THINGS I REMEMBER:

BY CLAUDE EWING LOVETT, JR.

I was known as Junior Lovett through high school, but I have been called Claude since entering Texas A&M University in September 1939. I was born June 12, 1921, in our farm house, the third child in our family of six children. My earliest memories are on the farm near Eureka, Kansas. Our address was Neal, KS and we went to Tonovay School. The first, second and third grades were in one room.

We moved to Texhoma, OK, in the spring of 1930 where I finished the third grade. When school was out we moved to the ranch in the Texas Panhandle and in September I started the fourth grade in Stratford. We moved to Channing in 1935 where I attended two years of high school before we moved to Dumas where I finished the last two years graduating in 1939. I enrolled in The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas.

My first room mate at A&M was Bill Holland who left school and joined the Army during the first semester. We were in K Company Infantry. Ed Lambert, from Temple, was then my room mate and at mid-term break our Freshman year, Ed invited me to go home with him to Temple. He had a steady girl friend and promised to get me a date. My date was Mary Helen Rosener, a beautiful girl. We double dated with her older sister, Frances, and her date, Wendell Williams, in the Rosener's living room. This was Feb. 10, 1940. I was 18 and Helen was 15. Ed Lambert left school and joined the Marines at the end of our sophomore year. I went to Temple with him several times, and Helen came to A&M for our Sophomore Ball in the Spring of 1941. Fall, 1941, start of my Junior year, school became much more serious and Military training was revved up. My new room mate was then Howard Herron from Dallas. Howard was an A student, a good military man, a member of the elite "Ross Volunteers" and a great room mate. He made the Military his career, retired as a full colonel and now lives in Austin. When Pearl Harbor happened, everything was intensified. I was on a field trip that Sunday, Dec. 7,1941, and when we came back to the campus in the afternoon there were signs hanging

out of the dormitories such as, “BEAT THE HELL OUT OF THE JAPS’. We were soon told there would be no six week ROTC camp during summer holidays, 1942. Instead, we would stay in school straight through and end our senior year in Jan. 1943, following which we would be inducted into our branch of service, promoted to Corporal and sent to OCS. (Officer Candidate School) Visits to Temple were less often. Helen did come to A&M for the Senior Ring Dance. This is when Aggie rings are turned around by girlfriends following which you are a former student. My ring was taken off in the aid station when I was wounded Nov. 12, 1944 and while in Hammond General Hospital, some 3 or 4 months later, I received an envelope addressed to me with just my ring inside. All Aggie rings have the name engraved inside. Our graduation was Friday, Jan. 22 and the final review was Saturday, immediately after which we were restricted to the campus. My Mother and Mrs. Anderson were there for my graduation. Monday morning we were loaded on buses, taken to the Houston induction center, inducted into the Enlisted Reserve, loaded back on busses, taken back to A&M with instructions to go home and wait for orders. I hitched a ride to Temple, saw Helen for a short visit and started hitch hiking toward Dumas.

All A&M ROTC graduates were inducted into the Enlisted Reserve and ordered to report for active duty at various reception centers. I reported to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and was promoted to Corporal and sent by train to Fort Benning, Georgia to attend Infantry Officers Candidate School. I graduated from OCS May 20, 1943 with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant and was assigned to the Infantry Replacement Training Center at Camp Walters, Mineral Wells, Texas. On July I was assigned to the 90th Infantry Division, Camp Barkley, in Abilene, Texas, in command of the third platoon, Company G, 357th Regiment.

Our entire Division left Camp Barkley by Troop Train for Camp Granite, California in late August. We camped near Yuma, Arizona, for two days before loading on trucks for an all night trip. We went to Desert Center, then east toward Parker, Arizona. Camp Granite was an area of sage brush in the desert about midway between Desert Center and Parker, Arizona. This was CAMA (California Arizona Maneuver Area), and we trained in combat maneuvers until about December 20.

On December 24 (Christmas Eve) 1943, we boarded a troop train in Needles, California, headed for Fort Dix, New Jersey. We disembarked at Ft. Dix in the snow, after dark, on December 31, 1943(New Years Eve). In March, 1944, the entire division moved to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, a "staging area", where we were restricted to the base in preparation for departure overseas.

I was on the advance party to board the ship after three days at Camp Kilmer to arrange space for my Co. G (some 175 men) to come aboard. We were on a British troop ship, the Dominion Monarck (a converted 700 passenger cruise ship), and we sailed out of New York Harbor with over 3500 men aboard, our 357th Regiment plus some non 90th Division troops.

We sailed in convoy, for safety from German submarines, which meant that our speed was held to the slowest ship in the convoy. We were at sea 14 days and docked in Liverpool, England, about March 30, 1944. From Liverpool we were moved by trucks to a tent camp, in a pasture, in the Kidderminster area some 10 miles from Birmingham.

Around May 25 we moved to a camp on the Chepstow Race Track property in Wales where we were told that our division would be a part of the invasion of Western Europe known as operation "*Overlord*". Here we received maps and information on beach conditions including obstacles and German defenses. We were told that all friendly aircraft would be marked with black and white stripes on the wings and fuselage.

Our Regiment boarded a U.S. liberty ship,the U.S.S Explorer< about June 2 nd and sailed out of Cardiff into the English Channel to await the start of the Normandy invasion. This was a U.S. ship crewed by the U.S Navy. We had excellent food including fresh eggs (cold storage) cooked to order. They had chicken fried steaks on June 8, just before we got off the ship.This was a treat from the scrambled (powdered) eggs we'd had since leaving the U.S. The food overall was great and I ate steadily to try to avoid becoming deathly sea sick.

In the early morning hours of June 6 we heard General Eisenhower's statement over the ship's PA system that Allied troops had landed in France and operation "Overlord", the invasion of Western Europe, was underway. The next two days we stayed on special alert rehearsing getting off the ship into landing craft, and abandon ship drills.

We learned on June 7 the ship carrying the 359th Regiment was sunk by either a mine or torpedo, and the information that if our ship was hit it would sink in 15 minutes. These were Liberty ships built in 90 days.

We had many "get ready to go" alerts but about noon June 8, the landing craft started coming along side, and the announcement was "*This is not a drill*". When it came time for our Co. G to off-load, the LCT (landing craft tank) came with one of our company Jeeps with a trailer already aboard. The sea was very rough and the LCT was raking up and down the ship's side. We were to climb down the scramble nets (large rope nets hung over the ship side) into the LCT, and were warned to jump from the net and not get raked off. We got loaded without mishap and headed in to Utah Beach.

I was in command of the Third Platoon, Company G, 357th Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, Seventh Corps, First Army. Our division was later assigned to the Fifteenth Corps, First Army, and in late July, we joined the Twentieth Corps, Third Army under General Patton where we remained for the remainder of the war in Europe.

The sea was very rough, and our LCT grounded on a sand bar about 100 yards off shore. They dropped an anchor with a winch line some 200 feet before we stopped. This was to winch the boat off of being grounded. When they dropped the gate we went off as fast as possible going out to the right or the left, away from the center because we knew that jeep, with loaded trailer, was going to come roaring off behind us with full power on. The jeep was waterproofed so it would run under water with snorkels off of the engine air intake and gas tank. With the engine running wide open in low gear, and four-wheel drive, the object was to keep the water blown out of the exhaust until reaching the dry beach. I remember seeing the jeep and driver go under except for the snorkels and then reappear as he got in shallower water. Nick Dolan was the jeep driver..

We got on the beach and kept moving inland as fast as possible to get our units together and count heads. My entire platoon made it and overall our Company, Battalion and Regiment fared very well. We went into a defensive position for the night with orders to move out early the next morning to attack German forces in the, soon to become, "terrible hedge rows".

When we landed on Utah Beach the Officers in our Company G, 2 nd Battalion, 357th Regiment were: Captain Bill Domries ,Commanding Officer; 1 st Lt. Elmer (Rip) Regn, Executive Officer; Platoon Leaders all 2 nd Lieutenants: First, Bob Reeves; Second, H. A. Brotherton; Third Claude Lovett; Weapons Platoon, Joe Healy. Our regiment, commanded by Colonel Ginder; Battalion by Lt. Col. Lester and Battalion Executive Officer was Major Jastre. Lester was a big tough talking, rude, crude overbearing slob. (Any questions just read what others said about him in John Colby's "War From The Ground Up").

We got in the first serious combat on June 9, getting beat up real bad and needed authority to bring our mortar fire close in front of us. Lt Max Kocour, forward observer for 81 mm mortars, went looking for Lester and found him curled up in a hole blubbering and crying. Capt. Chuck Nadeau, commanding F Co. was seriously wounded and the next time I saw him was at McCloskey Hospital in June 1945. He said that when he got to the Battalion aid station there in Normandy, Col. Lester was curled up in the corner whimpering. Nadeau, a lawyer by trade from Houston, said his only regret from the war was that he didn't shoot Lester right there in the aid station. He was the only case of real cowardice that I ever knew of, and we had lots of times when it seemed that the only way out was to cut and run. H. A. Brotherton and other men helped me personally through several of those times. Major Jastre took command of the Battalion, and was a great leader, but was killed on June 10, at which time our Capt Domries assumed command. Rip Regn took command of our G Company, and I was made Company Executive Officer. Joe Healy was wounded in our first battle. Bob Reeves was killed the next day, which left Sergeants in command of the first, third and weapons platoons.

My third platoon sergeant, Sgt Leslie Ross, was wounded in our first combat and ended up on the first plane load of Normandy casualties to arrive at McCloskey General Hospital in Temple, Texas, my wife Helen's hometown. The Press was there for interviews, and Sgt. Ross told them "My Lieutenant is from Temple". Helen had a call early the next morning from a close friend telling her "Claude's name is in the paper". That afternoon Helen and her Mother went to McCloskey to visit Sgt. Ross. This was the first they knew that I was in Normandy.

We received replacement enlisted and officer personnel after a few days. Of two officers, one was excellent but the other just couldn't handle it, and we sent him back to the Regiment. On June 12 (my 23rd birthday) our company attacked through Sainte-Mere-Eglise, the town made famous in the movie, "The Longest Day", with the Paratrooper hanging alive in his parachute until the Germans noticed and shot him. The locals still have a dummy hanging in a tattered chute today. I think Red Buttons played that part in the movie, "D Day".

When we fought our way into the hedge rows, the going was so tough that finally our attack changed into an almost out of control situation. The German artillery (88 MM), mortar and machine gun fire was just plain devastating, and with men running every which way, the wounded calling for the "MEDIC!" (One medic in each rifle company) I had that hopeless feeling. In the melee I ran into Lt. H. A. Brotherton and we agreed that we had two options; we either needed to run, or to stay and try to get control of the fight. We decided to fight. We gathered as many as possible, got them in positions to defend, and to start firing toward the Germans. The artillery was mostly landing behind us now, and with the German attack stalled we managed to hold on until dark. I talked to Rip, and agreed to move our group back to join what was left of Co G, taking the wounded with us.

Rip Regn recommended H.A. and me for Silver Stars, which were approved and presented to us in August. During the battle that day I found PFC Donald Kitzman in a dazed state, and saw that he was blind, probably face burned by white phosphorous. I put him in a foxhole and told him to stay there until someone came to get him. We were back with the Company, and I had just laid down when I remembered him. That was a terrible feeling. I got a man, I think Rudy Legerski, to go with me racing back up there hoping I could find the hole where I left him. We found him, and luckily he could walk well enough to help us get him to the Battalion Aid Station.

Donald was permanently totally blinded, but there is a good as possible ending to his story. His face was scarred from the burns but well healed. He was taught Braille by a lady who was legally blind, but with enough sight to get around. She and Donald were married and lived an apparently happy and useful life. They traveled a lot and for many

years attended the annual 90th Division Reunions. I remember when we had a professional photographer take pictures of the entire group, some 500 people, at our Kansas City reunion, Donald told his wife "be sure to buy copies of the pictures". There are some good outcomes. They have both passed on but remain an example of how to cope with bad times.

H. A. Brotherton was special; full name was Holman Atlee, but went by initials. We called him just "H" especially on the radio, it worked well for brevity. H. A. and Lt. Thomas Leatherwood were the two witnesses and only attendees when Helen and I were married in the Fairmont Methodist Church parsonage in Abilene on August 21, 1943. H.A.'s uncle, the Rev. Robert L. Butler officiated at the ceremony. Sadly, Thomas Leatherwood was killed during the first few days in Normandy.

H. A. and I leaned on each other through the next 5 months until I was wounded Nov. 12, 1944. We learned later that Joan, H. A.'s wife, gave birth to their first child, Jimmie, on that day. He is now Navy Captain James Brotherton, retired from the Navy in 1994. H. A. didn't eat much and usually had an extra K ration, so late one night he gave me a "dinner" ration. Dinners had a chocolate bar, good, but hard like concrete. When I unwrapped the bar it was crumbled up which made it easier to eat, but I bit on what felt like a real rock. It was pitch dark so I put the piece in my pocket, and the next day saw that it was a piece of shrapnel. I later found H. A., checked his left breast pocket, where he had carried the K ration, and there was a small hole in the outside layer of his pocket. We joked as to whether we both should get Purple Hearts, he for almost getting wounded, and me for almost breaking a tooth. If we had John Kerrey's rules then there would have been no doubt. H. A. went through the war, stayed in the service, and retired a Lt. Col. in the CID (Criminal Investigation Division). He died too young in 1975.

Hill 122 in Normandy, top 122 feet elevation, was the Germans' point for directing artillery and mortar fire in addition to watching all troop movements, which made taking that hill a prime objective. The 359th, with tank support from the 712th Tank Battalion, took a terrible beating for two days in trying to take the hill. We were pulled out of the line to their left, ordered to attack through them and finish seizing the hill with a promise of other units protecting our right and left flanks. When we found that the

units on our flanks were so beat up they had no ability or intent to fight, I went back hoping to get help, but finding that we had to go with what we had. I remember very clearly the words from Col. Barth, our 357 Regimental Commander, "*Lieutenant, the reputation of this regiment and the entire 90th Division depends on your success today*". I called Rip and told him we had to go with what we had. We jumped off with some advance through the hedgerows. In one area we found 3 of our tanks that had been knocked out and still smoking. In checking the bodies scattered around, one moved a bit and I said, "*I think this one is still alive*." He said, "*I sure as hell am and I need some water*." He was burned black on face and hands and appeared to have both legs off. I called for the Medics, left him my canteen of water, had a man stay with him until medics came, and then we went on with the war, thinking, that man was not going to make it. He was Lt. Jim Flowers, 712th Tank Platoon Commander, awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, written about in several books, and honored with the James Flowers Armory in Arlington, Texas named in his honor. At the 90th Division Reunion in San Antonio, in 2001, Jim and I were interviewed by Aaron Elson, author of several war books including Tanks For The Memories and They Were All Young Kids. Jim Flowers died at his home in Dallas in 2001 at age 87. I have received mention in the books and press because Jim said that I saved his life. The truth is that our Battalion Surgeon really was the one who kept Jim alive. You can read the doctor's report in his book, The Battalion Surgeon by Dr. William M. McConahey.

Normandy and the hedgerows were getting behind us. We had been to the west coast side to cut off the Germans from getting in or out, and now we were ready for some more open country. On July 24 we were in position, headed south-southwest. We were told to move back 1000 yards during the night for extra clearance. A maximum effort bombing raid, to clear an area one mile wide and ten miles long in front of us, was to start early July 25. The Third Army with General Patton was activated, and we were now in the Twentieth Corps commanded by General Walton Walker. Early morning July 25, the bombers came by the hundreds. Looking back to our rear they were lined up as far as we could see. This was referred to as "The St. Lo Raid". The 29th Division was on our left (east) flank, and in that area the first bombs were 5000 yards short resulting in many casualties. The 29th Division commander, General McNair, was one of those killed. The

raid lasted some five hours resulting in utter devastation in the bombed area. A Quartermaster outfit came with 2 ½ ton, 6 by 6 trucks (deuce and a halves-in GI lingo) and we loaded on for our first ride since leaving England.

The division, now under Gen. Patton, was divided into two Task Forces; Task Force Barth, which was the 357th Regiment, with a 712th Tank Platoon and commanded by Col. Barth our Regimental CO; Task Force Weaver, made up of the remainder of the 90th and commanded by Gen. Weaver, assistant 90th Div. CO. We led off toward Avaranches, somewhat southwest. Our orders were to avoid getting into a fight if possible, by by-passing Germans and just keep moving. We were to go south to around Avaranches, turn east toward Le Mans then north to the Sees area, hoping to make contact with the British, who were coming from the north, and then together trap the German Seventh Army.

As we moved down the road we had a tank, with a hedgerow clearing rake on the front, to push all the destroyed German vehicles, tanks, guns, wagons and dead horses out of the way. The Germans used lots of horse drawn equipment. After the second day and a few small skirmishes, we decided to put a scout vehicle out in front of our main force. I drew the assignment and brought up one of our G Co. Jeeps with Nick Dolan as the driver. The Jeep had a 50 Caliber machine gun on center mount and a 30 Caliber mounted on the right in front of the shotgun rider. The three volunteers were Nick, the driver; our Co. Supply Sergeant, Jake Parton, who loved the 50 Cal. Machine gun; and Jose Ortivez, who rode in the back with his BAR(Browning Automatic Rifle). I rode shotgun, and we went patrolling out in front looking for any German trouble. The objective was to determine their strength. If it was weak we would organize a quick fight, but if it required a big fight we would direct our main column to go around without delay, and leave the Germans for troops in the rear to clean up. This was the Third Army's tactic under Gen. Patton. There was a huge German force trapped in the Brest Peninsula, which a small U. S. force held there until peacefully taken as prisoners after VE Day in May.

During these days we learned to watch for "bed check Charlie". We gave the name to the small German plane that flew over about an hour after dark. Orders were to

stay concealed, but don't try to shoot him down, which would expose our position. As we moved along it was evident that the Germans were very disorganized. We left the trucks, had some small fights and headed into LeMans with a tank on the road with us. I was walking in the bar ditch to the right and some 15 feet in front of the tank. As we came over a rise he (the tanker) saw a German tank some 300 yards down the road. BLAM! BLAM! His 75 MM. fired in rapid succession. The muzzle blast knocked me flat and it was a while before I could hear. Not known to us the 79 th Division was headed for LeMans on a road about 400 yards to our right. When our tank fired, the 79 th thought it was Germans, and they started firing on us with machine guns. We returned some fire but then we decided they had to be friendly troops because our machine guns fired a lot slower than German's. Theirs go BURRP and ours go bang, bang, bang, a distinct difference. In England we were told yellow smoke signifies friendly troops. Luckily, I found one of our guys had a yellow smoke grenade. I crawled out and threw the grenade as far as possible. When the smoke came up, those guys fired faster. Rip had been on the radio, and finally through 20th Corps Hqtrs. we made contact with the 79 th. I went over to chew out somebody. I found the Battalion CO, Lt.Col. Olin E. Teague. We didn't get along very well. He threatened to court martial me, and I threatened to shoot him.

The next meeting with Lt. Col. Teague was at McCloskey Hospital in June 1945. He was A&M Class of '32. He ran for and was elected to Congress while we were both patients at Brooke General Hospital in 1946. His wound severed his foot, but they sewed it back on leaving him on crutches and wearing a 4 inch built up shoe. When he was in his 70's, he agreed to amputation. He told me he wished he'd had it done in 1945. He served many years in Congress and died at age 88. As far as I know there was never any news about this "friendly fire" incident. It was just part of the war.

We then started moving toward LeMans spread out on both sides of the road. When it got pitch dark we got everyone onto the road and silently walked into the town right down main street. After posting guards the rest of the Company laid down on the sidewalks on both sides of the street and slept until daylight. As we woke up, a few German soldiers started leisurely coming out of the buildings. Some of our troops would pick up a rifle and the Germans would throw up their hands with a startled look. We learned later that they thought we were paratroops who had jumped in during the night.

The French people had a big impromptu celebration for their liberation from the Germans. They got some of the women, who had fraternized with the Germans, then shaved their heads and paraded, then through the streets.

When our other troops arrived we gathered G Co. together and marched approximately five miles north where we went into a semi-rest position. This was our first break since July 25. The date was August 8 or 9. LeMans is where we turned north toward the Sees area. This is where we hoped to close the Falaise Gap trapping the German 7th Army.

Word came down that only part of the company could go into LeMans, but we had to leave one officer in the company. Rip, H. A. and I got a Jeep and driver to go into town leaving one of our newer officers in charge. We had some French food and champagne, but after about an hour this guy came rushing in to tell us to get back to our area, so we did. We found that the whole task force was scheduled to move out at 4:30 A. M. We walked 25 miles before getting into a bad fight that lasted until daylight the next day. We took some prisoners that we sent them back. Then we moved out toward Sees expecting to meet up with the British. They were supposed to be coming in from the north.

On August 14, we decided to reactivate the Jeep scouting patrol so Nick, Jake, Jose and I started patrolling one to two miles ahead of the company, which was moving by foot. We were easing along a somewhat sunken road when Jake opened fire with the 50 Cal. Because he was sitting up higher than us, he was first to see a German Bicycle Troop about 300 yards down the road. The troopers, who could, abandon the bicycles and ran into the brushy area to the right of the road and opened fire. Nick sped up, racing down the road, and somehow jumped that Jeep through the brush and into the field. All of us except Jake, jumped out, and took what cover we could find so that we could return fire. Jose with his BAR, Nick had a rifle, and I had my 45 caliber pistol. I should have stayed in the Jeep with the 30cal. We couldn't see the Germans, but Jake was keeping them down with the 50 cal. After eight or ten minutes the Germans started yelling "COMERAD". All firing stopped and Jake told me, in a low voice, "*We better take 'um prisoners, this thing is jammed.*" The gun got too hot and "key holed" which is a term

that means a shell casing melted and was stuck in the chamber. We gathered the Germans together. We had them get back onto their bicycles, and with our Jeep in front leading the way with Jake pointing the "key holed" 50 to the rear, we led them back to the company.

A United Press war correspondent, the only one I saw in my 5 months of combat, was there with our Company G. when we arrived with the Germans in tow. The "One Man Army" and other stories listing only three names, Jake Parton, Nick Doland and me were a result. Jose Ortivez was killed, but UP said they couldn't use his name. Rip recommended, and we all received Bronze Stars, with Jose's is awarded posthumously.

It was one of those many sad times, but we moved on north still looking for the British to close the gap. After three or four days moving on forward, we were looking down into Chambois Valley. There we went into a defensive rest mode. After two or three days we got orders to do whatever was necessary to make contact with the British.

With Nick and Jake (with a new 50cal) we took off down through the valley. At the lower area it was utter devastation. Tanks, trucks, artillery, wagons all literally blown up and burned with several German bodies strewn around among dead horses. Two horses were barely alive, one laying down kicking and the other standing with innards hanging out. Jake tended to horses in civilian life, and he mercifully shot the two, one shot each. I have seen many documentary pictures from the Felise Gap action, and one in particular, I'm sure, is exactly what we saw that day.

By the way, the date was August 21, Helen's and my FIRST ANNIVERSARY. Back when we were still at Chepstow, and learned we would be a part of D Day, I thought I might be busy on Aug. 21. So, I put a money order and a note to Helen in an envelope addressed to Temple Florist, Temple, Texas, USA telling them to deliver flowers on August 21, to Helen. That day, as we went on up the other side of the valley, I thought how good it was that I was still alive when Helen got the flowers.

In the woods on the north side of the valley we found some British in some farm buildings. A British soldier told me the officers were in the house. I went in to find them having tea. The CO, I think he was a major, told me they had no orders to move further

south or any intention of doing so. I thanked them for no help, and we raced back to the company reporting what we found; don't expect any help from the British.

Orders came for us to head for Paris after being relieved by the 80 th division. We started out, but the next day we were ordered to hold up because the French Second Armored Division which had been formed in England from French refugees before the invasion, was going to take Paris. This was apparently their first, only and last almost action they had in the war. The next day, here they came in new American Sherman tanks, French flags flying and standing up in the turrets wearing red berets. We heard later that they rolled in to Paris, abandoned the tanks and either went home or started partying. The few Germans still there were through with the war and just looking for someone to surrender to.

We got orders to cross the Seine south of Paris, then swing north to Reims. We made it to Reims with few problems, just walking a long way and no trucks for support. The French had a little celebration for us, we saw the cathedral, which had 25 foot tall sand bags all around the outside, and then moved on east. We saw no war damage in Reims. (On a trip to Oberammergau in 1980, with Milton and Dorothy Dare as tour guides, we made a short stop in Reims. That is my only revisit to 1944 locations.)

Our next encounter of any sizeable resistance was at Briey. We had a small fire fight then pushed on into part of the town late in the evening. Things quieted down as it got dark. The town had a stream through the middle. We were on the high side, about 50 or 60 feet higher than the other side. We decided to wait for daylight, if the Germans would let us, to decide our next move. We had taken a few prisoners, and they told us there were maybe 200 troops in the buildings on the other side of the stream. I noticed, in the dark, one of the prisoners appeared to be crying. On closer look I saw that he could not have been more than 17 years old. Our interpreter said, that he thought we were going to kill him. That's one reason we get POW"s back to rear areas and safety as soon as possible.

All was quiet throughout the night, and soon after daylight a white cloth was waved from a building on the other side just across the bridge. We waved back and a soldier and officer, along with an American POW, came out slowly walking across the

bridge to where we waited to meet them. They said their battalion CO wanted to negotiate a surrender agreement. We agreed to meet in the middle of the bridge unarmed, and sent the officer back with the message, keeping the German soldier and of course the G. I. Capt. Max Kocour, 2nd Battalion S3, was with our G Co. and when two German officers came out; Max and Rip went from our side and met them. I had our riflemen and machine gunners ready in case anything happened. One officer spoke English and was upset that they were both higher ranking than Capt. Kocour and wanted some special deals. Rip told them they would be treated as POW's, wounded would be cared for and all moved from the danger area in accordance with the Geneva Convention. They agreed and soon came marching in formation across the bridge, saluting and doing a formal surrender. We put guards with them and they just continued marching down the road to the rear. There were 500 plus in the group.

We got an order to check out a report that a huge cold storage plant, full of German Army meat, was located in Homecourt (French pronounced "amicour") about 12 miles SE of Briey. I got Nick with his Jeep and Henri, a French kid who had been with us since Sainte-Lo-d'Oourville, and we headed for Homecourt. We stopped to talk to an important looking man as we got into town. Henri and he talked maybe five or six minutes. Henri told me the man was the Mayor, and that he didn't know anything about a cold storage plant. I told Henri, "*Tell him he is going with us to look for the plant and if he is lying, he is in trouble"*. With that he remembered the plant and where it was located. It was a big two story building and we learned there was over 1,600,000 pounds, mostly beef sides, in the plant. We called the report in, waited about two hours, and when the Quartermaster trucks and personnel showed up, we went back to Briey. We hoped to get a steak out of the deal that night but no such luck.

When we got back to the company it was time to move on east to the Metz area. There were lots of skirmishes moving east, but around September 25, we were near the town of Maiziers-les-Metz, a small town with a steel factory. On orders we went into a semi-defensive, rest position. This is when the story was that Gen. Patton's 3rd Army ran out of gas. One of the divisions south of us had troops across the Moselle River at Metz, and was ordered to pull them back into defensive positions. We thought then, and I still think now, that the hold up was to let Montgomery's British catch up.

The slag created by the steel mill, apparently for many years, had made a huge oval shaped hill about 200 yards long, 75 yards wide and 100 feet high, the highest point around. Of course the Germans were using it to direct artillery and mortar fire. After several days F Company attacked the "slag pile" as we named it, and it is referred to as such in war stories. They started early morning, before daylight, on October 3, and by late afternoon had occupied about 75% of the pile and had taken many casualties. Just before dark our G co. was ordered to relieve F Co. We got up there just about dark and it got dark in a hurry. They were in bad shape, and left us with it as fast as possible, taking the wounded with them. We managed to kick the last Germans off, but before we could get organized the artillery and mortar fire came. For over two hours it came with no break. It was, and to this day still is, the worst, most helpless and terrifying experience of my life. Our artillery calculated that during one period there were over 100 guns (artillery) firing at our slag pile. Slag is like molten rock, and when cooled is big chunks of shale. The artillery shrapnel was bad, but the flying pieces of sharp flint like rock were terrible. There was no way to dig in. We got people to stay down between rocks or in any low place. I am still amazed that our casualties were not greater. We did get an extra medic up during the second hour. Suddenly, the shelling stopped and we knew that meant the counter attack was coming. We could hear the Germans yelling and getting fired up. We got people in position as much as possible. We had one heavy machine gun from H co. under Sgt. Morris. We told our people to keep their positions, stay down and when the attack starts, shoot anyone or anything standing up.

In our 60 mm mortar ammunition there is a shell that bursts high in the air and puts out a lighted flare on a parachute. I called the weapons platoon to see if they had any. They did and would be ready to fire on my order. When the first of the enemy came over the top, our troops opened fire, and about 30 seconds later the first flare lit up the area like daylight. It was brutal on the enemy, and those who could went back down. They made two more runs at us, but as it was getting daylight they retreated the last time. During the attacks the 60mm mortars kept the flares going, and the 81mm mortars were firing high explosive shells just over the edge of the pile onto the attacking Germans. The 81mm mortar folks told us their mortar tubes were ruined that night; they got too hot and warped. This was the end of a terrible night, and the only consolation was that we

still had the high ground. Another company took over, and we moved on into about half of the town. We held the half west of the railroad tracks, and the Germans were still holding the east side. We were in a holding mode for the next several days, just harassing each other, until relieved by a fresh unit. They took the rest of the town while we went north into a division reserve area to heal up, clean up, receive replacements and get ready to make the Moselle River crossing.

There is a range of huge hills, running north and south, east of the Moselle. This is where the French built the infamous Maginot Line after WWI so they would be forever protected from the Germans. The Germans just went around through Belgium and took France in a matter of weeks in 1940. Since then, the Germans had reconfigured the huge fortifications and the guns now pointed west, overlooking the Moselle river and beyond. The Moselle crossing was a massive operation involving at least three divisions, 90th, 5th, and 95th, on a broad front from Metz northward to past Koenigsmacker. For this action the French Government awarded the "Croix De Guerre, With Palm" to the entire 90th Division. I have the medal in a drawer, but have never displayed it. It is a beautiful medal and we may want to show it someday if France happens to do something nice for the USA.

Our Company crossed the river about 4 A. M. on November 9, using boats provided and manned by the 315th Engineers. The river was some 100 yards wide flowing very swiftly and as rivers in northern France do, flowing north. There was some scattered German mortar fire during the crossing, but we got out of it onto land and started moving south toward the town of Koenigsmacker. It was dreary, wet and cold but we were well dressed for that kind of weather. The second day, the November 10th, we managed to get some shelter in houses in town. We had to move out before daylight, attacking to the east to seize the first high ground. This was a forested area and we made our objective at the top just after dark. Expecting artillery fire, we started digging in for the night, but suddenly a bunch of Germans just came walking in among us. At Texas A & M University in Military Science and Tactics, we were taught that this was a "meeting engagement", where two opposing forces meet and both are totally surprised. In the total darkness it was a mad scramble for maybe 10 minutes. We took some prisoners and sent them back to the rear, but I think most of the Germans got away running in all directions.

Our F Company was to make a night attack across some 300 yards of open ground to wipe out German machine gun positions before daylight on Nov. 12. We received a call telling us they needed help. We moved around as fast as possible going through what was left of F Company, but by the time we got to the open ground it was getting daylight and German machine guns were ready. We decided if we could get to the wooded area on the other side we would be between the gun positions and could get around behind them. There were some spots a few inches low in the open area and we started across well scattered out running from spot to spot with our machine guns firing on the German gun positions. Everyone knew we had to keep moving to make a place for others coming along behind. At one point Rip dove in beside me. He had a back pack which stuck up, with him lying face down, and when the bullets started ripping the pack I knew were in a bad place. We should not have been together and I told him "*I'm going, you wait.*" I made it to the woods and with the men there, started up the hill to get behind the Germans. They had dug trenches, every 20 or 30 feet, and we moved a few at a time from trench to trench, until we were able to attack the machine gun position. We came charging in behind them firing and throwing a few hand grenades. One slipped off through the woods, but it seemed to be over and we sat down on the side of a trench trying to breathe.

I saw a German moving through the woods but when the man beside me said he didn't see him, I took his rifle and stood up to get a better view. As the man came out in a little opening getting ready to shoot at us, I shot him. At that instant I saw the machine gunner on the other side of the clearing, and I went face down, head back toward the rear. I knew I was hit pretty badly. The men were firing over and around me taking care of the German. I felt like my right arm was flailing around so I reached under me with the left hand to grab it, and it was just laying there.

When the firing stopped I rolled over and two men helped me up to sit back on the side of the trench while they went down, and finished off the last of the gun crew we were after in the first place. They called for the medic and I started back down the hill with a helper. About the time we met the medic I got fuzzy headed, sat down, and then laid down with a lot of pain. The medic pulled my clothes down from the neck and gave me a shot of morphine in the upper breast. The relief was almost instant. They picked

me up with a litter, took me to the bottom of the hill where there were other wounded men. I remember Rip saying they couldn't get us out for awhile because the Germans had gotten between us and our forces in the rear. I know they put sulfa powder in my wound and bandaged it to retard the bleeding. I think they had an IV giving me plasma. They must have kept the morphine coming because my memory was very foggy. Sgt. Clyde Brady was one of those wounded that day.

Late afternoon they strapped us on our litters to a Jeep and went racing back. Next stop was the Battalion Aid Station. I was wearing wool and fatigue pants, undershirt, wool shirt, fur lined jacket and fatigue jacket. Medics had opened my shirts and jackets only enough to put the sulfa powder in the wound and pack dressing in to stop the bleeding. At the aid station was this red headed happy kid, who had been our company medic when we landed. He was tending to me. He asked he could have my fur lined jacket and I told him, yes. He sat me up on the litter, as he started pulling the jacket off when the Battalion Surgeon yelled, "*Cut that off*". Of course he took his scissors and cut everything off above the waist and bandaged me up good.

I was taken by ambulance to another aid station right on the bank of the river. I was checked over and put on a boat, similar to the one we crossed on three days ago. It seemed like a long ride, it was dark and rainy, and I learned later the river was a mile wide due to the rain and the fact that the Germans had opened flood gates at a dam upriver. Next stop was the evacuation hospital (tents) where they took another quick look and sent me on to the field hospital which was still tents but with real surgical facilities. Sometime in the night I was taken to surgery, where there were eight to ten operating tables side by side down the length of this long tent with every table in use. They removed the temporary bandages from my shoulder. The doctor looked at the wound and felt around some, then he said "*Give him ether; he may have a lung injury*".

I woke up with a plaster cast from my waist to under my left arm, completely covering my right shoulder and arm all the way to the finger tips. The arm was raised to about a 45degree angle with a brace between the forearm and the body cast. Soon after I awoke, the doctor came to check on me. He was real pleased that I had feelings in the fingers and could move them. It was getting daylight so when I asked him if he was

going to get some sleep, but he said he was on his way back to surgery. A Chaplain came by, said a prayer and I asked him to write to Helen. She received his letter soon after she got the telegram from the War Department. Helen told me she and her parents were having breakfast when they heard the knock on the door about 7 AM. Helen said "there is my telegram".

Someone was constantly checking on me, and it seemed the primary concern was circulation and feeling in my fingers. I think it was back in the evacuation hospital when they started penicillin shots every three hours. Of course, they all went in to my left arm, the only open space. Penicillin was the new "wonder drug" and the shots burned, but the morphine eased that also.

Sometime the next day, November 14, they put four of us on a GI ambulance and took us to the 317th General Hospital located in a hospital building somewhere in Paris. The weather was still wet, dreary and cold. It was good to be in hospital bed. After checking my vitals the chief nurse, a Major, asked me when I last had a BM, and I said I don't remember. When she saw I still had my 2 pair of pants on and the cast was some 3 or 4 inches down over the belt, she said it had to be before they put this cast on. An orderly then cut off all my clothing around the bottom edge of the cast. Then he gave me a big dose of mineral oil.

I think it was after dark the next day when we were put on a train which took us to Cherbourg, where a boat then took us to the port of Bath in England. From there we went by ambulance to an Army General Hospital. This hospital was in Quonset huts near Bath. I think I got there probably just before daylight on November 16. I was still getting the penicillin every three hours, but the morphine stopped and I soon realized I wasn't as tough as I thought.

There were 20 beds, 10 down each side in our Quonset hut. Heat was from two Sibley coal fired stoves. Every morning at 5 AM a guy came with a bucket of coal, stoked the fires and cleaned out the ashes, being sure to make the most noise possible. We had good nurses and ward boys. The patients were Infantry (like me), Artillery, and both Fighter and Bomber Pilots, which led to some good natured needling. Someone would yell, "Looks like friendly troops below", and another yells "bombs away, lets go

home". I tried writing to Helen left handed but it was so very aggravating that I may have gotten two done with help.

They changed my cast in order to clean the wound and reduce some of the bad odor created by the sulfa powder being mixed with blood. With cast cutters, like big tree pruners, they started cutting up from the bottom on the left side, and had to cut not only the cast but the two pairs of pants and belts which were under the cast. After cutting the top half off of the arm and shoulder, the cast was pulled off. That was the most severe pain ever. I got some more morphine while a new cast was applied. Back in bed with the new, wet and cold cast they put a dome over me with 20 light bulbs on the under side to help warm me up and dry the cast. It took about 12 hours, but it worked. Thankfully I kept that same cast until I got to Modesto, Ca. about Jan. 15, 1945.

One day a Sergeant came in with several "Purple Hearts", handed them out by name, and mine was one of them. That's the way they were presented most of the time. When I got my new cast they put a big ZI on the chest. When I came back to the ward the guys yelled, "Lovett, you're going home". ZI was zone of interior, USA. It was a great feeling knowing that I was on my way home knowing my combat days were over.

On December 24, Christmas Eve, 1944, I was taken by ambulance to the Port of Bath and loaded on the USS Uruguay, a cruise ship converted to a hospital ship. There were six of us, officers, in the cabin with three upper and lower bunk beds. I was on a top bunk. The service and food was great. We had a pretty smooth ride with no one getting seasick. The medical staff was friendly and efficient. Two of the doctors even played in some of our poker games when they were not busy. Of course, going home like we were, it was a pretty happy ship.

None in our cabin were what you would call sick. We were all orthopedic, bone injury, patients. After dark on December 31, New Years Eve, the ship's PA announced that we were in sight of Boston Harbor. We would be docking during the night and would be taken off the ship the next morning. Boston was no longer blacked out and we could look out the port hole to see the lights in the distance. It was a great thrill and cause for a feeling of safety. Knowing that the "Battle Of The Bulge" had started on

December 16, and right now as we sailed into a safe harbor the worst part of the battle was going on in and around Bastogne, Belgium.

We docked before daylight and soon after breakfast (January 1, 1945) they took us off of the ship. We were put into ambulances taking us to the Station Hospital at Camp Edwards, MA. First priority was to call Helen. There was a pay telephone on a rolling stand, one per ward of 20 beds, and it could be rolled right up to each bed. The AT&T Co. gave one free call and I was lucky enough to get Helen on the first try. That was a great thrill to hear her voice. The last time we talked had been in March, before we left for England. I told Helen I had selected my preferences for Hospitals; No. 1-McCloskey, Temple; No. 2-William Beaumont, El Paso; No. 3-Fitzsimmons, Denver.

On January 3, I was told which and I called Helen. I was going to Hammond General Hospital, Modesto, CA. After a six or seven day hospital train ride I arrived in California. The first thing they did was no more morphine. It took a few days, but I did realize how easy it is to get hooked. I could walk and go to the officer's mess for meals with large pants and shirt kind of draped around the cast. Helen came as soon as she could. When she walked in she was just the ultimate in beauty, and I thought life is good and all the bad times in the past were over.

I had several surgeries. I went from the cast to a strap on brace and in June was sent to McCloskey Hospital in Temple, Texas. After I had several more surgeries, the hospital was scheduled to close and I was sent to Bushnell General Hospital in Brigham City, Utah. Helen, of course, went along. An infection in the wound, caused by pieces of clothing taken with the bullets, would not heal. The doctors said no more surgery, so in Utah I had penicillin; we went to winter ski meets and waited. When they told me this hospital would soon be closed, Helen and I came to Temple on leave.

While there we came to Brooke General Hospital, San Antonio, I met with Col. Thompson, who was Chief of Orthopedics. He had done surgeries on me at McCloskey, and he said he would like to finish the job. He gave me a note, which I took it to the admitting office and was immediately transferred to Brooke from Bushnell. We found a $50 per month apartment near the hospital. While still waiting for the infection to heal, I asked for and was assigned to duty, first as Admission Officer and later Officer Patients

Personnel Officer. In February 1947, Col. Thompson did the surgery to fuse my right shoulder joint, putting me back in the cast for 3 months. That was then followed by the brace which was followed by physical therapy.

The surgery was a success, the infection was gone and I was ready to become a civilian. I went before the disposition board, then the Army Retirement Board and on October 15, 1947. I was discharged from Brooke General Hospital (now Brooke Army Medical Center) and separated from the service with the rank of Captain, thus ending my military career.

SPECIFIC DATES FROM DIARY KEPT BY HELEN:

Feb. 10, 1940 First date with Claude (Double date with Francis and Wendell)

Jan. 15, 1943 A & M Senior Ring dance

Jan. 22, 1943 Claude graduated from A & M

Jan.30, 1943 Reported to Ft. Sill Ok. and promoted to Corporal

Feb. 6, 1943 Transferred to Ft. Benning, Ga.

Feb. 20, 1943 Entered Infantry Officers Candidate School

May 20, 1943 Graduated from OCS and commissioned 2nd Lt. Infantry and transferred To Infantry Officer Post Grad. School, Camp Walters, Mineral Wells, TX.

May 21, 1943 Claude called from Vicksburg, Miss.

May 23, 1943 Arrived in Temple from Ft. Benning

Aug. 2, 1943 Transferred to Camp Barkley assigned to G Co. 357th Reg., 90th Inf. Div.

Aug. 15, 1943 Went to Abilene with Claude

Aug. 21, 1943 Helen and Claude were married in Abilene by Rev R. L. Butler in First Methodist Church parsonage; H. A. Brotherton & Thomas Leatherwood as witnesses.

Sept. 2, 1943 90th Div. left Camp Barkley by troop train & arr. Camp Pilot Knob, Yuma, AZ. Sep. 8 then to Camp Granite (all night truck ride) Sep. 11, 1943.

Oct. 9, 1943 Left for Calif. – 2:30 AM train

Dec. 25, 1943 Kay Chicatelli, Darelyn Branae and I, in Kay's car, left for Trenton, N. J. and drove to Blythe.

Dec 26 Drove to Globe, AZ. Dec. 27 to Fabens TX.

Dec. 27, 1943 90th Div. left Needles, Ca. by troop train & arr. Ft. Dix N. J. Dec. 31, 1943

Dec. 28 to Cisco, TX: Dec. 29 to Monroe, La: .Dec. 30 to Tallbottom, GA: Dec. 31, to Vasa, NC: Jan. 1, 1944 Belair, MD: Jan. 2, 1944 arrived at Ft. Dix

Feb. 15, 1944 Officers regimental dance, Ft. Dix

Feb. 19, 1944 90th Div. Review (parade) at Ft. Dix

Feb. 24 1944 Luncheon for Officer's Wives

Mar. 12, 1944 Claude (total division) restricted to camp

Mar. 16, 1944 Moved by train to Camp Kilmer N. J., Port Of Embarkation

Mar. 19, 1944 Last time I saw Claude till '45.

Mar. 21, 1944 Claude boarded the "HMS Dominion Monarch" as advanced party

Mar. 23, 1944 Sailed out of N. Y. Harbor

April 3, 1944 Landed in Liverpool, Eng. And moved by truck to Camp Kinlet

May 15, 1944 Moved by truck to Marshalling Area, at Chepstow Race Course in Wales

June 3, 1944 Boarded the USS Explorer (liberty ship) in Cardiff

June 8, 1944 Boarded landing craft and waded ashore on Utah Beach about 2:30 PM.

July 12, 1944 Claude promoted to 1st Lt. and awarded Silver Star

Aug. 14, 1944 Claude awarded "Bronze Star"

Nov. 12 1944 Wounded in action near Koenigsmacher, France in Moselle River crossing and arrived at the 106th Evacuation hospital.

Nov. 14, 1944 Moved by GI ambulance to 7th Field Hospital near Etain, France

Nov. 16, 1944 Moved by GI ambulance to 217 th General Hospital, Paris, France

Nov. 19, 1944 Left by hospital train for Cherbourg

Nov. 21, 1944 By hospital ship to South Hampton and by GI ambulance to the 106th General Hospital near Bath, Eng.

Dec. 23, 1944 Boarded the hospital ship, "USS Uruguay" at South Hampton for USA

Jan. 3, 1945 Docked in Boston, Mass. harbor

Jan. 4, 1945 Arrived at Camp Edwards, Mass. Station Hospital. Claude wired he had arrived.

Jan. 5, 1945 Claude called—going to hospital at Modesto, Ca.

Jan. 10, 1945 Boarded hospital train for Hammond General Hospital, Modesto, Ca

Jan. 14, 1945 Arrived at Hammond General Hospital

Jan. 24, 1945 I arrived in Modesto and saw Claude at the hospital

Jun. 15, 1945 Claude presented the Bronze Star, Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster to the Silver Star and the Distinguished Service Cross by CO Col. Paust at military parade

June 20, 1945 Claude on Hammond's radio program

Aug. 1, 1945 Left Modesto for Temple. Claude transferred to McCloskey Gen. Hosp.

Aug. 25, 1945 Claude on McCloskey's radio program

Aug. 21, 1946 Claude promoted to Captain

Sep. 23, 1946 Claude's fusion operation. (Right shoulder joint fused by Col. Thompson)

Oct. 15, 1947 Claude retired.