

The Day Robert Higbee Died

By John Landolfi, Company I

We used to take turns to go back to the house to cook ourselves meals from our rations, and go back two or three men at a time. When it was my turn, Higbee and I went back to the house and went upstairs to the second floor. We could see a good view of the field to where we were dug in. I had received a package from home, from my mom, which contained a can of Spam.

Just as I stooped over to light the squad stove, a mortar shell hit into the sill and window. We didn't hear a thing! When I came to, [I don't remember how long I was out], I saw Higbee with a hole in his back. I took my sulfa pack and spread it on the wound. I lifted him on my back and carried him downstairs to the cellar and laid him on a bed of potatoes and ran out under heavy fire to find the medics, not realizing that I was wounded also. I returned with George Jackson and a medical team.

They put him on a stretcher and carried him away. The medical LT treated me there and that was when the sergeant came to get me and tell me our mortars were knocked out and [he] needed me. The LT didn't want me to leave because of my concussion and wounds. The Lt remarked that I was a crazy and brave kid to return to the front. The SGT and I ran back to the fields and we each took a gun and just fired our mortars to help repel the Germans. I never knew [until later] that Higbee had died within an hour.