

Vet's Diary - Everard R. Hicks
Med Det, Hq Btry, 924th Fld Arty Bn, 99th Inf Div

Maxey	15	15 Sep 44 – left Camp Maxey, Paris, Texas (Division Camp)
Boston	29	29 Sep 44 – left Boston Port of Embarkation
Arv Scot 11		11 Oct 44 – arrived Gourock, Scotland
Eng	11 – 12	12 Oct 44 - reached Blandford, England
Arr France	4	04 Nov 44 – arrival Le Havre, France
Aubel	7	07 Nov 44 – arrived Aubel, Belgium
Here	9	09 Sep 44 – Camp Maxey, Paris, Texas

My Life Thus Far

15 September 1944. Left CMT (Cp. Maxey, Texas –ed) per rail for places unknown – had a long train ride to the E.C. (East Coast –ed). Went thru the following states: Texas – Arkansas – Louisiana – Mississippi – Alabama – Georgia – South Carolina – North Carolina – Virginia – Maryland – Connecticut – Delaware – New Jersey – New York – Rhode Island – Massachusetts. An uneventful trip except for a track wash-out in Va. (Virginia –ed) – Train was delayed for a long while. Was lucky to get a train compartment together with Lt. Burbank (**1st Lt. Bernerd H. Burbank, Battalion Surgeon, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed) – all thru his effort of course – In S.C. (South Carolina –ed) off train to get eye medication. Lt. Burbank removed cinder from cornea of eye while train was moving. Was quite a feat – I really sweated for the man. Lots of cinders in eyes – sick call two times daily – “coke” in water cooler. Tips to Porter. Then Bull session till 0300 with Lt. Burbank – lot of personal love life – Breakfast in bed for the Lt. (Lieutenant –ed). Took wrong passage way (the train had two –ed), got caught by Lt. McG. (**1st Lt. George C. McGee, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed).

Saw School where Lt. B. (Burbank –ed) went to Med. School – At 0230 the 21st of September we disembarked from train. We were greeted by “The Transportation Corps” song – “You are now at a secret Station – write no letters or make no phone calls, etc.” Dirty barracks. Bunked and arose ½ hour later to get Barrack Bags. Up early for “Staging” – training - censorship, etc. Gave typhus shots to Bn (Battalion –ed). 22d September, saw movie “Abandon Ship at Lake” (the funny thing about the film was that it was shot at a lake, and not at sea –ed). Nothing the 23d. 24th of September, got first Pass to Broughton (Massachusetts –ed). Schrameyer and I went. Did nothing. Went to Boston with Schrameyer – Walked the street and to “Park Square” Met two gals with candy. Quite a time. The Policeman with billy club – “One week of ‘7’ or None”. Sailor up the hill from us (the policeman knocked the sailor in the ass, since he was having sex in the park, and his bare bottom was showing, so he hit him with his club, and told him to get dressed and to disappear –ed) – home on chartered bus. My first sub-way ride to town from Ball Park – B (Boston –ed) – quite a place.

Finally the big Day came – on the morning of 29 S (September –ed) – we walked up the G.P. (gangplank –ed) of the S/S Exchequer – loaded with horsehoe rolls and duffle bags. Really a load – was in Comp. (Compartment –ed) 2 – top bunk by Peterson of Hq Btry (Headquarters Battery –ed). Woke up at sea. Cold as ice – calm sea – 30 September – rain and cold – sighted N.Y. (New York –ed) Convoy – looked good to me. 31 September, sea got rougher and rougher – all the way over – rainy – Lt. worked in ship’s Dispensary. The Detachment did too after a while. Lt. B (Burbank –ed) rated a bed in the ship’s Dispensary – lucky guy! Soaked my toe which was hurt in the US during ball game with 370 (370th Field Artillery Battalion –ed) by a Staff Sergeant (name left out, blank, can’t remember –ed). We won by big score – I was really poohed afterwards – Lt. Murphy (**1st Lt. John R. Murphy, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed) played with me. “It is now official blackout time” close all doors, hatches and draw all blackout

curtains” – “Harry the Electrician” (another typical member of the group –ed) – The stinking Mess Hall – sub attack off port side (this was on 6 Oct 44 -ed) – saw flying fish etc. Saw waves 40 ft high. Lt. Burbank said – awoke and saw land on 10 October. Sighted a beautiful red roofed house on a hill – was at G.S. (Gourock, Scotland –ed) – unloaded in small boat to train, loaded and off like H (hell –ed)! Red Cross with coffee and donuts – ate K-Rations and six seat compartments – was with John Carpenter – Rudy – “Poncho Canoe” and “Texas” - slept little – Finally on the eve of 11th O (October –ed) – was rainy nite – Maj. Rowe met us over W.E. (week-end –ed) and took the wrong road to D-14 (code name of Camp –ed). Windy and rainy – straw mattresses – double-decker bunks – sing – in bombproof building – Had pretty nice set up – Buckets in latrines (so-called “honey” buckets –ed) – Poor showers and rain all day – Wind about 40 MPH and more rain – Went to BI (Blandford –ed) with Lts. B (Burbank –ed) and Beovers. To BI G.H. (Blandford General Hospital –ed). Got many medical supplies, etc. Lt. B (Burbank –ed) saw a Nurse he knew, so made quite a few visits – Langford and Brandon came as Ambulance drivers. Pretty good “Joes”. Brandon knew Dad. First Pass to “W” (Weymouth –ed). Schrameyer and I met a WREN and arranged a date for Monday nite. Later met up with Vi and another girl – was quite “moved” by Vi. To pub and she kissed me – nice – had quite a necking party and dated her for the following Wednesday nite. I couldn’t wait so went out already on Monday nite - That wasn’t good. English Customs don’t permit it - Saw her Wednesday nite though. Took her to a movie and to a café to eat “fish ‘n chips”- we had quite a time, discussing class distinction – Nice time with her. Real sweet –

said she liked me as much as her B.F. (boyfriend –ed) from Ga. (Georgia –ed) – Friday nite went to town and it rained – home early – I slept in the Dispensary all the time, pro’s) (advantages –ed). Sunday afternoon, Schrameyer and I met a WREN and Meadows and three ATS. Went to “tea” with them. “Beryle” had a date with a sailor at 1800. So I was out for the nite – home and to bed – Had another date with Vi Tuesday nite – We went for a long walk – nice time – She was very sweet indeed. We also had “fish ‘n chips” and coffee at her favorite place. Home with her and met her little niece – gave her some candy and “chewing gum” “gum chum”, above was a mistake. Had a date for Tuesday nite but was restricted for 48 hours to pick up all (AWOLs) in the U.K. Went to see Vi on Thursday nite and met an ATS on the street – went for a walk with her – “no soap” – she wasn’t the most beautiful girl in the world either. Saturday nite 28th O (October –ed). Was to have met Meadows and two ATS girls at 1700, but Meadows didn’t show up – my girl had to work so I went out with Meadows’s girl “Janet”. We went to a double feature and saw “One nite in Rio” and “Once upon a Time” I had already seen them both – gave her some American “Ci” (cigarettes –ed) and even indulged in a couple of them with her. She had quite a laugh out of that. Had to go to the “John” during the show too. She stayed at YWCA and I walked her home. Was raining so we got my raincoat and walked

down by the “swannery” in the rain. Took her home and she being Meadows’s girl I hesitated to kiss her, but the friendship was dropped for a few minutes, so I went ahead. Spent a quiet Sunday in Camp – 30 O (October –ed), Langdon and I went to town on an illegal “Pass”, fiddled around a bit and almost fell down when a big dog came by – had on British Heel Cleats (in fact, Hob-Nail Service Shoes -ed) so was slippery. We followed the girls and the dog and walked them down by the swannery. Stopped at a nice bench and did a little “woo-pitching”. She was young and a blonde – had nice large “mammary” glands – her name was Margaret. I had my “Ocorena” (musical instrument –ed) with me and I played around a bit with it – Had a lot of fun. Got home late and shot the bull for quite a while (just talked bullshit –ed). 31 October. Went to “W” (Weymouth -ed) again with Langdon. We met Lt. Burbank with a WREN “Jean”. We were just about to meet two ATS girls when he came around. He even helped us out. We took the girl to the “Pier Restaurant” and had a beef dinner. Embarrassed the waitress when she started to take the extra bread away (there was rationing in England –ed). We walked the girl to Nottingham House (dorm for WRENs –ed), and had to walk another 2 ½ mile back to Camp. That was our last nite

out in "W". The next two days were of great interest – Andy and I went to Litton Cheney to get some Plasma and Gas Casualty sets. Picked up a WREN at Nottingham House. Met "Olds" (Supply Sergeant –ed) at Supply (Depot –ed) and got adhesives from him – that was our History in Nottingham ... Guard on jeeps 1 November – drew 6-7 shifts both nites – off at 1600 hrs.

9 Nov to 19 Nov 44. We drove like HE (hell –ed) for somewhere – the town of L (could be Liège, but can't remember –ed) was really blown up. Drove there late at nite and got in last from the convoy – to bed in an orchard. Maj. Rowe came after us and took us to our unit. Up early for "C" Rations. Drove all day and finally stopped late at nite and went to bed. Next day, we set up the Aid tent etc. Lt. and I went for a walk to Battalion A.S. (Aid Station –ed). Was there for a few days. Saw my first Robot Bomb (V-1 -ed) there. Left there and drove thru blinding snow for hours and about the mines. We were put in our first Belgian house. Out the window I could gaze into the soil as if watching "Deutschland" (Germany –ed). That date I sort of set foot on it. Had quite a time fiddling with clocks – was kidded quite a bit about them. Was in a kitchen and dining room of a house there. Back at the first position, Lt. Burbank sewed up a little girl's forehead. She fell on the road from her bicycle. She was a cute little girl and didn't cry at all. Lt. Burbank gave away 2 of my Hershey bars. We took her home and got some apples. I learned the word for apple in French (pomme –ed). That was my first conversation in French. Lt. B (Burbank –ed) came out with his pockets full of apples. The house we stay at is a good one, though - 8 of us in two rooms. The como (signals unit –ed) is next door and a good Nazi (a 'friendly' local German sympathizer –ed) lives also next door. I tried to learn some German from him and had him sweating for two hours. The third day here, Lt. B (Burbank –ed), Andy and I went to "M" (Mürringen –ed) - was a nice place and town. Saw where the first "Robot" (V-1 -ed) landed, and the destruction it did. Blew up trees and broke them off etc. for yards around. Two motorcycles

"snafued" – Got extra cheese ration. Spent several nites following playing "big poker" had quite a time and nite. Got extra "C" Rations and "D" - ate all nite. An old man gave us "Milch" one day. About 18th of November the old man had a cow which had a hard time having a calf – I helped the cow! Nothing of interest only two hours spent in foxholes, my feet went to sleep – foxhole caved in – two-man hole shared with Lt. Burbank. 19 to 25 November, nothing of too much interest happened. Got to shower in warm "Wasser" – Went to medium A (105mm Artillery area –ed) to see Meadows. Borrowed 100 Francs from him, rate was 76 US Cents for 43 Belgian Francs. Got letters from Mother, Dad, Lela, Shelby, Ashley, Scotty, and Jean – "Texas" says she had sent me a package. Wrote to her twice. Had Turkey for Thanksgiving dinner 23 November - Ate it in the rain and snow in a can (meat can –ed). Later also fed a woman and 6 kids some of our "C" Rations. Real cute little kids. 26 November, cut Lt. B (Burbank –ed) and Galligan's hair. The kids from across the street were here, and we gave them each some food etc. I cut the little boys' hair, got quite a kick out of it. Saw dozens of "BBs" (V-1s -ed) – 27 November, Blue Monday - things go wrong. Lt. B (Burbank –ed) talked with Colonel about Graves Registration - "Nicht Gut". Went to see Major Adams (**Maj. Blair S. Adams, Headquarters Division Artillery** -ed). Back in blackout. Party at Division. Back home and mail. "BB" (Buzz Bomb -ed) lands too near for comfort in our area – 28 – 29 November – nothing of interest – 30 November to "M" (Malmédy -ed) for the afternoon – had swell time – bought apples, bread etc. With Lt. Burbank for dinner in a Hotel Restaurant – my first meal out in over a month - Had potatoes, trout and pork chops. I gave my chops to Lt. O.K. with him.

1 December 1944. Back to "M" (Malmédy –ed) with Vaughan, Galligan and Somerville – got bread and apples – Very nice time. Vaughan and Galligan got "stewed" (drunk –ed) a bit, lost my gloves too – had a flat tire. Sabbath 2 December, John Carpenter got me a pair of gloves at salvage pile – went to Cir. Co (Clearing Company –ed) to get Geneva R.C. (Red Crosses –ed) on Arm Brassards. Got the brassards to be ready to pull "stakes" so took it easy. To Church in afternoon. Only

the Medics with Lt. McG (**1st Lt. George C. McGee** -ed), Benjamin (**2d Lt. Earl W. Benjamin Jr., 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed), Piper and Walker there – Chaplain Musgrove (**Chaplain/Capt. Clifford L. Musgrove, Headquarters Division Artillery** -ed) made the talk. Very fitting too. 4th December, Lt. Burbank promoted to Captain. He went to visit V-V (Verviers -ed). We cooked quite a meal for him. Beef, beans, corn, slaw, bacon, French fried potatoes – used Herr Moeckels' (the good Nazi -ed) silverware, plates, cups, etc. Candles and cake. Brandy. Very nice. Beat Capt. B (Burbank – ed) - two games of chess. 5th of December, started building canvas sides to jeep to keep out the wind – went with Capt. Burbank to see a "Fraulein" with gall bladder trouble – a "sehr liebe" Fraulein was there. She had the gleam in her eyes for the Doc (good-looking girl -ed) – He played the game swell (Dr. Burbank was a ladies' man, -ed) – back next nite and morning. He examines her in nightgown (a bit of this and that) (in fact, he tried to f... her -ed). A hasty preparation to move, so much junk we couldn't carry it all - To Church – Capt. McNeil (**Chaplain/Capt. Walter W. McNeil Jr., Headquarters Division Artillery** -ed) "saw" in coffin shop – screws – hinges, etc. he could use. Andy and I – In house with Sgt. Pounds (**1st Sgt. Finley Pounds, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed), Lt. Benjamin (**2d Lt. Earl W. Benjamin Jr.** -ed) – Poker games – 2 nights straight, 2 calm nites. Ready for action, everything O.K. so far – lots of shelling though – worked on our light. Lt. McG (**1st Lt. George C. McGee** -ed) gave us lots of mail today – mail from Jean, Betty, 4 from Mother and 1 from Shelby. To bed early. We got that "action" we were getting ready for – at 0500 we took to the cellar – for ½ hour constant shelling – got two cases that were Germans and one was "kicked out" here – SF (skull fracture -ed) – PW (punctured wound -ed) of skull – brain on blanket – I took care of the second

one – shrap (shrapnel -ed) wound LW (lacerated wound -ed) shoulder – sulfa (sulfanilamide -ed) crystals and compress to wound – Visited S/Sgt. Meadows and Detachment. Lt. Mount (**2d Lt. Everette A. Mount, 372d Field Artillery Battalion** -ed) KIA. Quite a day. With Chaplain Musgrove (**Chaplain/Capt. Clifford L. Musgrove** -ed) for last rites – Buzz Bombs and tracers. Had diarrhea yesterday – went 12 x to the "John". 17 December fairly quiet day. Shells etc. Early in morning five casualties from Battalion from 88mm while on road laying wire - got quick word to move and did leaving stuff – dug in with Capt. B (Burbank -ed). That nite we woke up with tracers and machine gun fire everywhere. I was scared stiff – we then started a nite with shelling I shall never forget. Up the road toward town - shell fire from artillery, machine gun, and flares. Lying in mud and snow and anywhere possible. Turned around and started another way. Lead truck stuck in mud and couldn't get thru. Back to the road. Constant shelling for a couple of hours. Close too! Rain, slept in mud. Got wet and muddy. Finally we started cross-country for "E" (Elsenborn -ed) cross fields, woods – so dark the vehicles were bumping into each other. Finally at daybreak we reached a road and felt safe. I must have prayed that nite – I feel our prayers were answered too. That was a nite we shall remember always. 18 December – In "E" (Elsenborn -ed) and to Div Arty (Divisional Artillery -ed). At noon we were to go into a house there but moved to the woods instead and dug in! Capt. B (Burbank -ed) and I together. Shallow foxhole the first nite and no incoming fire. Dug the hole much deeper 19 December and felt fairly safe from shells. Late in afternoon we had a bombing and strafing attack. Smalley and McNabb (**Tec 5 William H. Smalley, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed) and (**Pvt. Lloyd R. McNabb, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed) of Charlie (C Battery -ed) were killed. Smalley was cut in half, our morale was a little low so Capt. B (Burbank -ed) gave us a little pep talk. 20 December - We dug a little more and tried to fix up our foxhole. Lots of Buzz Bombs went over and I

prayed a thousand times. Lots of fire from our guns. 21 December – we dug the Aid tent in deeper and improved conditions a bit and prepared for the nite. In foxhole about 14 hours. 22 December – Up and breakfast of 10-in-1s. Captain and Andy went to Clearing Company. Fairly quiet day till late in the afternoon, when shells landed near our dugout. Shrapnel tore up our tent and all around us, but no one got hurt though. To bed at 0500. 23 December – Still quite a bit of fog, so little air activity. Some shells dropped nearby. The Nazi push seemed to be checked at some points on our front. Was Sabbath and

real cold and windy. Sgt. Rhyne (**S/Sgt Ralph H. Rhyne, 924th Field Artillery Battalion -ed**) critically wounded, one leg amputated at Clearing Company. "Smitty South" (**Pvt. James L. Smith, 924th Field Artillery Battalion -ed**) KIA, was with Rhyne. Went with Capt. Dunlap (**Capt. Woodrow J. Dunlap, 924th Field Artillery Battalion -ed**) to Clr. Co. (Clearing Company -ed) and to bed early. 24 December – Clear and cold weather. Lots of planes out, looked good too – saw one shot down over border of Germany. Had a couple of strafing raids by their planes. We started our Aid Station dugout and didn't finish and blacked out our tent. It was a lovely nite. To bed early. 12 letters. Was reading them when the Huns started to really shell us again. Finally finished reading. Almost everyone got a package but me. 25th of December 1944 – Xmas Day, beautiful day – snow on ground but sky clear. Our bombers out early and the "Jerries" out to meet them. Saw some dogfights and one German shot down. Was strafed a few times. Built our log dugout all day – More mail and Xmas packages – none for me though – grateful to be alive – O.K. to bed early – have prayed more in past few days than ever before. This is 8 nites of straight sleeping in foxholes. 26 December – Clear cold day – good for air action and there was quite a bit. Strafing a little and one Battery bombed. Lt. Benjamin (**2d Lt. Earl W. Benjamin Jr. ed**) KIA,

a swell fellow, and 3 more got it too. Direct hit on foxhole. 16 hours foxhole sleeping. 27 - 29 December – same as before - quite a lot of artillery action on both sides one large shell hit within 25 yds of our hole. Had a good spray of dirt over us that nite. The Capt. and I went to bed early and talked ourselves to sleep. We both agree this is no place for a man with "ulcers". 30 December – was off and went to see Fisher as I hadn't seen him in months. He was rather nervous so I left as soon as possible – went with Pete (Mess Sgt Peterson -ed) and Galloway. Real cold! About 15°F and snow – more Bombers up than I ever saw – for miles! Maj. Adams (**Major Blair S. Adams -ed**) visited us and we all tried to keep warm. 31 December 1944 – last day of the year – snow, wind, and fog. Cold too. Had short Church service with communion. John Carpenter and I went to take a shower, the first one in almost a month. Got so cold I wish I hadn't gone! Felt good to be clean though – back late and hot chow saved for us. Shot the "bull" with Schrameyer, Galligan, Andy and Johnny – up late till 2100, so to bed and wait for the New Year! 1st January 1945 – the New Year came in with a bang. Artillery really opened up on both sides – several shells landed too near for comfort – Capt. woke me up at 0002 for wishing me a Happy New Year, while all hell broke loose. Cut wood and fixed blackout curtain on Aid Station dugout. Lots of letters – ate corned beef with the boys – up late till 2200. 2 January – nothing much happened – fairly quiet day and nite – up late again writing letters. 3 January – Galligan sick and to doctor at Clr Co (Clearing Company -ed) Station. Dug out the Aid Station sides for shelves - to Camp E (Elsenborn -ed) for material to help out in Aid Station – to Div A (Division Area -ed) saw Major and the bunch. 4 January – heavy snow. To Division Area with requisition for extra medical supplies – to Coll Co (Collecting Company -ed) with "Shandy", also to see Meadows and the boys. Fixed roof on Aid Station dugout – it was really leaky up till 2400 - midnight. Had a lunch

of bread and stuff (don't remember what 'stuff' -ed) – found two sacks of it on the road. 5 January got a haircut today, my first in weeks – went to Division Area to get medical supplies – got three Xmas packages today – my first too – one from Shelby, Betty, Mason and Jean – was very happy about that too. Wrote letters and to bed in foxhole, my 19th nite in one. 6 January - nothing much happened – a very quiet day. 7 January – Payday – got 1192 Francs (Belgian currency -ed). Fixed up hole a little – cut two hairs Sunday nite – ate toast and butter with the boys – still snowing. 8 January – Today was a 'sad' day – someone stole 3 qts of liquor from the Colonel (**Col. Edward O. Hopkins, XO, Division Artillery -ed**), so he cussed out the whole crowd and dares the man to step out that did it – so we are now restricted for the duration of the war – all this for 3 qts of liquor – some way to run an Army! To "E" (Elsenborn -ed) for wood with Vaughan, got some and a few incidentals. Took bath and changed underwear, was a bucket bath. 9 January – Stayed pretty close and fiddled around. 10 January – went to D.A. (Division Area -ed) with requisition for medical supplies. Saw Chaplains and related the "story" to

them. Fixed up a nice door to our foxhole entrance and cleaned out our hole. 11 January – Dug our Aid Station out a foot deeper. Can now stand up in it. Spent the day digging. Lot of mail – wrote letters, etc. 12 - 16 January – little of interest happened – took my laundry over to Meadows and he got it done by the girls in the house where the Aid Station was. Got them back for my Pass. 17 January I went to Verviers for a two-day rest period (to Jayhawk Rest Camp -ed). Andy (**Tec 4 Richard P. Anderson, 924th Field Artillery Battalion -ed**) and I. A couple of Buzz Bombs landed there while we were there – we met “Josette” and Andy, and I spent a lot of our Pass there listening to the radio etc. Back to “camp” in foxholes – snow drifts 10 to 15 feet deep. 20 January – spent a quiet day. 23 January, Capt. Burbank went on his two-day Pass – a little ‘incoming mail’

(artillery fire -ed) the last few nites. Got a new Replacement – name “North” – lot of air activity. Hope the Russians keep going. Tonite they are only 165 mi (miles –ed) from Berlin and 50 mi from Danzig. Nothing much happened in the next few days. Russian news much better. Some big 8-in guns moved in only 100 yds from our dugout. The boys jump up in the air every time they shoot. More artillery than I ever heard. The snow is melting and all the foxholes are soaking wet, it’s a bloody mess. My bedroll is wet too and I sleep in the Aid Station for two nites. On Sabbath 3 February we move back to “Heartbreak Corner” (most probably “Hot Corner” or “Purple Heart Corner” -ed). The Krauts were here only 2 days ago. The destruction by our artillery is unbelievable. Not one house in “B”, “K”, or “R-R” (Büllingen, Krinkelt, Rocherath -ed) is left undamaged! I counted at least a dozen Nazi trucks knocked out on the road. We move in at dark and they attack in the morning. Everything goes O.K. The fields and roads are “littered” with dead Germans. They evidently left so fast they were unable to bury their dead. There were about 14 dead in the barn where we were – we therefore moved to another house in the area – in front of the house were 3 dead cows – 1 dead German. In the back were three different series of graves – two series of about ten each were German, one was three American boys buried by the Germans. The snow is still deep but there are two dead Germans lying, half covered by snow, near the new dug graves - it

truly is a horrible picture to see though. In destroyed tanks there are German and American dead alike. Burned, shot, etc. The scenes are the worst I have ever seen. There were 3,200 artillery rounds put in these towns, so there is no doubt why everything is dead and destroyed.

February 5 & 6 – We moved up for “action” to the Siegfried Line. We cross two defensive lines of Dragon Teeth and are living in one of the pillboxes. It has several rooms, complete ventilation, electric heating, and air purification. The roof is over 6 foot thick and so are the walls. That terrain was just committed when a sudden burst of Pete’s submachine gun – at what ? “Wer schiesst?” “Ich verstehe nichts!?” (Peterson had heard a noise, and started shooting inside the pillbox, deafening noise in a closed space –ed) – but my pulse stepped up about 40 pulses/minute. Today, Capt. Burbank and I treated three casualties from Bouncing Betty mines. Lt. Livingston (**1st Lt. William S. Livingston, Headquarters Division Artillery -ed**), the “Bull” (nickname for an Officer with a ‘bad’ attitude -ed) and some other guy got it. There must have been at least 20 holes in Lt. L (Livingston –ed) and the other man - Our Aid Station is now set up in one of the pillboxes. They sure are excellent for protection against shells. They lack firepower though. In this one, only light machine guns could be installed. There are living quarters and bunks for 6 men – one has 15 bunks and as many as 25 different rooms. Quite a war, and also quite a pillbox. Sure wish this thing was over too. Another trip to the minefield. Murphy (**1st Lt. John R. Murphy, 924th Field Artillery Battalion -ed**) pitching, me Ginnis and Campbell got the bat. Bad, this carried them thru the minefield. I really “sweated” it out. Found stove in pillbox - Lots of small arms fire went of. Not a good sound! Wrote letters, 5 in all to bed. Left Siegfried Line for “rear” for a few days – in a good house – German SS troops stayed here a few days ago. There’re broken guns and dead horses still around – rainy and cold all the time. 11 February 45 – Have already had several civilian pts (patients –ed). Am enjoying the rest so much. Last nite slept with my clothes on.

Celebrated three years in the Army 2-11-45 – first time to sleep with clothes on since December. I am getting all my clothes washed. Lots of mail. 13 - 19 February 45 (Eibertingen) This is one place I won't ever forget. I helped a girl carry water and asked her to help me learn German. So I go see her that nite - she taught me German O.K. and boy oh boy all the other things she taught me!! So home again and I go and get a "P" (Prophylactic, or condom, to prevent getting the clap from this girl –ed). Capt. B (Burbank –ed), Schrameyer are there and we take 4 tablets of sulfa (as an extra precaution –ed) – I then started one of my worst nites I ever spent. I was allergic to the sulfa drugs and nearly died. Great welts came all over me – not one inch of my skin was missed – I drank water and vomited – took adrenalin / epinephrine - Finally got to bed at 0800 what a nite!! Christine was a good kid but too sexy for her own good. I saw her a lot and talked with her. She cried when I left and said she loved me - some stuff!! Anyhow that was quite a time I had there. 20 February 45 - To another town for a rest period. Inspection tomorrow by F. Black (**Brig. General Frederick H. Black, 99th Division Artillery Commander** -ed). Some stuff!! Have met a nice girl here – Emmy – she is also helping me with my German – been learning a little here. To shower today. 23 February Nice set up. Schrameyer and I have a room by ourselves. Had the inspection – I was C.Q. (Charge of Quarters -ed). Sunday, Schrameyer and I fiddled around. Found no soap. After a short stay at Plombières (Belgium -ed). 27 February, we head for "Deutschland" I see Aachen and it is really destroyed with buildings smashed to bits. Capt. B (Burbank –ed) went to see his Emmy – no soap. We stayed in our old wrecked hotel or something of that sort. After we got to Düren – it's really flattened – not one house is left standing that I saw. We crossed the Ruhr River, there was a Pontoon Bridge.

1 March 45. We go to Elsdorf, Germany, and start our assault on the Erft Canal. We force it and take several towns. In this vicinity we got well plastered with bombs from the Germans. Had two casualties that nite - we moved to another town, the advance is going well, we stay in a basement overnite. Next day we move again – are in that town for only an afternoon and nite – We move again and are close to the Rhine River. One afternoon we could see our artillery shells land on an old Factory. Next morning the "Doughs" (Infantry –ed) clear up all resistance west of the Rhine. During that time I saw the boys of "Big Sister" (155mm guns of the 372d Field Artillery Battalion - "Little Sister" were the 105mm guns -ed). The worst thing of the war to see yet. Sgt. Fisher (**S/Sgt Anton J. Fisher, 371st Field Artillery Battalion** -ed) and Cpl. Ruber were KIA. That was quite a blow to us all. 6 - 12 March - we traveled fast jumping from town to town till we got to the Rhine – we stayed in Konteradmiral Speer's mansion. At 0642 13 March 45 we made history by crossing the River Rhine on a Pontoon bridge – Since then things have been "red hot" and still heating!! 14 - 20 March we remained in Dattenburg for a few days – Meadows and the other boys were in the same place – we moved to the next river and crossed it in a day. Since 24 - 27 things have been like a "rat race". We drove up the "Autobahn" which runs from Frankfurt to Cologne. We change positions sometimes three x daily. 27 - 31 March 45 – we have been all over western Germany – near Limburg and in Lollar. Here we saw 334 British

Field Officers (including 16 General Officers -ed) who have been released – Talked to a Lt. Paratrooper and a Maj. General – Here two German Red Cross girls came with patients and I talked with one for two hours in the Doctor's office – She was very pretty and was a Nurse in a German Field Hospital. Here we acquired the field glasses and camera (there was an E. Leitz factory there –ed) – I sure would have liked to fraternize with her. We got back into the line and moved fast. Incidentally her name was Hildegard (this girl walked 200 miles looking for an SS Hospital to bring her wounded (SS NCO) brother to for treatment –ed). 1st April or so, we left Lollar for the Ruhr Pocket – here we moved several times – we captured over 15,000 Germans in two days. A truce was declared and the Germans gave up – A German Officer shot a Russian and Andy and I fixed him up and took him to Balliver to a Hospital. It was still run by German soldiers. I talked to a

couple of them – On the way back we were stopped by a woman – 4 little boys had stepped on a dud (nickname for German landmine -ed) and were badly hurt. We fixed them up with the aid of a German Nurse and took them to Hospital too. By mistake I took her to a place 8 minutes from her home and she had to walk back – She gave me eggs, wine, and films. Quite a day – we then left on 17 April for places unknown. West of Nurnberg. We drove 300 miles, so we are now sweating it out – to **116th Evacuation Hospital** to try and find a dermatologist. To Bamberg. 18 to 24 March we go into several different positions and have a hard time keeping up with the Germans. We get several eggs at these locations. We are now eating Ks only

so we must have more to eat - I talked with several Polish Prisoners. Gave them cigarettes. Took a few pictures. 24 – 28 March – Things move fairly fast still. 27 March I take off with a Medic from AAA (**535th Antiaircraft Artillery, Auto-Weapons Battalion** -ed) we go see a wounded German soldier. We are the first GIs here in this town. He is shot in two places, chest and abdomen. I give him plasma and bring him back to the Aid Station. Give him another plasma but he dies! (please also read the introduction –ed). We are living in a school. The 29th we cross the Danube River. I take several pictures of it. I almost missed the Bailey Bridge. I also treated another German. He is an SS shot in the chest. We evacuate him. After crossing the Danube, we continue several miles. 30 March we get one of the best thrills of the war – we recapture Service Battery, but Joe isn't with them (this was Stalag VII-A Moosburg -ed). See and talk with most of the boys. Lots of British men here too. Have been PWs for five years – I buy and find 14 rolls of 35mm film. 1 May 45 - Some of the atrocities the Germans inflicted on our men were the following which were told to me by a British PW who had been a prisoner for five years – he was captured in North Africa and sent to Italy, from there they were transferred to Silesia, in or near Russia. Here they stayed till the Russians started their drive. Then, one morning they were called out for roll call and marched off. They started a 1300 km

trek to Western Germany. There were several Russian PWs and Jewish boys in the bunch. The Jews had no shoes and soon froze to death. There were hundreds of them who froze to death on the road in the deep snow. They were supposed to receive one Red Cross Package each week. Some got two but most had been looted before they got them. The stuff in cans was all dumped out together. They were eleven days in a boxcar and the only way to secure water was to swap cigarettes. There wasn't any way to have bowels movement or to urinate. No one could lie down either. The door was kept shut for days at a time. On the marches there was little food and the prisoners had to beg, borrow, or steal. They seem to think most of the German civilians were against the Nazis. There were also conflicting reports. Some of the boys were treated O.K. 2 May - we move out of Moosburg (where the PW Camp was located -ed) and cross another River – it wasn't quite as large as the Danube – we fiddle around for the day and finally move into Altfrauenhofen and stay in a Doctor's house. Here the third of May, the rumor started that the war was over –

We later find out it was Italy (2 May 45 -ed) and Austria (4 May 45 -ed) that surrendered. The next day the Russians capture Berlin (2 May 45 -ed) and the news sounds like it's about over – also we hear that Hitler is dead and that Grossadmiral Karl Dönitz is appointed the Führer (1 May 45 -ed) of Germany on Hitler's request. Seventh US Army capture Feldmarschall Gerd Von Rundstedt (captured by 36th Inf Div, 1 May 45 at Bad Tölz -ed), and also a lot of other big shots (such as Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring -ed). 3 and 4 May, Capt. B (Burbank –ed) and Maj. Adams and I take quite a recon in the country. We liberate three pistols and a camera. We also buy 40 eggs for 6 Reichsmark. I used their own money too!! 4 May we move again, but no luck. 5 May we get the news that Denmark, Holland and north-western Germany (4 May 45 -ed) have given up; there is a rumor that Norway is about to fall or give up too (7 May 45 -ed) – we also get the news that we are to be part of the Army of Occupation for a while – so we're to sweat out the end of the war (7 May 45 + VE-Day 8 May 45 -

ed) with the US Army of Occupation, and the CBI (China, Burma, India –ed) Theater. We leave this place and drive all day for our semi-permanent location as Occupation troops. We finally arrive at our destination at Germalshofen, Germany, and are set up in the town hall and a school. We have a large room for the Dispensary. Plenty of space!

8 May, got no V-E Day celebration, but we spent the day setting up and cleaning equipment. There are sure a lot of pretty girls here and they all go by here several times a day – Across the street there's a swimming pool and we propose to go there too. 29 May 45, several things of interest have happened. I took an aeroplane ride over Schweinfurt and shot pictures – I also went to Schweinfurt a couple of times. Went with Miller to check the guard! Bathing with German gals and 'Recon' boys. Looked thru hole in fence and there he was!! (this was **Capt. Ralph Greenberg, 924th Field Artillery Battalion**, who was trying to enforce non-fraternization rules among Enlisted personnel, but got 'friendly' with the girls himself -ed). Scared stiff (this was Capt. Greenberg, for having been caught redhanded by some Enlisted personnel –ed). Talk with Frau Schmidt and Ann. Bath. Spoke English. With Capt. Burbank to visit Batteries and to Würzburg to get medical supplies. Nice large town – Saw Batteries etc. Got four packages – one from home, one from several people, Helen and Janet McNally. With Andy, see "Frieda" und "Konrad". Score a hit when "Wir einen Spaziergang machen werden – war sehr gut – hat Sie gesagt – Ich habe Sie gern - aber wann Sie zu hause sind, wirst du mich vergessen – Ich habe viel Angst wenn wir von den Hitlerjugend und die SS reden". Quite an experience. 4 June 45, I was lucky enough to get a 7-day furlough to the French Riviera at Nice, France. So we started out by truck for Luxembourg. We go in an A Battery truck. Capt. B (**Capt. Bernerd H. Burbank, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** –ed) and Lt. Macklin (**1st Lt. William A. Macklin, 924th Field Artillery Battalion** -ed) are the 2 Officers.

We ride 8 hours in trucks and get to Luxembourg. We travel thru Frankfurt and Mainz – both 'kaput'. In Luxembourg, we wait for two days for a train. Heinz and I go to Schmidt to take pictures etc. We ride 40 hours in a train with 10 men. Only 2 meals in 40 hours. We finally reach Nice and get a bathroom. Miller, Backarck, Heinz and I have a room 'zusammen'; we clean up and receive new clothes. The first nite, Heinz and I go for a walk to the Red Cross Center. A nice string band is playing, so I go for a stroll on the "Promenade des Anglais", and there I meet three boys from the Battery. While listening to them, I see a nice young lady walk by, so I go. This was a hard to get girl, but I finally got her, and walk home with her. I make a date for next nite. So from then on we are together all we can be. She's really a sweet gal. Beautiful too. Has light brown hair with blue eyes – about 125 and about 5'7" tall. Is an artist. She speaks 5 languages – I meet her mother and father. In her room we had quite some time, and then we finally we go to a concert.

She and I go to one movie. One nite to the "Hill", two nites to the "Adriatic" Bar. We meet Heinz and see his paintings. Quite a wonderful week. We return to Luxembourg and stay overnite. I return to Germany. Here took two rolls of film with me. If I had made the necessary arrangements I could have married Ann (she was the daughter of a former French Ambassador to Poland, had been caught by the Germans while working as a messenger for the French underground –ed). She really was one wonderful girl – I shall never forget my week at the French Riviera. There are volumes I could write but it's better to forget such things which hurt you to think of too much. We returned to Germany and I meet 'Frances', one of Doc Burbank's patients. She has TBC so I can't do much other than go see her. She is a very lovely girl to look at and to talk to. Andy and I go almost every nite to see her. She even promises me a little puppy. About July 10, 1945, we are all transferred to the **33d Field Artillery Battalion** (1st Infantry Division -ed) which is located in Heidenheim. Here, I meet several people. A German gal teaches me German Polka, a waltz + some others. Here we swim a good deal, we have trouble with Ambulance drivers and "can" (get rid of him –ed) one of them. Afterwards we get two very nice guys. Taylor and Smith. We soon move to Neuendettelsau (south of Nurnberg) Germany. Here is a Hospital Town where there are 2 SS Hospitals. I meet Esther Sepp. She was a very lovely girl of 22 years. She spoke very good English and was a very nice person. I used to go see her

every nite at 2000. We at first went for walks and then we went to her house. She always had something for me, like salads, pie, and fruit. It was a perfect set up. Later and for the next two weeks we stayed with two German gals, Hildegard and Gerlinde. To the NCO Club and had Hungarian "Wein" and also Cognac – "Trinken". During two nites partying and drinking. We finally left the 3rd of August 1945.

Then I got assigned to the **400th Armored Field Artillery Battalion** (non-Divisional unit -ed) in the city of Münchberg. Here I swore to fraternize no more! I met with Finch and we were the last ones to find a place to stay. We went to the Factory, no beds were available for us. So we get up and plan to sleep on the floor. Finch and I decided to go for a walk. We went into the room of Sgt. Hill, Hodley, Wilbud and I walked over and looked over the way and in the house nearby was a girl who was dressing for to go out. It was Saturday nite. So all the boys were yelling at her and she was fluffing them off. Finally, she motions to me to come over there but I thought that she was just kidding. Finally I dress and go out with Finch. She comes out and so the three of us go to town together. She says she's going to a dance so we accompany her. We sit there and talk for quite a while and the crowd starts coming in. Two other girls come over to sit at our table, so on into the nite. Some Tec 4 insists on dancing with "Angelita" all the time, so I decide to leave, but Marie tells me Armita wants me to stay. I go home with her for coffee and cake.

So Finch and I go with Marie and Armita to their house. Here we eat cake and drink coffee. Next morning we go take pictures. From then on we go to the Dance Hall, swimming, and walking, and picture taking. I had a wonderful week there with her. She cried very much when I left. She got my bracelet though I got a little gold chain from her. There is very much that happened that week. On the 5th of September 45 we are back to France at Camp "San Antonio" (couldn't find the name –ed). I go to Paris, France. A nice Pass. We are on the 17th of September waiting to get back home again. After a delay and change of orders we are back at Marseille, France instead of Le Havre (up Northern France –ed). We make the trip by train with the 6-man compartments. I didn't know the men in my compartment but we just acquainted fast. The trip before this was very interesting to us – it was from Nürnberg, Germany, to Camp "San Antonio", France

We were to travel by train – so we had boxcars to ride. 20 men in each car. This included all our equipment. We were crowded and rather uncomfortable. The trip took 3 days and nites. We bartered with the French. We traded candy, gum, cigarettes, etc. for tomatoes, bread, cucumber. The French were in the market for clothes, cigarettes, etc. I sold almost all the clothes I had. I got \$ 8.00 for shirts and shoes. I even took off my underwear and sold it for \$ 4.00, only to be sorry later as I when I arrived home I had to pay for it almost as much! At Calas (Staging Area –ed), I ran into Finch again and we went to several shows there. Later on, on the 29th of September we boarded the S/S Marine Devil, a Liberty Ship and we were on our way home again. We sailed along the coast of France and Spain, and we were near enough of the North African coast for me to photograph it. The Mediterranean Sea was smooth and we saw a lot of big fish, including sharks and sailfish. We went past The Rock of Gibraltar almost at nightfall, and I wasn't able to get a very good picture of it. It looked very impressive though in the dark. The next days at sea were nice – warm weather and calm sea. I lay on deck in the sun a lot and read several books, one was "Forever Amber".

About the 5th day at sea we ran into a terrible storm and the waves were so high that the ventilation system was cut off – This made it very stuffy in the hold and too rough of a sea to stay on deck – We lost lots of time here in the storm that lasted for three days – Very dangerous and cold too. Finally on the 9th of October we arrived at Hampton Roads, Virginia. It was a wonderful sight to see the United States again! In the heart of an American is that longing to be home again – to see the land we love. To know we were home again left an ache in our hearts and a lump in our throat – I even cried a little when I

saw the US coastline. We disembarked and went onto a train to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia. Here we received a wonderful dinner, steak with 4 vegetables, salad, milk, ice cream, etc. Then to nice barracks and a bunk. We were here for one to three days and were then sent to our Separation Centers. I left the third day via Pullman to Cp. Atterbury, Indiana. Here we got processed through all the different Departments and in the afternoon of 14 October 1945, I was Honorably Discharged from the Army of the United States. I had served 3 years, 7 months, and 34 days. I was now S/Sgt in grade when discharged. I got a bus to Louisville and stayed over the nite there. I bought a few things. I got home on the 16th of October and began my life as a civilian...

*Above texts were compiled from the original Diary held by **S/Sgt Everard R. Hicks (ASN:35257572)** who served as a member of the Medical Detachment with the 924th Field Artillery Battalion in WW2. Although violating Army Regulations, Sgt. Hicks held a Diary and shot quite a number of photographs during the war with a captured German camera. The MRC staff are truly grateful to this Veteran for kindly sharing his personal reminiscences with us and our readers. The additional help received from his son Marc is hereby acknowledged and very much appreciated too. To help readers, the authors have added a few editing remarks and further identified some of the persons mentioned in the Veteran's Diary.*