

September 18, 1989

Dear John,

I received your letter and was sure great to hear from you after forty some years. I will give you as much information as I can my mind doesn't click as it once did.

The artillery you mentioned in your letter was the same that hit me. The first hit was in the left leg between the knee and ankle. Four men came by and picked me up and was carrying me back to where we jumped off that morning. Then Lt. Fox and Sgt. Whitey of I Co. made a packsaddle and was carrying me in their arms, a shell hit near by, so close that it covered me and Lt. Fox with dirt. Lt. Fox fell on top of me, I couldn't get him off. Sgt. Whitey finally was able to get up and said he was going for help. I think the other two soldiers were killed. Sometime later two medics from an armored outfit came by and gave us first aid. They put me and Lt. Fox on the half track and started with us to the rear. About that time shells begin to fall. The driver tried to get out but when he would make a move the shells would fall. The Germans had every cross road and gate zeroed in. Lt. Fox was really hurt, he said he was hit in the stomach. After that he didn't say another word. When we arrived at the Aid Station the doctor looked at him and he was carried out. The doctor wouldn't tell me anything. The second hit got my right arm up close to the shoulder and my middle back (did not get my spine but they could see two vertebrae). I was sent to England to a hospital (this was during the V-2 Blitz) and on October 4th I was flown to the States to Finney General Hospital, Thomasville, Ga.. In the spring 1945 I was discharged from the hospital and assigned to a 4-F outfit, 4th Service Command, guarding Prisoners of War in Greensboro, N. C.. I was discharged from service at Fort Bragg, N. C. October 1945.

In March 1945 I married Cecile Rainey, a girl I had dated before the war and we celebrated our 44th wedding anniversary last March. We have a daughter and son of who we are very proud. Our daughter is married and has a daughter. They live in Shelby, which is great. Her daughter is a freshman in college this year. Our son lives in Charlotte, about 40 miles southeast of Shelby. He's married and has a son 13 years old and a daughter 12. We really enjoy our grandchildren!!!

In 1976, my leg that was hit, the knee joint had arthritis and the V.A. Hospital replaced it with a complete knee joint. It is still serving me faithfully.

I had several different jobs over the years but I finally settled down with the Sheriff's Dept. of Cleveland County, N. C., Retired from there 1984 with 18 years of service.

Sorry, seems all I have to write is about myself.

You mentioned Ben Davis in your letter, he lives here in Shelby.

I see him occasionally. He has some real estate that he has rental space for mobile homes and understand that he owns several mobile homes of his own.

Lt. Huffman was wounded the day we crossed the Vire River. I heard later he died.

Sgt. Ray Gibson was wounded a few days following Lt. Hoffman death. Ray came back to Shelby and sold insurance for about 35 years. He had a heart attack and had to retire. He passed away about five years ago. We remained good friends all those years and I still miss him very much. Sgt. McGinnis "Joe Bud" was Plt. Sgt., 4th Plt. came back to Shelby and worked as an electrician with a local Co. He died a couple years ago.

J. Y. Queen (bald headed guy) lives in Hampton, Va.. He's retired from the railroad. We have remained friends through the years.

Ben Hendricks still lives in Jackson, S. C.. The address you have is the same as I have. Ben is in very bad health. He has his good days and bad ones. I talk with his brother who lives in Shelby. I saw Capt. Smith in Witchita, Kansas in 1981 at a reunion of the 30th Div. Association and again in 1987 in Orlando, Fla. at another reunion.

Also, I see Harold Patchett, who was in the 4th Plt. at the reunions. He lives in Frankfort, Indiana. Harold farmed but has now retired. He and his wife visited a couple of days with us March 1987. They also attend some of our Tar Heel Chapter meetings, We have two meetings a year. Our next Tar Heel meeting is to be in Winston-Salem, N. C. November 17-18-19. Enclosed is some info on that. I saw Col. Bob Shaw in Orlando, Fla. in 1980 and again in 1987. He lives in Florida and was doing great in '87.

In July 1985 we were returning from a National Reunion of the 30th Div. Association in Dearborn, Michigan and we spent the night in London, Ky.

As I have said it was so good to hear from you after all these years, and would love to hear how your life has been. Also, please give me your telephone number.

Regards,  
Greg Browning