

DIARY
OF
CORPORAL JOHN JOSEPH DUMONG
UNITED STATES ARMY
SERIAL NUMBER 3675-4015
COMPANY "A"
167th ENGINEER (COMBAT) BATTALION



Diary of Corporal John Joseph DuMong United States Army
Serial Number 3675-4015
Company "A" – 167 Engineer (Combat) Battalion
3rd Platoon
A.P.O. 339 c/o PM
New York, N.Y.

In case this is found either burn it up or please send it to me.
"The difficult is done immediately, the impossible we do our
best"

Diary of Army life from the time we were ready to leave our
basic camps.

NOTE: The items in smaller italicized print is from the 167th
Engineer Combat Battalion official record.

MAY 1943

The 167th Engineer Combat Battalion was activated on 15 May 1943 at Camp McCain Mississippi and was immediately attached to the XXI Detachment, Special Troops, 2nd Army for Administration and Supply. Captain Hugh E. Templeton was in Command.

From 11 May 1943 to 7 July 1943 the ranks began to fill out and it soon became a recognizable Battalion.. Most of the enlisted men came primarily from the reception centers of Illinois and Michigan.

SEPTEMBER 1943

The Battalion completed its Initial Training Period on September 25, 1943 which consisted of building bridges, laying and removing mine fields, rigging and demolitions. Major Templeton was in command of the Battalion.

OCTOBER 1943

The Battalion started the second stage of its training on October 4, the Unit Training Period. Camp McCain was left behind in November and the new training area was the Louisiana Maneuver Area.

NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 1943

During the Louisiana Maneuvers, the Battalion, working as Corps Troops, was assigned the duty of keeping lines of communications open and repairing bridges for tactical units. Tents were pitched in mud and rain and men were continuously cold, wet, hungry and dirty.

JANUARY, FEBRUARY 1944

After four long months of hard work and Louisiana mud, the Battalion motored back to Camp McCain. Major Manion took command of the Battalion and it was assigned to the Fourth Army.

MARCH, APRIL 1944

The Intensive Training Period started on March 3, 1944. Each man in the Battalion was to complete all of the overseas "musts" and had to be especially qualified in Preparation for Overseas Movement (POM).

MAY 1944

On 15 May, the Battalion had its first anniversary. There was a parade and a review. On May 27, a demonstration of Combat Engineer Training was given for Secretary of War Patterson. The demonstration included construction of Bailey and timber bridges, laying of mine fields and rigging

June 12, 1944

All sort of excitement around here. Have all new equipment. Looks like we are all set.

June 13, 1944

Left on train, from **Camp McCain**, destination unknown. The boys have all made guesses where we were headed. Played poker to pass time.

June 14, 1944

Still on train. Played more poker. Luck lousy.

On June 15 and 16, the Battalion said good bye to Camp McCain en route to the staging area at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts.

June 15, 1944

Arrived at **Camp Miles Standish**. Am not to happy about the whole deal.

June 16, 1944

Still at **Miles Standish**, checked clothing again.

June 17, 1944

Still at M.S.

June 18, 1944

Still at M.S.

June 19, 1944

Still at M.S.

June 20 – 25, 1944

Still at same place.

On 26 June, 1944 the Battalion proceeded by rail to the Boston Port of Embarkation and boarded the British ship H.M.S, Mauretania, destination UNKNOWN.

June 26, 1944

The big day has arrived. Left by train for boat at 6:30AM.

Boarded the largest boat from **England**. The **Mauretania** at 1000 hrs.

The band was playing and my heart was starting to act funny. Thrilled.

June 27, 1944

Stayed all day on boat

June 28, 1944

Left **Boston** harbor at dawn. Rode out about 3 miles and parked for awhile. Started out on our voyage again around noon.

June 29, 1944

Our Battalion has been picked for M.P. duty on boat for entire trip.

June 30, 1944

My post is the Medics hospital. Pretty handy in case I get seasick.

We were escorted by a seaplane for awhile and he was relieved by a Zepp

July 1, 1944

Everything pretty quiet. Escort left us. Starting to really burn the oil now.

July 2, 1944

All quiet. All routine stuff. Got a shot in the arm again.

July 3, 1944

Sub sighted. Zigg-zagged on course and lost sub. No shots were fired. All quiet again.

July 4, 1944

Celebrated by firing a volley of shots and a dandy pep talk by English Commander.

We have hit the cold waters. Big relief from the hot stuffy weather we had.

July 5, 1944

Landed at **Liverpool** port. Band played American songs "Yanks are coming" was very inspiring. Had to stay on boat.

On 6 July 1944, the battalion disembarked at Liverpool, England and proceeded by rail to Stuart Commons, England. Upon arrival the attached to the 1117 Engineer Combat Group and assigned to Third Army.

July 6, 1944

Got off boat and walked a few miles carrying packs to train. Red Cross served coffee & doughnuts.

July 7, 1944

Arrived at **Camp Stewart** the day previous. Spent today arranging sleeping quarters and vicinity.

July 8, 1944

Spent day training.

July 9, 1944

Spent day training(demolishing)

July 10, 1944

After day of training we had a pass. Drank a lot of lousy beer. Went to dance hall and danced quite a bit. Had a good time.

July 11 – 14, 1944

Left for new training area for increased training on pontoon bridges.

July 15 – August 1, 1944

All time spent on severe training. Had a few more passes. Find the English girls uninteresting.

August 2, 1944

Arrived at marshalling area. Stayed overnight. Quite a lot of Zepps or Rubber Balloons guarding this part of England.

August 3, 1944

Still at Marshaling area

August 4, 1944

Left for boat to cross Channel. Left for **France** at 10:00 PM from **South Hampton**.

On August 5, 1944, the Battalion disembarked at Utah Beach at 1530hours and bivouacked one mile SW of St. Germaine de Varreville, France

During the first days of August the Battalion got its first glimpse of the war-torn countryside of France, Everywhere we looked, the destruction and desolation of war could be seen.

August 5, 1944

Arrived in **France at Utah Beach** and waited for tide to go out. Got off boat at 2:30 PM and drove from LST by truck. Were awed by huge shell holes and damage of villages by our Army.

August 6, 1944

Stayed at Bivouac area and had to be careful of booby traps.

On August 12, while out on reconnaissance in enemy held territory, Lt Ziegler, T/4 Newlin, T/5 Baker and T/5 Nicholson were ambushed. The patrol ran into a German road block one kilometer SE of Vallaine. T/5 Baker was killed, Lt. Ziegler was seriously wounded. Ziegler was detained as a POW until the end of the War. Newlin and Nicholson later returned safely to the Unit after being released. They reported that the enemy had no transportation to evacuate them

On August 21, the 1st Platoon, Company A under the Command of Lt. Tucker, while out on reconnaissance in the vicinity of Bellegarde, came under heavy fire from enemy ambush. The Platoon withdrew, leaving Pvt. Kalat and a squad as rear guard. Pvt. Kalat remained on the vehicle and opened fire with his machine gun, killing and wounding several of the enemy. His fire was so effective that it enabled the squad to remount the vehicle and effect their escape. Pvt. Kalat was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

August 7 - 30, 1944

Started on road work. Saw first good German a dead one. Had nasty job of turning them over for inspection of booby traps. They were bloated and stunk like hell. Got a lot of Cider from people who were liberated by us. Wine and Cognac very expensive. Tried to master French language but no soap. Read out of translation dictionary.

During the last days of August, the Battalion, as units of the Third Army, moved through Velleloup, Sommesous, Resson, Bar-le-Duc, Commercy and Toul.

On September 4, the Battalion moved SE of Bourcq. At this location the Battalion was given the mission of building bridges across the Moselle River and Canal, to assist the 8001 Division in making the crossing

August 30 – September 11, 1944

All routine work. Same as maneuvers. Mostly repairing roads for heavy traffic behind us. Pretty close to front lines all the time. Today were informed of hot job coming up. Can't say I like it.

During the period September 9 to September 24, the Officers and men of Company A, Company B, Company C, and H&S Company distinguished themselves in the performance of combat engineering missions in support of the crossings of the Moselle River by XII Corps at Dieuouard, France.

During the crossing of the Moselle River, a provisional platoon made up of mechanics, clerks, truck drivers, and other specialists from H&S Company performed outstanding service as combat engineers and infantrymen. The platoon was commanded by Captain James J. Donnelly.

On September 12, the provisional platoon assisted B Company in the construction and maintenance of a vehicle ford across the Moselle River at Dieulouard, France. They were under intermittent artillery fire during most of the day. On the 13th, they assisted Company A in the replacement of assault boat pontoons of an Infantry Support Bridge damaged by shrapnel. During this work, they were under constant fire from artillery. In several instances, the men narrowly escaped death or injury by diving into the water to avoid shell fragments.

A commendation for the work done by the Battalion at the Moselle River Crossing was presented by Major General M. S. Eddy, commander of XII Corps.

September 12, 1944

Left bivouac area before dawn to bridge **Mosselle River**. Enemy on opposite side. At dawn all artillery opened up and we started work. Put up first bridge in big drive. Everything went along smoothly until noon. Enemy artillery started zeroing on our bridge. No hits were scored on bridge. Had a few close shaves but was saved by faulty shells.

Left by bridge as guard and to maintain. How I wish to be home. Never prayed so hard in my life.

September 13, 1944

Still a lot of artillery from enemy. They were driven to higher grounds. Buddy killed in afternoon by shell. Same afternoon spent a lot of time in ditch. Small protection. Prayers are heard, Buddies alongside of me wounded and yours truly was lucky.

September 14, 1944

Same place. Shelling ceasing a little. In afternoon it stopped. On guard at night. Big counter attack. Jerries driven back. Sure had a close one.

September 15, 1944

Relieved of guard duty. Could of kissed C.O. for big favor. Went back to former bivouac area and rested. Oh! For a drink.

September 16, 1944

Road work around bridge. Scared stiff.

September 17, 1944

Same work.

September 18, 1944

Built another bridge a mile or two further down from first one.
Shelled at dawn of September 19, 1944.

September 19, 1944

Here we go again. More shells, Jerries have advantage of high ground. Seen our P47's in action. One shot down. Picked up by Cub plane and saved in enemy territory.

September 20, 1944

Lot of planes giving us a big hand. Best thriller ever seen. Lot's of action.

On September 26, the mission of the unit was to construct barbed wire entanglements, lay mine fields, and to put up defensive positions along the front lines on the East side of the Moselle River.

September 20 – 30, 1944

Spent most of the time building CP's for infantry. Lot of excitement had by all.

September 30 – October 5, 1944

Same work, Always close to enemy. Don't like the idea.

On October 5, Major Manion was relieved of his command and Major Leonard W. Peterson, who was S-3 of the 1117 Engineer Combat Group, assumed command of the Battalion. The Battalion moved to Pont-a-Mousson, France and for the remainder of October was given the mission to maintain front line barriers and mine fields.

October 5, 1944

Moved to **Pont A Mousson**. Lived in doll factory. Routine work.

October 6 – 7, 1944

Routine work.

October 8, 1944

Shelled by Naval gun shell weighs 700 lbs. Routine work at daytime. Spent a lot of time in shelter.

October 9, 1944

More shells, a few close ones. Throwing smaller shells. Had hot job of pulling mines at night. Truck blown up and 3 buddies hurt. Not serious. Enemy very close by.

October 10 – 27, 1944

Routine road work.

On October 14, a Battalion formation was held for General Eddy, who presented the men of the Battalion with Silver and Bronze Star Medals.

On November 1, the Battalion moved to the vicinity of Liverdun to attend the XI1 Corp's Floating Bridge School

October 28 – November 1, 1944

Left for bridge school. Before leaving, seen Marline Dietrich. Not so hot. At bridge school trained as motor boat operator. Spent 2 days on different size motors.

November 2, 1944

Left school for trip back to **Pont A Mousson**. Sort of leery. Lived in some factory.

. On November 4 the unit moved back to Pont-a-Mousson where preparations were made to cross the Seille River near Port sur Seille. The companies of the battalion supported the 4th Armored Division and the 42nd Cavalry in the river crossings.

November 2 – 9, 1944

Routine work. Pretty noisy from artillery guns of ours.

November 9, 1944

Left **Pont A Mousson** for **Fort Cecil**. Stayed there one day and night.

November 10, 1944

Arrived at **Chateau Ville**. Bivouacked in house. Time spent on guard .

November 11, 1944

Same place. Stood guard.

November 12, 1944

Still at **Chateau Ville**. Rest of Platoon moved out and left our squad there. Truck broke down so stayed at **Chateau Ville**. All quiet on our part.

November 13, 1944

Moved to town named Sallach. Had a house to ourselves. Fireplace and all. Stood guard in pitch black night.

November 14, 1944

Built bridge and was shelled again. Snowed all night. Shelling not accurate.

November 15, 1944

Went back and improved bridge. Shelled again. Shrapnel landed on bridge but no one was hurt.

November 16, 1944

Was called on same job. Drove nails by flashlight. No more shelling.

November 17, 1944

Stood guard at Sallack no excitement.

November 18, 1944

Played pinochle. Had picture taken by press in a Heinie grave yard. Stood guard.

November 19 – 20, 1944

Moved to **Remilly**. No work. Stood guard. Seen first robot bomb. Scared hell out of me.

November 21, 1944

Guard duty. Biggest day in history. **Metz** taken for first time in centuries by Yanks. Glad to be a Yank.

November 22, 1944

More guard duty. Was Corporal of guard. No excitement.

November 23, 1944

Turkey galore. Had swell Thanksgiving. Stood guard at night.

November 24, 1944

More guard duty. Extra careful on duty because of news of infiltrating Jerries.

November 25, 1944

Rest of Company moved out. More guard duty.

November 26, 1944

Moved to **St. Avoild**. Moved into large building, Attached to Recon Calvary. Most work done with our own protection. Way ahead of Infantry.

November 27, 1944

Job filling in tank trap.

November 28, 1944

More tank traps. Filled up with gravel. Supply truck burned up. Went back and went to sleep. Recon outfit red hot, Had job for us but was to hot. Lieutenant refused job. Lucky for us because it was a trap.

November 29, 1944

More holes to fill. Shelled and finished job and left in record time. Went back to bivouac area and heard rumors of time bombs in city. 28 reported by prisoner. Sweated the night out.

November 30, 1944

Stayed in all day and hunted for more bombs. They were set to go off from 10 minutes to 21 days. Found bomb with 2,000 lbs of T.N.T. . Am starting to get worried. Played pinochle at night anyways.

December 1 ^ found the Battalion at Camp Teting Camp, France which was an abandoned French Army Post along the Maginot Line. Here the units of the Battalion helped to remove time bombs from the 80th Division Headquarters at Ste. Avoird.

December 1, 1944

Got attached to new Recon Calvary outfit. Seems like suicide to stay with them. Am wondering if I will ever see my honey again.

December 2, 1944

Artillery zeroed in on the town. Broke windows above where I slept. Spent night in air raid shelter.

December 3, 1944

Looked for more bombs in our building. Tore a big lumber pile down looking. No luck, Stood guard that night.

After guard duty was over played pinochle waiting for shelling to start.

Between sweating out time bombs and enemy artillery am getting worn out. Shell started coming in moved to basement again. Alerted to move.

December 4, 1944

Moved in day time to **Oberhomburg**. Heavy fighting on outskirts of town. Could hear mortars coughing. Stood guard and heard our planes going into Germany. Sounded good.

December 5, 1944

Heard time bombs blew up in **St. Avoild**. Moved out just in time. Alerted to move again.

December 6, 1944

In **Germany** at last. Moved into small house. Not much protection. Shelled again. We were acting as ghost infantry Sure didn't like it.

December 6, 1944

Protected town. Heavy fighting in next town. On guard constantly for infiltrating hienies.

December 7 – 8, 1944

Today was told we were going back to Battalion. Sure good news.

Out of the whole deal one man broke down from shell fire. Alerted to move. Moved back about 20 miles and slept in hienie barracks.

December 9, 1944

Went on quartering party for new bivouac area for Battalion . Found good room for squad in town called **St. Michel**. Good civilians live around town. Had a little Schnapps. Am brushing up on my German.

December 10, 1944

Stayed in getting equipment in shape.

December 11, 1944

Went to work on bridge. Good job by us. No excitement.

December 12, 1944

Went to work on new bridge in rain. Got muddied up. Lady downstairs baked us apple pies. They were good. Still at St. Michel.

December 13, 1944

Worked on tank traps. Came back and heard they were picking out boys in our outfit for infantry. Keeping fingers crossed.

December 14, 1944

Went to work on same tank trap after freezing ride on truck. Came in at night and spent rest of night playing pinochle.

December 15, 1944

Had hot cakes for breakfast. Went to work on road until 10:30. Called in to work on fixed bridge. Zuke hurt by flying board. Got material ready for bridge and came back. Spent night writing letters.

December 16, 1944

Built another fixed bridge. Commented on bridge by COL. Best job yet. Finished bridge and came back.

December 17, 1944

Went to church today in **St. Michel**. Beautiful service. Went out to work after. Seen air show by P47's. One Hienie plane came over by us but was chased back by anti aircraft fire. Came in at 6:oclock. Had haircut. Hit the hay early.

December 18, 1944

Alerted to move so stayed in. Got truck all set. Didn't move after all. Went downstairs and had plenty of Schnapps. Went to bed late.

December 19, 1944

Stayed in all day and loafed.

December 20, 1944

Road work again, No excitement.

December 21, 1944

Took a shower today. Went on guard afterwards in **Sargammend**. Enemy close by. Guarded bridge the Hieneis forgot to blow up. Plenty of night excitement. Was scared stiff on guard. Shells were coming in close. Finished guard duty and tried to get some sleep.

On December 22, the Battalion was in support of the 44th Division.

December 22, 1944

On guard all day and night. Spent a lot of time with infantry boys.

December 23, 1944

On guard until night time. Was relieved and came back to **St. Michel**.

December 24, 1944

Went to work on another fixed bridge. Done a good job. Went to church services at midnight. Received Holy Communion. Most beautiful High mass ever attended.

Christmas was spent in Herbitzheim, France, an island-like town on the Saare River. Except for the turkey dinner and Christmas packages from home, Christmas Day was just another working day for the men of the Battalion.

December 25, 1944

Went to work on this big holiday. Came in for Turkey dinner. Had all the trimmings. Went back to work on big bridge job.

Came in at 5:30 and finished the night playing pinochle. The lady downstairs baked a cake and some cookies for us. Also gave us a bottle of Schnapps. Good stuff too.

December 26, 1944

Went out to work on bridge again. Coming along pretty good. A few shells landed close by but did not pay any attention to them.

December 27, 1944

Stayed in today. Have a rash on my face and went to Medics. Treated with penicillin. Nothing much . Alerted for enemy troops.

December 28, 1944

Stayed in today. Played pinochle part of the time. Was waiting for a letter from my honey but no soap. Spent the night helping eat my buddies packages and writing a letter. Still on alert. Oh me! We were called out at 11:30 at night to throw sand on hills and curves. Sure was glad it was dark or other soldiers would have thought we were bucking for a S8(Section Eight). Sergeant Smith was shot at by a guard. No one hurt. Got in at 7 in the morning and retired.

December 29, 1944

After working all night I slept until noon. Spent the day gabbing. Am finishing by writing a couple of letters. On alert.

December 30, 1944

Called out to guard bridge. Spent day guarding and building shelter. Had a nice setup and was relieved at midnight. Went back to area.

On 31 December the Battalion moved to another French Camp outside of Sarralbe, France.

During this period, the Battalion was transferred from the Third Army to the Seventh Army, under the command of General Jacob Devers. Major units of General Patton's Third Army were moved North to help contain the German's counterattack in the Battle of the Bulge.

December 31, 1944

Went to Church and after Church laid mine field. Pity any Jerrie trying to go through it. After finishing mine field went back and was alerted to move. Moved to **Sarralbe**. Bivouacked in German barracks cold as can be trying to sleep.

During the month of January, the battalion laid mine fields, constructed road blocks and dug defensive positions in support of the 44th Infantry Division. Five bridges were constructed in the Sarreguemines and Remelfing areas.

January 1, 1945

Spent the New Year as any other holiday. Work! Set up demolition on bridge. On alert as usual.

January 2, 1945

Gave us a break and we slept until 8 o'clock. Went to work on mine field. Had to stay for guard.

January 3, 1945

On guard all day and night. A few shells passed overhead but they were not intended for us. Was a little nervous but slept good on off duty.

January 4, 1945

On guard in some place. Noisy as hell all day and night. Lot of big guns popping off. Town nearby heavily shelled. I wrote my usual letter tonight. I sure am homesick.

January 5, 1945

Stood guard on mine field. Went hunting rabbits. Shot one but he got away. Spent the rest of the day "spitting in wind". Rabbit set off "bouncing Betty" at night.

January 6, 1945

Between guard shifts went hunting. Got a big jack through the heart at 300 yards. Dressed it for next day. During night another "Betty" went off. Am anxious to see if it got another rabbit.

January 7, 1945

Still on guard duty on craters. Went hunting after guard relief. 2 more jacks to my credit. Fried up the other one. Delicious.

January 8, 1945

Same place, same guard. Got another jack.

January 9, 1945

Got my first deer. Big 5 pointer. Am now a confirmed deer hunter. Same work.

January 10, 1945

Relieved at 5 at night for road work. 2 buddies killed in mine fields. Sure is jittery around here.

January 11, 1945

Sanding road all day. Won \$50 in crap game at night.

January 12, 1945

Sanding road. Had big portion of deer. Best meat I ever ate. Officers enjoyed it also. Went to bed early.

January 13, 1945

Stayed in bivouac area in morning.

January 14, 1945

Made accordions all day for another outfit.

January 15, 1945

Same work

January 16, 1945

Made more accordions. Acted as assistant driver and helped haul the accordions to front.

January 17, 1945

Worked on road to new pontoon bridge.

January 18, 1945

Helped with bridge and finished bridge at 6 at night.

January 19, 1945

Worked on road to bridge.

January 20, 1945

Helped on wooden fix bridge. Snowed like hell all day & night. Went on guard at night.

January 21, 1945

Worked on wooden fixed bridge again. Work is going along pretty good. More snow.

January 22, 1945

Worked all day on bridge again. It is really shaping up.

January 23, 1945

Finished bridge in **Sarregamund** today. It should go down in Engineering history. What a masterpiece. Pulled guard at night.

January 24, 1945

Stayed on same job to clean up.

January 25, 1945

Stayed in and got things together. Pulled guard.

January 26, 1945

Stayed in again

January 27, 1945

Worked around area

January 28, 1945

Stayed in area

January 29, 1945

My Butch's birthday. He is 7 years old today. Unable to send him anything and feel lousy about it. Worked loading Ties for infantry emplacements.

January 30, 1945

My birthday. Just like any other day in Army. Work on same job.

January 31, 1945

Payday. I won \$50 in crap game. Same work.

By February 1945, the German counter-offensive, known as the Battle of the Bulge, had been contained and the Allied troops were on the move again.

During the month of February, the Battalion laid mines, set up defensive wire, and constructed individual infantry positions in the Achen, Oermingen area. The Battalion figured strongly in the defensive preparations made in the Sarreguemines area of Southern Alsace.

February 1, 1945

Same work. Won \$100 in poker game. Am going to send it home.

February 2, 1945

Went to movies after a good days work, Good picture.

February 3, 1945

Worked on infantry emplacements, Ticklish work.

February 4, 1945

Hauled material for infantry emplacements.

February 5, 1945

Got mine field job and don't like it a bit.

February 6, 1945

More mine work right up on the M.L.R.(Main Line of Resistance)

February 7, 1945

Same work. Hot job.

February 8, 1945

Same work. Rained all day made the job plenty miserable.

February 9, 1945

Same work. More rain.

February 10 - 18, 1945

Finished mine field. Almost got through without accident. Lancaster & Hrica got hurt by B.B.(Bouncing Betty) mine.

February 19, 1945

Stayed in area to get tools in shape. On alert.

February 20, 1945

Still in area.

February 21, 1945

Washed clothes all day. Getting all my stuff in shape. Something is coming up. A lot of rumors are circulating.

February 22, 1945

Stayed in area cleaning equipment. Loaded trucks.

On 23 February the Battalion left Alsace for the 9th Army area, arriving at Nuth, Holland on the 24th. While in Nuth, the Battalion performed general maintenance tasks and road work.

February 23, 1945

Left **Sarralben** for unknown destination. Passed thru **Metz** and bivouacked in a garrison.

February 24, 1945

Still on road. Went thru **France, Belgium** and ended in **Holland**.

February 25, 1945

Went to a Holland Church.

February 26, 1945

Worked on roads. People from different houses gave us coffee.

February 27, 1945

Road work. I eat this up like mad.

February 28, 1945

Alerted to move. Stayed in.

March 1, 1945

Moved 20 miles in **Germany**. The houses are all burned. Lot of mines around.

During the month of March, the engineer work of the Battalion consisted of combined mine sweeping and road maintenance in the area east of Maastricht, Holland. Companies A and B constructed a 273 foot long, Class 70 bridge over the Roer River in the vicinity of Orsbeck, Germany

March 2, 1945

Worked on large wooden bridge across **Roer river**. Making fill ins today.

March 3, 1945

Same work.

March 4, 1945

Same work

March 5, 1945

Same work. Crap game at night. Won \$200.

March 6, 1945

Same work

March 7, 1945

Same work. Almost finished.

The battalion then moved to Vise, Belgium to attend a floating Bailey Bridge School in preparation for the major operation of crossing the Rhine River.

March 8, 1945

Worked until noon. Got called off to go to bridge school. M.P. jeep run over mine. Not a very nice sight.

March 9, 1945

Arrived at destination. Am going on pass tonight. I had a lot of good Cognac and had a swell time.

March 10, 1945

Started bridge school. I am a motor boat operator and am learning about the Army power boat 52 horsepower.

March 11, 1945

Handled the boat okay.

March 12, 1945

Finished school

March 13, 1945

Took off for **Germany**.

March 14, 1945

Moved further up. Civilians in town.

March 15, 1945

Worked building corduroy roads.

March 16, 1945

Same work

March 17, 1945

Same work.

March 18, 1945

Same job.

March 19, 1945

Same work. Shot a 2 yr old buck. Big feast coming up.

March 20, 1945

Had that big feast and so did the rest of my gang. Same work.

March 21, 1945

Went to another bridge school for reasons of our own. Big things coming up.

March 22, 1945

Completed schooling and had it fairly easy.

From the Rhineland bridgehead at Remagen, the Allies captured the great industrial Ruhr Valley where so much of the German arsenal had been produced. By March 23, the Saar with its important industries had been captured also.

March 23, 1945

Resting for our big job.

Company C gets the job of de-mining the City of Roermond. Lt. Post, Sgt. Knight and Pvt Garnaas were killed by a mine. Several others were wounded by mines. The Battalion then moved to Kempen, Germany and there began preparation for bridging the Rhine River at Wessel

March 24, 1945

Am on alert for the big job. Anxious to get it over with. Not a bit worried about outcome. If this job comes off like planned we will be a very famous outfit.

March 25, 1945

We got greeted at the **Rhine River** by the usual welcome. A few shells came close. Got strafed at night by ME110. No one hurt.

March 26, 1945

Am coming along swell so far. No more shells as yet. No sleep last night because of enemy aircraft.

Layout of the bridge over the Rhine begin on 25 March and actual construction started on March 26 at 0600 hours. The bridge was to be a 1,415 foot long Class 40, floating Bailey bridge. The bridge was completed and opened for traffic at 1900 hours on March 27. It took only about 37 hours to construct. This was a tremendous accomplishment by the men and Officers of the Battalion. During the night while the bridge was under construction, the skies were continuously lit up by anti-aircraft fire.

March 27, 1945

Was motorboat operator during day. Almost sunk a boat because of swift current. Completed the Largest Bailey bridge we ever built. Around 1500 ft of bridge. No sleep again because of important job.

Was strafed again but no damage done. The ack ack and machine gun fire was beautiful to watch. They accounted for 9 planes in three days over our bridges. We completed 1500 ft Bailey Bridge in 25 hours. Record time. Forgot to mention that I seen Churchill on March 24 with the usual cigar in his mouth.

March 28, 1945

Had morning off. Took mineral bath. Sure was wonderful sensation. Went out after dinner and worked until 6 oclock.

March 29, 1945

Had day off. Spent most of it sleeping.

March 30, 1945

Road work

April 1, 1945

More road work.

April 2, 1945

Put up a big 150 ft triple double Bailey bridge at night.

April 3, 1945

Finished bridge and came back and slept.

April 4, 1945

Moved to a new area was called back to the Rhine River to fix bridge. Worked all night as power boat operator. Was given credit for good job.

April 5, 1945

Moved back to old area and outfit had moved again. Spent all day finding them.

April 6, 1945

Moved again to **Munster**

April 7, 1945

The whole town is leveled, worked on road patching it up.

April 8, 1945

Road work in **Munster**, found a few souvenirs.

April 9, 1945

More road work. Had some good rum. Good stuff.

April 10, 1945

Road work

The Battalion activities in April consisted of general maintenance of roads and bridges to expedite the movement of supplies to the front lines. Company A constructed a 140 foot long Bailey Bridge at Friedrichsfeld over the Lippe Canal and cleared streets in Munster, Germany.

April 11, 1945

Road work in **Munster**, found a couple of souvenirs.

The Battalion then moved to Bad Nenndorf on 13 April 1945.

April 12, 1945

Moved to **Bad Nenndorf**. Traveled on **Autobahn** highway.

April 13, 1945

Road work on outskirts of **Hanover**. Had plenty of schnapps.

April 14, 1945

Road work and more schnapps.

April 15, 1945

Road work.

April 16 – 19, 1945

Road work – not any excitement to talk about.

April 19, 1945

Moved out with squad to **Hamm** and loaded boxcars with barb wire accordions.

April 20 - 22, 1945

Same work

April 23, 1945

Moved back to area by **Autobahn** highway.

On April 24, 1945, Col. Howard McCord took over the command of the Battalion.

April 24, 1945

We now have civilians working for us. Non Coms are bosses over them. Soft, eh!

April 25, 1945

Moved to new area not far from **Brunswick**. Have the best set up ever had, good solid beds, showers and electricity.

In May the activities of the 167 Engineer Battalion centered chiefly on bridge construction and maintenance of the Autobahn Highway in the vicinity of Braunschweig, Helmstedt and Fallersleben, Germany

April 26 – May 2, 1945

Working on **Autobahn** and bridges nearby. Hitler dead. Wont be long now.

Hitler committed suicide on the night of April 30, and his successor, Admiral Karl Doniz, immediately moved to open negotiations for ending the War. The German collapse came at the end of April and beginning of May 1945. German units in the field began to lay down their arms independently.

May 3, 1945

Same work.

May 4, 1945

Big Army victory in Italy. Good news for us. Was a little worried that we might have had to go there to clean up.

May 5, 1945

Another big group of Heinies gave up in our sector. Can't last much longer.

May 6, 1945

Am Cpl. Of the guard from 3 – 6 in morning. Am going on pass to rest center in **Holland**. Sure needed it.

On May 7th, General Alfred Jodl signed the unconditional surrender document for Germany. President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill declared May 8th to be V-E Day, for Victory in Europe

May 7, 1945

Traveled all night on way to **Maastricht, Holland**. Arrived 7 in morning. Nice set up. Took off to **Liege, Belgium** in afternoon. What a day. Rumors of Armistice.

May 8, 1945

Armistice declared. Spent the whole day, night and following day getting drunk in **Vice, Belgium**. I do mean drunk. Met a beautiful blonde and, oh la la! People went crazy when they heard the news of Germany surrendering. Bouquet liquor for yours truly.

May 9, 1945

Still in **Vice, Belgium** and still drunk. Same blonde!

May 10, 1945

Came back to CO. area and moved with them to **Hannover**.

May 11, 1945

Worked on roads until 3 in afternoon. Civilian finished up job.

On May 13, the Battalion celebrated it's 2nd Anniversary and V-E Day. Church services were held in honor of the men in the Battalion who were killed in action.

On May 23, Company C moved to Bremen to construct a 273 foot fixed bridge at Huntebruck, Germany

JUNE

1945

On June 5, the Battalion moved to Mengerlinghausen, Germany and on June 13 moved to Epernay, France (Camp Lucky Strike). A letter was sent to higher headquarters requesting that the Battalion be kept intact as a unit for re-deployment.

The request was denied.

On June 15 the Battalion was deactivated. Three line Companies became Forestry Companies -the 2789th, 2790th and 2840th Forestry Companies—and were sent back to Germany. Lumber and construction materials were badly needed by the German people to rebuild their Country. The men from the 167th that went into the Forestry Companies again performed an outstanding service in helping to supply this need.

This closes my diary for the war in Europe. Honey, the last few items I put in were the closing of my miseries and good times spent in Europe. Don't get jealous of the blonde mentioned in this diary. You know me when I get drunk. I behaved myself as best as could be expected after not being with a woman for such a long time. She was professional so I did not take any chances! If I had anything to hide I would not put it in my diary for you to read.

You can now get a fair idea of what I have gone through for you and my little guys.

Big cities that I have passed thru.

France

Le Mans, Laval, Troyes, Pont A Mousson,

Nancy, Sarregemines, Little Aachen, Sarregemines

Union, Metz, Belgium, Holland

St. Avold in France

Big countries

France, England, Belgium, Holland, Germany

Luxembourg, Rheims Epernay

| CITY | COUNTRY | DATE |
|----------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Liverpoll | England | July-44 |
| South Hampton | England | July-44 |
| St. Germaine de Varreville | France | August-44 |
| Velleloup | France | August-44 |
| Sommesous | France | August-44 |
| Resson, Bar-le-Du | France | August-44 |
| Commercy | France | August-44 |
| Toul | France | August-44 |
| Vallaine | France | August-44 |
| Bellegarde | France | August-44 |
| Bourcq | France | September-44 |
| Dieuouard | France | September-44 |
| Pont-a-Mousson | France | October-44 |
| Liverdun | France | November-44 |
| Port sur Seille | France | November-44 |
| Camp Teting Camp | France | December-44 |
| Ste. Avoid | France | December-44 |
| Herbitzheim | France | December-44 |
| Sarralbe | France | December-44 |
| Sarreguemines | France | January-45 |
| Remelfing | France | January-45 |
| Achen | France | February-45 |
| Oermingen | France | February-45 |
| Southern Alsace | France | February-45 |
| Nuth | Holland | February-45 |
| Remagen | Holland | March-45 |
| Rhineland | Holland | March-45 |
| Sarr | Holland | March-45 |
| Ruhr Valley | Holland | March-45 |
| Maastricht | Holland | March-45 |
| Orsbeck | Germany | March-45 |
| Vise | Belgium | March-45 |
| Roermond | Germany | March-45 |
| Kempen | Germany | March-45 |
| Wessel | Germany | March-45 |
| Friedrichsfeld | Germany | April-45 |
| Munster | Germany | April-45 |
| Bad Nenndorf | Germany | April-45 |
| Sandkamp | Germany | April-45 |
| Braunschweig | Germany | May-45 |
| Helmstedt | Germany | May-45 |
| Fallersleben | Germany | May-45 |
| Mengeringhausen | Germany | June-45 |
| Epernay(Camp Lucky Strike) | France | June-45 |

July 31, 1979

This memorandum is strictly to ease my pains in my heart. After all these years (past 1943 to 1945) I beg God to forgive me for my part in all the deaths I am responsible for. I never believed in the stupid killings of my enemy in war. Even at the time of obeying our officers our heart was not in it. We laid those stupid mines and placed death traps for guys like you and me!!! They did not want to die either. I imagine they prayed to God to forgive their part in our untimely pains and deaths for a thought held so high in our minds.

“Freedom from our aggressor”

We such a beautiful country to live and die in that we should always be proud to be “Americans”

This, my dear wife I want you to know because I know I have never been the same guy you married a long time ago.

I just can't shake the dirty job I had to do back in the war years.

I was so lonely for you & my boys I thought my heart would break but a letter from you was sure good medicine. It would help ease the pain of loneliness and sorrow I felt!

I don't claim to be a hero and never have tried to be then. I had a stinking job to do and done the best I Could!

Plain Citizen John DuMong