	316	55	51	422

(1) 505, 504 Prcht RCTs (a) Also occupational duty in Western Sicily
 (2) 505, 505 Prcht RCTs (b) Also occupational duty in Naples. Does not
 (3) 325 Gli RCT include periods 504 Prcht RCT was in Corps or
 (4) Div on right flank of Fifth Army Army Reserve after Div proper left Italy.
 (5) Div on Sorrento Ridge and Naples Ridge (c) Also occupational duty in Cologne, Germany, area

(6) 505 Prcht RCT on Volturne River (d) Also occupational duty in Ludwigslust,
 (7) 504 Prcht RCT in Invernica Sector Germany, area.
 (8) 504 Prcht RCT Venafrro Sector
 (9) 504 Prcht RCT on Anzio Beachhead
 (10) Net, does not include periods
 Oct 4-7, 1943 or Oct 27 - Nov 25, 1943

Total Days in Combat by Year

Year	Days
1943	141
1944	173
1945	108
TOTAL	422

Total Days in Combat as a Result of:

Airborne Deployment		Ground Deployment	
Sicily	41	Italy	143
Italy	20	Ardennes	63
Normandy	38	Central Europe	57
Holland	58		
Total	157	Total	265

Appendix D: Statistics of the 82nd Airborne Division Casualties

Campaign	Missing in Action	Wounded in Action		Injured in Action		Killed in Action Died in Action
		Not Rtd	Rtd	Not Rtd	Rtd	
*Sicily	48	474	336	x	x	197
*Italy	73	1,140	799	x	x	309
*Normandy	661	2,373	1,554	704	502	1,142
*Holland	622	1,796	821	327	196	535
** Ardennes & Rhineland	101	2,073	1,036	609	364	440
** Central Europe	30	168	34	49	31	42
Totals	1,535	8,024	4,580	1,689	1,093	2,665
		12,604		2,782		

* -- Corrected to Dec 12, 1944
 ** -- Corrected to May 28, 1945
 x -- Figures not kept for these campaigns

Rtd -- Returned to Division
 Not Rtd. -- Did not return to Division

Computations corrected on the basis of official reports received to Oct 25, 1945:

Campaign	Missing in Action	Killed in Action Died in Action
Sicily	12	206
Italy	2	327
		On the last day of its last campaign the 82nd Airborne Division liberated five of its soldiers who had been captured in Sicily and later had been "hired out" to German farmers as farm hands.
Normandy	0	1,282
Holland	80	658
Ardennes & Rhineland	7	670
Central Europe	5	75
Totals	106	3,228

(Figure 44: 82nd Airborne Division Casualties)

a) *Casualties: The 82nd Airborne Division occupied front line positions for a total of 316 days and suffered a total of 19,586 casualties of all types, an average of 61.98 casualties for each day, on the basis of computations made May 28, 1945.*

- 1) *An average of 4.85 men were missing in action each day.*
- 2) *An average of 39.88 men were wounded each day.*
- 3) *An average of 8.8 men were injured each day.*
- 4) *An average of 8.43 men were killed in action or died of wounds each day.*

b) *Casualties by campaign: Figures available as of October 25, 1945 show that only 106 individuals of the 82nd Airborne Division are still listed as "Missing in Action", all others listed earlier as "Missing" having been liberated from prison camps or legally declared dead. A tabulation of casualties on this basis, however, would not present a true picture of the Division's status during the particular campaign, and two sets of computations therefore are given below.*

Information provided by 'Saga of the All American 82nd Airborne Division'

Albert Love Enterprises, Atlanta, GA ©1946

This is in essence a yearbook of 82nd Airborne Division.

Appendix E: List of the Concentration Camps

Concentration and Death Camps

Camp	Function	Opened
Auschwitz-Birkenau	Concentration - Extermination	May 26, 1940
Belzec	Extermination	May 17, 1942
Bergen-Belsen	Detention - Concentration	April, 1943
Buchenwald	Concentration	July 16, 1937
Chelmno	Extermination	December 7, 1941
Dachau	Concentration	March 22, 1933
Dora-Mittelbau	Sub-Camp of Buchenwald	August 27, 1943
Drancy	Detention	August, 1943
Flossenburg	Concentration	May 3, 1938
Gross-Rosen	Sub-Camp of Sachsenhausen	August, 1940
Janowska	Concentration - Extermination	September, 1941
Kaiserwald	Concentration	1942
Majdenek	Concentration - Extermination	February 16, 1943
Mauthausen	Concentration	August 8, 1938
Natzweiler-Struthof	Concentration	May 1, 1941
Neuengamme	Sub-Camp Sachsenhausen	December 13, 1938
Plaszow	Concentration	October, 1942
Ravensbruck	Concentration	May 15, 1939
Sachsenhausen	Concentration	July, 1936
Sered	Concentration	1941
Sobibor	Extermination	March, 1942
Stutthof	Concentration	September 2, 1939
Theresienstadt	Concentration	November 24, 1941
Treblinka	Extermination	July 23, 1942
Vaivara	Concentration Transit	September, 1943
Westerbork	Transit	October, 1939

(Figure 45: A list of the Concentration or Death Camps)

Concentration and Death Camps


Camp	Liberated	Number Killed
Auschwitz-Birkenau	Jan 27, 1945 - Soviets	1,100,000
Belzec	Liquid, Dec 1942 - Nazi's	600,000
Bergen-Belsen	Apr 15, 1945 - British	35,000
Buchenwald	Apr 11, 1945 - USA	N/A
Chelmno	Liquid, July 1944 - Nazi's	320,000
Dachau	Apr 29, 1945 - USA	32,000
Dora-Mittelbau	Apr 9, 1945 - USA	N/A
Drancy	Aug 17, 1945 - Allies	N/A
Flossenburg	Apr 23, 1945 - USA	N/A
Gross-Rosen	May 8, 1945 - Soviets	40,000
Janowska	Liquid, Nov 1943 - Nazi's	N/A
Kaiserwald	N/A	N/A
Majdenek	July 22, 1944 - Soviets	360,000
Mauthausen	May 5, 1945 - USA	120,000
Natzweiler-Struthof	N/A	12,000
Neuengamme	May 1945 - British	56,000
Plaszow	Jan 15, 1945 - Soviets	8,000
Ravensbruck	Apr 30, 1945 - Soviets	N/A
Sachsenhausen	Apr 27, 1945 - Soviets	N/A
Sered	Apr 1, 1945 - Soviets	N/A
Sobibor	Summer 1944 - Soviets	250,000
Stutthof	May 9, 1945 - Soviets	65,000
Theresienstadt	May 8, 1945 - Soviets	33,000
Treblinka	N/A	N/A
Vaivara	June 28, 1944	N/A
Westerbork	April 13, 1945	N/A



Walter K Tuzeneu - Sgt Tuzzie - an honorably discharged veteran of WWII and an honorable man, paid all taxes, never cheated any man, always kept his word and earned the twinkle in his eye. Was discharged Aug 1945 with those returning to civilian life after serving in the European Theater of Operations.

Began writing the story of gliders in early 1980. The effort was put on the back burner until about Jan 2000 due to work, trials and tribulations, recitals, graduations, sickness and vacations. Have lived alone since 2006 which gave me the opportunity to enjoy writing, kept me busy, kept me active and I have been enthusiastic ever since. This follows my first book, LV B4 TV & Fat Free 9/2012.

My war experiences, my work in meteorological research, [was one mile & ½ from an atomic explosion] to study the fallout from atomic elements, contributed to a study ' how high would the level of the oceans rise if all the ice on earth melted?; the conclusion of the committee it would not raise the level even 1/4 of an inch. and then transferred to research in Electronic Warfare which compelled me to write and finish "The Knot Will Hold". These experiences, pertinent comments and facts make me ask a question, " Do we still live in the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave?"



**82d Airborne Division
Historical Society, Inc.**

Gift Shop Manager - Greg Carpenter

Bldg C 6841 Ardennes Street Phone: 910-436-1735

Post Office Box 70119 Fax: 910-432-1642

Fort Bragg, NC 28307-0119

Email: abn82d@nc.rr.com

Website: www.82ndairbornedivisionmuseum.com



