

Subj: OLD TIMES
 Date: 4/19/1999 3:26:14 PM Central Daylight Time
 From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)
 corasneary@aol.com

Lt. Tom Sneary, ex-L Company platoon leader, second platoon——

I have been given your email address by Savacool's boy in New Orleans. He also gave me Lewandoski's email, and he and I have been in touch back and forth.

Maybe you will remember me. I was your radioman until you got wounded on the same hill where Savacool got killed. I remember them taking you out on a stretcher. You were eating an apple on the litter!!!

I have a million memories of those days in Italy, and I understand from Lewandoski that you came back to the front from the repple-depple towards the end. I was with a railroad operating battalion by that time in Leghorn.

If you want to keep in touch, my email is on this post, but it is BENMAY@PRODIGY.NET.

My nickname was "SWEDE", if that is any help in remembering me —
 Best regards, Ben Johnson

Headers

Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>
 Received: from rly-zc02.mx.aol.com (rly-zc02.mail.aol.com [172.31.33.2]) by air-zc05.mail.aol.com (v59.4) with SMTP 19 Apr 1999 16:26:14 -0400
 Received: from pimout1-int.prodigy.net (pimout1-ext.prodigy.net [207.115.58.53]) by rly-zc02.mx.aol.com (8.8.8/8.8.5/AOL-4.0.0) with ESMTP id QAA23806 for <corasneary@aol.com>; Mon, 19 Apr 1999 16:26:13 -0400 (EDT)
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 From: "BEN JOHNSON" <BENMAY@prodigy.net>
 To: <corasneary@aol.com>
 Subject: OLD TIMES
 Date: Mon, 19 Apr 1999 16:16:21 -0400
 Message-ID: <01be8aa1\$7e0cfa20\$0100007f@localhost>
 MIME-Version: 1.0
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 X-MSMail-Priority: Normal
 X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 4.71.1712.3
 X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V4.71.1712.3

BENHAM M. JOHNSON
1907 SUNSET AVE.,
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(609) 361-9630
EMAIL BENMAY@PRODIGY.NET
JUNE 14, 1999

Tom,

Thanks again for all the stuff that you sent me recently. I have been going over it, and I will try to answer your questions one by one.

First, if possible, I would like very much to have a copy of the photo of you and the other officers. I think that it was taken outside the platoon CP on the Arno. It has you and Lt. Worrell and some of the other officers. If it can be copied, let me know the cost, and I will be glad to forward it to you. I regret that I have absolutely no photos of Italy. We weren't allowed to have cameras at the front, and all the pictures that I took of Naples, Leghorn, and Florence were lost in a flood in WVa in the 60's/ I also lost a nephew in WVa, but that is another story.

The official version of the Arno days was most interesting, and it verified many of my own memories of those days. That combat patrol referred to in your Battle History was a real bitch!! The man killed on our side was Alton Boyer. He was killed when he pushed past me in a ditch outside the farmhouse that was booby-trapped. I had stopped because I smelled a rat in the whole setup, and he told me to get the hell out of the way and he pushed past me and set off the trap. He was killed right in front of me. It's hard to forget something like that!! I also remember a GI who was killed on a patrol at the Arno when a mortar shell hit his back-pack radio dead center. You sent me out to see if there was anything that could be salvaged from the radio, but hell, I couldn't even find it. I don't see this GI's name listed in the report, and he may not have been from L Co. But he was sure dead!!

There was a colored lieutenant that was on his way to the 92nd, and you sent Speraw and me and one other GI to take "him out and show him what combat is like!" My God!! We got him in a ditch in front of our lines, "Porky" Speraw got into a melon patch and came back with two big watermelons, and the four of us sat in this huge ditch eating watermelons, while our artillery fired over our heads. After we finished the melons, we came back to the CP. I never saw the colored Lt. again. God, what a war!!

I have some data re: the 92nd Division---the overall reports from all official documents are not at all flattering. There is some reference to the 85th being sent to back up the sector during the German push towards Leghorn. This was the enemy attack of Dec 24-25-26, 1944.. The Nisei troops were also ordered to back up the 92nd, which was in total disarray from the attack!

I remember Karaberis, but not too well. He and I never had occasion to come into much contact with each other. I did get your letter of 5/1/99, so I have that data from you about him.

I was not aware that the Company was commended, nor did I know that you had gotten the Silver Star. Belated congratulations!!! That must be the hill that Walter calls Cemetery Hill, and I still think of it as Hill 715. That was a hell of a fight!! We lost a lot of men there, and I can, even today, visualize almost the entire two days of battle, from the cow stable to the foxhole that you and I shared. Do you remember shooting the GI in the ass in the dark?.. And the German medics patching him up and carrying him up the hill on the litter after we captured them? Do you remember the Kraut with his arm blown off carrying the litter, and you telling me to "cut off all that stuff hanging from his arm"? I borrowed Ritz's medical scissors and cut what was left of the muscle and the tendons, while the Kraut just stood there. He was in shock all the time!

Do you remember Sgt Phipps running back with his foot blown off by a Kraut grenade, and you threatening to shoot him if he didn't get back to his foxhole? That was before you knew that he was wounded! All the new replacements ran with him, and the entire right flank collapsed, which gave the Krauts a chance to overrun our positions. We lost plenty dead that night. That was when the Krauts got back into our mortar section and Henry Parrot was wounded, along with many others. Do you remember the .88 shell that exploded on the embankment just beyond the fox-hole where you and I were standing? That was the shrapnel that killed Lt. Worrel, about 200 yards down the road! And the German tanks!!! They really had us boxed, and the only reason that we even won the fight was because they finally quit!!

I can only tell what I heard about Cpt Godbold, and that was that in the attack on Castleonerato, he got behind a big rock in the middle of the battlefield, turned off his radio, and refused to come out. Sgt Holliday, of the Weapons Platoon, threatened to shoot him. That is what I heard. What the truth is, I cannot swear. I know from my own personal experience with Godbold that he was inclined to panic in a dangerous situation, and I never felt comfortable with him as a Company Commander. Savacool was Exec when I joined the company at Ft Dix (now

about 20 miles from my home, and full of Albanians from Kosovo). I remember him distinctly. He did take over as CC when Godbold was relieved of command. I ran into Godbold at the Repple depple in Naples the second time around, but I didn't bother to say hello. I also saw Ciccenilli there, and we bullshitted for awhile. Chick was a hell of a guy, and a great officer!!

From your wound dates, I can see why we missed each other from time to time. I was wounded on May 15th on the attack on Castelonlerato. You bandaged me, then Ritz bandaged me. Slight wound, but it smashed the radio, and you were very disappointed! It was about this time that Godbold was hiding behind the rock! We lost a lot of men in that attack.

The entrance to Rome was on June 4th, and the official version has the dates all wrong!! It was two days before D-Day, so 5th Army's hour of glory did not last too long, did it?

Lt Duffy was purely hell-on-wheels! I remember that he and Sgt Holliday and one of the machine-gunners got in a jeep while we were still in the Minturno sector, drove it up into the German lines, and opened fire with the .30 and the .50 and some Tommy guns!! Not long after this Duffy was transferred out, but I don't know where they sent him. He was a tall, lean, tough sonof a bitch from Texas, and Holliday was just like him. They were there to kill Germans, and they worked at it full time!

You sound like you had a good time getting Navy chow and Scotch. I have to wonder how Ray Rose gets hold of all this data that he has? He found me through a notice that I put on a web page about the 337th going overseas. I must have gotten a dozen or more responses to that one little item, including the one from Ray. I wish that I had known about the reunions years ago when it was easier for me to travel.

Walter called me the other day (June 6th) and we had a nice talk on the phone. His voice sounds the same as I remember it from fifty years ago!

I've written enough for a while---you will get bored. I am sending you something that was published in '97, or sometime. It is fiction based on fact, so you might recognize some of the names, as I generally don't bother to change them. I am also enclosing another short clip.

Believe it or not, I actually get paid for this stuff!!!!!!!!!!!!

Write again.

Best regards,

Ben



Subj: Re: MAY 15TH JUMP OFF (YOUR E-MAIL JUNE 17, 1999)
 Date: 6/23/1999 7:58:52 PM Central Daylight Time
 From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)
 To: Tomsneary@aol.com

Tom,

As far as I know I have gotten all the data that you have sent me so far. I am having a little trouble with Prodigy, and I am not sure that I am getting all my email. but I hope for the best.

As far as Norwood is concerned, the last I saw of him was when they were taking him of the hill where Kareberis killed all those Krauts. He was walking all over the place and we whispered to him to get down, but he was shot by the machine-gun in the legs.

None of us could get to him because we were pinned down—I mean pinned down!—by the gun, which was only about 10 yards in front of me. I was lucky because I had managed to jump behind a big rock when the Krauts first opened up. You will remember that we had orders not to shoot, and that's why the Krauts were doing pretty much what they wanted to.

As far as my wound, I took a bullet through the left arm, and the bullet went through the radio, too. When you found out that you had no radio (the little 536) you said "Oh, shit!" You banddaged me up, and then ritz came over and bandaged me again. Such attention!!

I was in the hospital in Naples, went through the repple-depple, where I saw Godbold, and then went by ship to Anzio where we debarked and took trucks to the outfit. This was on June 3rd, so you were on your way to the hospital, and I think that Lt Stack had the platoon at that point, but I'm not sure. The next day we marched through Rome and kept on going for about other five miles before we quit for the day. The Air Corps had caught the Krauts in the roadways and blew the hell out of them. Dead bodies and horses and .88s and everything laying all over the place!

AS far as the family is concerned, I went to college under the GI bill and got married in my senior year. We raised three kids, and the boy is in Eureka, Ca. and has his own construction business. My oldest daughter raised two kids, went back and finished college and got a degree in accounting. She had a good job with the state (PA) as state auditor. Now she is on disability, permanently disable with Multiple Sclerosis. My wife also has it, but she is not quite as bad as the daughter, being at least ambulatory.

My son was just diagnosed with cancer of the colon, so we are hoping for the best for him. Our youngest daughter has a 4 year old, a very good job in the computer industry, and her husband is the Recreation Director of a first-class township, the same one where I was a commissioner for four years.

I am glad that your kids came out as well as they did. I well remember when our kids were very young, and the polio was going through the neighborhood. Every day it seemed that another one of their friends had it, and we allwent around with our fingers crossed. Luckily they missed it, but Fate seems to have caught up with us after all. This ticker of mine managed to tke me through WWII, but it's just barely hanging in there nowadays.

—Original Message—

From: Tomsneary@aol.com <Tomsneary@aol.com>
 To: Ben Johnson <benmay@prodigy.net>
 Cc: Kaatsring@aol.com <Kaatsring@aol.com>
 Date: Sunday, June 20, 1999 7:08 PM
 Subject: MAY 15TH JUMP OFF (YOUR E-MAIL JUNE 17, 1999)

Subj: Your letter 6/27/99

Date: 7/7/1999 8:02:20 PM Central Daylight Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)

To: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY)

CC: RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE), Kaatsring@aol.com (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI)

Tom,

I am sending copies of this to all concerned. It was great to get your letter of the 27th, together with the pictures. the Weasel is a new one on me. I never saw one, but they may have gotten up to the front while I was in the hospital in Naples. All I ever saw were mules, mules, and more mules!!

I'm glad that you liked the article that I sent, and I'm flattered that you had copies made. I also appreciated the comments by your wife—the whole idea of writing is to make the reader feel a part of the action. I've had several pieces published about our experiences on the front. One was about the patrol that we all went on where we ambushed the Krauts on a foot bridge and killed a bunch of them. I don't know if you remember it, but it made quite a story. Actually, two or three stories.

About the pictures that you sent. I would like very much to send you cost of printing, without making too much of a point of it! So, please let me know the cost, and let me know if you take VISA!! (Joke)

I would have sworn in court that the Lt that you identify as Capt. Davies was actually Lt Worrell. Ah, well.. Maybe my memory is not as good as I thought.

As far as "the hill" is concerned, I remember almost every second of it!! Do you remember the cow shed where we were, along with some wounded men and some other troops? German tanks were all around us, and I was firing the window of the shed and you came over and told me to stop firing. After awhile, one of our men that was under a haystack came running in the door of the shed, after Jerry machine-guns set the haystack on fire. The other gunner tried it, but he was killed the minute he came out from under the haystack. That was Pvt Landi. We lost the whole right flank after Phipps had his foot blown off. I don't know how he got back to the aid station, we were all sort of busy that night. Savacool had ordered "every man to the front", and you and I got in a fox hole together. It was raining like hell, and when I ran I slipped in the mud and I broke my neck. We were no sooner in the hole when the Krauts attacked in the dark, and I fired my M-1 without even cleaning the mud out of the barrel. I figured it would blow up, but all it did was blow the mud out of the barrel! That was one hell of a good weapon!!

I was not surprised to hear about your dinner with the tankmen from the other side. I met a German several years ago who was in Italy, and it turns out that he taught gunnery to the .88 gunners!! so we had a drink together!!

I joined the 85th at Dix. They had sent a bunch of us up from the 99th Div to fill out the ranks of the 85th before going overseas. You say 'lucky you', but actually I was very fortunate to get with the 85th. The 99th spent almost a whole other year in the states, but when they got to Germany the first thing they hit was the bridge at Remagen, and they got the hell shot out of them!! Poor leadership! Then they got hurt again in the Battle of the Bulge. So I was lucky to get shipped up to Dix, and I never regretted going to the 85th.!

Lt Duffy was in the Weapons platoon, and Holliday was his platoon sgt. The book shows Hoffman as platoon sgt, but he was later given a battlefield commission and sent to OCS, or something.

My email prints everything I sent, so that the mail can be identified.

Subj: Re: Your e-mail 7-7-99

Date: 7/31/1999 9:23:14 PM Central Daylight Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)

To: Tomsneary@aol.com

CC: RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE), Kaatsring@aol.com (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI)

Tom,

Good to get your latest, and I am sending you under separate cover the article that you requested. This is on the ambush at the bridge, somewhere in the Gothic Line.

As far as I know, after Cpn Savacool was killed, Lt Stack took over as company commander. If Stack was wounded, it would have to be after I was wounded again and went back. Ask Walter, as he was with the company to the very end, and he would know more about that period than I.

All these years I have wondered why you told me not to shoot at the Krauts. I had a bead on one about 300 yards away, but it was raining, with intermittent fog, and I couldn't seem to keep him lined up in my sights. I fired about 6 rounds and missed every shot, and I was disgusted. There also was one hell of a machine-gun firefight right outside the door of the shed. Lasted about 10 minutes between two of our guys (I didn't know either of them) and a German machine gun. Nobody was wounded!!!

I haven't been in touch with Stack, and I don't remember Cates at all. I am having trouble remembering Holmberg.

I loved your line, "...Crabtree has passed away since that time. Due to health reasons, he will be unable to attend this year in Michigan." God, I wish I could think of lines like that!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Keep healthy and I hope you like the article. When it was written I had no idea that I would ever in this world be in touch with you men

ain—

Regards, Swede

Headers

Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

Received: from aol.com (rly-ya01.mail.aol.com [172.18.144.193]) by air-ya01.mail.aol.com (v60.18) with ESMTP; Sat, 31 Jul 1999 22:23:14 -0400

Received: from rly-st07.mail.aol.com (rly-st07.mail.aol.com [172.18.149.18]) by aol.com (8.8.8/8.8.5/AOL-4.0.0) with ESMTP id WAA20380; Sat, 31 Jul 1999 22:23:14 -0400 (EDT)

Received: from aol.com (rly-yh01.mail.aol.com [172.18.147.33]) by rly-st07.mail.aol.com (8.8.8/8.8.5/AOL-4.0.0) with ESMTP id UAA20702; Sat, 31 Jul 1999 20:16:56 -0400 (EDT)

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From: "BEN JOHNSON" <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

To: <Tomsneary@aol.com>

Cc: "RAY ROSE" <RROSE39963@aol.com>, "WALTER LEWANDOWSKI" <Kaatsring@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Your e-mail 7-7-99

Date: Fri, 30 Jul 1999 22:25:08 -0400

Message-ID: <01bedafb\$e8a61ec0\$696afcd1@default>

MIME-Version: 1.0

Subj: Your email of 8/29

Date: 8/30/1999 3:25:07 PM Central Daylight Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)

To: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY)

CC: RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE), Kaatsring@aol.com (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI)

Tom,

I read over your email and I don't know if you got a copy of my email to Ray or if you are asking me for a copy! I thought that everything that I sent in email was automatically being kept for me, but now, on checking everything out, I find that, if I send a separate email—such as this one—I have a copy in my files that I can check out. And when I receive an email, such as yours of the 29th, I have a copy. But if I just a piggy-back a reply to the sender on his message to me, then there is no copy of my answer to the sender! This comes as a real jolt to me because I had planned to print out all my answers and add them to the loose-leaf notebook of all this correspondence between the four of us! Now a lot of that data is lost, so I don't always know what I told you fellows! I also cannot tell from my records who I sent copies to! This is a good system (OUTLOOK EXPRESS) but it is not a great system!

Anyway, let me know exactly what you want to know about the 'Kraut on the litter'. This was the guy who got shot in the chest (Almost the same spot as Lt Ciccanelli) and landed on a little ledge about 8 feet below the surface of the ground, and you had us loop slings together from the Mausers and you sent me down to hook the Kraut to the "rope" so that we could haul him up. After the men got him up, I was left to get back up as best I could! Then you handed me a Tommy-gun and told me to herd this crew back behind the lines. So I got the Krauts to pick up the litter with the wounded German on it, and off we went!! The rest of the patrol came along behind me.

I don't know how daring I was. You told me to do it so I did it. I also got the dispatch case from the dead Kraut in the stream, and I also chased downstream looking for a Kraut that Toodle said had run away. I never found him, and I think maybe Toodle was putting me on a little bit..Anyway, as long as I was in the stream I guess you figured that I was the logical guy to get the dispatch case from the body in the stream. Then I guess, after I did that and had nothing else to do, I may as well go down the cliff and get the wounded German back up, and after that, having done such a good job, I may as well take a Tommy-gun and herd all these people back somewhere!! Maybe I should have put in for overtime!! I'm trying to remember what the rest of the patrol was doing at this time. I know Ritz was working with some wounded, because he bandaged up the Kraut on the litter. I remember that when we checked the packs of the 'troops' that we had just shot up, we found the packs contained shoe-polish, rags, brushed, etc. We had just shot up a high-ranking officer and his officers and batmen! Hardly first-class fighting men. This was the same action where I put the rosary in the hands of a dying kid. He couldn't have been more that 15 or 16! I used it in a story somewhere or other, and I liked the way it came out so well that I used it in another sketch that hasn't been published yet.

This was also the patrol where we came back along the road past all the dead, Germans and Americans. There was an Italian priest going from body to body, giving Last Rites. This impressed me tremendously..It was raining like hell, and he was absolutely drenched, but he was in all his priestly garb, and doing his duty to God. I have never forgotten this scene, and I used it in a poem (never submitted for publication)

As you can see, it was quite a patrol!

I hope that you can get to the convention

Subj: Your e-mails to Ray 9/10; to me 9/10 & 9/19

Date: 9/19/1999 10:51:48 PM Central Daylight Time

From: Tomsneary

To: benmay@prodigy.net

CC: KLWCL, RRose39963, djones@oh.verio.com

Ben,

It was good news to get your e-mail of this afternoon saying you were basically spared from FLOYD. I got a confirmation yesterday Walt had received my e-mail, so that means he had and has electricity at least.

You and your good wife are among the few who have been able to stick together for 50 years, and you both are to be congratulated and greatly admired, at least by the younger ones. We do need to set an example that people can live together for more than a few years as it seems the divorce rate gets higher all the time. This December 26th, Cora Nell and I will celebrate our 57th year together and we're still going strong.

I appreciate now knowing of your two wounds and the dates. You beat me on your first wound by about 15 days and with the second for both of us, I went to the hospital on October 15th and you on the 20th. I came back to the Company on Feb. 1, 1945 and my third wound sent me to the hospital Feb 21, 1945. This means we lost contact after October 15, 1944. I have often wondered who took my place on my first and second wound? I don't remember moving any one out when I came back. Do you recall?

You must have had a good time with the railroad battalion in Leghorn and Florence. I remember Leghorn. I was in a rehab camp which was set up at the former Kings race track which was between the sea and Pisa. Just before going back to the Company, a group of us Infantry Officers went into Leghorn to the Officers Club. There just happened to be a large group of Merchant Seamen there and a small group of combat Navy men. One thing lead to another. We Infantry guys finally sent the Merchant Seamen flying out of the club, for they were stupid enough to insult the combat Navy guys.

One time you mentioned you had lost some the e-mail exchange among us. I will be glad to send you copies of any you are missing. Just let me know.

Another incident I wonder if you and Walt remember. We were in reserve and I feel it was north of Florence. The Company went out on an all day "Problem." Trucks took us to this area which had a bridge over a stream. They let us out, and we walked across the bridge and then started our all day "Problem." When we had completed and went back to the bridge at the appointed time for the trucks to pick us up, they were there, but the bridge was gone. As I recall, it was in the fall and we had to find a place to put all the men out of the weather and prepare the 10 in 1 rations we had as emergency food. We finally located on the map of the area a place we thought was a "castle." We took off for it and when we were approaching the gate, down the lane comes a guy in a Tyrolean outfit, and almost perfect American (there is a difference between English and American accents) he wanted to know if he could be of help. As I remember, he was Crown Prince Ruffo and while the Krauts had placed mortar shells in the top of almost all parts of his square castle, everyone was put up, and his cooks prepared the food. He had carbide lamps which was great. In his living room he had the most recent copies of Life, Time, etc. The next morning he took a group of us out to his vineyards, and then underground where he had the most complete communication setup imaginable. He was the main contact for the Italian underground with Washington and London. What an experience. Hopefully you both were in on this.

Appreciate you giving the background of your Daughter In Law. It is a small world.

I'm hoping to close two ESOPs this week. It has been over a year since the initial contact with both of them. One couple in their mid-fifties will be getting 2.8 million in cash. What are they going to do with all that?

Believe this is enough for this time.

Tom

Subj: **MAY 11, 1944**

Date: 10/10/1999 7:32:39 PM Central Daylight Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)

To: Kaatsring@aol.com (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI)

CC: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY), RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE)

I just seem to have lost something on my screen, but not matter—it won't mean anything until I hit SEND!!

As far as email is concerned, I send out a lot of stuff to my kids, who all have computers, and the rest of the family, and to my publishers from time to time. And I still screw up!!! So don't feel too badly about it!

I am going to send you the book that I mentioned, and you sure don't have to pay the postage because I want you to see the other guy's point of view. BUT I MUST HAVE IT BACK WHEN YOU ARE DONE WITH IT!!!! As far as I know, it is the only extant copy in the USA, except maybe for the Library of Congress.

Now, as far as my part in the May 11th jump-off for Rome. The attack started at 2300hrs (11 PM) and began with an outfit jumping over us, I think it was the 88th Div, but it could have been elements of the 339th Reg. We were in foxholes on the front, and from our positions we could see the town of Scauri, down along the coast. After the attack started Tom and I got forward in an old stone outbuilding, and lay there waiting for a German counterattack. I distinctly remember rats running across our bodies as we lay there, trying not to make any noise. Remember, we were all brand new at this game. This was the same building where Mize had been killed by shrapnel the day or two before. Anyway, the attack went very badly for the GIS, and many of the attacking forces were killed in the barb-wire emplacements. We could hear them screaming from where we lay in the building. The Lt came back without his rifle, screaming at the top of his lungs!! Too much for the first time out!!

Anyway, Tom and I were there most of the night, and when dawn came we went back to our positions. I went to a foxhole and I think that Tom went down to the CP. Godbold was still Company CO at this time, and the CP was under constant artillery fire, and every one was getting jumpy. I remember that I could look out on the German positions and see the body of a dead German lying there. This was on the 12th, and we didn't leave the position until the attack on Castelonorato, on the 15th. he was there all that time so he must have smelled pretty ripe.

I remember both Haverlock and Weiner, but I can't remember what platoon Weiner was sgt of. Holliday was sgt of the weapons platoon and I remember him very well. Wasn't Lt Duffy still platoon leader at this time?

You are right about the Jerry wire. It was a much better grade and had been adapted just for combat conditions. I think that our wire was improved towards the end of the war. I know I had a hell of a time with the wire when we were up at the Arno at the farm.

I got hit on the 15th, so I don't remember taking Castelonorato, but according to the book (and my own memory) we lost a hell of a lot of men there. Not only our outfit, but all the ones that were involved.

I'm anxious to see what Tom remembers of that night. Tom, do you remember being in that outbuilding with the damn rats running over us, and the guys screaming in the wire?

As they say nowadays, this was the GOOD war!!!!!!!!!!!!

Regards to all, and keep the faith.....Swede

Subj: **MEMORIES, ETC**

Date: 10/27/1999 10:10:51 AM Central Daylight Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)

To: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY)

CC: djones@harborcom.net (Don Jones), RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE), Kaatsring@aol.com (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI)

Tom, and all the rest of L Company,

Sorry to disappoint you on the memory theory, but Pollock and I have not been in touch until Ray got us all started on this thing with the Internet. I have not even been in touch with too many army men; air corp and navy and marines, but not many combat infantry men. It just seems to me that there are certain scenes from my army days that are completely etched in my memory, almost as though they happened yesterday, as everyone likes to say. I remember you and I on the very first patrol into no-man's land. We were in a static front near the Garigliano River, and the immediate enemy-held point to our front was called the "Pimple" because it was such a little hill. We also had a Lieutenant there who was "on loan", but he was not one of our regular officers. He and I went out on recon patrol one night, just the two of us. All we carried were '45's, and we got next to a house in no-man's land and listened for about 20 minutes. There were Krauts in there and they had some women, because we could hear them carrying on. I guess it takes a certain amount of nerve to go into the middle of a battlefield for your kicks! Anyway, they went out the next night on an ambush patrol to the house, hoping to catch the Germans, but they would not take me. Anyway, they never saw the Krauts, and they came back with no prisoners. After that, the lieutenant left us. I just can't seem to remember his name, but he was a real hot-shot!

There was a sort of dugout in front of our lines, and when we manned the foxholes everynight the dugout, which had been built by the Germans, was used by us. It had four bunks in it, and a desk with a candle in a rum bottle, and two hand-grenades on the desk. It looked just like a scene from ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT. Once in a while there would be a little bit of artillery in the distance, and sometimes we would hear Jerry "zipper-pistols" going off. Otherwise, everything was quiet. Right in all of this peace and quiet I managed to come down with malaria, and got sent back to the hospital. Quaintance was assistant runner, and he and I shared a dugout at that time. It was right around Easter, and the flowers were beginning to bloom on the terraces. After I got wounded at Castelonorato, Quaintance took over the radio duties, and he was killed about four days after I was wounded.

It's funny how we remember in spurts. I don't remember Laferski at all, but I remember Major Smith, with the moustache, and Col Madsen very well. Two damn fine men. We used that ditch as jump-off point, and the Germans were throwing air-bursts at us just as we crossed the road. We walked into a trap, they were in front and both sides of us, and we couldn't have gone more than 300 yards when I got hit in the arm, and the bullet went through the radio. I remember how mad you were when you found out the radio was ruined. This was when Godbold got behind the rock and stayed there like forever. The Mexican kid was Jesus Serna.

More later Swede

Headers

Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

Received: from rly-yd03.mx.aol.com (rly-yd03.mail.aol.com [172.18.150.3]) by air-yd01.mail.aol.com (v62.10) with E

Subj: **GERMAN BOOK**

Date: 10/27/1999 10:10:55 AM Central Daylight Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (BEN JOHNSON)

: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY)

CC: RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE), Kaatsring@aol.com (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI), djones@harborcom.n Jones)

Tom,

The book that I sent Polock is by Fredo von Senger und Eterlin, who was the commanding general of the Wermacht army that opposed us as we fought our way up the boot. It is a very interesting book, not only of the Italian campaign, but also the Russian front, and a lot of other interesting data about the activities behind the enemy lines. He talks at length about Cassino, and the bombing of the monastery, and there are good photos in there of the fighting in the mountains, the mule trains (yes, the Germans had mules, too), and some about the fighting in Florence area and the Arno River.

You might like to read it when Polock is finished with it. If so, he can send it to you. BUT I MUST HAVE IT BACK EVENTUALLY!!! I have checked on the Internet with rare book dealers, and this is the only copy in the USA!!

Thanks for the idea for Veterans Day. I may go back a war or two to the Civil War, where I had four great-grandfathers serving in the Union Army, and try to make a philosophical presentation of it. I don't know yet. War has changed, it is mostly UN police actions now, in countries where we have no business being in the first place.

Polock mentions Sgt Davis, and I remember him very well. He was regular army, and so was Sgt Norwood. Ray has dug up some more of the old L Company "bones"/ I remember Ray Heckel. He ran the wire from the Company cp to the machine gun and mortar positions. Lawrence Pollotta I remember very well. We called him "Ginzo", and I used him in one of my stories. He asked me, somewhere deep in the northern Appeneines, after Savacool and a dozen others had been killed and wounded, and we were down to nothing, if I wanted to be a sergeant !! I just looked at him and laughed. Sneary wasn't there at that time, and I think that Stack was running the platoon. Elton Teel was Stf Sgt of the first platoon and he was captured by the Krauts at the Arno River. That little episode is in the book somewhere. I remember Domann, a little short guy about thirty five years old. I can remember his face very well, but I hadn't thought of him in all these years until I saw his name on Ray's list. Then his face came right into my memory.

Ray, I can't help you with Norwood's whereabouts. He was a very quiet, private person. A very good soldier, but you never knew what he was thinking. He had a completely drab personality. He never got loud, he never got mad, and he was never scared. I sometimes wondered if he knew what the hell was going on. But he was decorated for bravery at Terricina, and he deserved it. He was wounded on the hill where Karaberis saved our collective ass.

The other names I don't recognize, and I think that they were all probaby replacements.

More later—Swede

Headers

Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

Received: from rly-yg02.mx.aol.com (rly-yg02.mail.aol.com [172.18.147.2]) by air-yg03.mail.aol.com (v62.10) with E Wed, 27 Oct 1999 11:10:55 -0400

Received: from pimout5-int.prodigy.net (pimout5-ext.prodigy.net [207.115.58.59]) by rly-yg02.mx.aol.com (v62.10) w

Subj: **BOOK**
 Date: 11/12/1999 7:59:44 PM Central Standard Time
 From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (REGARDS)
 To: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY)

Tom,

The topos came today and they are great!! I want to thank you for sending them. This was the first time that I ever saw a map of where Hallback and Drew Lewis were killed. If you remember, we were attached to the British 8th Army at that point, and after our guys took the hill, the Brits thought that they were Germans and blew the hell out of the hill with their artillery.!!! I remember them bringing the two bodies down on the mules. that's also where Porky Speraw got a piece of shrapnel in his butt during a heavy barrage by the Krauts. Didn't we have FUN????

The von Senger book is in the mail today so you should be getting it next week some time.

As far as the ticker is concerned, you have been through it so I don't have to sugarcoat it. The ticker is barely going, and it does alright as long as I don't overexert or come under too much stress. Walking too fast, for example, can screw everything up. If the pulse is too low, I get faint and dizzy. If it goes too high, I get angina.. So I take a nitro!..If that doesn't work someone will dial 911! But you know the drill!!!

i have decided to take a medical deferment and sit out the next war. You guys will have to fight the enemy without me!!!

More later,

Regards, Ben

Headers

Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

Received: from rly-zd01.mx.aol.com (rly-zd01.mail.aol.com [172.31.33.225]) by air-zd02.mail.aol.com (v62.15) with Fri, 12 Nov 1999 20:59:44 -0500

Received: from pimout4-int.prodigy.net (pimout4-ext.prodigy.net [207.115.58.198]) by rly-zd01.mx.aol.com (v63.6) with ESMTP; Fri, 12 Nov 1999 20:59:35 -0500

Received: from default (PSVLB103-38.splitrock.net [209.252.106.86]) by pimout4-int.prodigy.net (8.8.5/8.8.5) with SMTP id UAA8225102 for <Tomsneary@aol.com>; Fri, 12 Nov 1999 20:59:32 -0500

Message-ID: <004101b2d7a\$32bfa60\$566afcd1@default>

From: "REGARDS" <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

To: "TOM SNEARY" <Tomsneary@aol.com>

Subject: BOOK

Date: Fri, 12 Nov 1999 20:55:36 -0500

Organization: Prodigy Internet

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: text/plain;
 charset="iso-8859-1"

Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit

X-Priority: 3

X-MSMail-Priority: Normal

X-Mailer: Microsoft Outlook Express 5.00.2314.1300

X-MimeOLE: Produced By Microsoft MimeOLE V5.00.2314.1300

Subj: Your e-mails: 11/8/99, 11/11/99, and BOOK 11/12/99

Date: 11/19/1999 7:33:02 PM Central Standard Time

From: Tomsneary

To: benmay@prodigy.net

CC: djones@oh.verio.com, KIWCL, RRose39963

Ben,

This is my third attempt to get this to you. My mouse keeps freezing and I loose the whole letter.

11/8/99: regarding your "ticker." I can empathize with you. I always carry a small bottle of 10 nitros with me every time I leave home. I have been thankful I had them on me a number of times over a year ago. I have been told to replace them every 6 months if unopened and within 4 days if opened. Also, originally they had me on an aspirin once a day, and since the first of this year just 3 times a week. I bruise easily, but I clot quickly, which is amazing. I am covered with blue spots when I hit something, like working in the yard, but this is an easy trade off. You mentioned the German P-38. Were you with me when we made a raiding patrol back to a German Battalion? Well, that is where I got my first wound. We go into quite a fire fight. got into a duel with a German Major. I got his P-38 and kept it with me all the way back to the states, but when we got transferred to St. Louis, and were living in a hotel waiting for an apartment to open, I couldn't leave it in our room and I couldn't take it to the office, so I put it under the seat of my car. We had to use the hotel parking garage and you guessed it, one day the P-38 was gone.

11/11/99: My "Veterans Day" was just a normal work day. Dallas did have a small parade, but that was it. The von Senger book arrived Wednesday in good shape. During my lunch time, I have read the Forward, which sets the tone of the General, plus some 30 pages. It is unbelievable, but I'm sure true. I will let you know when I have finished reading it and sending it on to Ray.

11/12/99: When sending you and Walt those topos, I felt both of you would quickly relate to this area, and you have. Yes, I remember being attached to the British. I remember how their chaplains were right with us, and I remember them giving the last rites to several men. I never saw an American chaplain closer to the front than Battalion.

In my e-mail of 11/7/99 I mentioned the book Ray loaned me - **THREE BATTLES: ARNAVILLE, ALTUZZA, SCHMIDT**. It relates too often to the problems of communication, down to a small patrol, and how many of our men were casualties of our own artillery. The topos I sent you were copies of the ones contained in a separate packet in the box in which Ray sent the book. Ray has suggested I send it to you and then you in turn send it to Walt. It is all boxed and ready to go. Please let me know if sending it by UPS is O.K.

Last Monday night I attended my third monthly meeting of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Some years ago when I bought a new car, the dealer, who knew me, asked me if I had a Purple Heart, and I said yes. He then told me that the State had special license plates for Purple Heart recipients and they were free from then on. Well, the State did verify, and my plates are "3P-HRTS". Some 6 months ago, I got an application to the MOPH as they had gotten my name from the State. Really fast work! Anyway, I am just learning about the organization. Monday night I learned vehicles with the Purple Heart plates park free on any city or state owned parking facility, and up to 30 days free at any airport parking area. No big deal, but this was gotten through by the organization. You and Walt may want to see if you have a close Chapter, and learn what benefits are available to you. As I learn more, I will share with you.

Believe this is enough for this time, and I've made it here without a problem. I have reported my problems to our computer man and he will be getting me a new CPU with Windows 98 by next Tuesday. If you e-mail me around this time and I do not respond, send to Cora Nell's computer - corasneary@aol.com. I'll e-mail you all when I get completely set up.

Tom

Subj: **TOM'S EMAIL OF 11/20**

Date: 11/22/99 7:07:15 PM Central Standard Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (REGARDS)

To: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY)

CC: djones@harborcom.net (Don Jones), RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE), KIWCL@AOL.COM (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI)

First of all, Tom, I did not know that your granddaughter was at A&M, but I'm surely glad that she was not hurt in the bonfire collapse. What an awful thing to happen to kids in school. If they're not getting shot nowadays, bonfire piles fall on them!!! I sometimes wonder if we weren't safer in combat!!

You mention smokeless powder that the Germans used, and the huge advantage that it gave them, especially the machine-gun emplacements. A good practical example of this was on Hill 719 (I think you men call it CEMETERY HILL) One of our machine-guns that was positioned directly in front of the cow-shed where Tom and I (and a lot of other men) were, was in a fire-fight with a Jerry MG. This fight between the two guns went on for a good five minutes, and the smoke that came from our gun was building up in clouds, but the Jerry gun couldn't be seen at all. The fight was never decided, our guys finally left the gun and came into the shed with the rest of us, shaking with fear and cold. I had seen a Jerry that I was taking shots at, when Tom asked me what the hell I thought I was doing, and to cut it out!! I never did hit the guy I was shooting at!

One thing that the Krauts had that was good was the flash protectors on the ends of the barrels of their cannons and MGs. I found that the worst thing about firing the M-1 at night was the temporary blindness from the muzzle blast and flame from the end of the barrel. It ruined the night vision. The artillery men had the same complaint, but they used to close their eyes when they fired at night. With the rifles, we couldn't afford to close our eyes.

Tom's experience with a sniper made me think of my own wound at Castelonorato, when the sniper hit the little radio, which is what he wanted to do. My arm just happened to be in the way at the time!

Col. Madsen was one of my favorite officers. Whenever I hear tell of men who are real leaders of other brave men, I instinctively think of him. He was everything that a man could want in a leader, and I was sorry to hear of his death from you all, but in 1999 I am not surprised at anyone's demise. The passing of time takes us all!

Tom, you were probably lucky to forego the Majorship. You might have gotten stuck with the Korea deal!!!

In your reference to the "40 photos" it might be best to send them to Walter. Is the Gordon Parret the same one I knew as Henry Parret, who was wounded on that confounded Hill 719!! He was in the Weapons platoon, so Walter would know him better than I. Or is he a totally different person?????????

That's it for now, guys!!

Headers

Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

Received: from rly-yc05.mx.aol.com (rly-yc05.mail.aol.com [172.18.149.37]) by air-yc05.mail.aol.com (vx) with ESMTP

Mon, 22 Nov 1999 20:07:15 1900

Received: from pimout7-int.prodigy.net (pimout7-ext.prodigy.net [207.115.59.180]) by rly-yc05.mx.aol.com (v65.4) with

ESMTP; Mon, 22 Nov 1999 20:07:07 -0500

Subj: **UPDATES**

Date: 12/10/1999 3:49:45 PM Central Standard Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (REGARDS)

To: Tomsneary@aol.com (TOM SNEARY)

CC: djones@harborcom.net (Don Jones), KIWCL@AOL.COM (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI), RROSE39963@aol.com (ROSE)

Hi to all,

First of all, I got a blank email from Polock that said HI, but he must have said something on it because Tom responded to it. I would love to know, like Tom, what Walter's remembrances are. I know that none of the three of us seem to have at all the same memory of Hill 59. I think you guys call it cemetery Hill. Maybe not. That's the hill where Lt Worrel was killed, along with so many others. I think it is the same hill where Tom got his commendation.

Speaking of "friendly fire" do you men remember the time we were bombed and strafed by the Spitfires? I remember it very well, no one was hurt but we had to dig some people out where they had been buried in their holes by the bombs. Quite an experience. Do either of you remember this flasco? it seems that we called for air support, and threw red smoke on the Jerry position. Not to outdone, they fired a red smoke bomb on our position. the fly-boys, who never did learn how to read a compass, saw the red smoke on our position, and dutifully and with great glee bombed and strafed the crap out of us!!!!!!!!!!!!

I don't remember where we were at the time, but most of the time in combat I never knew where I was!!

Tom, I just got your list of names in today's mail, but without the pictures I can't remember who is whom!! I hope that you are enjoying that book by von Senger.

UPS is OK for me, as we get everthing on this island that everyone else gets, and maybe more. We get rebates on our property taxes, we just got a state-ordered discount on auto insurance, and we just have a good time in general, and I hope that you guys do too!

Angina gets to be a nuisance after a while, no es verdad, Tom?

I was sorry to hear about Parrot dying. And here we are, almost to the anniversary of Benny Addumus's death.

I would like to contact Lt Ciccennelli again. The last I saw him in WVA was in the early sixties, and he had a bad heart at that time, so I don't know if he is any longer with us. Speaking of Long, this email has developed a life of its own, and is getting out of control, so I will sign off and wait to hear from you all again.

Don, I am in touch with Alessandro, and I last emailed him in Italian. I would have liked to have seen his face when he tried to interpret it!!

Take care!!

sWEDE

----- Headers -----

Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

Received: from rly-yc02.mxx.aol.com (rly-yc02.mail.aol.com [172.18.149.34]) by air-yc01.mail.aol.com (vx) with ES

Subj: **Re: Updates - Your E-mail 12/10/99**

Date: 12/13/1999 5:09:19 PM Central Standard Time

From: BENMAY@prodigy.net (REGARDS)

To: Tomsneary@aol.com

CC: djones@harborcom.net (Don Jones), RROSE39963@aol.com (RAY ROSE), KIWCL@AOL.COM (WALTER LEWANDOWSKI)

Tom,

You're right about the way the hills were numbered. I just emailed Ray to help him with it. I remember some of the numbers from checking the maps. but I never knew what town I was near. Now I know that we were at Firenzuola, because that's where Perry was killed, and when his fox-hole took a direct hit from an .88, Ritz came back and told us that, "He's beyond anything that I can do for him. I can't even find the pieces!!"

See, I remember this kind of stuff!

As far as 'no es verdad?' I'm surprised that a Texas boy like you didn't pick up the Spanish.. Up here in Jersey we seem to need a working knowledge of a half dozen languages just to get by! My cardiologist is a Hindu, but speaks great English. The guy who pumps my gas is a pakistani, the kid at the dry cleaners is a Korean. The girl who busses the tables at our local restaurant is Spanish, and responds best to that language. My daughter-in-law is French, and my son-in-law is Italian-American!

So I pick up a few words now and again.

I had no trouble picking up the photos that Don emailed, but I haven't tried to download them because I already have them in my collection from the first time that he sent them.

Speaking of Cemetery Hill, which I think of as Hill 615, do you recall when Savacool sent you and I out on a sort of scouting expedition as soon as we got on the hill? we wandered out to about 500 feet to the right flank and started to dig a fox-hole in a grove of trees. This was when the Jerries decided it was a good time to zero in their mortars on us, and we decided it was a good time to get the hell out of there, so we came back to the line. that was before all the FUN started on the hill. And do you remember the way it rained on that Hill?

Well, enough memories for a while.

Regards, Ben .

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Return-Path: <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

Received: from rly-yh03.mx.aol.com (rly-yh03.mail.aol.com [172.18.147.35]) by air-yh02.mail.aol.com (vx) with ESMTP; Mon, 13 Dec 1999 18:09:19 -0500

Received: from pimout8-int.prodigy.net (pimout8-ext.prodigy.net [207.115.59.137]) by rly-yh03.mx.aol.com (v66.4) with ESMTP; Mon, 13 Dec 1999 18:09:08 -0500

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by pimout8-int.prodigy.net (8.8.5/8.8.5) with SMTP id SAA52318;
Mon, 13 Dec 1999 18:09:00 -0500

Message-ID: <000501b45be5c4b3a40\$3d6afcd1@default>

From: "REGARDS" <BENMAY@prodigy.net>

To: <Tomsneary@aol.com>

Cc: "Don Jones" <djones@harborcom.net>, "RAY ROSE" <RROSE39963@aol.com>,
"WALTER LEWANDOWSKI" <KIWCL@AOL.COM>

References: <0.95391273.25831c5f@aol.com>

Subject: Re: Updates - Your E-mail 12/10/99

Date: Sat, 11 Dec 1999 18:58:18 -0500

Organization: Prodigy Internet