

Dear Susy, I will try to answer Gracey's questions about our service during the war. I will write what I can and email it to you and you can email it to Gracey.

George and I interned together at Cincinnati General Hospital before we entered the Army. (This is when I first met your father). At this time we were given commissions of Second Lieutenant Medical Administrative Corps in the Army. This was just a means of keeping us from the grasp of the draft board. When we completed our internships we were promoted to First Lieutenant Medical Corps and taken into the service,

We were sent to the Medical Field Service School at Carlisle Barracks in Carlisle Pennsylvania. Here we were given a course to learn the Army's methods. We learned how the medical service was organized, how to drill the troops, logistics, map reading, the use of the compass, and how to detect poison gas by its smell, and many other things too numerous to mention.

On completion of school the new officers would be assigned to various army units. George and I were assigned to the 80th Infantry Division then located at Camp Phillips, Salina, Kansas.(Blue Ridge Mountain Division). It was here I met your mother, "Wabby".

After about four months the division moved to Yuma, Arizona for desert maneuvers. For some reason, after about two months I was sent to The School of Neuro-psychiatry at Mason General Hospital at Bayshore Long Island. On completion of the course I met Dr. Menninger, the world famous psychiatrist and was offered a position in an Army General Hospital as a psychiatrist. I turned this offer down, feeling I did not have enough training for that. I returned to the 80th Division now in Trenton, New Jersey at Fort Dix. At this time the division was in the process of getting up to the full table of organization in preparation for going overseas. It wasn't to be very long before George and I would be on our way to a great adventure.

I will pause here to explain where George and I fit into the picture. A medical battalion consists of four companies known as Company A, B, C and D. Companies A, B, C are collecting companies, one for each regiment in the division. A simplistic description is this: during combat the wounded are attended to where they fall by the aid men. These men give morphine for pain and put sulfa powder on the wound and then temporary dressings. The wounded are carried to the collecting company where major bleeding is stopped and intravenous plasma is given if the wounded is in shock.

The collecting company makes certain the wounded are fit for travel and they are carried by ambulance to Company D. That is where George and I come into action.

More later.....Doc

Company D is called the clearing company. It is here that we have the means to give blood transfusions, do any surgery needed short of major surgery, and any procedure to stabilize the wounded and get them in good enough condition to move them to a field hospital. It is here in the clearing company that many heart breaking sights and experiences are daily occurrences. The emotions experienced here are almost more than one can handle. Many young men come in with legs blown off leaving a bloody mess of avulsed muscle with protruding bone slivers. This isn't bad enough, there are many shell fragments imbedded in various places. Our job would be to give a transfusion if needed, then pick out all the bone slivers, remove damaged, or dead tissue, then clean up the wound, apply more sulfa powder and put on a dressing. Next remove shell fragments, in other areas, which were usually jagged and difficult to extract. When all of these were removed the wounded soldier would be transported to a field hospital where there were surgical teams. If his condition required surgery or treatment exceeding the ability of the field hospital surgeons, he would be flown to England or the USA for care. These field hospitals were set up for specific problems. There would be one that treated only pulmonary wounds and another for abdominal wounds, etc.

You asked if we were on the front line during combat. No, unless we were needed there. That rarely occurred but on several occasions we were very close. Actually during the Battle of the Moselle when the Germans counter attacked with their tanks we were surrounded and cut off from our unit. It was a dangerous situation, occurring during the night, when we thought everything was secure. Our platoon was off duty and asleep. We didn't know what had happened. The Germans had been repelled. I remember one thing about that night and I am sure George did too and that was the division had pulled up their large artillery guns, called the 155's, and put them very near our tent where we were trying to get to sleep after a "horrific" day. Every time one of these guns fired our sleeping bags would leave the ground or at least it would seem so.

Maybe, the description of the clearing company will give you an idea of what your father went through. I think I forgot to mention that the clearing company was divided into two platoons, called 1 and 2. They functioned this way: when platoon 1 was in action caring for the wounded they were in a position forward of platoon 2. Platoon 2 was busy getting the wounded transferred to the field hospital. When the task was done platoon 2 would leap frog over platoon 1 and start caring for the wounded. At this point platoon 1 would evacuate all of their wounded to the field hospital and then get ready to leap over platoon 2. In this manner we could keep up with the fighting as it moved forward.

Now I will jump back to George getting ready to leave for Europe.

If you recall, before I got into the structure and function of the medical battalion, I had mentioned that George and I were at Fort Dix where the 80th Division was getting its table of organization up to full strength. (a funny story comes to mind about this that I will relate in the future). When this task was finished we were moved to Camp Kilmer which I believe was somewhere in New Jersey nearer to New York City. Here all 15,000 of the men of the 80th received physical exams and the necessary immunizations. This was accomplished in a huge barn like building where there were many rows defined by wooden rails. About every 10 feet there was an offset where a doctor was stationed. You get the picture. Men would advance through the rows. At each offset the doctor stationed there would examine a specified part of the man standing before him. Example: the first stop eyes, second stop ears nose and throat, third stop lungs, fourth stop blood pressure, and so on until after the last stop (hemorrhoids and feet) the immunizations start. Here is where trouble started because many of these big fine specimens passed out when given a simple shot.

The next day your father and I with a squad of men were ordered to board the ship, which would transport us, as an advanced party. Boy! Were we surprised when we found it to be The Queen Mary. That night we were ushered into the ship's dining room. Holy Mackerel! White table cloths, silverware and menus. Then, came a frightening thought – is this our last meal? The troops boarded the next day and then we were away (all 15,000 men on this ship). I hate to tell you this but your father got sea sick before we left harbor. After we left the harbor we noticed we had no escort to protect us from submarines but we were assured that the Queen Mary was so fast, and by taking a zig zag course, no submarine could lay in wait and target us or even try to catch us. Every day we played Bridge or watched movies to pass the time. The sea was not rough but the ship did roll a bit because of the heavy concrete fortification on the top deck. These were to protect the anti-aircraft guns there.

We actually crossed the ocean in four days despite our zigzag course. We had one scare as we approached the Firth of Clyde. Alarms went off, an aircraft approached. Was it enemy or friend? Soon the all safe alarm was given, for the plane was deemed friendly. We landed at the Firth of Clyde in Scotland and were hurriedly loaded onto quaint Scottish trains and traveled to Norwich, England. Here we disembarked and marched to an old English manor house where we were billeted. Our quarters were a mess to say the least. Wooden bunks full of old straw, Pigeon droppings everywhere, and one old bathroom.

The toilet and shower must have been from medieval times. The toilet was porcelain and the seat very high like a throne. There were colored roses and rose leaves as decorations on the outer bowl surface. The shower was a half cylinder set in a tub like ours only larger. To take a shower you stepped in the tub, walked into the half cylinder, turn on the water. The spray came from a myriad of small holes in the half cylinder and they sprayed water on one from every angle.

Well – enough for now. I am getting carried away instead of answering questions.

Back to work now.

We didn't stay long in Norwich. Maybe we were there a week or ten days before we moved to South Hampton. It was here that we boarded the ships that were to take us across the channel. I don't know about George but I had a "queasy" stomach related to the lecture we were given before boarding ship. This was to tell us that the Germans had a poison nerve gas for which we had no defense. The gas mask

was of no value. One drop of this gas on the skin would kill you, but not to worry, the officer giving the lecture felt that the Germans would not use it because we had air superiority and could retaliate. He also mentioned there were mines in the channel – as if we could do anything about it.

As you know, the G.I.'s were always making smart wise cracks about things (I guess to ease the tension). The following is one that I overheard as we were on the docks getting ready to board ship. All around the docks were these large barrage balloons (these look like small blimps) over and around the docks and held by cable. Their purpose was to prevent German fighter planes from coming in low and strafing the troops. It was this sight that prompted a particular GI (soldier) to say, "Why in hell don't they cut these cables and let this country sink."

It was dark when we crossed the channel and needless to say the crossing was uneventful. In the morning the ships were unloaded. All the personnel were in place in their vehicles and the vehicles (trucks) with the personnel were dropped on to large landing barges and then ferried ashore. Here it was a little scary. The whole beach was mined and there were signs all over, on which were printed, "Actung Minen." A very small lane was cleared for us to reach the road that paralleled the beach. About an hour later we pulled into a clearing of a wooded area. We set up a station here, noting that nearby there were dead German soldiers along with the mortars and mortar shells they had been using just before their demise. It was at this time that George and I realized someone could get hurt in this war.

When darkness fell the order came to load up, "we are pulling out". The station was taken down and put in the trucks. Men and equipment were ready to go and when the order, "Move" came - off we went. Our convoy reached over 15 miles and of course the medical unit was at the very tail. It was dark and dusty. No headlights were allowed and no taillights were allowed. Every truck had built into it a small dim blue light in each taillight. This was known as the blackout light. It was this light the driver behind must follow. The convoy moved very fast. The roads were dusty. The dim blue lights ahead were almost invisible as was the road. Being at the rear of the convoy meant we were always trying to catch up with the main body of the convoy. I will never know how the truck drivers knew when they were on the road and when they weren't. All of a sudden we stopped. A squadron of Luftwaffe bombers were overhead. We could hear the bombs explode a short distance ahead. Soon big flames were seen. Then we moved ahead, after the bombers left, driving through the burning bombed town. It was an eerie, scary, sight.

At dawn we arrived at a huge farm field where we were dropped from the convoy to set up a medical station. At this time we were informed the 6th German army had been surrounded. We had just closed the remaining gap. Then it started, artillery bombardment for 48 hours, with never a lull. It was the first time your father and I saw the heart wrenching first casualty and the horrors of war.

Our station had just been set up when the first casualty was brought in. He was a "tanker" who had somehow climbed from a burning tank. His clothing was charred completely. The skin beneath was blistered extensively. The meat on his hands was cooked and draping from the exposed bones. His face was one massive blister so swollen that his eyes could not be seen. He was in no pain because all of his nerve endings had been burned. Your father and I could do nothing for him. The first thing this "tanker" asked for was a cigarette which we placed between his burned swollen lips. He then asked for someone to take a letter, which he would dictate, to his wife. He went on to tell his wife how much he loved her, that he had been wounded. He said he probably would be sent back to a hospital and then most likely home in a few weeks. He ended it sending all of his love. At this point he quietly died from shock. It was almost as much as I could take and from the look on your father's face I know he felt the same. Most of the casualties that we saw were traumatic from shell fragments, land mines, or booby traps. These usually were very serious, like the abdominal wall being blown off, the head bisected by a piece of vertically flying fragment, or extremities being blown off. There were not too many casualties from infections such as pneumonia, severe colds or gastrointestinal diseases. Strangely enough there were very few cases of "Battle Fatigue." The latter being emotional problems from stress of battle and fear of death. These problems were severe enough to cause inaction and the person so possessed would be a detriment to the rest of his unit. He could be of no help and he would need caring for at a critical time.

New types of casualties appeared during the battle of the bulge that were due to the weather. These being trench foot and frozen foot. The temperature was about four degrees above zero. The fighting was fierce and the men were in fox holes day and night. Their feet became wet from cold wet mud and water in the fox hole. This caused greatly swollen painful feet that looked very pale. This was called "Trench Foot". Frozen foot occurred when the Army issued shoes that were rubber. The feet would sweat in these

and the sweat would freeze. The problem was solved when boots were issued that were rubber about two inches above the sole. The boots could then ventilate.

Just to deviate a bit I will tell you two interesting events. Just before Christmas, we were about to attack the Siegfried line when the order came down to load up immediately we are moving out. Where? No one knew. Benzedrine tablets were given to the officers to take to stay awake so as to be able to keep the truck driver awake (each truck had an officer riding in the front seat with the driver). The driver was not given the Benzedrine. It was the officer that had to stay awake to keep the driver awake. We were then worked into a huge convoy of trucks, tanks, jeeps, halftracks, and whatever. This convoy followed a lead vehicle at top speed. You cannot imagine this convoy when darkness descended. The headlights of the vehicles were turned on. This was unheard of. Black out rules had been broken. In the early dawn we found ourselves on the outskirts of the city of Luxembourg. The troops were hurriedly deployed to face the oncoming flank of the German army. This was the beginning of "The Battle of the Bulge." As luck would have it we set up our station in an old castle that was some 900 years old. At least that is what I was told. When George and I entered this castle we were really shocked. It had beautiful hard wood floors, huge fire places that one could walk into, steam heat, hot and cold water and believe it or not showers. Since it was Christmas, the "Guys" rigged up a Christmas tree in the hall. Many of the enlisted men chose to sleep in the tower where the ramparts were. Even though it was outdoors and cold there was a huge fire place where logs were kept burning. We were lucky enough to remain here for three or four days. Later on we had the chance to stay in the Duchess of Luxembourg's hunting lodge for about three days.

The details as to where the division moved and fought can be found on the history previously sent or on the one at the end of this summary.

Gracey asked if we had been on the front line. No never directly on the front line because we were not supposed to have to operate there, but there were times we were attacked by artillery fire. Once after we had been in combat for 102 days continuously, we were pulled out of action and sent to St. Avold, France for rest and relaxation. We moved into an area on the outskirts of the town surrounding a large hospital. The Germans had just pulled out of here. The hospital was empty so we took it over for living quarters. We also used many of the surrounding buildings. One we used to set up a movie theater and one as a mess hall. After we had moved in, one of the citizens of St. Avold came to see our commanding general and told him that when the Germans had pulled out that they had left time bombs under 21 buildings in our area. Three bombs were set to go off every three days until they had all exploded. Our general said we would not move for he did not want to let the Germans know they could deny us the use of a town by planting time bombs under buildings. Sure enough, every three days there were three earth shaking bombs that exploded. After the first bombs went off the General pulled all of our troops out and billeted them in homes that had been occupied when we moved into the area, all except the medical personnel in the hospital. He claimed the Germans wouldn't blow up the hospital. It had a huge red cross painted on the roof.

Well, they didn't blow it up, but they fired 88 mm shells at it every morning and every evening. I don't think they tried to hit us but only warn us not to use that building for any purpose other than medical. Those shells were so close that shell fragments came in through the windows. The building that housed our anti-aircraft artillery was blown to kingdom come by a huge shell. Staying in the hospital was very nerve wracking. At night George and I would be awakened by a noise in the hall and when we would stick our heads out the door to find the cause we found some of the men tearing up floor boards. They said they heard a ticking noise coming from under the floor. So, that is the way it was for the full time we were there.

Another time when we were fighting through the Siegfried Line, we had set up a station in a small school house, taking care to blacken out the windows so no light would show at night. Shells dropped around us. When we came to the Rhine River we were going through a small town at night in convoy, when we were strafed.

There are many interesting stories to tell. Bullets were flying everywhere and bouncing off walls, etc. Fortunately none of us got hit, not related to combat. Maybe in time I will get to them. Gracey asked what we did for entertainment when we were not in combat. Really there wasn't much free time and when you

did have some, one would write letters, read and rest. At times, when it was safe; we would explore the town we were in and take pictures. (We can thank George for the film with which we had to take pictures)

We all had "liberated" cameras and we could find a photo shop in a small town that would develop and print pictures for a pack of cigarettes. Without film, too bad. In the next "epic" I will tell you the story of how George got the film and also how he got home ahead of the division.

Gracey, I forgot about the movies. On occasion when we were "off duty" we had movies to watch. I really do not know who supplied them, maybe the USO.

More to come

As our convoy approached the Rhein River (a division with all of its troops and equipment when in convoy stretched out about 15 miles) the medical battalion was at the rear followed by a truck with a quad of 50 caliber machine guns to protect the rear of the convoy. We were passing a recently destroyed German convoy that had been pushed off the road. A ghastly sight of wrecked equipment, dead horses, and battered bodies. Suddenly a plane swished overhead strafing us. The gunners behind us could not turn their guns fast enough to shoot at it. We heard them yell, "What in _ _ _ was that? Well it turned out to be a German jet. We didn't know they had such a plane, but lucky for us it could only fly for 15 minutes before it ran out of fuel. We crossed the Rhein and stopped in Wiesbaden where there was a huge winery that, we were told belonged to one of the high big wigs, Goering. Needless to say we emptied the place of Champagne and Rhein wine. For about a month everyone had wine or Champagne with "chow". From here we moved west to Jena, where we liberated a German warehouse filled with PX items. Here is where your father discovered the footlocker full of 120 film. He had the presence of mind to drag it to a truck and take it with us. Another thing your father did, every time he found any German Marks he saved them. However they no longer were worth anything because the Americans had issued invasion money to take the place of the mark. Many Germans did not trust the invasion money and still traded in marks. George's marks came in handy buying eggs, bread, cake, and photo developing. We were not in need of food, but dark bread and fresh eggs were a pleasant change from white bread and dehydrated eggs. Enough for now, I have other things I must do. But before I leave I just wanted to mention that as we would move about France and Germany numerous cow carcasses strewn about the landscape were seen. These had been killed by artillery fire during combat actions. They presented the picture of small blimps that had swollen to ghastly proportions by the internal gas formed from decomposition.

See Pages below for History of 80th Division
and a picture of the "Guys"

THE BLUE RIDGE DIVISION

80TH COMBAT DIVISION — FIRST ARMY, A.E.F., WORLD WAR I

THE DIVISION OF UNIQUE DISTINCTION — Never failed to gain its objective... Only A.E.F. Division called upon three times in great Meuse-Argonne Offensive... Ranked first of all National Army Divisions by War Department... Organized 1917... Trained at Camp Lee, VA... Sailed for France, May, 1918... Returned to U.S., June, 1919... It always led... It captured two Huns for every man wounded... It captured one machine gun for every man wounded... It captured one cannon for every ten men wounded, besides large quantities of munitions and stores... It accomplished these results of vast importance to the success of the general operations with a far smaller percentage of casualties than any other Division engaged.

80th COMBAT DIVISION — THIRD ARMY, E.T.O., WORLD WAR II

Reactivated: 15 July 1942, Camp Forrest, Tenn.; Second Army Maneuvers, Tenn.; Camp Phillips, Kansas; Camp Laguna, Ariz.; & Corps Maneuvers, California; Fort Dix, N.J., Camp Kilmer, N.J.; Overseas June 1944 (E.T.O.) Returned to the U.S. Dec. 1945 and was inactivated early in January 1946.

ONE OF THE CRACK DIVISIONS OF GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON'S THIRD U.S. ARMY, the 80th earned its reputation in such actions as the Argentan-Falaise Gap, Lorraine Campaign, Battle of the Bulge, Siegfried Line, and Central Germany... entering combat August 10, 1944 the division's first major action was the capture of Argentan under V Corps, First Army. Then, pursuing the retreating Germans, the 80th captured Chalons Sur Marne, Commercy and St. Mihiel in the drive across France. After bitter fighting in the Moselle River Bridgehead, the division opened up a new drive Nov. 8, advancing thru Delme Ridge, Falquemont and St. Avold. Relieved after 102 days of steady combat, the 80th was preparing to assault the Siegfried Line when a sudden alert sent them rushing north to bolster the breakthrough known as the Bulge. By January 23, 1945, after fierce fighting in Luxembourg and Bastogne, the division had driven the enemy across the Clerf and Wiltz Rivers. The division then smashed the Siegfried Line under XII Corps in the Wallendorf area. It smashed the Line again under XX Corps in the Saarburg area, taking Kaiserlautern and St. Wendel. Crossing the Rhine 27 March, the division took Wiesbaden, Kassel, Erfurt, Wiemar, Gera, Jena and drove to the outskirts of Chemnitz. The last major offensive saw the 80th cross the Isar Vils and Inn Rivers. Entering Austria, at VE Day on the Enns River, the 80th could look back with pride at her record: 239 days of combat, 6 distinguished citations, 212,295 PW's captured. Gen. Patton said, "Whenever we turned the 80th loose on anything, we always knew the objective would be attained."

"THE 80TH DIVISION ONLY MOVES FORWARD":



Self, George, Henry Lane, Bromo Seltzer, and Charlie Stewart

Bromo was captain of our platoon. Henry Lane was the dentist of our second platoon. Charlie Stewart was from Headquarters Company. I cannot identify the location of the picture. It was probably taken in Luxembourg.

>>>If my memory serves me correctly we eventually moved from this area to Marienbad, Czechoslovakia. There is a weird story about this move that had nothing to do with your father directly.

While the 80th was still in Bavaria, I was sent to Garmisch-Partenkirchen to take over command of A company The company had already set up in the largest hotel in town. The hotel had been evacuated of civilians and the station was placed in the large foyer and an adjoining room. There was a curfew ordering no civilians on the streets from 6:00PM to 6:00AM. Also the Army had ordered that no civilians could be treated in any of the medical units. This is the way that things were when one night (when I was on duty as I always was for there was no relief), I walked two German civilians. One was a young lady about twenty five years old and a young girl about twelve years old who had a scarf wrapped around her head hiding her face. The older one approached me and in perfect English said, "I know we are not supposed to be here and I know you are not supposed to treat German civilians. I pray you will please help my little sister. She has a nasty disease that is getting worse and worse. She works as an apprentice seamstress for the town's doctor's wife. The doctor keeps telling her that she will get better but she isn't. I don't want him to know we came here. Could you please help?" At this point she removed the scarf revealing a sickening site. The face of the little girl was covered with one big scab. The eyes were just about to be infected. This was the worst case of impetigo I had ever seen. I knew Penicillin would cure it. How could I not treat this child? So, I took the chance of court martial or some kind of punishment and agreed to treat her. We had many vacant rooms so I assigned them to one and ordered the top technician to give her Penicillin every four hours. We would keep the little girl in the hotel during curfew hours and she could return the next day just prior to curfew and stay until curfew had expired for that day. The little girl responded well and in about a week she was well, and released. A week later the older sister, the younger sister, and an elderly lady (Grandma) appeared in the station. The older sister came to me saying, "we want to give you a gift for the care you gave my sister." The little girl handed me two Bavarian dolls she had made. The grandmother insisted I take a beautiful intaglio mounted in a silver setting. The older sister said, "I have nothing to give you, however, I have noticed that the soldiers working here were always talking about when they might go home. So, my gift is that I am going to tell you when you will go home. In thirty days your unit will move to Czechoslovakia. Thirty days after that you will be on your way home." I thanked her and promptly forgot what she told me until in thirty days the order did come to move to Czechoslovakia. Believe it or not thirty days later the division was on its way home. We moved to a town called Aschaffenburg. From here we were to board a ship to England and then transfer to the Queen Mary sailing to the good old USA arriving, there, about a week or so after Christmas. Can you believe this? How did the young woman know this? Was she an agent? CIA? I guess we will never know.

How George goes home.

At this time we found out there was to be a point system to determine the priority of leaving for home. This was based on length of service, length of combat, whether you were married, the number of children you had. Your father qualified for going home with the division. I did not qualify. I was two points short because I had no children. Accordingly, I could not go home with the division. Now the time frame didn't please your father. He said to me, "I promised Wabby I would be home for Christmas and if I go home with the division I won't make it. I am going to have to do something about this." It so happened that Aschaffenburg was only a few miles from Frankfurt, where Army headquarters were located. George said, "I know someone in headquarters, Bedell Smith (at least that is the name I thought he mentioned) and I am going to see him to see if he can get me home PDQ." I didn't know if he was serious or not but I said, "Well see what you what you can do for me." He replies, "I will try." Off he goes to the motor pool, gets a Jeep and has the driver take him to Frankfurt. About four hours later he returns with orders for his return to the U.S.A. – top priority. I said, "Gee George that is great where are my orders?" He stated that Bedell said that he couldn't help me now, but said he would get me home top priority as soon as possible. At this point your father just took off without notifying the commanding officer, got Jeep and went to Camp Phillip Morris to catch a ship home. I didn't see George again until July 1946, when he returned to Cincinnati to take a Residency in Medicine. For the time he was here, Ginny and I frequently got together with him to go places together (this brings up another memory which I shall share later).

After your father departed, I was transferred to Corp headquarters where, I was greeted by a really nice General. He expresses how happy he is that I was transferred to his command because he knew nothing of handling the medical paper work, let alone what should be done with the displaced persons who were under his care. He hurriedly found me an office, living quarters, and a command car. He expressed the hope that he had for me to be with him for quite a while. For me, this didn't go down well. However I did what I could seeing to it that the displaced persons, in the area, had what they needed for good health and sanitation.

I shared living quarters with a dentist, a Baptist Chaplain and a Catholic Chaplain. The Baptist was a pop corn addict and the Catholic always had plenty of wine. Guess where I spent my evenings. After about one week I received a phone call informing me that I had orders for top priority home. It didn't take me any longer to leave than it took your father when he left Aschaffenburg. I still don't know if these orders were the results of the efforts of your father or the German young lady whose sister I had treated. I really think it was your father.

The rest of the story, as interesting as it was, concerned me and not your father. I will not go into that. I hope I have given you an idea of what your father experienced and what his duties were.

The only thing left is the answer to Gracey's question as to how I earned a Bronze Star. To tell you the truth, I really don't know. When I think back on it I can only surmise the following: I had attended the Military School of Neuro – psychiatry, I was made the assistant division psychiatrist, during combat I served on the Court Marshal Board, during the Battle of the Bulge I was sent on one sub-zero night to a hunting lodge, where there was no heat or water, to examine 500 troops who were scheduled to move to the front in the morning. These troops came riding in open bed trucks with blankets wrapped around them and half frozen. There was no way to examine them. I sent word to all the units that if anyone was ill to come see me in the kitchen. Only two came, one with pneumonia and one with an infected wound. We all had to sleep on a concrete floor in thin army blankets. I was never so cold in my life. Just think of those poor guys going to the front in the morning, after the battle of the Moselle I saved my platoon from being caught in a flood, and last I was sent to Biessenhofen to a prisoner of war compound to discharge 300 prisoners. They were to be examined for VD and given all of the usual vaccinations that were usually given. I had no equipment or vaccines but I got it done. (Interesting story.). One thing that slipped my mind was an incident that happened during a battle in the Siegfried line. There was a field hospital near our unit. This hospital was doing chest surgery only. There were six surgical teams each consisting of a surgeon, an anesthetist, and a nurse assistant. It seems that they had lost one anesthetist and needed one urgently. Notice was sent to our unit asking if anyone here could give anesthesia. I happened to be the only one and thus volunteered. I was guided across a field, where 88 shells were falling, to the surgical tent out of range of the artillery. It was shocking sight when one entered that tent. There were rows of wounded men on cots, with transfusions running, waiting for chest surgery. I was quickly ushered into the surgical tent and introduced to the surgeon with whom I was to work. I couldn't believe it. This surgeon was Dr. Mansfield from Cincinnati. He was an acquaintance of mine. He asked if I could do intratracheal anesthesia for open chest surgery. I said yes, and away we went. We did several cases that night.

Gracey, that is how I think I earned the Bronze Star. I will insert what the Army sent with the citation, below.

This leaves the story I promised to tell you about the night George, Ginny, and I went out together to see a movie. After the movie we decided to go to Graeter's ice cream parlor. Arriving just at closing time there was a tall red haired teen age boy locking the door. Your father knocked on the door to which the teenage opened the door and told us he was closing. Your father in a loud booming voice said, "I am a doctor and if you came to my emergency room, with a broken leg, I wouldn't turn you away." At this the boy opened the door and let us in. He took our orders for sundaes and waited in the background with his elbow on the counter and chin in hand. We had forgotten the time and were having a ball chatting as we consumed our sundaes. After a very long time he approached your father, tapping him on the shoulder, and says, "Sir, if you were a doctor and I came to your emergency room with a broken leg, I wouldn't stay there this long." We all roared with laughter and needless to say left him a good tip.

I am sure that many memories might arise as time passes. If so, I will send them to you. I hope that you enjoyed what memories that I had left after all of these years. You understand that your father shared these experiences with me. He was a good brave soldier. One of which you can be proud. I am just sorry I can't express thoughts like he could and I am sure my English and grammar needs repair, Love, Doc

My citation is below. It is a little messed up.

I have saved many other certificates that the Army issued when I was discharged. I am sure that George has the same.

CITATION TO ACCOMPANY GENERAL ORDERS

A Bronze Star Medal is awarded Captain Charles H. Foertmeyer, 0436465, Medical Corps, 305th Medical Battalion, Army of the United States, for meritorious service in France, Luxembourg, Germany, and Austria from 7 August 1944, to 8 May 1945, in connection with military operations against an enemy of the United States.

During this period Captain Foertmeyer performed the duties of Medical Officer in a superior manner. During the long months of combat in which his unit participated, his supervision of treatment and treatment of battle casualties has been of highest calibre. His leadership, good judgment, and sincere devotion to duty are commensurate with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.

Continue on down to next page for an afterthought.

As you can see by looking at the 80th division history above, I had jumped ahead from the Battle of the Bulge to the crossing of the Rhein River. There wasn't much to say about the Battle of the Bulge except that the fighting was fierce and the weather was almost unbearable. George and I had all we could handle caring for the wounded both from the weather and the battles. We did have well trained enlisted men ("medics") who were a terrific help. We could not have been able to handle all of the work ourselves, under the circumstances our job became just about supervisory. These "medics" all through the war were invaluable. I am certain that if anything had happened to any of the medical officers these men could have jumped right in and done our job.

There was one incident during the Battle of the Bulge that involved your father. We had set up our station in the gasthaus of a very small town. The Germans had been infiltrating our lines and causing much havoc. As a precautionary action a password was issued every day. If you should happen to approach a guard he would yell, "password" and you had better be ready to respond with the pass word and the yell, "counter sign" which also had been set for the day. If he didn't know the countersign you were to shoot him. (if you had a gun. Medical officers did not carry guns, at least were not supposed to). Of course if you did not know the password the guard was to shoot you. This procedure was to guard against infiltrating enemy. Well it seems on one very dark night your father stepped out of the gasthaus where he had been working. He was exhausted, from work, and just wanted to get a breath of fresh air. It was too dark for anyone to identify him. All of a sudden a voice came from the darkness, "password". Your father had forgotten the password because of fatigue. All that he could do was stammer. Fortunately, just as this was occurring, an enlisted man stepped out from the gasthaus, heard the click of a rifle bolt cocking in preparation to fire. He screamed as loud as he could, "don't fire, don't fire, that is Captain Dana. The guard was shaking when he came to your father, "saying, Oh God, Captain Dana I almost killed you."

After leaving Luxembourg, we smashed our way to the Rhein, Wiesbaden, Kassel, Erfurt, Wiemar, Gera, Jena and then to outskirts of Chemnitz where we were just about ready to capture the town when the army pulled us back. There was an agreement of some kind that the Russians were to take the town. Crazy, huh?

We then, on our last offensive, crossed the Inn River, entering Austria. We were at the Enns River on VE day.

I guess this concludes the rambling, disorganized, memories that remain in this, 88 year old, head. Your father could have done it more skillfully and eloquently. I do hope that at least it gives you an idea of a part of your father's activities. There were many more that I wouldn't know about because we were not together at all times.

Again love to you all, Annie, Nancy, Susy and Sonny.....Doc