

Leonard
M.
Diana

720 Briarwood Blvd.
Arlington, TX 76013-1501
November 26, 1999

Mr. Lucas C. Martin
75 Saly Way East
Selbyville, DE 19975

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Dear Mr. Martin:

My recollection is that Co. A, 410th Infantry, attacked Schillersdorf on my birthday, January 26, 1945.

We had been in Jüggweiler the night before, cozy and comfortable.

We emerged from a wooded area into what seemed like a huge field covered with snow at the extremity of which lay Schillersdorf a town I'd never forget. We trudged through the snow, from time to time running forward.

The Krauts were being far from hospitable. A BAR man had blood on his chest, and he left for the rear. I remember Charlie Reynolds of 4th Paso, but I don't remember whether he had been hit. Fred Upcraft and I had crossed

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the expanse of snow unscathed.

There was a Kraut soldier lying by the side of the road. There was a bitter fight for a few houses at the edge of town which we captured with the aid of Col. Robinson and some tanks one of which was inactivated by a German bazooka. A few Krauts surrendered in giving up these houses and, as they were being conducted to the rear, their comrade who had been lying at the side of the road jumped up with alacrity to join them.

There was no progress beyond these few houses, and at dusk they became our "perimeter of defense," convenient because we could take turns entering them during the night to get warm during short periods of relief from our night-long guard duty.

Before dawn I made my way to a barn behind my "guard house" and squatted to answer a call of nature. I was joined by Capt. Lewis (Louis?) of D Co, who soon admitted that, like

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me, he often had this urge just before an attack.

Since 60 mm mortars wouldn't be much use in clearing houses, I carried a light machine gun January 27 as we cleared the remainder of Schillersdorf. It turned out that there wasn't much clearing to do. The Krauts had pulled out during the night.

To celebrate we were given a rare warm meal and mail call. I received a birthday card from my parents. Grateful was I to be able to read it.

As the holiday approach, I am reminded that we spent the holiday period of '44-'45 in the Saar region.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you.

Sincerely,

Len Diana



LEONARD M. DIANA
720 BRIARWOOD BLVD
ARLINGTON TX 76013-1501

720 Brairwood Blvd.
Arlington, TX 76013-1501
January 12, 2000

Dear Lucas,

I know you're working very hard on your 103rd Division project, and I admire you for making the effort. I continue with the war stories.

It was probably between Christmas, 1944, and New Year's Day, 1945, that Co A, 410th Infantry took up positions in a coal mining region, probably part of the Saar of coal mining fame. We covered a wide sector of the front line, because many American troops had been sent to the Bulge. The earth was covered with snow; there was no cover, little concealment available.

We were ex-ASTP ex Air Cadets and replacements ^{and some who had just graduated our arrival to Camp Howze.} Bill Phythyon had been an Air Cadet, an inventive one. He covered our platoon's section of the front with a thin metal wire to which he connected tin cans containing pebbles.

One night, when I was guarding a portion of the front line, a report came that Kraut patrols were active in the area. After a couple of hours in the morning I heard those tin cans

emitting rattling noises, and I swiftly ran to the house where my off-duty friends were keeping warm and announced ominously that Phyllygon's traps had been activated.

All rushed out to meet the challenge; Bill ran toward the wire, then slid to the prone position as he neared it. Pretty soon we heard the "enemy": M E O W W W!

A few days later, when we were in the same position, we learned by phone that we should send a man to company headquarters immediately. Again we had word that German patrols were out that night. Headquarters was in town some distance away and no one wanted to go.

Finally, I volunteered. Key West, one of the 614 TD troops with us, declared he would not let me take that trek alone. After a time Key West took his carbine off his right shoulder, transferred it to his left shoulder with the muzzle pointing behind us and fired. He explained that he heard a noise behind us and thought he had better fire, just in case.

It has saddened me all these years that Bill Phyllygon was killed by mortar fire in

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The Haganew Forest on January 16, 1945.

One best to you and your efforts, Lucas.

Sincerely,
Len Drain