

James B. West

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I am enclosing 2 disks with some pictures on it plus a copy a diary I attempted to make while overseas. I was in a group of ASTP personnel that were shipped from Northeast Center Junior College in Monroe, LA to the 103rd in Gainesville, TX. I was put in the 328th Engineers, Headquarters & Service Company and in the motor pool section. The diary includes some notations that I made.

The following are descriptions of the photos on the disks. Some of the pictures have faded but you can select the ones that think will appropriate.

DISK #1

- 103-01 CWO Sears & Lt. Cooper
- 103-019 Rafting on the Inns River, Innsbruck, Austria
- 103-02 The motor pool gang at Brenner Pass, we couldn't go pass this point in Italy
- 103-03 103 on parade in Innsbruck
- 103-04 The 103 band practicing-Innsbruck
- 103-05 Ditto of # 103-01(picture was reversed)
- 103-06 Parks at Brenner Pass
- 103-07 Sign at Brenner Pass- Buckavich posing for picture
- 103-08 The motor pool gang
- 103-09 The German Truck that was used as a parts truck.
- 103-10 Another picture of the gang
- 103-11 Where we stayed in Steingarten
- 103-12 Our house in Garmish Parten Kirchen
- 103-13 Gen. McAullif's car

Disk #2

- 103-14 Farmhouse- stayed in the hay barn above the farmer's living quarters
- 103-15 His oxen. Also had a tank wagon which he used to spread liquid manure from a concrete basin near the barn.
- 103-16 McBaine & the Red Cross Doughnut Lady
- 103-17 Perry Days
- 103-18 Oscar Johnson & Jim West after rafting the Inns River
- 103-19 Jim West

Disk #2 6 pages of Diary-

Members of the Headquarters Motor Pool- 328th H&S Engr.(that I remember)

Officers-Motor Pool

Cooper, Lt.

Sears, CWC

Enlisted Men

Buckavich (Buck)

Carlson

Celli, Eugene

Chadwich, Dick (transferred to MP's)

Days, Perry

Elliot, Sgt.

Frankart, Herman (Kraut)

Fuhr

Hansen, Harry

Johnson, Oscar (Double 'O')

McBaine, Eddie

McCune

Matthews

Moyer

Parks

Rouse, Rom A.

Senzee

Smith, Snuffy

Waters

West, Jim

Jim West

*My printer started acting up while trying to
make copies of the pictures on Disks 1 & 2
Had lines on the paper. You can use the discs
to make better prints on a computer.
The thumb prints show what's on the discs
along with print numbers.
The diary is on disks # 3*

James B. West, 328th Engr., H & S Co.

Sept. 25, 1944; Everyone were restricted to the company area at Camp Howze.

Sept. 27, 1944: After sleeping in the rec hall, we left by train for Camp Shanks, NY.

Sept. 28, 1944: Pulled into Memphis, TN this morning. Only 90 miles from home and it might as well been a thousand.

Sept. 29, 1944: Somewhere in Ohio when I awoke. Went through the steel town of Pittsburgh.

Sept. 30, 1944: Arrived in Camp Shanks. Had to walk 2 miles to the company area.

Oct. 3, 1944: Went to New York City on a pass.

Oct. 5, 1944: Walked from the Company area to the train, a distance of about 3 miles. We carried a full field pack, blanket roll and I had my mackinaw over my arm. On the train were our duffel bags. We received a sack lunch as we boarded. We left the train and boarded a ferry and boarded the a ship at the 42nd pier. The band was playing and the Red Cross gave us coffee and candy. The ship was the Henry Gibbons made in Pasagoula, Miss.

Oct. 6, 1944: Left New York at 8:30 AM.

Oct. 7-20, 1944: The days on the ship were spent doing physical exercises, classes in French and German. Had to spend 1/2 hour walking around the deck in a continuous circle. On our off time, we played cards, lay on the hatches or looked for some sign of land. I saw some flying fishes and a school of porpoises. The smell of the kitchen was terrible and it was very hard to eat the two meals a day we had on board ship. We heard two games of the World Series (2 St. Louis teams-Cardinals & Browns). Heard "Rum & Cola-Cola" I bet thirty times a day. In the afternoons, some of the fellows made up a dance band and played for the troops. Also there some boxing matches on the aft hatch.

Oct. 18, 1944: Saw our first glimpse of land which turned out to be Oran, Africa.

Oct. 20, 1944: Marseille- We arrived here today and were one of the last ones to leave the boat. We were issued the Red Cross kits and three boxes of K rations. We climbed down the rope ladder into a LST boat, then to the beach. The harbor was still beat up and the docks couldn't accommodate the ships yet. It was about 11:30 PM when we left the ship and after eating one of the K rations on the beach, we went on a 9 mile hike to the staging area.

Diary of World War II

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Oct. 21, 1944: Well I admit it, I couldn't make all of the hike, so I caught a truck and rode to the staging area. Got there about 4:30 that morning. Pitched a shelter half and went to sleep.

Oct. 22, 1944: All the tents are in rows and we got orders to dig a fox hole behind our tents. The damndest thing I ever heard of. The ground was nearly solid rock and the holes were in a straight line. Anyone would have known better than to do this.

Oct 23- Nov.6, 1944: Time was spent getting equipment ready for combat.. We also got passes to Marseille, a very dirty filthy place. Plenty of red lights on the buildings.

Nov. 7, 1944: Left the staging area. First bivouac area was in a field at Birbounq de Rouge.

Nov. 8, 1944: Dijon was the second area. We stayed in a park there.

Nov. 9-10, 1944: Breauvillers- pup tents were our only shelter. We were in the woods and it began to snow very hard.

Nov.11, 1944: The 103 rd was committed to action. We moved further up. Someone picked out an area on top of a hill. dirt roads and we couldn't get the trucks up it.

Nov. 12-22, 1944: Moved again about five miles. Lived in Parabola tents,. Built shop for our use and then moved before we could use it one day. The first time I pulled guard duty, two of us was on for the night. Pulled two hours on and two hours off. On my first shift I got my ass chewed out because I didn't challenge the OD correctly. It had been snowing all afternoon and the trees were full of snow. On the other side of the valley was the artillery. They opened up while I was on guard. When they did, the snow fell off the trees and I was scared.. I would be thinking that a Kraut was sneaking up on me. The tent caught fire a couple on times. No harm done.

Nov. 23, 1944: Thanksgiving Day - We lived in a hay barn. For supper, we had turkey, cranberry sauce, hard candy and the other items that went with turkey. There wasn't much enjoyment to the eating for it was raining all the time.

Nov. 25, 1944: Frapella-the house that we moved into was once used by the Krauts as a hospital. A doughboy stepped on a mine and Lt. Cooper had us all out that night. He thought the Krauts were back in town.

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Nov. 27, 1944: Urbeis-Johnson and I came on a quartering party the day before. I heard my first 88 there. We had a three houses to hold for the company. I was in one and Johnson was in the other. The shells came in all doing the night and neither of us got any sleep that night.

Dec. 4, 1944: Dargnengen- Joe's Place as we called it. He had plenty of schnapps, wine and beer there. He made it himself. Most of us slept in a barn there. Also, some Kraut planes came in the day we were moving in.

Dec. 10, 1944: Mommensheim- Mac and Fuhr were cooking for the motor pool. We wasn't with the headquarters company anymore.

Dec. 13, 1944: Mittesheim- The brick factory. Did a lot of target practice with our Kraut rifle in the dirt pits there.

Dec. 15, 1944: Morsbronn-I was put in the kitchen in place of Fuhr withl Mac the blacksmith and barber.

Dec. 18, 1944: Lobson-Lived in an old hotel

Dec. 22, 1944-Jan. 14, 1945: Nelling- We moved up into the Third Army sector. Had Xmas dinner in a barn. When the company moved out. we moved into some of the houses that they had. We had a big time hunting rabbits there. Chadwick was transferred to the MP's.

Jan. 15, 1945: Reichshoffin- The shop was in a railroad shed there. We lived in houses close to it. The old lady in our house had a little dog that slept in the warming oven all the time.

Jan. 20, 1945: Mac and I were preparing supper when we had to pack everything in a hurry and get the hell out. The Krauts were supposed to be on their way in. We left leaving a lot of junk behind. We went to Neuweiler that night. This was on a Saturday and the Krauts didn't come in until Monday.

Jan. 21, 1945: Saverne-It was beginning to look as if we were going to have to sleep in a bowling alley that night but about eight o'clock, we found an empty apartment and a big garage right in back of it. We moved in. The next day the 5th Corps moved into Saverne and put the town off limits to troops. We had to be content with sticking our heads out the windows or going down to the driveway. However, we could go to the picture show at night if we carried our rifle, steel helmet and gas masks. Here the Krauts began to shell Saverne with "Alsace Alice". Some fragments in our back yard and street. Fritz, a French kid who lived in the same apartment that we did, was badly hurt by a German land mine that was in the back yard.

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Feb. 25 - 29, 1945 Went on a pass to Brussels. Saw the famous little boy fountain there. Sent home a brass souvenir of it.

March, 1945: McCune and Rouse joined the motor pool. Also, we liberated a Diesel truck that burned charcoal and made it a parts wagon.

March 17, 1945: Bouxweiler- We moved the motor pool there. I made the trip. I had been sick at Saverne and when we got to Bouxweiler, I went to the medic. That afternoon they sent me to a hospital in Saarsburg.

March 23, 1945: Was moved to a recuperation hospital in Saarsburg.

March 25, 1945: Went to a reppo-deppo in Saarsburg.

March 28, 1945: The reppo-deppo was moved to Saargemines or close to it.

March 29, 1945: Was moved to another reppo-deppo at Haguenae

April 1, 1945 Schifferstadt- Rejoined my company finally. One of the group had killed a deer with pistol and we had it for supper.

April 3, 1945: Neustadt- We did army of occupation there> one of our houses had a cellar that was full of Champaign and wine. Across the street was a big air raid shelter.

April 8, 1945: Heppenhein-crossed the Rhine river to get there. Lived in a service station.

April 11, 1945: Gershein- Moved there by the super highway. Along the way, there were evidence of piles of charcoal ashes on the right of way. Some trucks were stopped dumping the ashes and reloading the charcoal. We stayed in some building to a German airport.

April 20, 1945: Bertzfeld-On the move again.

April 21, 1945: Marherdt- While I was liberating some potatoes out of a cellar, the woman who lived in the house , happened to come down to the cellar. She could speak perfect English and told me that the potatoes were for poor people and that I shouldn't take any.

April 23, 1945: Kircheim-Lived super deluxe here. For 22 men, we had four houses plus a garage for the shop. Where we had the kitchen, there was a nice lawn, a fish pool with statues and a large cage of birds. Rode a motorcycle here for the first time in my life.

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April 25, 1945: Geislinger- A one night stop. Moved out two nurses. They wanted to stay and help cook but Lt. Cooper chased them off.

April 26, 1945: Langenau-A field day for fishing. The lady of the house didn't want to move because she was a German officer's wife.

April 27, 1945: Untergemaringezen-While en route here, we were strafed by the Germans. We crossed the river at Ulm. Large numbers of Germans began to surrender. We passed one large convoy of trucks driven by the Germans surrendering. At one town they were still walking in the streets. We were traveling too fast to pickup ant PW's.

April 29, 1945: Steingarten- The Germans are still surrendering by companies and battalions. One group were mostly 12 and 14 years old. They were a labor group.

May 1, 1945: Garmish-Partenkirchen- Site of the 1936 Ski Olympics. Snowed every day we were here.

May 5, 1945: Innsbruck-The end of the war caught us here. We could ride up the ski lift on a T-Bar. Hitler was supposed to have had a retreat on top this mountain. We found some rubber rafts which we took up the Inns River about 5 miles and then rode the fast moving back to our camp site. We were allotted our first Coca-Cola since the states. These we tied on some cord and threw them in the icy Inns River to chill. Across the river from us was a sandy beach where the Austrians came to sunbathe and swim. The Austrian women would change to their bathing suits on the beach. Their procedure was something to behold. One would think they were going to expose themselves but they didn't. We were able to walk to downtown Innsbruck as our shop and quarters were only 6 or 7 blocks away. Another pastime walking the paths in the mountain across the valley. We were given a trip to the Brenner Pass. We weren't allowed to go across the border into Italy by the Fifth Army but they did allow to step across the boundary just so we could say that we had been in Italy.

July 3, 1945: Furstenfeldbruck-They didn't tell us but we assumed we were being readied for the Pacific because of our low point. We were transferred to the 120th Engr of the 45th Division. Back in tents again.

July 21, 1945: Ulm- First step on our move to a staging area. Stayed in an airplane hanger.

July 22, 1945: Kaiserslauten- Second stop. Lived in the woods along side the super highway.

July 23, 1945: Camp St Louis- The French dust bowl area.

July 28, 1945: Went to Paris on a pass.

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Aug. 20, 1945: Left Camp St. Louis for Le Harve.

Aug. 21, 1945: Arrived Camp Phillip Morris. The war in the Pacific was over and because we had been processed to go to states for a leave, we were allowed to go home early to be discharged.

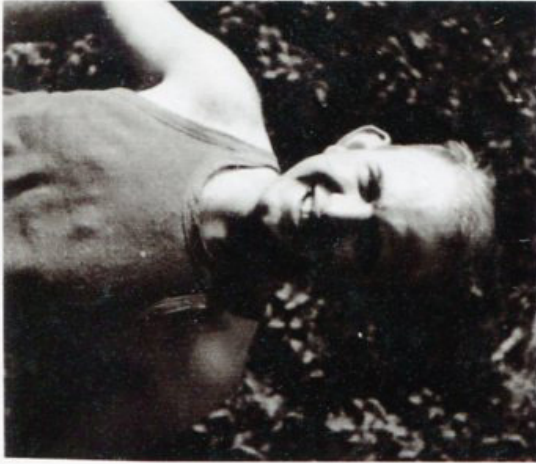
Sept. 1, 1945: Boarded the Marine Devil at 1900 hours. Was told our barracks bags would be searched for any guns. Threw 2 carbines without stocks and a grease gun (submachine gun) overboard.

Sept. 2, 1945: Left Le Harve at 1045 hours. Our barrack bags were never inspected so a lot of weapons were thrown in the harbor that we could have brought home.

Sept. 10, 1945: Arrived Boston before noon. What was my impression of Boston Harbor? Well, there were a lot of trash in the water. What I thought was jelly fish floating on the surface turned out to be condoms.

Diary of World War II

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103-62



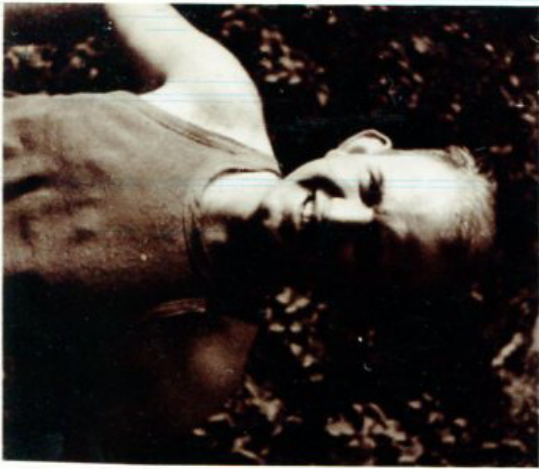
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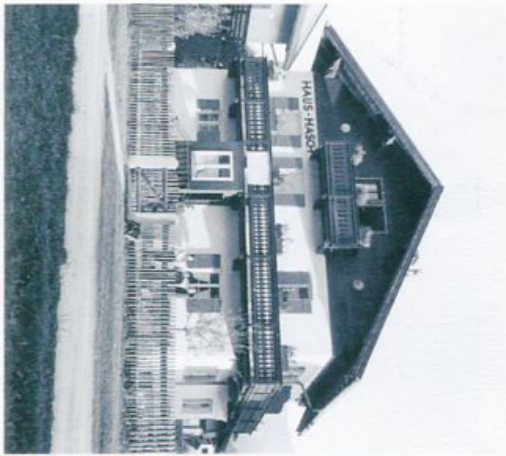


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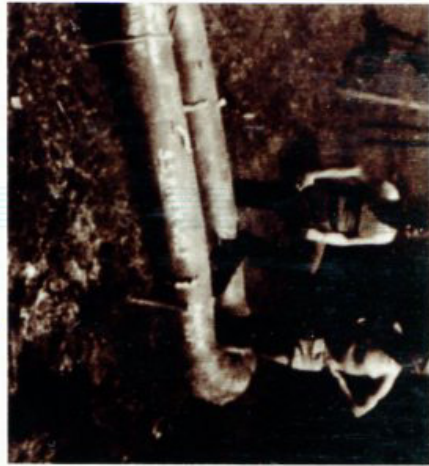
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