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Postscript : Notes of Lt. John B. Neely, written in 1944

## COMBAT

103rd Infantry Division  
410th Infantry Regiment  
Company I

Company Commander	Capt. Charles [H.] Thompson
Executive Officer	1st Lt. Edward [G.] Murphy
1st Platoon Leader	T/Sgt. John Metcalf
2nd Platoon Leader	2nd Lt. [Donald E.] Paulson
3rd Platoon Leader	2nd Lt. John [P.] Neely
4th Platoon Leader	1st Lt. [Joseph L.] Keough

### Third Platoon

Platoon Leader	2nd Lt. John [B.] Neely
Platoon Sgt.	T/Sgt. [Ottis W.] Jacobs
Platoon Guide	S/Sgt. [Thomas C.] Stigall
Platoon Runner	PFC [Val A.] Loper
1st Squad Leader	S/Sgt. [Gerald W.] O'Connell
Asst.	Sgt. [Joseph] LeBeau
2nd Squad Leader	S/Sgt. [Carl] Minnear
Asst.	Sgt. [Eugene T.] Dombroski
3rd Squad Leader	Sgt. [Arnold T.] Marzullo
Asst.	PFC [John A.] Johancen

11 November 1944  
Vosges Mountains, France

We climbed down the ship in landing nets into landing craft, and went ashore in complete darkness. We then boarded trucks and took off to somewhere with full battle gear and our guns loaded. This was the beginning of never knowing where we were or where we were going. We drove for several hours up into the Vosges Mountains and began to hear artillery fire. Then we left the trucks and continued on foot, single file up the mountain side in complete darkness.

Soon, Company I met Capt. Thompson and Sgt. Stigall who are to lead us to our position on the front lines. I find that my position is to relieve an entire company. It is Company F of the [30th Infantry Regiment.] Sgt. Stigall and a Sgt. from Company F lead my platoon up in the darkness.

We leave the small road and continue up the mountain. We are going single file, each man holding onto the rifle of the man in front of him. In the darkness, we have no idea where we are or where the enemy is. Our column breaks many times in the darkness and we waste a lot of time regaining contact.

11 Nov. 1944 (Cont.)

We are also making a lot of noise which the Germans must hear. Some artillery goes over our heads, our first experience, and we don't know if it is ours or theirs. So we hit the ground every time a shell goes over. The guides have lost their way in the darkness, and we are having a tough time. I don't know where we are, and everybody is getting short-tempered. Finally we hit a road and come to a house that is F Company's command post.

Stigall and I go in and there is the captain of F Company and his platoon leaders and sergeants. He sends one man from each of his platoons to guide my squads to our area. He has only 34 men and two officers, counting himself, left in his company. I figure he must have had about 70% casualties. Something for me to look forward to. (In a few weeks our rate will be higher than that, but we do get replacements.)

The captain orients me somewhat, but I am still plenty confused. I am surprised to learn that this house is out in front of our own lines and in plain view of the enemy. I ask the captain if there isn't danger of the enemy shelling it, and he says there is, but he was willing to take that risk to have a few comforts of living in a house instead of a foxhole, so I decided to stay there also.

The captain and most of his men have had cases of trench foot and can hardly walk. They, also, have plenty of German equipment, field glasses, pistols, etc. We have a telephone to the company command post, but I have no idea where it is. Before the captain and his company pull out, he gives me some battle tips, and then leaves.

I sure feel low tonight. My squad leaders report that they are in position. I don't know what is on my flanks. I finally get Capt. Thompson at the C.P., and he gives me the coordinates of a point on the map where Colonel [Harold H.] May wants a patrol sent to look around. It's absolutely dark outside, and it's impossible to see a foot in front of you, but it's an order!

I tell Sgt. Stigall he has to go, and feel like a murderer sending him out. He comes back in about an hour and reports he saw nothing which I can well believe. I call Capt. Thompson and tell him. It is now about 2400 [hours] and Lt. Paulson

finally gets on the phone and makes contact with Capt Thompson. It helps some to be able to talk to him. Sgt. [Ottis W.] Jacobs, PFC [Val A.] Loper, Sgt. [Thomas C.] Stigall and I go to sleep for the night. It was a long day. Later I find out that there is a Frenchman and his wife sleeping downstairs in the cellar.

12 November, 1944

I slept through the night all right on a straw pile on the floor. We kept one man on the phone all night. The Frenchman and his wife come upstairs and seem very friendly. They built a fire and cooked us some potatoes. We find that in part of the house they keep a cow, chickens, dogs and rabbits. The house is really filthy like most French houses. The front window of the house overlooks a valley where the town of LA CHALET, about 300 population, lies and on the other side of the valley is a small creek and the mountains start again, where the Germans are.

Our house is in full view of them and sure looks like a dangerous place to stay. I don't understand why their artillery hasn't blown up the house yet. We can't decide whether to stay here or go back in the hill behind the house where my platoon is dug in. To get out of the house and get back to the hill where the platoon is, you have to run about 30 yards over open ground before you hit the woods. The captain whom I relieved said a sniper got one of his lieutenants who didn't run fast enough; so we really 'put out' when we leave the house.

[Sgt. Thomas C.] Stigall and I go up to look for the troops. The platoon covers a front of about 400 yards. Directly in the rear of the house is [Sgt. Arnold T.] Marzullo's squad and on [Sgt. Carl] Minnear's right is [Sgt. Gerald W.] O'Donnell's squad. We walk around and see all the boys who are in pretty good spirits.

There is all kind of equipment lying around, both German and American. We are pretty careful about picking up things because of booby traps. Our platoon is directly in the center of the Division area and we overlook the town and have a beautiful view of the enemy's hills. They have a similar view of ours. One platoon of Capt. [Clifton H.] Whipps' Company M is in position down in the town; really a hot spot.

John P. Neely

About 400 yards to our left is [Lt. Donald E.] Paulson's platoon. I don't like the big gap. I have a section of heavy machine guns on each flank. Our mortars are back in the company C.P. Our light machine guns are with Lt. Paulson. On the right of my platoon is the 411th regiment. We have made contact with them. [Sgt.] Stigall and I have taken over one of the foxholes in [Sgt.] Marzullo's area behind the house, so that we will have a place to go if artillery comes in on us.

The trees are plenty scarred by enemy artillery bursts, and all of the foxholes that the 30th Regiment men left us have heavy log roofs on them to protect from tree bursts. About 1000 hours, the Germans sent in a concentration of artillery right on top of us. [Sgt.] Stigall and I really hug the bottom of the foxhole. It sure is a good feeling to be in the bottom of a foxhole at a time like this.

We soon learn not to do any unnecessary moving around because the artillery always comes in. Later we find out that PFC Richard B. Lloyd of the 4th platoon was killed in the shelling. In the afternoon, Stigall and I go over to [Lt.] Paulson's 2nd platoon to see him. In his area are a bunch of dead Germans all frozen, as well as one G. I. They must have had a fight before we took over.

Later in the day we got another concentration, but we are all in the house and go down in the cellar. I don't feel as safe in the house as I did in the foxhole. I still don't understand why the Germans don't shell the house. At 1600 hours Stigall gets a detail to go back to the C.P. for rations. The Germans must have seen them for they send over some shells, but the detail makes it O.K. We decide to sleep in the house again tonight in spite of the danger because of the cold weather outside.

13 November, 1944

They really shelled our area and Paulson's during the night. We had to get up once during the night and go down in the cellar with the Frenchman and his wife, when the shells were hitting close to the house. We picked up an extra telephone today, and ran a line from the house observation post to [Sgt.] Marzullo's C.P., so that we can have better communication with the platoon from the house. A Lt. from our supporting artillery and his radio

man came in today to set up their O.P. They have a good field artillery radio and good maps. Sgt. [Donald] Calfee and one of his men also came down here to set up an O.P. for their mortars. It's really getting crowded in the house now and more dangerous. Every time someone runs from the house, the German observers drop a few shells near the house. I expect them to put one right on top of us soon. If it weren't for the comfort of living in a house, I would move back into the foxhole.

When I go back to look at the platoon, I discover that they have found two Browning Automatic Rifles to add to our complement which will come in handy. We fire them to see how they work, and the company C.P. calls down and wants to know if there is an attack. Sgt. [Eugene T.] Dombrowski is sick today so we send him back to the aid station. They say he has appendicitis and that is the last I see of him.

We get a lot of enemy artillery on our position today, and the company C.P. calls down to see if we have any casualties. The company C.P. is back only about 300 yards, but they receive very little artillery. I begin to see where only a few yards make a lot of difference in how rough it is. The house is more crowded tonight but we all find a place to sleep in the straw on the floor. There is a nice bed in the house, but we are afraid the Germans who were here before us may have left booby traps in it. We get the usual amount of artillery during the night.

14 November, 1944

Today when I went to check on the men, I brought Cpl. [Walter F.] Schneider as runner in addition to [PFC] Loper and to be a general handyman for anything that comes up. Lt. [Joseph I.] Keough, Lt. [Edward G.] Murphy, and [1st] Sgt. [Audrey R.] Walters came down to the house this afternoon to visit and look around. The usual amount of artillery is coming in and this being the first time that these three have been this close and under fire, they jump each time a shell hits close, while we battle-hardened veterans of four days just laugh and ignore the shelling. One hits about 100 yards away from the house, and [Lt.] Murphy takes off for the cellar while we all laugh at him.

14 Nov, 1944 (Cont.)

About 5 minutes later, a shell hits right outside and blows the remaining glass windows in on us, so we all decide it's time to go to the cellar. We take a telephone down with us so that we can talk to [Sgt.] Marzullo up on the hill. For about 30 minutes, the Germans really give us a shelling, and we really sweat it out. One shell clips off a corner of the house. The shells hit up in our platoon area and on all sides of the house. I swear that I'll never stay in the house again. [Sgt.] Marzullo and I talk and joke to each other on the phone during the barrage, and he asks if he can have a furlough, and I tell him he will have to come down to the house to have me sign the papers. He says, "No thanks !"

As soon as the barrage ceases, [Lts.] Keough and Murphy and [Sgt.] Walters go back to the company C.P. and don't visit anymore. Then our own artillery comes over going the other way, and the Germans catch it for a while. It's a good feeling to know what they are getting. In a few hours, we forget about the shelling and decide to stay in the house again tonight.

The Frenchman cooks us the usual potatoes for supper, but we are getting tired of them, and of our K rations also. There is a big glow in the sky of a fire off to our left through the hills, and they say it is the Germans burning the town of ST. DIE which is supposed to be one of our objectives.

14 November, 1944

I wrote a letter home today and didn't do much of anything else. During one of our daily German artillery barrages, a shell hits outside the backdoor which is open and a small piece of shrapnel came in and hit Sgt. Jacobs in the leg. Nothing serious, it just drew a little blood. We all want 'Jake' to get the Purple Heart but he doesn't want it for something so small. [PFC John] Johancen has been sick for the last few days, so we send him back to the aid station. Sure hate to lose him, he is a good soldier. [There are] the usual artillery duels which we watch from the front window of the house. Tonight, the ST.DIE fire is still going and makes a big glow on our left.

15 November, 1944

Sgt. Stigall and I go out and look at the men. We go up to [Sgt.] Marzullo's foxholes and talk to him. The artillery is coming in every once in a while. Marzullo and Stigall take off to go down and see [Sgt.] O'Connell. In about five minutes, Marzullo comes running back to tell me that Stigall got hit from shrapnel from a tree burst. He is not hurt badly but they took him to the aid station. That is the last I see of Stigall, and I sure hate to lose him. He is one of the best men I had.

I have the G.I.s (dysentery) pretty bad today and don't feel any too good. I guess it is from the French food and water down at the house.

Two Germans came over into [Lt.] Paulson's area today and surrendered, and tell us that there are plenty other men who wish to surrender, but that their officers won't let them. We are not doing anything much, just staying in our holes and keeping our weapons clean. I guess we will make an attack soon. All of the companies should be pretty well organized by now. The attack will be a rough one with the big open valley to cross.

We had a pretty good barrage this afternoon and [PFC Frank] Postupak in [Lt.] Paulson's platoon was killed. Tonight the fire in ST. DIE is still going strong. When we do take the town, there won't be much left.

16 November, 1944

This morning the news finally came. The attack will be tomorrow. I thought that since we had been sitting here for several days, and we were used to the artillery, and knew the ground pretty well, that the 410th [Infantry] would lead the attack. However, it is to be the 411th on our right and the 409th passing through us, who will make the attack. Tomorrow morning there will be a big artillery barrage by us at 0845 and lasting to 0915 after which the attack will jump off.

All of us are quite relieved that we don't have to make the attack. After the attack we are supposed to go back to a rest area. If the 411th is held up, I guess we will be committed, so I make up plans for us to attack and give them to my squad leaders. I hope we don't have to use them however.

16 Nov., 1944 (Cont.)

Sgt. Walters called up and wants me to zero in our mortars on a coordinate he gives me on the map. After about an hour, I get them zeroed in. It takes a long time because there is a lot of other fire out in the valley, and we don't know which burst is ours. We fire smoke shells for identification, but so does someone else, and that confuses us more. So we have to fire two mortars at the same time so that we can identify our bursts. Finally we get the mortars on the spot, a road junction. In case of a counter-attack tomorrow, we can set up a quick concentration. We all get to be excited with thoughts of the coming attack.

17 November, 1944

We get up early this morning to be ready for the attack. Calfee, Jake, and the artillery forward-observer are going to stay in the house while I am going to be back with the phone by Marzullo's foxhole. We have instructions to give any small-arms supporting fire that is necessary for the advance of the 411th. The men of the 411th are now mixed with us and are waiting the order to attack. They sure look unhappy and I don't blame them!

At 0845 the barrage starts, and I have a perfect view of it. It is really something! It is bigger than anything I have ever seen in training. 8 inch, 240 mm's, everything is going over. At 0945 the barrage stops, and the 411th starts its attack through the open valley. We are having a good time firing all of our ammunition over their heads into the far hill where the enemy is.

We now hear the rapid cyclic rate of German guns as they fire on the men advancing. A German mortar shell lands right on a leading scout of one of the platoons down in the valley. Germans have machine guns set up in some of the houses in the village, and are giving the 411th some trouble. The valley is now filled with men of the 411th, with the exception of some of the men of Company E, 411th, who are held up by machine gun fire and are suffering heavy casualties. The men are scared to death of artillery fire which we are used to. The 409th Infantry on our right has gotten across their part of the valley and into the hills.

Part of Company E has been trapped in the creek on the far side of the valley, and the rest of the company has returned back to our side of the valley. Their captain is missing and the 1st Sergeant has taken over. It is really messy.

Things have become more quiet, and I go down into the house. The artillery forward-observer is trying to adjust his guns on a house where a German machine gun is, but can't get a direct hit. The shells hit on all sides, and cracks the walls, but the house still stands.

Part of Company E is still up in our area, so I guess we won't leave tonight. The medics are bringing back plenty of wounded, and leave some of them in our house for awhile. We sleep in the house tonight. I am plenty weak from this dysentery, and don't feel very good.

18 November, 1944

We get up early this morning to continue the attack. The remainder of Company E, [411th] is still up in our area. They again attempt to cross the valley, and there is no fire from the enemy position. The Germans evidently withdrew during the night. Company E gets to the far hills O.K., and we begin rolling our packs getting ready to move back. I call Capt. Thompson, but he doesn't know yet when we will withdraw.

Col. [Donovan P. Yeuell], C.O. of the 411th, comes down to the house to observe the results of the attack. Brig. Gen. [John T.] Pierce calls him to find out how things went, and to say that he will be down to the house soon. Gen. Pierce and his staff arrive in about half an hour, and come down to the house to look things over. They soon leave and Capt. Thompson calls and tells me to bring the platoon back to the C.P.

We go back and drop our packs which will be brought to the rear by our jeeps. We start out of the mountains back to our rest area. It is a really tough climb up. The snow is melting, mud is everywhere. Our shoe packs sure are no good for marching. We have to stop about every half hour to rest because of the steep climb.

18 Nov., 1944 (Cont.)

My dysentery is really giving me trouble, and I am very weak. Finally about 1600 [hours], we get to the rest area which is a mud hole on the side of a hill. Sgt. [Slamenski], the mess Sgt. is there with the kitchen, and Cpl. [Albert L.] Sherwood, the mail orderly, with a bunch of packages. I get a couple of packages and letters from home and also a small pocket stove and some heat tablets. We have a pretty good meal and I go sleep in the hospital tent, worn out by my G.I.s. I am not the only one who has them and most of us are up all through the night with them.

19 November, 1944

I really spent a rough night; up every half hour or so with the G.I.s. Today we get issued dry, clean clothes and new sleeping bags. We have turkey for dinner, and it is pretty good. The word comes down that we will be prepared to move out in an attack and river-crossing by 0400 tomorrow morning. We are all disappointed since we thought we would be here for three or four days at least.

About supper time, three-fourths of the men are sick with food poisoning from the turkey we had for dinner. This makes my dysentery much worse, and I am really sick along with almost everyone else. We go to bed, and try to get some sleep before we move out.

20 November, 1944

We finally move out by truck this morning at 1000. Most of the men are still pretty sick from the turkey we had yesterday. All we know is that we are going to ride for about 10 miles, and then go to an assembly area to prepare for a river crossing or an attack of some sort. We ride over rough cord roads and finally get to our detrucking area to march a short distance to a bivouac area where we eat and dig in. It starts to rain and we are wet and cold and muddy and sick. Everyone is feeling very low.

The Capt. is called to the C.O.'s meeting and soon returns and gives us the dope. We are to cross the [Muerthe] River, and from then on, no one knows anything. We put on our packs and

begin the approach march. It is still raining and the ground is very muddy. We march through ground that is full of shell holes. Finally, when are ready to drop, we go up a hill into a woods and bivouac and await further orders.

We eat our rations and dig in. The ground is very wet, and all of our foxholes fill up with water. It is getting dark and raining hard. We hear the river is flooded and the bridges are washed out, so we will have to wait until morning to cross. It sure is a terrible night--cold and wet and we are expecting enemy fire at any time.

21 November, 1944

At about 0700, we start off for the river. [See map before page 15.] It is still raining and cold. We march on foot for a short distance, and find that the engineers do not have the bridge up yet. Lt.Col. [Harold H.] May, Bn. C.O., goes to a town on the edge of the river to regimental H.Q. to a meeting and takes me with him. I wait downstairs in a house for about two hours while the meeting is going on. I get a chance to dry out some of my clothes, heat my K rations and get a little warm and feel much better.

When the meeting is over, we go back to the battalion, and I go to my company. The Col. tells the company commanders that while the bridge is being built, our battalion will carry ammunition from the supply point to the edge of the river. We all make a few trips back to carry the ammunition up. The trail is muddy and very slippery and much of the ammo is dropped on the ground.

The bridge is finally fixed, and the 411th crosses first. As soon as they get across, we follow. The ground all around is very soggy, and we sink in. After we get across the bridge, we continue on not knowing where we are.

We come to a German defense area where they had pill-boxes and barbed-wire. The Germans had already been knocked out, and the dead ones are all lying about. We march up a steep hill and everyone is pretty tired out. We now go through a mine field, and the engineers are blowing up the mines. I have to hit the ground right in a big mud hole when one of the mines goes off near me.

John P. Neely

We continue on up a very steep mountain, and it is really a tough climb, but almost everyone makes it. I am really tired. We finally get to the top of the mountain where there is a park. The Germans have been here and left a wonderful underground command post, all reinforced by logs. We have lost contact with Battalion and the other companies, and, of course, our radio is out. We finally get wire strung back down the hill and contact Battalion. They tell us to stay here for the night.

The supply jeep can't get up the hill, so we will not get any rations. We have had nothing to eat since yesterday, and I am really hungry. Lt. Keough has one box of K ration supper, and he shares it with me. I get my platoon placed O.K., and it's raining again. I sleep in the log C.P. and at least keep dry. It is a terrible night again. We find out from Bn. that Lt. [Judson E.] Baldus has been relieved as Bn. S-2, and Lt. [Peter R.] Shamboro has taken his place.

22 November, 1944

We get up early as usual and start down the other side of the mountain. After we reach the other side, we march across the fields for about two miles, and then enter a town which we learn is ST. DIE. It sure is beat up and still burning some. A big bridge across the river has been blown, and we see the turret of a U.S. tank sticking out of the water of the river.

As we are marching along each side of the road, a jeep comes down the road from the opposite direction, and a friend of mine from Ft. Benning days is sitting on one of the front fenders. I am too tired to even wave to him or shout at him, even though I want to.

We continue to march outside of town, and see the elaborate trenches and barbed wire that the Germans have set up. We go on past these for about five miles, and finally reach a bivouac area as it is getting dark. We all go to sleep without digging foxholes since we are so tired.

23 November, 1944

About 0500, one of the boys from Co. Headquarters, wakes me up and says there is a meeting at Co. C.P. right away, so I crawl out. The Capt. says we are going into the attack at 0600, so we

wake up all the guys, and we make our rolls and move out. As we move on to the road, we drop our rolls and pick up extra ammunition from the jeep. We march on a road for about four miles and the Capt. points out an assembly area for my platoon.

It is still raining, and this is the second day we have gone without food. I leave the platoon and go to the Co. C.P. for an orientation of the next move. The Capt. says we are not in the place where we are supposed to be, and that we will move to the correct position when it gets a little lighter. I go back to the platoon to await for the movement order.

As it begins to get light, we see that we are in a small cabbage patch, and it doesn't take us long to find and eat all of the cabbages, mud and all. We get the order to move, and go a few hundred yards down hill into another area and we wait again. We all sit around in the rain, and are low in spirits.

Finally someone builds a fire to heat some water to drink, and before long there are quite a few fires going and a good deal of smoke from them. Keough, Paulson and I are standing together by a creek bed talking when the first mortar shell comes in--very close. We all jump into the creek bank and begin digging in. Another shell hits very near us. Paulson doesn't have his shovel with him, so he digs his hole with his spoon, and does a very good job too.

A third shell hits no more than 25 yards from us and to our right, and we are really sweating. We continue to dig into the bank of the creek. This was the last shell and only one man [PFC Henry Galasso] from the 4th platoon was hit. (I see him later as he is passing through the 215th Replacement Center.) All of us put the fires out now, and we continue digging foxholes.

A runner comes down from the Capt. and tells us to be ready to move out in 10 minutes. We go back to the cabbage patch where we were earlier in the morning and wait some more. Five of our tanks go up a nearby road. The Capt. tells us we are going to cross an open field under enemy observation and artillery fire. We take off at 20-yard intervals between men and cross a field of

Combat

about 1000 yards. We continue on to the next mountain and up a road. As usual no one knows where we are going. An artillery shell comes in close to us, and I dive for a pile of logs, and make myself a little house to take cover in. Just like I used to do when I played with Lincoln Logs.

We continue on off the road and finally stop. The Capt. tells us he does not know where we are, and we are going to establish a defense for the night. Our company radio is out as usual, but we have the Forward Observer's radio, and the Capt. gets Col. May who tells us to wait until morning before moving.

24 November, 1944

About 0200, there is a commotion in Paulson's area, and 8 Germans are captured. They are a combat patrol and equipped with 'Burp' guns and plenty of ammunition. We relieved them of everything of value. We go to sleep with our security out and on the alert.

About 0700, we are off again, and go back down the road along the side of the mountain that we came up yesterday. We approach the outskirts of a small town and wait on each side of the road for further orders.

A shell goes overhead and hits somewhere nearby, but we don't pay much attention to it. The next minute, as I am picking an apple from a tree, an 88 shell comes in like a freight train and explodes right by us. No more shells come in, and we come out and see a big hole in the field about 30 yards directly opposite my platoon's position.

A boy about 200 yards down the road in the 4th platoon was hit by a piece of shrapnel, but no one else was scratched. Finally we got our rations and a big box of turkey sandwiches. We eat these and then down the road again. Before we leave, [PFC Wesley G.] Halle goes to the rear with a bad stomach. (I see him next at the 2nd Replacement Depot at Thaon in January, 1945.) We bivouac for the night somewhere and dig in.

25 November, 1944

We start off for an attack on a village about 0800 today. We are supposed to clean out everything within certain boundaries between us and this

village we are to take. The woods and brush are very thick, and we go forward two squads abreast in a skirmish line. We lose our direction and it takes us about two hours to reorganize and continue on.

Finally we come into sight of the village, and we are all so tired and hungry and cold that we are happy to attack in order to have a place to sleep and get warm. However, the Capt. says this is not the village, so we go around it. We continue single file along a trail, and as we come near a home, Sgt. LeBeau goes to the head of the column to act as an interpreter.

We get to the house and search it, but the French tell us that the Germans left about two hours ago. We continue on and come to another house. The French people come out and look at us suspiciously. We tell them that we are Americans, and they jump around and shout and cry. They have been under German occupation for almost five years. They pass along our columns with wine and fruit, and are very glad to see us. They tell us that the Germans have just left their house.

We continue on up the trail to the next house where they bring out bread, butter, apples, and *schnapps*. We stop while the Capt. tells that the town we are to take is just over the next hill. My platoon is to lead the attack, and we start off. We enter the edge of the town, and encounter no resistance. We can see people peeping at us from behind their curtains. We go to a house, and tell them we are Americans and ask where the Germans are. Again they are very glad to see us and cry. They tell us that the Germans have just left the town, (I think the name of the town is FRAPELLE.)

We continue down the street into the main square where the usual monument to the dead soldiers of World War I stands. The word has spread all over town that we have arrived. Just as we get to the middle of the town square, a frenchman runs up to me and shakes my hand and kisses me on both cheeks. All the boys give me the laugh for that. Everyone is having a big time. All of the French are out in the street with food, and inviting us into their houses.

I feel uneasy because there may still be Germans in town, so I keep the boys going until we reach the far edge of town, and have seen nothing of any Germans. The Capt. tells me to take a cer-



*John P. Neely*

tain section of town, and occupy the houses, which I do. We are very tired, so we try to find a good house where there is food and beds. All of the French are very hospitable. [Sgt. L.C.] Snyder, Loper and I go to the house of a French woman who is very glad to have us.

She cooks us a very good meal, and fixes a fire for us to dry our clothes. The woman tells us that the town has had a very hard life under the Nazis and have been mistreated. She tells us that we are the first Americans to come by. She says that her husband was shot by the Germans for being a spy. She has three daughters. One is 16, and the others are 4 and 5. We talk for a while longer, and show her on a map where our forces have been, and where the Russians are. She has heard no news of the war except what the Germans have told her.

She is very happy when we tell her that the French First Army has taken the Belfort Gap. We go upstairs to bed. Loper and I sleep together in a big feather bed with a big comforter, sheets and pillows. I go to sleep at once, and dream about sleeping all day tomorrow. About 2300, a runner from Co. H.Q. wakes me up and says to get the platoon ready to move out at once, and for me to report to the Co. C.P.

26 November, 1944

The Capt. tells me that the Regt. is going to attack somewhere and must cross a bridge which he shows me on the map. It is my duty to take my platoon and secure the bridge and the surrounding houses, and hold them so that the Regt. can cross. I am to fall in with Company I as they go by. I have about 1/2 hour to go two miles and take the bridge, and my men are still asleep and rations must be issued to them.

In about 20 minutes, we all assemble in the street out front. I orient the squad leaders and rations are issued and we take off. We get to the bridge O.K. and encounter no resistance, I station my squads in some of the houses around the bridge. I set up my C.P. in a barn, and of course, out comes the Frenchman with a bottle of cognac for us. It is now about 0100, and the Regt. is just beginning to cross the bridge. My platoon falls in behind the Company, and I learn that our Bn. is to break off from the Regt., and attack something or somebody.

We continue to march down a road, and it is very dark. Finally we halt and are told that there is a booby-trapped bridge ahead, and we must wait for the engineers to clear it. We wait for about an hour, and it is now 0300 and no engineers. We continue forward, and go around the bridge, and up over the roadbed of a railroad and through barbed wire.

It is pitch dark, and we can't see a thing. We march on through a railroad station and see no one. We continue up on the road with the march order : Company L, Company I, Company K. It is now about 0500, and our Bn. is on the road, one column on each side.

A shot is fired and a bullet sings over our heads. It is a sniper somewhere. We all dive into the water-filled ditches on either side of the road. More shots ring out, and we can't see a thing. Someone to our rear opens up with a machine gun, and we can see the tracers passing close over our heads in the darkness. We get the order to continue forward.

The sniper fires at us again, and the bullet whizzes by. We hit the ditches again. I hear Col. May and Capt. Thompson talking close by. We stay in the ditch about 1/2 hour, and I go to sleep. We are on our feet again, and now leave the road to the left. It is about 0630 and beginning to get light. We cross over a field and up over the roadbed of the railroad again, but in a different spot. We are outlined against the sky, but we are following the Col. orders.

We climb down the other side of the roadbed on our right and 25 yards to our left is a flooded stream. This area is about 150 yards long. Here we find the rest of the entire Regiment. What a spot for the enemy's mortars and artillery ! But luckily nothing comes in, and we get out O.K. We are now on a road going into town. All at once, a German machine gun opens up on us from the rear. Everyone takes off in all directions. Most of us run for the nearest hill which is never far away.

As we are running up the hill we are fired upon by some Germans who are entrenched there. We overrun them so quickly that they are taken completely by surprise. As the Germans open up with their guns, I hit the ground, and turn to see a

*Combat*

man lying next to me. We look each other in the eye, and he is German. He could easily have killed me, but he surrenders, and I am so surprised that I can hardly take his gun away from him. I also take his raincoat since I left mine behind somewhere.

We take a few other prisoners, but most of the other Germans have taken off. We then clear out the neck of the woods we are in. The area is very elaborately entrenched, and would have been hard to take if the Germans had fought.

Sgt. O'Connell sees a German entering some woods 400 yards away, and gets him with his M1 rifle. A really beautiful shot!

It is now about 1000, and we establish a temporary defense in the German positions. I look around and the Germans have left most of their equipment. Some very good bicycles with hand brakes and all of their packs.

I open up one of the packs and find a big pocket watch with dials showing the year, month, date of month and a moon that moves according to the time. I also get a good black leather jacket which I wear.

I set up my C.P. in an underground dugout made by the Germans. About 1600 we get orders to move out. We have been on the move for over 24 hours with no sleep, but I don't feel tired. We march on through a town with Jake [Sgt. Jacobs] on a bicycle which he soon discards. We head for some distant mountains where the Germans are supposed to be. It is raining again, of course.

We spread out in a wide formation going over the plain and reach the mountain we are supposed to secure. I take one-half of the mountain and Paulson takes the other half. He finds Germans on his half, but there are none on mine.

We dig in for the night and Snyder, Loper and I dig a foxhole and put pine boughs in the bottom and tin roofing and logs over the top.

Lt. [Robert W.] Lamkin has his heavy machine guns attached to me. It rains all night, but we sleep pretty good.

I find that Lt. Keough and a few others have stayed in the town where we were last night. He is not so dumb!

Late November, 1944

At 0800 a messenger wakes me up, and says we are to be ready to move out at 0830. Paulson leads with me second as we go up another road to somewhere. The entire Regt. is now together with all of its vehicles. It is raining and freezing cold. I am soaking wet and my fingers are frozen, but there is nothing much to be done about it. Sgt. [Cecil C.] "Pop" Sommers is sick, so he goes to the rear. (I see him later at the 2nd Replacement Depot.)

Now we hit a road block and the column is held up. In comes the German artillery right on top of us and in heavy concentrations. It looks like the Colonel would wise up soon about these road blocks and artillery. A shell hits very close and we all dive for the side of the road, and I see Lt. Col. May and Col. [Henry J.P.] Harding, [410th's C.O.] under their Jeep. We move on past the road block, and down the mountain road. We march a long way, and pass quite a few road blocks, made of felled trees. It is now dark, and we are all dead tired and hungry.

We turn off the road at a house and take a narrow, steep trail down into a large valley. The column is stopped, and Capt. [Howard T.] Walpole, Co. L, comes down and tells me to get a some messengers, and come with him. I get Loper and Snyder, and we follow the Capt. back up the hill to the house. My feet are beginning to give some trouble, and all of this climbing sure makes them hurt. The house is the Regt. C.P., and all of the staff are there. Col. May is giving Capt. Walpole hell about something. The four of us take off again down into the valley.

Walpole says we are to find K Co., who failed to stop when the rest of the column did. We go down into the valley about two miles and finally find them. The Capt. says that is all, and I can rejoin I Co. again. There is a house nearby, but a company out of the 1st Bn. has taken it over, and is all bedded down for the night.

I go in, though, and get a cup of coffee and a glass of schnapps. We now get the order to move on to some town and we are to clear it and then sleep there. I Co. is to take the town and part of M Co. is attached. We come to a town, but Lt. Murphy doesn't think this is the right one.

*John P. Neely*

We go on about 1 1/2 miles to another town. It is now about 2200. We enter the town, and go to a house to see if it is any good to stay in. A couple of people come out, and one of them tells us he is the mayor and is very glad to have us. We are now in Alsace-Lorraine, and the people speak a mixture of French and German, and some of them are not at all friendly. Many of them consider themselves to be German, and are sympathetic with the Nazis.

The mayor gives us the usual story that there are no Germans in the town anymore. I place my squads down the street while I investigate. Just then, a German machine gun begins to fire. The mayor runs into his house, and slams the door in our faces leaving us outside. We break the door down and get in, in a hurry. There is more firing outside, and some women in the house are afraid of us, and start crying and the mayor wants us to leave.

The firing stops and I go out to find that we shot a couple of Germans trying to get out of town on bicycles. I then place my men in the house which is quite large, and it looks like we might get some sleep. The word comes from Capt. Thompson that we have taken the wrong town and withdraw back to the one we just passed through. We are all disgusted, but we return to the first town. Company I goes into a big house, with my platoon up in a hayloft with plenty of hay to sleep on. Sgt. [Gerald W.] O'Connell is pretty sick, and I send him back.

27 November, 1944

At 0700 in the morning, my platoon is sent up a hill outside the house to defend in case of an attack. At about 1000, 19 Germans come down from an adjacent hill to surrender to K Company on our right. They were right by the road where we came last night. At 1200, Capt. sends me to another house about 700 yards to the rear of the first house to defend until we move out a short time later. The people in the house seem friendly enough, although they speak German.

I try to shave myself with a straight razor, but have a hard time, so Loper finishes up for me. We sit around and dry our clothes and eat apples

until 1500 when we get orders to move out.

We leave the town and march down a paved road. We go through a town that has been shelled up quite a bit. The civilians stand around and watch us, but don't seem very happy. Our artillery is not very far off, and they are setting a terrific barrage on a town about 2 miles away, where the Germans are, and where we are heading.

The town is in flames, and the road is jammed with vehicles bringing back the wounded. One jeep comes speeding back with stretchers on the front and rear, each carrying boys who are unconscious and bloody—very hard on our morale.

We enter the edge of the town just as it is getting dark. Many of the buildings are in flames from the artillery fire. The Germans have left, and their artillery is now falling on us in the town. It is now completely dark, and our battalion is dispersed in a field just outside of town.

All at once, there is the most terrifying sound I have ever heard. It seems like someone speeding down a street about 70 miles per hour, and suddenly jamming on the brakes full force and skidding, multiplied about a million times. These are the famous German "SCREAMING MIMIS" or [88mm artillery shells.] I had never heard anything like it before, and in the dark field, surrounded by flaming buildings, it is startling.

We cross a small stream, and go up the side of a mountain. We march quite a long ways, and then come to a road on the other side of the town. We halt several times and Sgt. Walters comes up forward to see what is the matter.

It seems that all the company commanders are at a meeting at battalion and someone put some sergeant in charge of leading the battalion to an assembly area. The Sgt. doesn't know where to go and neither does any one else.

Finally Capt. Thompson comes up, and we get going again. We turn off the road to the left and go up another hill into the woods. We stop in a spot and bivouac for the night.

We dig a hole and cover it with logs, and go to sleep. It is very cold, and we are all wet and hungry as usual. The Infantry is not the easiest branch to be in !

28 November, 1944

At 0400 a company runner wakes me up and says to prepare for an attack at once. I wake up the squad leaders, and issue rations. It is really cold, and the water and lemon juice in my canteen is frozen. I find Capt. Thompson and he says the Bn. is going to attack something with I company leading the attack.

My platoon will be leading the company. It is pitch dark in the woods, and we start off single file to a trail nearby. Part of the column breaks off, and it is lost, so we wait about an hour until we find them. We come to a small road, and go down it, one column on each side. It is still very dark and we can see nothing.

Suddenly a shot from a sniper rings out somewhere to our left. After a few more shots, we hit the dirt on either side of the road. The Capt. comes up and tells me to take some men and find the sniper. I take a squad, and we crawl on our stomachs in a skirmish line through a vineyard to try and locate him. We go about 100 yards and don't run across anything, so we come back.

The column now goes forward as it begins to get a little lighter. We can make out a few houses in a town we are coming to. All at once we are under heavy fire from a house about 10 yards away. The Germans are firing machine guns and rifles and [throwing] hand grenades.

We all dive into ditches by the road. A few boys are hit. The soldier right in front of me gets hit, and I call back for the medics. Everyone thinks I am the one who was hit, since I am calling for the medic, and for days later people are surprised to see me because they thought I was shot.

The Germans are shouting orders to one another and they are very close. My platoon is the only one in the fight as everyone else is back down the road and out of the way. I take all of the men with grenade launchers that I can find, and tell them to direct their fire at the house.

We crawl up very close to fire our grenades into it. Several of the grenades are duds and don't go off. I also bring up the bazooka, but all of the shells are duds and won't fire. We have been carrying them for some time and they are probably pretty wet.

We do get a couple of good grenades into the windows of the house. But the German fire continues. I crawl back to the road and run into Col. May and Capt. Walpole deep in a ditch of about 4 feet deep. They are surprised to see me as they thought I had been hit. By now we had captured a few Germans who were in the foxholes on the side of the road.

As I am lying beside the road, a German grenade is thrown out of the house and it lands right beside me. I don't have time to do anything, but fortunately it is a dud and doesn't explode. I am glad that we are not the only ones that have bad ammunition at times.

Now T/5 [Darrell D.] Elliott, my medic, is shot dead-center in the chest, right through his Red Cross Badge. He really looks bad as he is carried to the rear. [Note the Bronze Star citation on p. 60.] Another of my men has a bullet hit his helmet, and it lodges there, and does little damage to him.

We now get the order to withdraw to a hill in the rear. Things are really "snafu" now, and everyone is mixed up. Finally most of my men get together, and we dig in on the hillside. The prisoners are here and also the wounded. German machine guns from another hill are firing on us, but we can't locate them due to their smokeless powder. We have a tough time getting the wounded to the rear because the mountains are so steep. We make the German prisoners carry our wounded back for us.

The Capt. tells us to move out to the next hill to our front. We run across an open space to a small wooded area, and take cover there. The hill we are supposed to go to is covered by enemy artillery fire, so I hold up, but the Capt. says to go on, which we do. After a walk of about a mile over open ground, we get to the hill and find L Co. there also, so we dig in.

My feet are worse and giving me a lot of pain, so I see one of our company's medics. I take off my shoes for the first time in three weeks, and my feet are very white and wrinkled and bloody. The medic says I have trench foot, and should keep my feet warm and dry and stay off of them. I remind him that I am in the Infantry, and he says, "Too Bad!"

*John P. Neely*

As I am putting on my shoes and socks, a shell hits right by us. Four of us dive for a foxhole. I get in all but my legs, and the shells are falling fast all around us. I wait for the pain to come in my legs, but it doesn't. The shelling lets up so we prepare to move out. I later find that the artillery was our own, and they thought the hill was occupied by the Germans.

We are now going to take another hill so we start off. We go through some tall grass over our heads, and reach the hill and start up. It is very high and steep, and my feet are really taking a beating. As we are half way up, we see a German taking off down in the valley we just came from. When we get to the top, Capt. Thompson tells me my platoon is to lead on to the next hill and secure it.

Col. May and the Bn. forward-observer are now up here. After we secure the edge of the woods, K Company under Capt. [Daniel E.] Halpin is to pass through us and take the next town. I lead off down a small mountain trail with the rest of the company behind me in a single file. When we reach the base of the hill we are to take, we make a 90-degree turn to the right and go next to the hill for 400 yards.

I then halt the column and pass the word for all men to face the left and advance up the hill. This gives us a skirmish line all around on our side starting up at the same time. We get to the top O.K. and establish a defense on the edge of the woods, and wait for K Co. to come through us. The boy who got hit in the helmet early this morning, now realizes what happened and has a delayed reaction and emotionally breaks down, and has to be sent to the rear.

About 1830, just as it is getting dark, K Co. attacks the town. They evidently get in O.K. after driving the Germans out, but German tanks shell the town and K Co. comes back out. So both companies now advance into the town under heavy artillery fire, but meet no enemy opposition. The Capt. tells me to pick a house, so I grab a large one for the platoon, and we enter it. It is really a good house with several good bedrooms and plenty of food.

There is a picture of Hitler in one room, and a lot of German papers around, so we don't

hesitate to take anything we want. In the kitchen are all sorts of jellies and canned fruit and, of course, Cognac. We eat all we can hold and go to bed. I take off my shoes and some of my clothes and get into a big, feather bed.

29 November, 1944

For a change, nothing happens all night except for a little artillery, and I sleep until about 1000, but keep waking up earlier expecting the Capt. to call. The woman whose house we are in returns and she is very nasty and doesn't like us at all. We really tore up her house. I have learned how to handle these people now, and order one of my men to take her out and shoot her, (not really, of course,) and we have no more trouble from her. I got a new medic to take the place of Elliott.

We get word that the 411th is going to pass through us sometime today and to go on to the next town, and that we are going to follow them. About 1600 the 411th passes through and we fall in behind them. As we march out of town, the people place apples and bottles of wine in the middle of the street for us to help ourselves to as we pass by.

Our battalion leaves the road and the rest of the regiment and cuts across country to our left. The march order is Company L, Company I, and then Company K. The head of the column hits a road block on the trail we are following. It is decided that we will cut through the woods to our right, and go around the roadblock. There happens to be a trail just where we want to go, so we follow it in a 'column of files'.

Scattered artillery is falling, but not enough to cause undue alarm. There is now firing ahead and the column stops. Word is passed back that Company L in the lead has hit another roadblock, protected by German machine guns. The word is passed back for all bazooka men to come forward. Lt. [Leon J.] Sachleben and Lt. [Joseph F.] Adamski come back for something. We talk and joke for awhile, and then they go forward again.

I am talking to 1st Sgt. Walters when WHAM! A German shell comes right in on us. Everyone hits the ground as another shell hits just down the column from us.. Already there are cries for the "Medic!" as the shells fall up and down our

COMBAT

30 November, 1944

column really raising hell. Some of the shells hit so close to me that I am jarred clear off the ground. Walters and I are digging holes, but the ground is full of roots and so many shells are coming in that we can't get out of the prone position at all. Consequently we don't get much of a hole dug. The word comes back to withdraw back to the town we just came from.

As I am going back to let everyone know we are withdrawing, I see Sgt. [Carl] Minnear lying on the ground and blown to a bloody mess. There are some other boys hit, but they are being taken care of. Cpl. [Walter F.] Schneider was hit in the arm and is being treated. Our platoon really took a beating. I run into Lt. Lamkin on my way back and we stick together until we hit town.

In town there is plenty of confusion, and a few shells land in the streets. One shell hits right in front of me and I dive for the nearest doorway. I enter a pitch black room, and back into something alive and wet. It turns out to be a cow, it sure scared me. After the shelling lets up, I go out onto the street again. I find Capt. Thompson who tells me to gather my men and defend the edge of the town nearest the enemy against a counter-attack.

I manage to find all of my men, and take over the last house in town. An old man is the only one living there. I also put half of my men across the street in another house. We have six casualties in my platoon alone. They are Staff Sgt. [Carl] Minnear - dead, Pvt. [Howard I.] Schwenden - dead, the new medic, [Alsey H. Milburn] - an arm blown off, and Schneider and one of my B.A.R. men and another private - all wounded slightly.

My platoon strength is down to about 21 men now. It has gotten dark and I post my men outside. Two medium tanks pull up outside to coordinate their defensive fire with us. Sgt. [Joseph] Le Beau on the right side of the road, reports that he sees men out to his front, but we hold our fire for fear they might be some of our own men.

Lt. Paulson is defending a church on a hill to our right rear, and we can see far across his front. There is some shooting from his area, and a rocket is fired at the church. It is too dark, and we are too far away to take a chance on firing. One of my men falls through a hole in the roof while he is observing from a window and sprains his arm and is sent back. We try to get a little sleep.

In the morning we reorganize the platoon and take care of the dead. I get a .45 automatic pistol off one of the men in the 4th platoon, [PFC Raymond Voss], who was killed yesterday.

We get word that we are to be prepared to attack at any time. I decide to make [PFC Rabb T.] Kimmel my runner in place of Loper, who becomes a rifleman. About 1600 we take off down the same road we started on yesterday, but do not turn off as we did before. The Capt. says our company alone is to capture a town, [BLIENSCHWILLER], and we may have tanks to help us.

As we are marching down the road, a big explosion about 100 yards in front takes place. When we get to the spot, we see one of the men from the 4th platoon lying in the road where he had stepped on a shoe mine and blown his foot off. His face and body was splattered with his blood from the explosion. From then on, none of us gets off the road onto the shoulders. The word is passed back that mines are placed everywhere alongside the road.

It is getting dark fast and we haven't got in sight of the town yet. We continue down the road with the 2nd platoon leading, with machine guns attached. It is now dark, but there is a bright moon, and we can see pretty well. German machine guns now open on us from somewhere to our front, and we all hit the ground. We set up a hasty all-around defense. The tracers from the German guns are coming right over our heads, and are pretty in the dark.

All at once, several Germans walk right into my platoon, and we capture them. One of the Germans is very scared and starts to run, so we let him have it. He is not killed, but he is in great pain, so we give him a shot of morphine, and send him to the rear. We capture about five of them and send them back.

One of my 18-year olds is so scared he can hardly talk and is about to cry. The German fire continues, and we decide to blow them out with our 105 [mm] cannon. Lt. [Thomas W.] Jones is with us to adjust the fire. My platoon withdraws about 200 yards, and the 2nd platoon withdraws back through us, leaving us at the front.

*John P. Neely*

Kimmel and I go the rear of the platoon area, and sit down on the side of the hill and eat K rations while we wait for the cannon to start. The first shells now sing over and fall short—right in front of our defensive area. Several more shells fall short in the area, so we move back about 300 yards more, and go back to find Lt. Jones, and tell him his shells are too short. We continue to fire a good concentration into the general area, but I don't think it will do much against the dug-in troops.

The Capt. decides to wait until dawn to make an attack. So the Company forms a circular defense, and we dig in for the night. During the night our artillery fires a terrific concentration into the town we are to take in the morning.

1 December, 1944

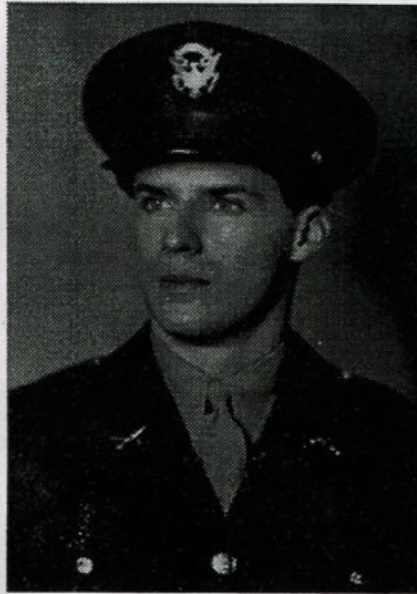
We get up at dawn and get ready to attack the town. We now have several tank destroyers and some men to help us. We get word that another outfit will pass through us and take the town while we support them by fire from our present positions.

Our company moves up on the hill a little higher, so that we can fire over the heads of the attacking troops into the town. Some tank destroyers go down the hill into the town followed by some men. We get the word to move into the town and clear it. The Capt. tells me to clear out a big church in the town, so we take off. As we enter the town, we see that it has really been shelled a lot. No one is in sight, but we know that the French are in their houses hiding.

My trench foot is giving me a lot of trouble again, and I am having much trouble walking. In the back of the Catholic church is a cart with two dead Germans in it. We enter the church and examine it from top to bottom and find no one. It is really a very pretty church and fairly large.

I pull a rope and ring the bells in the steeple just for the fun of it. A priest comes out and greets us, and tells us how rough the Germans treated him when they were here, and says they all left last night during the shelling. The church is a wreck with no roof and is burned up inside. A runner from the Capt. comes and tells us to clear all the houses down to the main street. The French are beginning to come out now, and we search the houses, and find no Germans. Some are captured in another part of

the town. As we go to the main square, there are French everywhere offering the usual food and drink. The Capt. tells us to find a house and take a break. I place my men in three houses and go in one of them for a rest. The people are very friendly and offer to cook us a meal. We ask for fried chicken but they have none, so I send out a couple of boys, and they bring back four chickens from somewhere. The meal is very good. It is now about 1500. We still don't know if we are going to stay here all night or not, but we sure want to as we are very tired. A line of German prisoners,



*2nd Lt. John P. Neely- Ft. Benning, Ga.- 1944*

about 200, marches by to the rear. We get word that an Armored Force unit is coming through soon, which they do. There is quite a large number of them.

The Capt. calls me down to the Bn. C.P. and says we are to move on and take a town or something. We are all tired and it is getting dark, so we feel bad. Company K and Company L are already attacking, and we are to follow them up. General Pierce is running around and giving his "Keep Pushing" talk. Company I takes off about 1700 with the 2nd platoon leading. It soon gets very dark and we can see little. We follow the road and then turn off down a narrow trail, single file. We enter a darkened town, DAMBACH, and go to the far edge of it.

The Capt. takes a house for the Company C.P. and I take one across the street for my platoon. I knock on the door and a man and woman open it. I try to tell them in French that we are Americans and that we want to stay in the house for the night. The man tells me, in perfect English, that he lived in Brooklyn for ten years and please come in. In the house are the man and his wife and two children. The man and woman used to live in the U.S. until the man's doctor sent him back to Europe for his health.

They are very nice and give me their bedroom. The two of them sleep in the basement, and I suspect that they have been sleeping there since the fighting started. We are all exhausted and go to sleep. At midnight, a company runner wakes me up, and tells me to be ready to move out at 0100. I go back to sleep.

2 December, 1944

The Co. runner comes back at 0100 and says that everyone is waiting for my platoon. But I don't even recall him waking me up at midnight to tell me. We take off in an attack or something down a road at 0200. We march a long way and go over a bridge and turn left off a road and enter a field. Col. May decides we are not in the right place, so we go back to the road, and over the same bridge and turn down a different road.

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd platoons got over the bridge, but as the 4th platoon goes over, there is a big explosion. Some of the men in the machine gun squad have stepped on "Bouncing Betty" mines, and are taken to the rear. We continue down the road, and a shot is fired on us from close range.

Up front I hear Sgt. Walters cussing out some man from Company L who fired on us. We go down the road and dig in on both sides and wait until morning. I count my men and there are nineteen, including myself and Tech. Sgt. Jacobs.



Lt. John P. Neely - France, 1944

This is out of 50 men we started with. Sgt. LeBeau is the only other Sgt. left. At this point, my feet have completely given out on me and I can't put any weight on them. Walking is impossible. At 1000, I see Colonel May in his foxhole beside the road, and he orders a jeep and driver who take me to a hospital to treat my feet.

Subsequently I am sent to a replacement depot, and later assigned as Personnel officer for the army newspaper, *Stars and Stripes* in Paris. Later we get moved to Altdorf, Germany, and then to Le Havre for shipment home.

I was in the Army for 3 years, 9 months, including 1 year, 10 months

overseas. I found out the difference between Peace and War is :

In peacetime, sons bury their fathers, and in wartime, fathers bury the sons.