1942 & 1943
November 30, 1942

This all began on November 30, 1942 when I enlisted in the mechanized cavalry! With twelve or thirteen other fellows, I left Madison, Wisconsin and took my medical exam in Milwaukee. We were shipped to Fort Sheridan, Illinois for more processing and then on a troop train going west. My army pay started on December 14, 1942, at $50 per month.

Camp Phillips, Kansas

December 7, 1942

I must have arrived at Camp Phillips, Kansas on the seventh of December. We were surely a bunch of perplexed people when we got off the train. The camp was so new, there were no sidewalks, no trees, just a bunch of crude barracks out in a cow pasture. By the end of December the place was being rapidly filled with troops.

I was assigned to Company "L" of the 302nd Regiment, 94th Infantry Division. There were only a handful of us for about two weeks, led by First Sergeant Smallwood, a man from the South. Our duties were primarily to keep fires in each of the three stoves in the six company barracks. They were all without insulation. If you had wet shoe soles at night, they froze to the floor. We also built "duckboards" to serve as sidewalks, had exercises and KP duties.

After Lt. John S. Lockwood became our C.O., things began to get organized. Some "acting" squad leaders were appointed and were designated by a bit of white paper on their shoulder.

December 23, 1942

It was about this time, on December 23rd, that I was admitted to the station hospital with catarrhal pharyngitis. The hospital was filled to capacity through December to February. I hope I am never as ill as I was that week. I was released on the 29th to return to Barracks 760. Everyone had colds.

Staff Sergeant Frank Papp, in charge of the weapons platoon, had me wearing a hunk of paper while we were drilling, but I didn't like it. I could see then that if orders had to be given, I wouldn't be the type to give them.

It seemed that we got shots in the arm every time we turned around. I know some got more than I did though, which numbered six plus one vaccination.

Before the end of December I discussed my status with our company commander, explaining that I had enlisted in the Mechanized Cavalry and shouldn't be in an Infantry Company. No action was taken; this was a verbal attempt.
January 12, 1943

On January 12th, I submitted a letter to Major Henson at Fort Knox asking for information regarding a transfer. Capt. James Check answered my letter. I answered his letter and stated my qualifications. His next reply was very favorable, stating that my qualifications met with the requirements as a student instructor in his department, but I would have to apply through proper channels, which I did on February 7th in a letter to my company commander, enclosing the Captain's letter.

February 9, 1943

On February 9th, I was appointed to Private First Class, an increase of $4 per month!!

After another plea to Capt. Check on April 27th, I abandoned hopes from him.

The period of training from January until April consisted of close order drill, calisthenics, obstacle course, care and cleaning of equipment, map reading and basic tactics. Due to the fact that all these buildings were simply 2 x 4's covered with 3/4 inch sheathing, it got very cold inside. At times my ink would be frozen until noon. As I mentioned before, if your shoe soles were wet at night, they would freeze to the floor in the morning. Cups were often frozen to the overturned plates in the mess hall. Milk and orange juice or fruit was often frozen. During extremely cold weather when we had classes inside, we would often go for a run round the block during our break. Much candy was consumed during the cold months for additional energy. At night shelter halves were put up around the bunks to help quell the spread of colds.

I found it quite hard to accustom myself to all the southerners in our barracks. There were two of us from Wisconsin, quite a few from the East and the rest from the Southern states.

When it warmed up, the mud was everywhere, especially on the drill field when we tried to do “to the rear march.” We held several full dress parades and reviews in the mud dressed in our best O.D.s. After you got just so much mud on your clothes, it didn't matter anymore and you just passed it off as “one of those things.”

We extended our hikes and were frequently doing eight to ten miles. Often we would start out in the morning wearing overcoats and wish we could take off our shirts in the afternoon. In mid afternoon mud would stick to the shoe soles and you would get two or three inches taller until you could stop and clean it off. The army has very little regard for the elements. We got so we could sit in it, stand in it and even lay in it. We always walked in it.

After long and aching hours of “dry practice” we went on the firing range. These proved to be long days. We would wait for daylight so we could see the targets and begin firing. Under the steady coaching of Lt. Guy, twelve of us out of thirteen made “expert” on the
machine gun range (both moving and stationary targets). I fired the Garand and made "sharpshooter." Some of us also qualified with the 45 Caliber pistol. We were now becoming soldiers! Lt. Guy was mean and tough. We took a thirty minute run every week, practice with bayonet, extended order drill, map reading, use of compass, obstacle course, hand to hand combat, chemical warfare, air and mechanized defense, hand grenades, sex hygiene, articles of war, guard duty, films, charts, demonstrations, lectures and bull sessions.

I was gunner, assistant gunner and ammo carrier on machine gun during these times. We carried that cotton picking weapon everywhere, took it apart, cleaned it and learned all its parts, dismantled it in the dark and reassembled it until it was part of us.

We never took a hike without it. If there was enough men for two squads, we took two machine guns. The mortar section had their troubles too; they carried their mortars (stovepipes, we called them). But they could sit on the reverse side of a hill while we double-timed out in front under orders of Popovich and Martin, both corporals.

We would often fall out in the company street with the wrong uniform or equipment three or four times in the morning due to orders being mixed up. Then it was back into barracks until it became a joke and we didn't care if we kept it up all day.

We used to come in from a hike or exercises and when we approached the company street we would all sing *This Is The Army Mr. Jones, Yellow Ribbon, Praise The Lord And Take Us Out Of Kansas and Kansas Is A Hell Of A State, Parlez vous* and also *Roll Out The Barrel*. Then if we couldn't make more noise than the 3rd platoon, Sergeant Papp would blow his top and say, "OK we'll have a singing lesson in the sixth barracks tonight."

March 31, 1943

Basic Training was over and the much talked about things called "Furloughs" were next. I was on the first group and left on an old Santa Fe bus at five AM on the 31st. It took ages for the trip, both coming and going. The time at home was swell. I gave my motorcycle, "Charlie," a good workout and was sorry to leave again. I returned to Camp Phillips on April 9, 1943.

April, 1943

We were in a new period of training with Lt. Guy, the C.O. We went on longer hikes and stayed in the field for a week at a time on exercises. I temporarily served as a Runner, both for the weapons platoon and also "L" Company. I was somewhat independent of the weapons platoon. We would carry lots of candy and sweets in our packs on these hikes and bivouacs as much as possible. We often hiked fourteen miles back to camp after a hard week. We dug *millions* of slit trenches and foxholes with our little shovels. We would walk a few miles, stop, then the orders were shouted, "dig in!" No sooner did we finish our hole, than it was, "Fill them up. We are moving out!"
On Saturdays, we always had inspection of some kind, either “barracks or full field.” Certain layout of your equipment was necessarily displayed and if it was not right, you were put on “report,” with extra duties resulting. Very seldom were we done before three PM.

During May or June the barracks were skirted with boards from the ground up to floor level. We also got hardwood floors and window screens. During the next three months we encountered lots of dust and heat. One afternoon during a hike, you could hardly see the men in front of you. Dust got into everything. Our barracks was located next to the mess hall and when the wind didn’t blow, we got dirty from soot. It was S.O.P. to mop the floor every day except Sunday.

Sgt. Papp was busted and did thirty days in the guardhouse for insubordination. Lt. Travis was C.O. for a time after Lt. Guy left, then Capt. Rigdon, then Lt. Morgan. First Sgt. Smallwood was replaced by a fat guy from Pennsylvania by the name of John Stracelsky. The Lt.'s couldn't pronounce his name so they called him Sgt. John.

It was during this month that a captain from the Inspector General’s office was in camp to interview E.M. I again put in a request for a transfer. Lt. Morgan also “interviewed” all who had visited the Captain. After insulting words were exchanged, I still wasn't sorry for my actions. I was sent to the Classification Headquarters with my records. After waiting until the last of July, I also gave up hope of a transfer to the 94th Recon. Troop.

June - July, 1943

We spent some miserably hot weather in the field during this month. It was in June or July we turned in our folding cots for wooden bunks with springs! We were going on Battalion and Regimental operations. Twenty-five mile hikes were quite common. Often we would start at midnight and hike with full field equipment. You would be wet all over from perspiration. Several of the weaker ones would drop out from fatigue. Many tramped doggedly on until they passed out. Officers began to complain to the medics after some higher up officials got the bright idea of a higher physical standard. They found that the training was tearing down, more than building up.

We often sat around in our underwear while writing letters or studying in the evening. It was miserably hot during the day and half the night. I attended church on base every Sunday and was a member of the regimental chorus. We were invited to Salina several times and sang over radio station KSAL once. The people of Salina often would invite us to their homes for dinner.

We were finished with RCT’s and taking part in Division Corps maneuvers. During these times, I was company runner and sometimes Battalion runner. Sometimes when the weather was cooler, we would spend the night in the field with only a raincoat to cover up
with. One particular night I would awaken from the cold and dig my slit trench deeper to stay warm. By morning it was hip deep.

We practiced knocking out pillboxes under real artillery and infantry fire. We crawled undergrazing machine gun fire on the infiltration course. On several occasions when our canteen of water was gone, we would scoop up some from a puddle and put iodine or halizone tablets in it to kill the “bugs.” This was a practice that was not authorized and several penalties were meted out if caught.

August, 1943

I took a GI driver's test and got my license the first of August. I qualified for jeep, 3/4 ton and 2 ½ ton trucks. After Lt. Morgan’s statement, “Where in hell did you get your license,” I declined the offer to drive for him and was on his “shit list” after that.

Transfer fell through also. We packed our barracks bags, winter issues in “B” and the rest of our stuff in “A” bags. We waited all forenoon outside the barracks on August 1st to be shipped. At about 1:30 we shouldered our weapons, with full field packs plus “A” bags and got on the troop train.

We left Kansas at about 2:00 PM, went through some of Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and back to Tennessee. We got off the train at 4:00 AM on September 4th in the rain.
Motor Vehicle Operator's Permit
Tennessee

We boarded trucks, formed a convoy and went to our camp; a cow pasture! Pup tents were erected with two men per tent. The next day the rain stopped and we dumped our “A” bags out to dry as best we could.

I was assigned to Service Company as an assistant driver on a 2 ½ ton 6 x 6 truck. I was with Private Frank Mitchell, the driver for “L” company's kitchen. Frank and I took turns driving and taking trips to town. We hauled dishes, beds, rations, pots, stoves, water, and most anything. I was now the envy of everyone. I had a warm, dry place, got to town and was seldom hungry. I took baths more often than the boys did in the rest of the company. As a whole, my job was soft, but quite dangerous as we were on the road during night maneuvers without lights, with just little green slits. You had to be awfully close to the vehicle in front of you so you didn't get lost. We had numerous close calls. I would have changed jobs only to be a motorcycle driver. Even the company commander would like to have had my job. September went fast. We moved often and drove one thousand miles this month.

My position as assistant driver ended today when I found myself on a list with 39 others slated for overseas duty.

Someone threw a blank cartridge into the fire this evening. Nobody would admit to it, so Lt. Morgan said we would all have to stand around the fire at attention until someone confessed. We stood, under guard, from 9:00 PM until 10:00 AM, when we cut cards and an innocent person took the rap. We all expressed our love for Lt. Morgan!

We boarded a troop convoy and proceeded to Camp Forrest, arriving at about 1:00 PM and pitched shelter halves in an old six-man tent area. We ate dinner of K-rations at about 4:00 PM. I was on KP.

Camp Forrest, Tennessee

I am dubious as to our future; 1700 men from the 94th Division; it seems that lots of them were ex-non coms and were shanghaied. Period of processing again, checked clothing, turned in web equipment, gas mask and barrack bag.

I got a tetanus shot and a physical exam today, right along with the rookies, also the usual “short arm” inspection and prostate exam. It is pretty cold sleeping on the ground with only two blankets. There are lots of rumors about when and where we are going.
I wish to recall the different places I have slept since becoming a GI. I have slept in slit trenches with just an overcoat, Camp Phillips, on the shoulder of a road during a fifteen minute break, in a pup tent with one and two blankets, on top of grass or dirt or mud, in snow with overcoat, on truck canvas between bows, in Tennessee, in canvas covered trailer, under low branches of a cedar tree with one blanket, on a flat rock in the daytime with field jacket for a pillow, under a 2 ½ ton truck with one blanket, on the hood of a 2 ½ ton truck with one blanket (too small), slept leaning against a tree on October 1st, in a barn with no blankets, sitting in a truck cab, in the back of a 2 ½ ton truck on a steel floor with two blankets and a heavy canvas cover, on a Post Office porch, cement floor with no blanket (in the rain), near an open fire with only a field jacket, in the rear of a truck on top of “A” bags. Also during lots of night problems in Kansas with no jacket or blankets, just a GI raincoat. At one time I wouldn’t have considered laying a nice army blanket in the mud, dust or snow. Now it is S.O.P.

October 7, 1943

I wore woolen drawers, sun tans, fatigues, field jacket, shoes, two blankets, raincoat in a pup tent and still almost froze last night. Got new dog tags and some new clothes today. Orders came down to get rid of all extra clothing. Lots of it was burned. Some guys slipped past the guards and shipped things home. Still no mail. We leave tomorrow.

On troop train

October 8, 1943

Haven’t slept in a bed since September 3rd on a Pullman car and here I am again in an upper berth on a troop train. We left this morning at 9:30, going through the Cumberland Mountain region. Went through Chattanooga, Knoxville and a corner of Alabama, I think. I’m in a car with “K” company. Lots of Jewish (independent fellows.) I slept real warm with two blankets and a raincoat. Seems queer to be in bed by 8:30.

October 9, 1943

Wow, did I sleep! There must be something wrong, they let us sleep until 6:30 this morning. They also gave us ice cream and cookies yesterday afternoon. We went through Charleston. A favorite question of the “dogfaces” is what state is this? I have yet to see any of those smiling USO gals passing out candy and cigarettes when a troop train comes through a town. In Alexandria, two little kids about six and ten, gave away some old but welcome magazines. Sometimes some colored boys come down and sell nickel candy bars for ten cents each. We saw the capitol and Washington Monument after crossing the Potomac River.

Fort Meade, Maryland

October 10, 1943

Arrived at Fort Meade, Maryland. This is great; good food, hot showers and beds! We got here about 11:30 AM. Today is Sunday, but one would not have known it. I got a typhus
shot and another physical. We also had a clothing inspection. It's now 9:15 PM and I will hit the hay. Wish the mail would come.

October 11, 1943

A very uneventful day. I drew out some used equipment and went on a three mile hike this PM. I walked about two miles to a theatre. Sweet Rosie O'Grady was showing. Still no mail.

October 12, 1943

We had a First Aid and gas lecture this morning. I drew out some new clothes and equipment this PM. The shoes are a greenish-buckskin color, with the smooth side inside. Also got two new barracks bags, gas mask, dark colored towel and underwear, OD handkerchiefs, good raincoat and overcoat. All good stuff.

October 13, 1943

Sure appreciate being able to sleep in a bed. I got a GI haircut and want to have it clipped just before I leave, if it is not too soon. We are going over basic tactics, bayonet, close order, cover and concealment, map reading, compass, etc. Passes are available from retreat until midnight, I guess. I bought three rolls of film, 127, and want to take them along. No mail yet.

October 14, 1943

Class on censorship today. No diaries allowed over seas. We have some real rookies for officers. They know they will not go with us and try to be real tough. A Lt. Arden Darden is obviously green and gets left and right confused, resulting in some real "screw-ups"
Classes in the disassembly of the M-1, bayonet practice, close order and rifle exercises were held. Went to show Corvette. We had to put up cubicles between bunks. Still no mail. Some got mail direct from home in near by states. No forwarded mail though.

October 15, 1943

Close order drill today. Also typhus shots again. Applied for and got a three day pass starting at 6:00 AM tomorrow!

October 16, 1943

Went to Washington, D.C. on my pass. Met a nice WAVE in the Archives building. We visited points of interest together, had supper and went to the stage show I Dood It with Virginia O'Brien. After searching in vain for a hotel or other room, I went to "Tent City," operated by and for Army with free coffee and doughnuts for breakfast.

October 17, 1943

I visited the Jefferson Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Arlington Cemetery, etc., today. I dated Y 3/c Francis Bowen this evening. We went to a church program, then to a show and lunch. I slept at the USO tonight.
October 18, 1943

I saw the house where Lincoln died, the Ford Theatre, visited the Capitol and saw the Senate in session. I went to a show, Bombers Moon, also to the Stage Door Canteen and saw the Virginia O'Brien stage show again. I had lunch and caught the 2:15 bus back to Fort Meade.

October 19, 1943

Today we were on the obstacle course. This morning I was awakened by two green Lieutenants because all cubicles were not put up properly. Got eleven letters and a package from Dot containing a neat little picture holder. Haven’t gotten all the mail from Tennessee yet.

October 20, 1943

I was on KP today, washing dishes and pans continuously most all day. Got a package from Sis and one from home containing a hunting knife. Expected to be awakened again tonight on the cubicle deal.

October 21, 1943

Well, well, we went on a night problem from eight to twelve. That gets my goat. These Lieutenants think we are learning something. I have been on more night problems than they have been on day problems. We pitched tents, got to sleep and were awakened by a real gas attack. I went back to sleep wearing my gas mask. We were back to barracks by 12:30 and get tomorrow free!! We used to hike all night in Kansas and not get any time off the next day. This is boring.

October 22, 1943

Gas drill again today in the PM while on a hike. I got seven letters today and went to a show in the evening. One letter was from Pat, a gal I had dated in Washington.

October 23, 1943

I got a pass for tonight until tomorrow to 2400 hours.

October 24, 1943

Got into Washington at about 8:30 and bought a pair of goggles for Ed for $3.95. Also bought a hunting knife for $10.95. The other guys will come back from “Boom Town” with a hangover and I will have a knife tomorrow. Visited a swell USO on North Street. I burned my name on the knife sheath with a wood burning pencil. They have many nice hobby facilities there.

I slept in some guy’s bed in the Salvation Army USO. I got chased out of the first one. Went to bed about 3:00 AM. I didn’t like to see all those empty beds going to waste. The two Marines that were with me got cold feet after being chased out the first time. I went
to the Stage Door Canteen, then to a dance in a Catholic Church parlor and then to a stage show. Called Francis Bowen, but was unable to keep a date. I came back to Laurel, as per last night. The bus was full and I had to stand for the entire trip. I got here for supper.

Walked about two miles with Private Tweet to theatre #4 to see the show, but the theatre was full so I walked back via “Boom Town.” The latest rumor has us moving about October 28th.

October 25, 1943

I got more equipment and packed bags in the PM. Included were two blankets, one OD colored fatigue outfit, eight pair of OD socks, one OD bath towel, one pair of shoes, all to go into a pack or “A” bag. The “B” bag has three sun tans, one pair of shoes, mosquito nets, one blanket, one mattress cover and other stuff. Our “B” bags are to be retrieved at the destination. I received partial payment of $15. We drilled in rain all morning.

October 26, 1943

It rained all day. I was assigned as table waiter, not a bad job. I turned in both bags and was checked again. We had classes in the barracks. All the new equipment is stuff I wear when we leave. I wrote a couple of letters. Things seem to disappear awfully easy here. So far I have lost a helmet liner, a rifle sharpshooter pin and an OD garrison cap.

Camp Patrick Henry

November, 1943

It is not clear how we got to Camp Patrick Henry from Fort Meade.

November 2, 1943

We left Camp Patrick Henry, Rhodes, Virginia, on a troop train at about 9AM, receiving two sandwiches and an apple as we got on. At about 12:00 or 1:00, we were broken up into proper lengths and sided into the loading docks alongside the ship. While we sat on the docks with our “A” bags, two “Grey Ladies” passed out hot chocolate and coffee. As the first of our group started boarding the ship, a band about one hundred yards away started playing We're Going Over and various other numbers. The line passed a desk where you answered roll call with your first name and then went up the gangplank on the Liberty Ship SS John Stevens.

We were ushered into hold #2 by a Lieutenant and assigned bunks, which were canvas on a pipe frame. Mine is a top one of five, only one tier on my right and innumerable tiers to the left, head and foot. The fourth from the floor comes up to my head. I also have a light at the foot and to the right of me. The workers were not through securing the deck cargo, so we slept in the bay in between.
Norfolk and Newport News

November 3, 1943

We spent the day at anchor, watching the gulls and numerous craft assembling. Two meals a day are served on board ship. We left harbor late tonight.

On board troop ship, SS John Stevens

November 4, 1943

At sea. Nope I don't like it!

November 5, 1943

I had to force both meals down today.

November 6, 1943

Same as yesterday. I am still seasick! Today I was on KP duty.

November 7, 1943

We had Catholic services today, but no Protestant service. I was in the mood for supper and actually liked it.

November 8, 1943

I tried some tactics on breakfast, but had to force it down. I didn't go to supper at all. The sea is very rough.

November 9, 1943

The same sea today. I took a capsule last night and slept pretty well. It was hard to stay in my bunk. There is lots of vomit all around, I ate two slices of white bread for dinner and begged one from a pal for supper. It is very rough tonight.

November 10, 1943

I dreamed I was in Uncle Daves (Patchin) eating a stack of wheat cakes with honey and butter and a soft fried egg. Later I was at home, eating a steak sandwich with lettuce and tomatoes, with salad dressing. This was a very vivid picture! I tried to carry over my enthusiasm for food until breakfast, but got only to the steps and “cashed in my cookies” in my canteen cup. The breakfast menu was coffee, dry cream of wheat, two slices of white bread, butter, jam and dehydrated eggs. Few went and fewer ate. I stayed topside until about 10:00 when a corporal grabbed me and others for officer's latrine detail. I worked about five minutes and then went to the doctor. He gave me two capsules for motion sickness to be taken morning and night. I made for my bunk, but vomited some greenish fluid in my cup before I got there. After taking one of the capsules, I slept. I didn't go for supper, but got a slice of bread from the fellow in the bunk below me and forced a square of tropical chocolate and water down.
We were called out for boat drill just before dark. I got two K-rations while up there. It is rough when the ship goes down in a trough. You can't even see the other ships in the convoy. It is raining tonight.

November 11, 1943

Well, this is more like it. The sea is quite calm today. At times I can see other ships in the distance. It's getting rough again tonight. I ate most of a K-ration this morning and a whole C-ration tonight. I feel much better. Several cases of rations are taken from the storeroom every night. It is very common to see eight or ten men standing around in a group and when the case is opened, they pounce on it like hungry wolves. They emerge with two or three or an armful of cans. At length one or two stragglers find their footing, stand up, and stagger away, beaten but wiser. Their tactics on the next box bring amazing results. It is said that even the officers play the same game. I'm not worrying about the chow line anymore. What I eat usually comes back up.

I am in need of a shave and a bath, as are the others. The hold is unbelievably dirty and foul smelling. I'm only the fourth bunk from an air vent, so that helps.

November 12, 1943

The sea got rough again. I ate four "biscuits" from C-rations. I was topside for about fifteen minutes. Sea is very choppy and windy. I don't feel too well!

November 13, 1943

Still choppy and rough. I ate breakfast and dinner and some K-rations. Feel better tonight. We got instructions to keep a full canteen of water at all times. Had boat drill.

November 14, 1943

Sunday, shaved a week old beard today. It is quite windy again. I got partial payment of $10. Card and crap games were interrupted long enough to hold a simple mass for the Catholics, but no service for Protestants. Ate K-rations for breakfast and C-rations for supper.

Most everyone has his normal stomach back again. The sea is quite smooth. Along with pay, we received a carton of cigarettes and a Baby Ruth candy bar from the Red Cross. I sold the cigarettes for thirty cents and was offered twenty-five cents for the candy bar. It's 1:00 AM and few have gone to bed.

November 15, 1943

It is quite nice today. They chased us out on deck at 8:30 AM so that filthy place could be cleaned up some. It is filthy. The center of the hold is covered with heavy canvas, which is slippery with grease and grime. This area is often filled with crapshooters and really presents a problem to go below. Ate C and K-rations and went through the chow line tonight. I had ½ a yellow pill, two slices of "pilot bread," stale butter, jam spaghetti and hot cocoa. I didn't even drink all the cocoa; K-rations are better. I still crave fresh fruit of
any kind, or lettuce or tomato. The crew gets fresh fruit, but not us. I feel pretty good, even on the equivalent of two meals a day. The sea is smoother now.

November 16, 1943

Ate K and C-rations. Don't go through the chow line, which is inferior to rations. I was "acting Corporal of the Guard" at 4:00 to 6:00, 10:00 to 12:00 and 4:00 to 6:00. They fired the 20-mm guns today for practice. I got one empty case. The sea is smooth and it is really a beautiful night, moon, etc. It is also very good for subs too. The convoy zigzags quite a bit to avoid being a good target.

November 17, 1943

Still no sign of land. Ate up the K and C-rations and now must try to replenish them. It is darker than the inside of a black cow out tonight. I saw several phosphorescent areas of plankton or something in the water along side the ship.

November 18, 1943

We were aroused at the usual 8:00 AM and chased out on deck so that the stinking hold could be cleaned. Body odors are strong after about three weeks without a bath. Had boat drill today. It is real dark tonight. I ate rations again today.

November 19, 1943

The sea was really rough again today. The ship rolled over on its side farther at times than ever before. Tin cans were falling, guys were hollering and sliding around, canteen cups, forks, spoons and helmet liners were falling and at times you had to hang on to keep from falling out of your bunk. I did my usual reading out of the New Testament. Still no land in sight. I removed my shoes to sleep last night.

November 20, 1943

I think we encountered an enemy sub at about 5:30 PM. I was forward and saw a destroyer on the left front drop a depth charge about three-quarters of a mile from us. It sent a blinker signal and circled the spot for some time. Nothing was officially confirmed.

I think we passed the Rock of Gibraltar at 8:30 to 9:00 PM. There were a couple of lights visible to the North at this time. Ate rations and was down in the hold looking for K-rations. The sea is very still. I got my hair all clipped off tonight. I ate part of an onion, which I got from Pvt. Verville. It was sure good.

November 21, 1943

Land! Africa! I saw it at 6:00 AM, but the sun wasn't up and there was room for debate as to whether it was mountains or clouds. It is 12:00 now and you can see it both on port and starboard sides. We are apparently nearing the "Rock", although I can't see it. I must have been wrong about last night. After twenty days of water, all one can do is gaze out over
the tree covered bluffs and say, "It's beautiful." Yeah, we passed the "Rock" tonight. I saw a whole school of porpoises. Ate rations again today and read daily gospel as usual.

November 22, 1943

Anchored in harbor tonight. Supposed to get off tomorrow. Very interesting, they even have electric lights. What will tomorrow bring?

November 23, 1943

We moved in and tied up. Most interesting to a kid from the Midwest of the USA. I now realize how fortunate we were to reach port without misfortune. Evidence of the conflict in which we are engaged is visible on many ships here. Gaping holes where torpedoes have hit, a half a ship and a partially burned tanker.

Had cornflakes for breakfast, went through chow line. C-rations again for supper. I wish I had some fishing equipment. An old guy sat out here in a rowboat on our starboard, catching little chubs all forenoon. The sailors got shore leave this AM. I was among the many that swiped onions and potatoes last night. I stored a couple in my barracks bag along with other rations.

**Oran, Algeria**

November 24, 1943

It was sure impressive coming into harbor. We raided rations and got off the SS John Stevens. By the time we got on trucks, it was dark. Everything I could see was very interesting.

November 25, 1943

We slept in squad tents at the foot of Lion Mountains. Our bunks are of rope slung between 2 x 4's. Woke up with rope marks all over my body. It's OK. I'm just glad to be on solid ground. It's sure a swell view of the mountain. We had the most beautiful dinner: turkey, dressing, boiled hearts, sweet potatoes, a salad of cheese and pineapple, pickles, peas, cranberry sauce, bread, pumpkin pie, nuts, candy and coffee. I went to a free show *Bataan* on the side of a hill. They have only one projector, so it takes quite sometime. I took an "open air shower" and nearly froze. We are sleeping on straw filled mattress covers.

November 26, 1943

Saw some natives wearing a draw string barracks bag with two holes cut in the bottom for feet to go through. Can get a pass to town. It is quite interesting to see the veiled women and "wrap around dresses." You can buy local produce right on the street. Lots of carts pulled by donkeys and kids begging for chewing gum. Sanitation is a problem in town. Open gutters are sometimes seen with all manner of crap and garbage.
November 27, 1943
We got our “B” bags and turned in some clothing. I saw a white woman. She must have been from the Red Cross. I went to the show Thank Your Lucky Stars.

November 28, 1943
Attended Protestant services at 9:15 and answered the “invitation hymn”. We got gold seal currency for the money we turned in on the ship. The Red Cross sold 3/4 of a canteen cup of ice cream for two francs, which was delicious. Went to the show Stormy Weather. Heard jackals yipping again tonight. I did my washing in my helmet.

November 29, 1943
They started processing; I am a messenger. Went to a show again tonight; Crazy Horse. We have swell meals.

November 30, 1943
It was just a year ago when I enlisted at Madison, Wisconsin. Got tickets for PX rations. Went to the show White Savage. Stopped at the Red Cross building, but it was packed with a show going on.

December 1, 1943
We are restricted or in quarantine yet. It rained or was cold and foggy most of the day. The summit of the mountain was hidden by clouds quite a lot of the day. I waited in PX line for about twenty-five minutes and bought 2 cigars, 9 cigarettes, 2 bars of soap, 1 roll of candy wafers, 1 life saver, a box of hard candy squares, 1 five cent bar, 3 razor blades and one bottle of ink, all for $1.03 - my rations for a week. I was changed to the first platoon of “B” Company yesterday. I have been in Companies A, B, C, D, L and R so far. Went to the show Andy Hardy's Double Life. Went to the Red Cross early in the evening and got ice cream in my canteen cup for two francs.

December 2, 1943
We were on formal guard mount at 11:00 AM. I was Corporal of First Relief, twenty men. Went down to the villa to inspect the guard in the afternoon. Nice buildings, but dirty with goats, chickens, sheep and kids all in the same rooms. One guard is posted in front of the courtyard entrance and other walks along side. The purpose was to keep soldiers out of the villa. I gave some Italian prisoners candy and cigarettes. Slept in the guard tent tonight.

December 3, 1943
Mounted a new guard and through Sgt. Martin, he and Santilli, Reed and I got a pass from 1300 hours to 2200 hours. We headed for St. Cloud and walked all six miles. We wandered around; it was very interesting. I took a couple of pictures. Lots of bullet holes. Bought oranges and tangerines at about forty-eight cents per dozen. Trading is better than
cash. I traded an old fountain pen, which I had saved for that purpose, for eight tangerines.

Cigarettes are also very good for trading. We had lots of fun trying to understand French and Spanish. I saw lots of people at a public water hydrant filling jars, pitchers and other containers. Saw several foreign motorcycles. I was surprised to see the size of the motors in French cars, which go by like a “bat out of hell” when you hitchhike. Ate supper of soup, some kind of cornmeal, etc., two eggs, sunny side up, sausage, highly seasoned, bread comes in fifteen-inch loaves, quart of wine, tangerine and spaghetti. Cost 60 francs.

The Market Square was being filled with wares. It would be interesting to visit it on Saturday when everything is in full swing. I saw a funeral procession, led by a red robed priest and altar boys, a horse drawn coffin with flowers and canopy. Four men carrying a sheet with a cross preceded the coffin. Mourners followed on foot. We removed our headgear when it passed by.

Very few American soldiers here. The French use almost all U. S. equipment such as jeeps, cycles, staff cars, etc. I might add that they act very unappreciative too!

We started back to camp at 7:15 and helped two Arabs push their cart of wood up a hill and made a little over six miles in an hour and five minutes.

December 4, 1943

I am the only one in “D” company and the only “L” company replacement that I know of that is on shipping alert. I didn't have to fall out with the rest of the company this morning. Had Spam and eggs, cream of wheat, bread and civilized coffee for breakfast. Participated in tent and personal inspection, then went to show Frankenstein Meets The Wolf Man.

December 5, 1943

Sunday, I was to pack my barracks bag and be at the supply room at 3:00 PM. When I returned from church, someone had already packed it. I waited until a checkup disclosed it to be an Armored Force man, Leonard L. Sherman, instead of me. I thought for a while that my prayers were going to be answered. For nine months, back in the States, I prayed every night that I might get an army cycle to ride, but with all that and the physical efforts, I am still in the Infantry. I went to an evening Protestant service and then to the show Star Spangled Rhythm.

December 6, 1943

A shipment went out. I fell out for drill and hiked ten miles in the forenoon. Took a shower and did some laundry.
December 7, 1943

Our tent got passes at 8:00 AM. We walked about a mile and got a ride into town. I traded cigarettes for three oranges. I think I got gypped. Ate at the Red Cross: Spam sandwich, doughnuts, coffee, and ice cream for five francs, Registered in State Log Book and saw one name from Evansville (Woodstock.) Bought a French language manual and had a Frenchman help with interpretation. It's quite difficult to get the sounds of vowels, etc., but I hope to get a basic idea of the language.

Went into the projection booth of the American Red Cross theatre. They have two American super simplex machines operated by a Frenchman. We met a couple of “D” Company cadremen and got a ride in a truck back to camp by 10:00 PM.

December 8, 1943

I lost or can't locate my pearl handled pocketknife with the little scissors; missed it this morning. There sure are lots of motorcycles in town. While looking down from the balcony of the Red Cross building, I saw lots of interesting sights below; an open wagon with butchered beef, sheep hides, heads and hooves all together. The one end of the beef dragged on the street when they unloaded it. Kids stood below us and begged gum, candy and cigarettes when we dropped them. Veiled women with baskets of oranges, wine or bread carried on their heads had as much right of way as carts or vehicles in the narrow streets. I pinched myself to see if I wasn't watching a circus.

I tried to increase my allotment (bond), but can't until I get assigned to a permanent outfit.

December 9, 1943

We had a night hike up the mountain for four hours.

December 10, 1943

We went on the firing range this morning; fifty yards just for practice. It rained quite a bit last night and the clouds were so low over the range at one time, you could hardly see the targets. I fired twenty-nine shots with the M-1. Got a partial payment of $10. Woke up this morning with the GI's. It must have been something I ate. I got PX rations; 8 cigarettes, 3 cigars, 1 soap, 2 razor blades, one candy bar, a Tootsie Roll and two rolls of candy wafers for $0.95. Drew the fourth blanket and went to the show Henry Aldrich.

December 11, 1943

We had close order drill, calisthenics and a ten-mile hike this morning. You would think we were a bunch of rookies! We had chicken for dinner, grapefruit juice to drink. We have had quite a lot of tomatoes, pineapple, grapefruit and lemon juice to drink. Have lots of Spam too. I had a small piece of fried chicken for supper and went to a show.
December 12, 1943

Went to 10:00 Protestant Services. It is cold and rainy. I got the most beautiful box of Fanny May candy from Natalie; was two pounds, however, still no letter. I went back to the mailroom and there was a letter from her with a Virgin Mary medal inside, also a Christmas card with a note. I usually get a piece of mail almost daily. Much more than lots of other fellows get. I write more than they do too! The weather is very miserable. We can't have fires in our tents to dry things either. We went on a fifteen-mile hike in the rain and all my shoes are wet.

December 13, 1943

All the guys in our tent went on pass in the rain except me. I was Company Runner again. I went to Battalion Headquarters to see about getting a job typing. I got it. I'm working at depot headquarters. Wednesday it cleared up and the sun came out. I worked on payroll and did some filing etc.

December 15, 1943

Worked on payroll. Got a box of stationary from Aunt Mary Sellick. I got PX rations after standing in line for nearly two hours.

December 18, 1943

Typed payroll as usual.

December 19, 1943

I worked from 9:00 to 10:00, went to church services and then typed until noon. Went to evening services and then to a movie.

December 21, 1943

Attended a French class in the Battalion recreation hall in the evening while the Company went on a hike up the mountain.

December 24, 1943

After I returned from personnel this noon, a B-25 flew over the area quite low. I went outside the tent when I heard a dull puff and the engine stopped. Through the clouds, I could see the flames and smoke where he hit. Rain and low clouds obscured the mountain until about five minutes after the accident, it cleared up.

December 25, 1943

We had turkey and all the trimmings for Christmas dinner. I went to midnight Mass with Elmer Buynak. The Company fell out for a hike, as usual, before dinner. I went to the barber and had a haircut for twenty cents. We went on shipping alert this PM.
December 26, 1943
I went to church and then to the Personnel Office. I was to have an interview with a Major to see about cavalry. It did not materialize.

December 27, 1943
Left on truck in the PM, boarded Dutch ship and cast off on December 28th.

**On board the Dutch ship in the Mediterranean Sea**

December 29, 1943
Water is quite calm and the ship rides nice and smooth, but I guess I am allergic to water. I'm not hungry. It is a good thing because the food seems terribly scarce or perhaps the English eat like this all the time? There are twenty men at our table. I have been put in charge of it. I appoint two men to go to "mess" to bring the food for every meal. We had a real tiny hunk of rose fish, about the equivalent of two slices of bacon and two oblong crackers, terribly hard, for breakfast.

Dinner was two golf ball size potatoes with the skins on, a tablespoon of boiled liver, some kind of bread pudding, a slice of frozen corned beef $\frac{1}{2} \times 3 \times 4$, a tablespoon of stewed carrots and peas, (I still think they were soy beans) coffee and a hunk of bread the size of two slices and a square of butter. The ship's canteen sold canned peaches for $1.60 and a tin of sardines for forty cents; Australian peaches and American sardines. Our hold is about the size of the one on the SS John Ericsson; about 340 men in it and lots of roaches. *(Note: the SS John Ericsson was the ship that Pfc. Ray Sherman returned to the United States on.)* In one corner near the ceiling is a colony of roaches the size of the circumference of a bushel basket! We sleep in real hammocks, which we put up over the tables. We are also carrying Italian officers, who travel first class with white table clothes, rugs, nice chairs, etc. I doubt if they even have to contend with all the cockroaches!

Our crew are apparently natives of the Dutch East Indies. They are definitely queer looking ducks. They all appear to be lacking some kind of vitamins or are undernourished or something. They are all dark skinned with dark hair and eyes. All carry some kind of knife. We have all kinds of uniforms or persons unimaginable on board. We are flying a barrage balloon for added dive-bomber protection.