



ARMY AIR FORCES



ARMY SPECIALIZED
TRAINING PROGRAM
Trains men in colleges



26th "YANKEE"
Battle of the Bulge
Siegfried Line

FROM WORLD WAR II - 1941-1945

A SOLDIER'S STORY

BY CHARLES E. FRETWELL



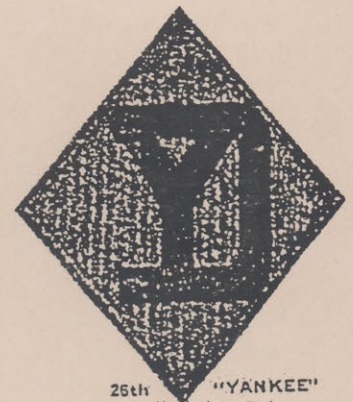
ARMY AIR FORCES

Greensboro, N. C.
May-June 1943



ARMY SPECIALIZED
TRAINING PROGRAM
Trains men in colleges

Providence College
July 1943 - March 1944



26th "YANKEE"
Battle of the Bulge
Siegfried Line

Fort Jackson
Columbia, S. C.
April-July 1944

Overseas
July 1944 - January 1946
England
France
Germany
Austria
Czechoslovakia

October, 1994


This book is a composite of a number of newspaper columns that have appeared in the RADFORD NEWS JOURNAL and in THE NEWS during the past several months.

It is, as I have stated previously, an attempt on my part to share with the readers what it felt like to be an eighteen year old like many other young Americans during World War II. It attempts to give some background leading up to that War and to follow my experiences beginning with my registering for the draft, my call to report to active duty and follows through with an account of my experiences in the Army Air Corp, my days at Providence College in the Army Specialized Training Program known as ASTP, as well as my days in service with the 26th Infantry Division as a part of General George S. Patton's US Third Army in Europe.

Each person who has served in the armed forces has his or her own experiences to relate and their memories of that service is directly related to what part of the war they experienced. Each has their own story to tell. This then, is mine. From the day I left until the day I was fortunate enough to return home and with the very last column a look back and a wonderful commentary by the late Eric Sevareid on the role of a soldier.

My thanks to all those who have made kind comments on what I have written and to those seeing them for the first time my best wishes that they will bring memories of a momentous time in the history of our country.

I WANT TO DEDICATE THESE MEMORIES TO MY WIFE WHO LIKE MANY OTHER SOLDIERS' WIVES KEPT OUR SPIRITS UP WITH LOVING LETTERS AS WE ENDURED THOSE LONG MONTHS OF SEPARATION.


Charles E. Fretwell

The News — Jou

Sunday
May 2
1993

50 years ago.....



Staff photo by Marty Gordon

It has been along time since this group, (from left) Charles Fretwell, Bill Guill, Bill Roop, and Truby Altizer, left Radford for World War II duty with the Army. Today, Fretwell begins a series on the events surrounding those experiences. See page 6.



A look back at second world war

Editor's note: Today, Charlie Fretwell begins a look at his and three others' experiences with the Army in World War II. Fretwell will give readers a first hand account of personal involvement in the activities surrounding the confrontation.

Over the years I have written a regular column for the News Journal, among those that generated the most reader response to me personally were the ones I wrote about my experiences in World War II. War seems to hold a certain fascination for most people, both for those who were participants as well as those who were involved in other ways.

Charles Fretwell

For those of us who served, the war was in reality what we were involved in and the things we experienced we remember with some clarity because of personal involvement. With these things in mind it is my intention to write a series of columns that will hopefully give you the reader a personal view of the experiences I was a part of and share with you the feelings I had as an 18-year-old average American youth who found his life and his involvement with life vastly changed by a notice he got 50 years ago this month from the late John C. Hopkins, clerk of the Radford Draft Board. It was an order to report for induction into the armed forces of the

United States.

There have been a great many books written about World War II by many different people. One of those books was entitled *The Good War* and that title may have been somewhat appropriate when the events leading up to our entry into it are compared with those of World War I, the Korean War or Vietnam. Because of those events and the developments that took place the United States came into the war with its people united and determined to strike back and with all segments of society totally behind the war effort. These events were totally different from those that lead to Korea and Vietnam.

To understand those event we need to look back somewhat at history and what led to our entry into World War II and hopefully I can share this with you from a layman's standpoint without being held accountable for all the historic and detailed account that might be given by some historian or someone who has done a detailed analysis of the circumstances.

In part World War II had its beginnings in the after math of World War I when as a result of that war the Sudaten land, a long-disputed parcel lying between France and Germany was awarded to France. Germany had been defeated by England, France and the United States. A democratic government was established in Germany headed by President Von Hindenburg. the county was forbidden to establish any form of military that could be used in ag-

gression against it's neighbors and for a long time this held.

As a result of a number of happenings in the early 1930s that was a lot of unrest and the government of Von Hindenburg came under siege. A group called the Nazi party, led by Adolph Hilter, slowly and quietly began acquiring power and influence using pressure tactics and attracting militants to their cause. This cause was to restore Germany to the role of a military power in Europe and to its "proper position."

Soon the government of Von Hindenburg was in name only and Hilter began calling the shots. Neighbors were turned against neighbors. Jews were the victims of the Nazi's as they were stripped of their citizenship and carted off to concentration camps or shot. Meanwhile, Hitler amassed a great army, a large naval fleet and a superior air force with the latest in fighter plane and bombers. Almost before the countries of Europe were able to wake up they were faced with a Germany loaded with overwhelming masses of war materials and equipment.

With superior military advantage, Hitler made demands about the Sudaten Land and its return to German and English Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain led a delegation to peace talks that led to a decision to return this land to Germany.

It was Prime Minister Chamberlain's last moment in the spotlight for soon Hitler launched his Blitzkreig that was to devour Austria, Poland, Hungary and other countries in Europe.

The News Journal

Sunday
May 9
1993

Price: 75¢

Your Hometown Paper

Editor's note: Today, Charlie Fretwell continues his first hand look at a world confrontation and the men that bravely served from the New River Valley.

For many years Sir Winston Churchill had been a member of Parliament and had spoken out at many points and on many occasions about the dangers and the high cost of appeasement in dealing with Germany. He was the conscience of England and while no one seemed to hear his words (or wanted to), he warned of the dire consequences of ignoring what was taking place and the cost of trying to appease a "mad man" as he pictured Hitler.

Charles Fretwell

Fortunately for England as well as for the world it was to Winston Churchill that the government turned for leadership in this dark moment in history. He brought his bulldog tenacity and his great command of the English language into play and as a result he almost singlehandedly rallied the British people to roll up their sleeves and get to work.

When the British and French groundforces were overrun in France and forced back to the small seacoast village of Dunkirk, it was Churchill who called on the nation and its people to bring every boat and ship they had to help evacuate every soldier they could and get them back to England so they could fight again another day. It was an almost unbelievable event as they were able to get all the men safely back to England and this included many French soldiers, sailors, and Air force personnel.

Hitler unveiled during early days

It was during these dark days when Germany bombers pounded English cities with tremendous air raids that killed thousands and the morale of the British people was at a low ebb that Churchill coined some of his more familiar and famous sayings. With a vastly outmanned Royal Air Force, pilots flying against highly superior numbers and equipment Churchill made an immortal statement saying, "That never have so many, owed so much, to so few."

As the nation continued to bear the brunt of Germany's daily and

nightly bombings he coined the phrase saying to the British people--"Let us so conduct ourselves so that if the British Empire lasts a thousand years, people will say

This was their finest hour." In assuming the office of Prime Minister he had stated that he "Had nothing to offer but blood, sweat, and tears and that he would call on each citizen to do his or her duty in our country's hour of need." His role was to rally his people and as history has proved no one ever did it better.

In the early part of his taking over the government he and his counterpart President Franklin D. Roosevelt met at sea off the coast of New Foundland and worked out plans for American help. Although we were not officially in the war we made plans for help, leasing 50 destroyers to the British for their use and arranging to provide other war materials such as tanks, planes, and other armaments. Churchill asked us to be the Arsenal of Democracy with the comment "Give us the tools and we will do the job."

It was during this period of time in the 1940's that America began gearing up for the war that loomed ahead. In the summer of 1940, plans were announced that a large Powder Plant was to be built near Radford and construction was begun. Like many others, I applied for a job and when I went to the employment office then temporarily located in the American Legion building, a classmate of mine, Arthur Jessee was working there. He knew I was only 16 and told me to put down 18 or they wouldn't hire me. I did as he said and went to work for Mason & Hanger Construction Co. and was assigned payroll

number 47.

Employment at the height of construction was 25,000 people and it was amazing to see the transformation of the old Flannagan Farm into a modern facility turning out powder for the great armed forces. For me, as a youngster who had not seen any large scale construction it was a revelation. My job was to check the trucks hauling all sizes of stone from the Radford limestone quarry located just below Claytor Dam. The stone was used in building foundations and the vast number of roads built throughout the plant. Most days I signed for over 300 truck loads.

When Mason & Hanger finished the construction job I went to work for Hercules as a time checker on the gates and later went back to work on construction with Hercules installing water mains and fire plugs throughout the plant. On December 5, 1941 I lost the tip of my middle finger on my left hand in an accident at the plant and was operated on in the hospital in Radford on Tyler Avenue where the Avalon Apartments are now located. Two days later, on December 7th, the Japanese launched their sneak attack on Pearl Harbor killing more than 2200 American soldiers, sailors and Marines and badly crippling the Pacific Fleet including most of our large battleships. On December 8th, President Roosevelt and Congress declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy and we officially entered the war.

Fretwell continues look at warfare experience

Editor's note: Today, News Journal columnist Charlie Fretwell continues his look at his first hand experience during service to the United States.

Following the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor the nation rallied behind our armed forces. Recruiting offices were swamped by those wanting to volunteer for service. Fortunately, the draft had already begun many months before and a large number of people were already in service doing their one year stint. For many, this one year turned into more than five years before the war was over.

Charles Fretwell

Almost overnight the nation went on a war-time basis with the major industries turning to the production of war materials. Nineteen forty-one was the last of the civilian car production until the war was ended. Car manufacturers began turning out tanks, jeeps, and planes. Clothing companies began making uniforms, tents, and thousands of other items that would be needed by the almost 13 million men and women that would be in uniform before the war ended.

Transportation facilities were jammed as every train and bus was loaded with people and with material being transported. Ships were jammed with service personnel, food and ammunition as well as vehicles, guns, and planes being taken to where they were needed. Army camps were jammed with draftees and volunteers and new camps were being set up to accommodate the rapidly expanded fighting forces. The movie industry began turning out training films of all types and entertainment features to keep up the morale.

In Hollywood, plans were drawn up to take USO shows to wherever American troops were stationed to entertain them. Small units were gotten together to go into areas close behind the front lines to bring a taste of home to the fighting men located in distant places.

Meanwhile, the war was raging all over the globe as the allies rallied to prevent Germany, Japan, and Italy from expanding their initial gains. In the Pacific, Japan had overrun the Phillipines, Formosa, Indochina and many of the islands in the South Pacific. Germany had

taken over France, Holland, Austria, Hungary, Poland and later began an invasion of Russia. Italy and Germany had invaded areas of North Africa.

While we were able to fight retreating actions in some areas it wasn't until September of 1942 that we were able to launch a major strike by invading North Africa and later taking on the famed German Africa Corp. headed by General Rommel an outstanding tank commander.

After a number of setbacks while engaging the enemy slowly the tide in North Africa turned as the American forces became more familiar with their equipment and more proficient in their fighting ability. It was here in the desert that General George Patton had his first success that has brought him to fame as a tank commander and a legendary figure in American military leadership.

After our successes in forcing the Italians and the German armies out of Africa, preparations were made to invade Sicily and later to invade Italy as well. The invasion of Italy and the fighting that followed turned out to be a long drawn out series of battles and much misery with the mud and the cold and the resistance put up by the retreating German Army fighting to prevent the battles from reaching German soil.

Meanwhile, the tide had begun to turn in the Pacific area as we slowly but surely began to make some headway as materials and equipment and men began to be put in place to turn the enemy back. Fighting was fierce as the Japanese resisted almost to the last man before many of the islands could be retaken. Naval forces engaged in many combat encounters with the Japanese fleet and both sides lost a great many men and ships but slowly the tide began to turn in favor of our military forces.

My age group (18) had registered for the draft in June of 1942 and we were called up for service on April 15, 1943. I had an older brother serving in the Navy at the time, another older brother was in Pearl Harbor as a ship fitter helping to repair the damage done there, and another brother serving as a construction foreman in Shreveport, Louisiana after helping to build the Radford Arsenal.

So, for me, my official entry into the armed forces began on April 15, 1943 and was to last until January of 1946, some 33 months later with over half of it being in service overseas.

Sunday
May 23
1993

Price: 75¢

Your Hometown Paper Since 1884

Draft notices given out

Fretwell continues his look at draft day, world conflict

Editor's note: Today, News Journal columnist Charlie Fretwell continues his look at his personal experience with world conflict.

RADFORD — Those of us in the April 15th, 1943 draft call-up met

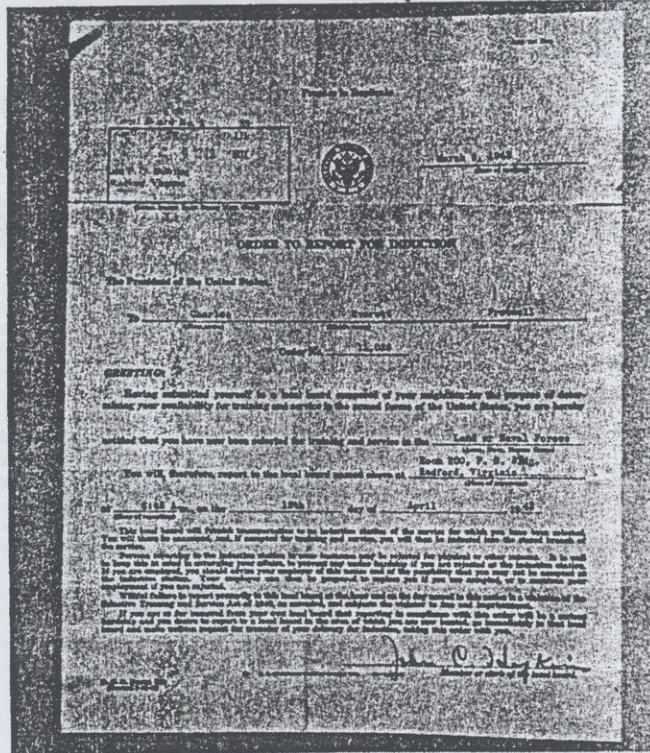
Charles Fretwell

at 6:45 a.m. in front of the draft board office located in the main post office on Norwood St. after the group was assembled a chartered bus picked us up and took us to the armed forces center located in Roanoke on Campbell Avenue next to the Times building.

There we were given some instructions, a physical, and then sworn into the service. We were then notified that we had one week to get our affairs in order and to report on April 22nd to be sent to an induction center. Among those entering with me were Bill Guill, Truby Altizer, Bill Roop, Junior Ratcliffe (later killed in the crash of a B-25 bomber), a cousin, Culver Alderman (later killed in a C-47 cargo plane crash just days before the war ended) and the late Curtis Harris and Kenneth "Red" Gordon.

We left Radford, as hundreds had before us and more hundreds followed, on a train that took us to Roanoke where we transferred later to another train that was to get us to Camp Lee near Petersburg, Virginia late that night. We were aroused about 5 a.m. and taken to the medical dispensary where we lined up for the proverbial "shots" passing through a line where medics on each side of us wielded the needles in both of our arms. On occasion some one would faint and it didn't help the feelings of those of us waiting for our turn.

The three days we were there were filled with batteries of tests and interviews as well as receiving army clothes and equipment. During the interviews I recalled expressing an interest in model planes, etc. since I wanted to get into the air corps and wanted badly to avoid being placed in the Infantry. What really mattered was



Charlie Fretwell's draft notice serves as a piece of remembrance of a time of conflict that affected many local men.

which branch of the service needed men when you happened to pass through the reception center and lucky for us (some of us) it was the air corps.

Most of our group composed of men from the Roanoke-Radford area were assigned to air corps basic training centers in Miami Beach, Florida and at Greensboro, North Carolina. The group I was in was sent to Greensboro. The camp at Greensboro was one of those special centers that sprung up to accommodate the huge numbers of personnel being processed. At one point, it had 50,000 air corps people there housed in temporary wooden barracks.

At Greensboro we were officially indoctrinated in air corps traditions, given basic physical training and had endless sessions of "spotting aircraft" and learning to identify them. In looking ahead, I thought I would like to be an air force ground mechanic but had no interest in flying.

After I had been there several weeks I received a notice to appear before the ASTP board at camp headquarters. No one seemed to know what this was all about but

it seemed to be something important. When I got there it was explained that ASTP stood for Army Specialized Training Program and it involved sending men to colleges and universities to study a highly concentrated curriculum of studies. If you were 22 or older, you must have had two years of college but if you were under 22 only a high school education was required. Selections to the program were made on the basis of induction test scores.

What an opportunity! You can imagine my feelings of elation what with the war going and here for me was a chance to go to college instead of becoming a part of the fighting. The feeling was not from a lack of patriotism on my part but simply a stroke of luck coming to me at an opportune time and from a most unexpected source. I could hardly wait to call home and share the good news with my wife and family.

There is, however, an old saying that "All that glitters is not gold" and I learned all about the later but I don't want to get ahead of myself.

The News Journal

Sunday
May 30
1993

Price: 75¢

Your Hometown Paper Since 1884

Writer remembers Army's KP duty

While we were stationed at Greensboro, we were an incomparatively small group of men located in two barracks side by side. As I stated in an earlier column the Air Corps basic training center in Greensboro had a large number of men located there and our small group of 65-75 draftees found ourselves frequently on K.P. (kitchen police) doing the thousand and one things that are necessary to feed the large numbers. Being on KP meant getting up much earlier, reporting to the assigned mess hall, eating and getting ready to serve the troops who came in later.

Charles Fretwell

KP duty went on all day and the work really got started in earnest after the meals were over with the cleaning up chores of washing dishes, scrubbing the large pots and pans used in the cooking process and finally, sweeping and mopping the floors before the next meal was scheduled to be served. We estimated that we spent as much as a third of our days at Greensboro on KP duty and since we were a small group it was easy to just assign the total bunch of us to KP rather

than to have to pick and choose from the larger units there. I suppose all the experience we garnered there is what has made all of us so proficient around the house in our older years.

One of the things we looked forward to was the mail calls. There is nothing like letters from home to bring cheer to a new soldier (or a more experienced one too). Coming from a large family I was fortunate to have a lot of mail which made the transition easier.

Memories of those war time years with the entire nation on war footing and everyone solidly behind the total war effort also brings back memories of rationing the rationing of tires, gasoline, meat, and many, many other items that we take for granted in today's world. Sugar was another item rationed and one that everyone looked forward to getting. So many of the foodstuff items went to serve those in the military leaving a shortage for the civilian population.

The nation got used to retread tires as most of the new tires went for the many army vehicles. A lot of tires that were retreads failed to perform and frequently as you drove along the retreads would come loose from the tire itself. Almost no one complained as we

were all into it together and putting up with inconveniences was a part of the circumstance.

Transportation was an overloaded process wherever you went. Trains and buses were always crowded and travel by car was restricted since few could get the necessary gas stamps needed to make a trip. Therefore, no one traveled very far from home.

A friend of mine at Greensboro by the name of McCoy left the camp with me about 3 p.m. on Saturday to try to hitchhike home, although we had to be back at the base by 5 p.m. on Sunday. We had won the overnite pass as a result of a surprise barracks inspection that our barracks had won. We hastily dressed, caught a taxi at the main gate, and had him take us to the outskirts of Greensboro to try to catch a ride.

Soon a man and wife stopped with their two kids and told us to get in which we did. We settled down feeling good about a quick

■ FRETWELL

Continued from page 6

ride. They took us exactly three miles down the road and stopped saying this was where they turned off the road. There we were in the middle of nowhere and worse off than we were before. Before too long, four ladies who worked in Greensboro stopped and took us about 20 miles to Mayodan where they lived. We then walked across town and a couple picked us up.

We progressed up Route 220 stopping at several "road houses" along the way. We sat in the car while they got something out of the back and took it in at each stop. We figured they were delivering something that was unlawful but never knew what it was. They dropped us off in Stoneville. We then caught another ride that took us to Bassett Forks just this side of Martinsville. By this time it was about 6 p.m. and we had been on the road seven hours. We stood at

the intersection and finally a young couple in a souped up V-8 Ford stopped.

Although they appeared to be drinking we got in anyway. As anxious as we were to get on our way, his wild driving and erratic behavior concerned us and we were somewhat relieved when he stopped at a roadhouse near Boones Mill. They went inside and we stood by the side of the road for an hour or so with only an occasional car coming by. Finally, a man came by heading for his early morning job as a cook for Merita Bakery in Roanoke. He suggested that he drop us off at the Roanoke Times Building and perhaps we could hitch a ride on their truck bringing papers to Radford and this area. Fortunately, we were able to do so and arrive in Radford at about 4:30 a.m. after spending about 14 hours to travel the approximately 150 miles to Greensboro. Such were the perils of war time travel.

Sunday
June 6
1993

The News Journal

Altizer was assigned to Berri, Italy

Editor's note: Today, News Journal columnist Charles Fretwell continues his look at WWII and the local men that it affected.

When Truby Altizer finished his basic training with the Air Corps at the Greensboro basic training center he was assigned to the Pratt & Whitney airplane engine school located in Flint, Michigan. It was on the site of the Buick Motor Company plant. Upon the completion of his airplane engine training at Pratt & Whitney he was sent out to Salt Lake City, Utah Air force base to study how plane engines reacted to hot weather conditions.

Some three months later, Truby was shipped to the Springfield, Mass. Air Force base to study the behavior of plane engines under cold weather conditions. In late December of 1944, Truby was sent to Norfolk and on January 13, 1944 sailed aboard a Liberty ship in a 100 ship convoy bound for Europe. The convoy had 14 escort ships to protect it and took 28 days to make the crossing. Just south of the Rock of Gibraltar the convoy was attacked by German submarines and one ship was sunk and another badly crippled by enemy torpedoes.

The convoy landed at Berri, Italy and following debarkation, Truby and his unit were assigned to the 459th bomb group base which was located near Rome. The 459th was a unit composed of the B-24's, a large bomber. Truby spent the rest of the war at this base and the planes he serviced did a great job in carrying out bombing missions all over northern Italy as well as in Germany, Austria and oilfields in Poland. Many of the missions were over nine hours in duration and for their success the 459th was awarded the Presidential unit citation.

Although Truby and other members of the support group were not allowed to fly combat missions they were allowed to go on training flights and related missions. One of his most memorable and sad recollections is when he decided not to go on a routine

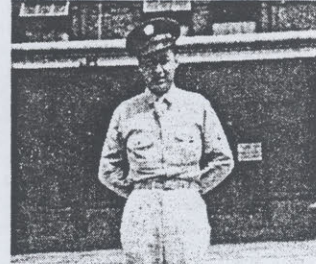
trip after he put on his flying mitt. Another friend asked if he could borrow it to make the trip. The plane wandered into a restricted area and was shot down killing all 13, all of those close friends of Truby's. Even today, almost 50 years later Truby had difficulty in talking about it.

At the end of the war Truby was reassigned to a B-17 squadron before being shipped back to the states for discharge in November, 1945. He was discharged at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Truby Altizer had two brothers that served in the armed forces during World War II. His late brother Bill served in an infantry unit in General Patton's Third Army and his late brother Cody, served as a member of the army of occupation in Japan.

Truby's parents were from Pulaski County and moved to Illinois soon after they were married to work on the farm of an uncle. Truby was born there and the family returned to live in Radford when he was one year old.

In 1940, Truby went to work for Lynchburg Foundry Co. in Rad-



Truby Altizer

ford and worked until he entered service in 1943. After the war he returned to his job there and worked in the Machine Shop for 37 years before his retirement in 1977. Truby was married to the former Lois Kinder in July of 1977 and they live on Carson Street in Radford.

To me, and to the many others that knew him, Truby Altizer represents one of those quiet, conscientious, faithful Americans who when called on, served his country with distinction and when it was over returned to take his place in society and to make his contributions to life.

NOTICE RADFORD LANDOWNERS

The deadline for paying first half 1993 Real Estate Tax is extended to June 7, 1993.

All first half taxes must be paid no later than June 7, 1993 to avoid a ten percent penalty and interest of ten percent per annum starting June 8, 1993.

All payments made by mail must bear a postmark no later than June 7, 1993 to avoid penalty and interest.

Taxes may be paid at the Treasurer's office in the Municipal Building at 619 Second Street in Radford between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Authorized by
Martin R. Roberts, Treasurer
City of Radford, Virginia

The News Journal

Sunday
June 13
1993

Bill Roop another to see action

Editor's note: Today, News Journal columnist Charlie Fretwell continues his look at WWII and how it affected many local residents.

When we finished our basic training in the Air Corps at Greensboro, Bill Roop, Truby Altizer, Bill Guill and I each went our separate ways to new assignments.

Bill Roop was assigned to mechanics school and sent to Seymour-Johnson field in Goldsboro, N.C. Following his completion of Mechanics school he sent to Fort Myers, Florida to attend gunnery school. There he qualified on the .30 and .50 caliber machine guns as well as practicing shooting a shotgun at targets being hauled on the back of a flat bed truck. It was an experience akin to skeet shooting and simulated moving aircraft targets.

His next assignment was to Plant Park Staging Area at Tampa, Fla., where crews for B-17 bombers were selected. He became part of a crew that included six enlisted men and four officers. From there he and his crew went to McDill Field for overseas training that included training over water in the Gulf. Bills particular assignment as a member of the crew was to be the top turret gunner. The top turret was located on the top of the plane between and just aft of the pilot and co-pilot. From McDill Field he and his crew were sent to Hunter Field, Ga., to pick up a brand new B-17 to fly to England.

In October of 1944 they flew to Gierner Field, N.H., and from there they flew the northern route and landed in Wales. They left there new plane there and caught a train to Epswitch, England to be

assigned to the 385th bomb group of the 548th Squadron of the famed Eight Air Force. They were based at Great Ash Field and learned to their disappointment

that they would not be flying the brand new B-17 they came over with. Instead they were assigned to a patched-up battle-weary plane that was a veteran of bombing raids over Europe. They learned that the new planes needed to go through a lot of checking out before they were sent on a bombing run.

On Oct. 25, Bill Roop and his crew made their very first bombing run, a mission that was to bomb oil fields deep in the heart of Germany. It was to be the first of 22 missions that they flew. Their missions lasted an average of 9 hours. On Jan. 16, 1945, while flying their 22nd mission, their plane was hit by enemy fire. Bill was wounded in both legs and the plane's navigator lost an elbow. They were the only two crew members hit but the shrapnel badly damaged the plane's controls. However, the crippled plane was able to make it back to England and landed at an air base at Lincoln.

Bill was hospitalized in England until March when he was sent back to Langley Field, Va. After processing he was sent home on a 30-day leave before reporting to Woodrow Wilson Army Hospital in Staunton, Va. From there he was sent to a convalescence center in Plattsburg, N.Y. He was discharged on Sept. 15, 1945.

Over the years since, Bill and his crew have gotten together on several occasions to reminisce and to remember those days in World War II.

Bill Roop graduated from Rad-



Roop

ford High School in 1941 and in November of 1942 was married to Marie Hines, a 1943 graduate of RHS. The couple has three children: William A. Roop of California, Donna Blout of Roanoke and Jack Roop of Lynchburg. They have a total of seven grandchildren.

In his working years, Bill worked for Lynchburg Foundry for 32 years where he served as special foundry core superintendent and the later worked with Federal Mogal of Blacksburg for 14 years as production supervisor before retiring for the second time.

Bill loved to golf and enjoyed water sports and travel, although, like many of us who served in WWII, time age and health problems have slowed his ability to enjoy things like he once did.

Bill Roop, like many others, served the county in a special time of need and did a great job with one of the finest flying outfits in our country's history—the Eight Air Force stationed in England.

The News - Journal

Sunday
June 20
1993

Price 75¢

Your Hometown Paper Since 1884

The War Years continue for locals

Following the completion of our air corp basic training at Greensboro, N.C. Bill Guill was assigned to Radar School at McDill Field, Florida after being cleared for work in the security section. Here he was instructed in the use of Radar in connection with air craft operations both in the domestic sector as well as in combat circumstances.

Charles Fretwell

In November of 1943 he was shipped to Boston and on January 1st, 1944 sailed aboard the ship "Empress of Australia" for Europe. They landed at a small seaport on the border between England and Scotland and the ship made ready for a return trip to the States. Just after clearing the harbor area the Empress was sunk by a German sub who evidently had been waiting for it's reappearance.

Bill was assigned to a British Radar school located at a training center at Lake Buzzard near London. They were instructed in the use of British Radar which was what was being used in the War zone at that time. Just days after the D Day invasion on June 6,

1944 his signal Corp unit landed on the invasion beaches and was assigned to duty with the U.S. Third Army under General Patton. Their job was to provide radar and signal services to coordinate and guide Bombers and fighter planes in their strikes against the enemy.

The unit stayed with the Third Army for several months before being reassigned to the U.S. First Army in the Northern sector. After the landings the Americans set up their own Radar systems as they were far more advanced than the older British version being limited to a 30 mile range whereas the newer one was able to provide coverage for more than 250 miles. In addition to the aircraft coordination the unit also provided for and coordinated the artillery shelling.

Bill's unit arrived at the Elbe River as the war ended, meeting the Russians. As a coincidence he was in Rheims on his birthday, the day the peace treaty was signed there. In a further coincidence his unit was preparing for deployment to the Pacific and the war there ended on his wedding anniversary date. Bill arrived back home on October 11th and was discharged at Ft. Meade.

Bill Guill graduated from RHS in 1942 and in September of that year married Doris Vaughn who graduated from RHS in 1943. They have two daughters - Sandra I. Brewer of Roanoke and Billie DeMeglio of Orlando, Florida as well as 2 grandchildren - Antorrea and Lance Brewer.

Bill is now retired and in his working years worked for Radford Limestone Corp., and later managed a number of rock quarries in Southwest Va. Later he worked for Hercules and for Service Contracting in Dublin. He retired in 1989 and now maintains and manages some rental property he owns. He stays active by doing volunteer work and they are very active in the Snowville Christian Church where he has served as Board Chairman, Deacon, Trustee and Elder, as well as doing a lot of church maintenance.

Bill Guill, like Truby Altizer and Bill Roop, served in a very important capacity during his years in service in World War II. His service in the signal corp providing information and guidance to our fighter planes and bombers and helping to direct artillery fire aided the war effort in a very special way in a very special time in our country's history.

War days

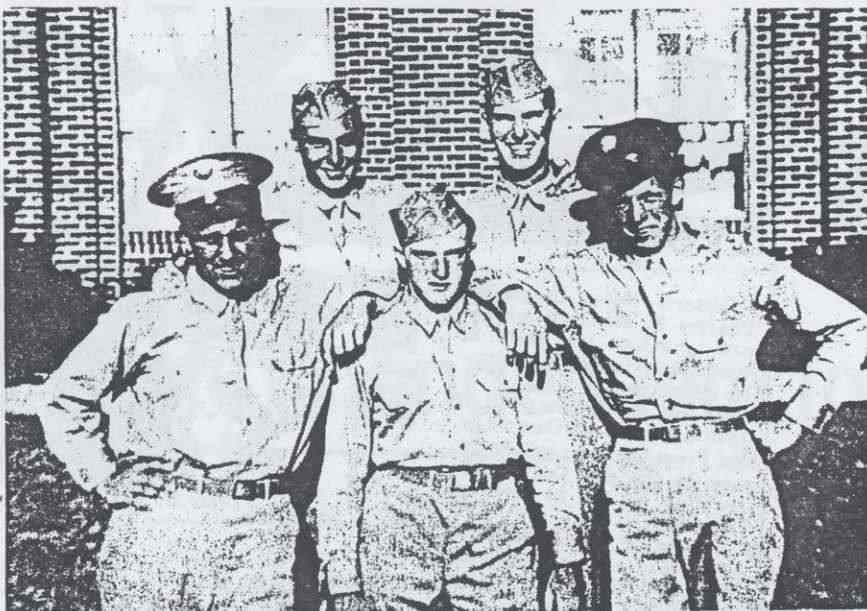


Photo taken at Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island. Pictured: (left to right) front row- Nick Fabian of Youngstown, Ohio; David Evans of Easton, Pa.; and William Davis of Chicago, Ill.; back row- Artie Friedman of Brooklyn, N.Y.; and Charles Fretwell of Radford.

Fretwell remembers Air Corps days

Following the completion of my basic training in the Air Corps, I was sent, along with others to an ASTP Star Unit than located on the campus of Clemson in South Carolina. Clemson was like Virginia Tech in those days, primarily an agricultural college, and we enjoyed our stay there and the great food they served which include fresh milk and several things grown on the farms as well as wonderful ice cream which was home made.

Charles Fretwell

While we were at Clemson, several rumors were passed along about where we were to be sent to college. While I was there, units were shipped out to Virginia Tech as well as VMI. Finally, after three weeks of waiting, we were shipped in a group of about 250 to Providence, R.I. We were told we would be leaving the following evening aboard the "Cotton Blossom Special," which was a stainless steel luxury train that ran between the deep South and Washington, D.C.

When we left Clemson the following day we marched a mile and a half to the station and waited for the train. When the luxury liner pulled into the station all the stainless steel cars passed by us and at the end of the train were four wooden coaches that seemed to have been left over from the Civil War. They had wooden seats and the windows allowed the cinders and the soot from the locomotive to filter into the cars. I spent the night trying to rest on top of the duffel bags piled in the front section of the cars.

We arrived in Washington early in the morning where we changed trains. We lined up our equipment in Union Station and marched down Capital Hill to a small hotel

where we ate breakfast. We later returned to the station and to our gear and boarded another train for Providence.

Arriving at Providence about 8 p.m., we were met by a young second lieutenant by the name of Jacobs, it was his first command and he was excited about it. He wore one of those campaign hats that tied underneath the chin. He led us on a one-mile march to Providence College and we arrived at the main dorm in the dark. Room assignments were made and we fell out as our names were called. I was called in a five-man group that included the names Davis, Evans, Fabian, Fretwell and Friedman and we became roommates for a good part of our stay there.

Artie Friedman became my closest friend and we have remained close to this day. He was a native of Brooklyn and had just finished three years at New York University before being drafted. Needless to say he tutored me and helped my make it at Providence College. Artie was later badly wounded in the Battle of the Bulge on Christmas Day in 1945. He was sent back to the states for treatment and a medical discharge.

Artie and his wife, Sylvia (whom he married while at Providence), have attended our daughters' weddings and we have in turn attended their two sons Bar Mitzvas as well as their daughter's wedding. As I have stated, we remained very close and last summer spent some time with them in their home in Chicago.

After a two-week study refresher course we were given a week's furlough and I returned home for the first time in late July. Upon my return to Providence I took my bride of eight months back with me. We got off the train in Providence not knowing where we would find a room but through a service center we located a room for the night and the next day we found a room for her in a large

brownstone house on Bowen Street overlooking the downtown plaza and the state capital. It was run by Mrs. O'Leary and many service wives stayed there.

Later, Evelene and Helen Lauster, the wife of a classmate of mine at Providence, roomed together. Helen found work at a nearby restaurant and Evelene found a job at Roses 5 & 10 Cent Store. We laughed because people seemed to stand around her to hear her southern accent. She started at \$15 a week and in the several months she was there rose to \$19 a week. She and Helen each paid \$7.50 per week for their room and on Saturday nights (we were allowed to stay out on Saturdays) we rented an extra room for \$3 a couple. We often laugh about the fact that on Sundays she gave me a quarter to take back to school to buy a drink ect.

As we got into our studies we found out how difficult staying in school was going to be. In addition to geography, history and English, we had physics, chemistry and a math course. In the three sessions were were their (nine months) we had a turn in algebra, trigonometry and advance trig. Most all of our teachers were Catholic Priests and we learned to locate and respect them. As a southern boy growing up in Radford, I didn't know a great deal about Catholic practices. One morning as I left my room on the third floor I found a line trailing all the way downstairs to the first floor. When I asked what was going on I was reminded that tests were to begin that morning and all the Catholics were in line to give confession. Knowing how unprepared I was to take the tests I wanted to get in there too if it would help.

In addition to our classroom responsibilities we had a great deal of military duty to keep up with. We marched and took turns "being in charge," giving marching orders ect. On Saturdays we usually had a dress parade before anyone could go out on pass.

Every institution had a program

Editor's Note: Columnist Charles E. Fretwell continues to relate his story of World War II and his particular adventures.

He was drafted in April of 1943 and sent to Camp Lee, Va. From there he was assigned to the Air Corp basic training center at Greensboro, NC.

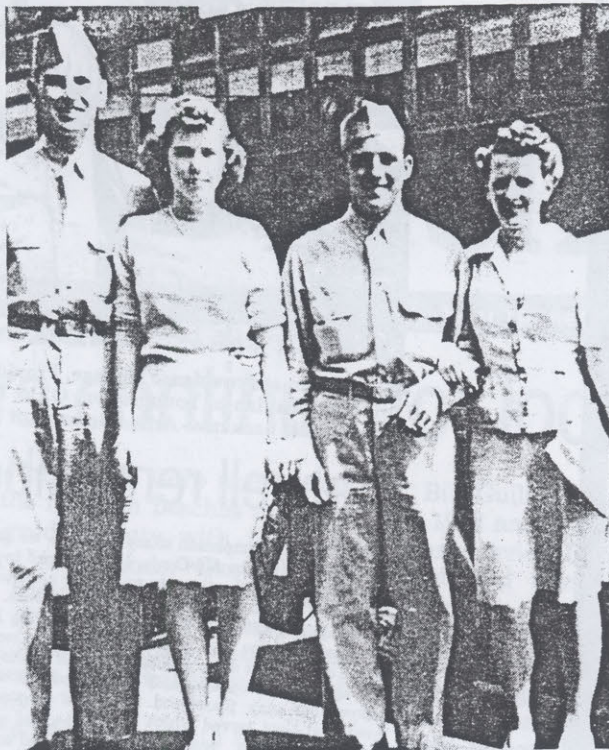
Following completion of his basic training he was assigned to the ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) and sent to Providence College in Providence, R.I. for Engineering studies.

There were ASTP programs in many colleges and universities and the Navy had its own program called the Navy V-12 and most every institution for any size had some type study program for the service personnel. We always suspected that it was intended as much to keep the colleges open as it was to provide engineers etc. for the services. As an example, at the time we arrived Providence College had less than 100 civilian students. In our day it is difficult to understand just how many people were involved in being in the service or working at some defense job or involved with the war effort in some way. There was few left to pursue college courses.

The concept of ASTP was a good idea but proved to be somewhat impractical as many of the students there began flunking out as the demands and expectations proved to be too great. We gave parties for those who flunked and were being sent back to the Air Corp. Little did we know at the time that they were the lucky ones and these of us remaining in school were destined to a worse fate.

During the time we were in Providence from 1943 to March 1944 we were able to get home 2 or 3 times. Also, to make trips to New York and to Boston for an overnight stay. Having an older brother in the Navy at the Brooklyn Naval Yards who knew his way around, we enjoyed visits to the Waldorf Astoria's Starlight roof, to the Hotel Pennsylvania's Cafe Rouge to hear Tommy Dorsey's band, to the Hotel New Yorker's Ice Terrace room to hear Johnny Long and his band and to many other musical events.

In Providence we enjoyed going to movies on the weekend and to the Metropole Theatre to hear bands like Lionel Hampton, Charlie Barnet, and others who



On the streets of Providence, R.I. in August, 1943, left to right: Charles and Evelene Fretwell of Radford and Marion and Helen Lancaster of New Castle, Pa.

were outstanding in the musical world of that day. We enjoyed the weekends because we could be together to attend church and to eat out at Child's restaurant. We often laugh about the Saturday nights when we rented the extra room at Mrs. O'Leary's and it usually was a small room off of her bedroom with a small bed that we had to hold each other in to keep from falling out of bed. We were so happy just to be able to be together and lived for those weekends when we could. We knew that the war was going on and the fighting was fierce and that others were having it far more difficult that we were and we were appreciative of just how fortunate we were.

Train travel in those days was crowded everywhere you went. I remember going back to Providence from one furlough home. Evelene was sick and couldn't go back with me. I got on the train here in Radford and people were standing in the train vestibule. I thought that when we got to Roanoke people would get off and I would get a seat but instead more got on than got off.

Although no one knew at the time, the D Day landings in France was to take place in three

months and more replacements and more Infantry Divisions would be needed to back up battles there. Those of us with wives living in Providence helped make arrangements for their return home. We left Providence in late March and three days later arrived in the small town of Tullahoma, Tenn. where we went through Camp Forrest and were given infantry equipment and the next day went up into the mountains to join the 26th Infantry Division which was just then finishing up their participation in the Tennessee maneuvers.

A great many of my friends were assigned with me to Co. I of the 328th Infantry Regiment, one of the three regiments comprising the 26th Division. The 26th was the Massachusetts National Guard Division. I was assigned to the Weapons Platoon as a member of the 60mm mortar gun crew. To go from the college experiences with all their bright expectations of graduate school, officers training school, etc. to being placed as replacements to fill out the infantry ranks was very difficult to deal with for all of us. It was a low point in our lives.

e N e w

Friday, July 16, 1993

Wartime events changed him forever

RADFORD — Starting out in the Air Corps, being assigned to college for several months, and finally being dropped into the infantry was somewhat of a jolt. Although we were faced with a somewhat disheartening situation, we quickly began to learn the ropes. We learned how to button two shelter halves together to form a tent. We learned how to clean a M1 rifle, get all the cosmoline (grease) off, and how to clean and oil the rifle for use. We learned to sleep out in the woods and in the open, to eat out of mess kits, and the hundreds of other adaptations we had to make to survive in a new circumstance. All of this had to come while still trying to deal with the jolt of what happened to us.

The 26th Division had been in active federal service for more than two years before we became a part of it so there were no openings for any of us to advance in rank as they were all filled. The one bright spot for us was that the maneuvers had been completed, and in a few days, we began the trek from Tennessee to our station at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C., by truck convoy.

While what had happened to us had been a large jolt, I look back on those days of joining the infantry and what followed in the months to come as a real turning point in my own life. The experiences we went through there and later in combat changed and formed a great many of my attitudes about life. It has caused me to never take for granted the freedom we enjoy, the opportunity to attend church services or the choices we are able to make in life. Like my friend Ralph Corn, I never get into a good warm bed between clean white sheets without reflecting on those days in fox holes — remembering what it was like to be wet, cold and tired. I have been grateful for everything that has happened to since.

Charles Fretwell

After a few weeks at Fort Jackson, we were given a seven-day pass home and instructed to write our will while there. That wasn't a very encouraging experience. The late Judge A. Sidney Johnson (father of Sid and Jack Johnson) wrote mine). My wife wasn't too thrilled about it either.

At the end of the week's furlough, we returned to Columbia and stopped overnight at a Mom & Pop Motel near Rock Hill, S.C. The older couple there made us show our marriage license before they would rent us a room. We were only 18 and 19, and these were the days before things became so promiscuous. Knowing there were more than 50,000 troops in Columbia, we asked the couple about someone who could help us find a room for Evelene in Columbia, and they referred us to their daughter and gave us her address.

It turned out the daughter and her family were moving the next day, but they put us up for the night. The next day, they called a neighbor across the street and asked them to help us. The neighbors turned out to be Marvin and Evelyn Hedgepeth who had a daughter Marilyn, age 3, and a son Larry, who was one year old. They agreed to keep Evelene for a night or two, but it turned out to be almost four months. They were super people and great to us. They hardly had room enough for their own family but helped us in a time of need. We went to Columbia a couple of years ago for their 50th wedding anniversary. Marilyn is now a paralegal secretary with three kids, and Larry is a medical doctor with two kids.

Our time at Fort Jackson was spent in field training, qualifying with our weapons on the rifle range and doing forced marches as well as 25-mile

hikes. I had become an assistant gunner on the 60mm mortar and had traded my M1 rifle for a 45-caliber pistol, an exchange that I liked very much except when I had to lug the 42-pound mortar for any distance.

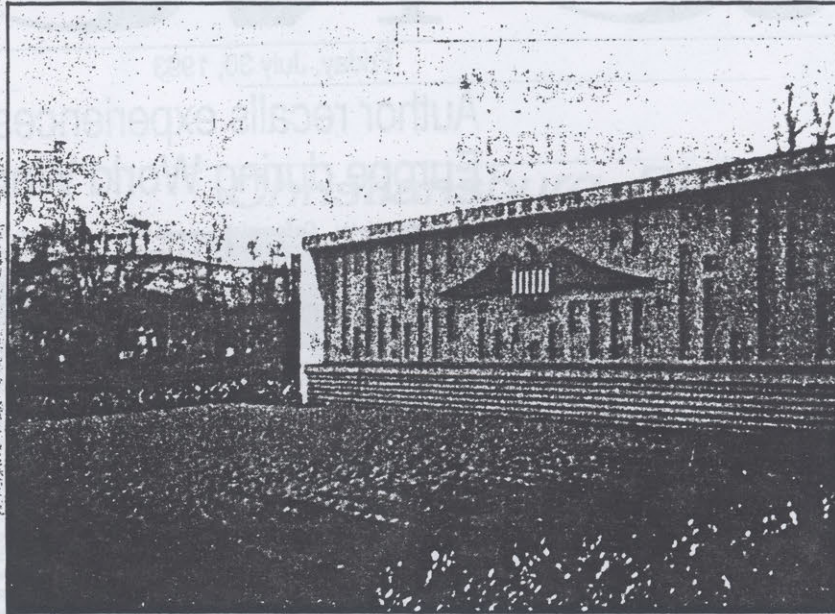
We began to be issued overseas equipment and to make ready for all of the requirements that went with being shipped overseas. Training was intensified, and everything was speeded up. Our company was selected to do some special testing and enter some competitions against other units. One of the tests involved setting up and firing the mortar on a given target. We had arranged that the first two of our mortar squads would get all of the particulars, such as where to set up and distance to the target etc., and ours, the third, would be the one that would set the record. This went fine, and we knew the distance and set the gun up in the proper place. Just as I began to lift the mortar shell up and drop it down the barrel, I realized that I had it upside down but fortunately corrected it in time to make our effort a success. It could have ruined my mortar career. Incidentally, we did set the record.

The long-awaited invasion of Europe began on June 6, 1944, and one month later, we were alerted for shipment overseas. In July, we left by troop train and arrived at Camp Shanks near New York City a couple of days later. We were given a pass to go into New York, and after dinner, I went to the phone center there for a free call home. Evelene and I talked for a long while, and it was to be our last voice contact for more than 18 months.

■ Charles Fretwell, a longtime Radford resident and amateur historian, continues his recollections of World War II and memories of his personal involvement in that war.



Mortor Squad Co. I 328th Inf. 26th Division just prior to going overseas
Back row- John Cyanowitz- Ed Caffrey - Ray Conley- John Cenknor
Killed Wounded Killed Sgt.
Kneeling- Charles E. Fretwell John Krausnaskas
wounded Killed



Columnist Charles Fretwell continues his memories of World War II with this column devoted to life on the Home Front in Radford. The picture is of the World War II Honor Roll then located on the site of the present Radford City Library.

Pearl provided a rallying point

One of the things that is hard for people who did not experience the World War II era to understand is just how completely the country was involved in the war effort. Unlike World War I, the Korean conflict and the Vietnam involvement United States territory was physically attacked and the opening round for us at Pearl Harbor left more than 2200 members of our armed forces dead from those bombings.

This provided a rallying point for American citizens and a response to serve and to avenge the sneak attack on our nation. Recruiting stations were overwhelmed by those wanting to volunteer. The nation was put on an all out, war time footing and every element of our Democratic society responded seeking to find ways they could help the war effort and to do their part.

Charles Fretwell

Here in Radford like all parts of our nation, people responded and did whatever was asked of them and sought to do their part. Before the conflict was over more than 12 million men and women became a part of the armed forces of the U.S. and millions more worked in defense plants, on farms, in factories, and volunteered their efforts toward helping our men in service.

As men left to serve in the war effort in uniform women began taking their places. Here in Radford at Lynchburg Foundry a number of women became a part of the work force helping to make Marine engines for liberty ships and crank cases for caterpillar tractors as well as engine blocks for pumping stations in the oil refineries to support the war effort. LFC employed between 800-1,000 people, many of them women as they continued to make cast iron pipe ductile line pipe to be used in water and sewer lines.

As in other parts of the country our people responded to the rationing of many items that were scarce. Sugar, tires, gasoline, meat, and many other items of necessity were rationed and allotted where they were needed. Rationing decisions were based on the status of the individual and their contributions to the war effort and need.

Service clubs sponsored the raising of "Victory gardens" designed to raise food supplies, they gathered scrap metal to be melted down and made into guns, tanks, planes, etc. They assisted in rolling bandages for the treatment of the wounded etc. Boy Scouts and Girl Scout troops gathered tires, old tools and scrap

metal to assist the war effort.

People were eager for the news of the progress of the war then raging all over in Europe, the South Pacific, on the high seas, etc. At night radios were tuned in to hear such outstanding news people as H.V. Kaltenborn, William L. Shirer, Eric Severied and Gabriel Heater. Gabriel always came on with the admonition that "there's good news tonight" and he always managed to somehow lift the spirits as he put forth efforts to make it look as good as possible. He could make you feel somehow that it would all be over soon.

Perhaps the most famous newsmen on the air was the late Edward R. Murrow who first came into prominence during those early days of the war when he broadcast live from London when England was fighting all alone and taking heavy pounding by German bombings.

Memories of those WWII war years include memories of "V" mail where letters were written on special forms that were then reduced in size before mailing to reduce the load on the post office and transportation, memories of stars and flags in the window of homes denoting that this was the home of a service man or woman and those with gold stars denoting a gold star mother who had lost a son in service. It recalls the delivery of the dreaded telegrams where families were notified of the death or wounding of a service man. Deaths notifications were usually done by service personnel in person.

Radford had a beautiful, large billboard with all the names of those in service on an individual nameplate. The billboard was complete with landscaping and located on the site of what is now the public library on First St. The nameplates are now mounted on the walls inside the American Legion-Senior Citizen building.

In 1985, Radford veterans got together to celebrate the 40th anniversary, of the ending of WWII. A booklet was gotten together containing the names of 301 veterans and a brief summary of many of their armed forces records. A total of 48 men who went through the Radford draft board were killed in action and their names were listed in the book.

World War II for Americans, was a time of unity, determination, sacrifice and total dedication to a cause that perhaps may never be repeated. Much of the credit for our total victory is due to the sacrifices of our civilian population who encouraged and supported our armed forces. As Americans, it may have been our "finest hour."

A MERRILL

The News

Friday, August 6, 1993

The "Red Ball" express kept supplies moving

Editor's note: Columnist Charles Fretwell continues his memories of World War II. His 28th Infantry Division has just landed in France and begun preparations to join General George Patton's U.S. Third Army in Combat.

The next few weeks were spent getting back into shape and securing all the equipment we would need in combat. The fighting in this sector had bogged down sometime earlier and had halted before the French city of St. Lo. General George L. Patton and his Third Army had been brought over and made ready. Behind a tremendous pounding by our air forces and a large and concentrated shelling by our artillery, Patton's tank divisions poured throughout the breach in a daring and highly successful maneuver.

The tank divisions ran wild and soon Paris had fallen and the fighting reached the German border before Patton's tanks had far exceeded their supply line and had to halt. The "Red Ball" express, a traveling company, had been formed to try to keep the gas and other supplies moving up to the front. A few of our men had been put into that effort but when we received notice that we would soon be joining the Third Army they came back to our unit.

Once we had been notified that we were going up, a somber mood set in for all of us for we at last realized that it really wasn't going to be over and that we would be called on for combat duty. The Third Army sent back more than 300 trucks to take us the almost 300 miles we were to travel. We left about 4 in the afternoon and riding the back of an army 2 1/2 ton truck with no top is no fun as you might imagine. Some time about midnight we passed through St. Lo and was able to see first hand the tremendous damage that had been done there. It was almost indescribable. There was not a building that hadn't been hit and evidence of the devastation was everywhere.

The next day we by-passed Paris and arrived at Fountainsbleau about 10 miles south of Paris. Here we rested and late the next day we were given talks by Regimental and Divisional Commanders and then issued LIVE ammunition. I think it was then that we fully realized

Charles Fretwell

that the play games were over and it was most serious from here on in. Someone asked me once how it felt knowing you were going into combat and I replied that it was sort of like the first football game. There was a certain excitement and you wanted to meet the challenge but the difference is that this was a deadly challenge but until you met it face to face you didn't realize just how deadly it really was.

We were taken to a small village called Atton which was near Pont A Musson in the Alsace Province. Here we detrucked and began walking. In the distance we could hear the rumble of artillery. No one seemed to be talking as I'm sure everyone felt as I did a great apprehension about what was going to happen. We arrived in a small clearing in a forest where they told us to dig in for the night. Just as we had completed our foxholes and prepared to bed down the order came down for I Company to pack up that we were being moved into line right away and so we were the very first unit in the 26th Division to be committed to combat.

We relieved a unit of the 80th Division (The Va. Blue Ridge Division). The enemy across the line was the German 11th Panzer Division but there had not been a great deal of enemy action in that sector for a few days.

We took over their positions but the next day our Mortar squad leader decided that he wanted the 3 mortar guns placed about 100 yards from where they were. About 4 p.m. my buddy John Krasnauskas (who was later killed) and I sat down beside our newly dug position and talked with a friend Glen Elste. A few yards away the 3 mortar squad sergeants were laying new communication wires back to Co. Headquarters.

As we were sitting there talking we suddenly heard the sound of onrushing air and the noise of incoming shells. You don't have to have heard it before you just sense it and react. I rolled into the hole we had dug. Both John and Glen rolled in on top of me and soon we were joined by the 3 fellows that had been laying

wire making 6 with me on the bottom. The ground shook with the thunder of the shells landing and the whine of the shrapnel tore across the top of our hole.

During a lull in the shelling Glen Elste said "O Lord, I don't want to die here in the fields of France a young man. I want to live to get back to Chicago and have the gout, the Rheumatism, the Arthritis, and all those old aches and pains." I'm sure it was a reaction from his fright but he was expressing all of our feelings. We were fortunate but we were to learn moments later that just 50 yards away two of our buddies, one being my best friend, were killed instantly and become the first of what was many casualties. Ray Conley was from a little town north of Chicago-Belvidere, Ill. and Paul Foley was from Philadelphia. Both had been with us at Providence College in ASTP.

Charles Fretwell is a long-time Radford resident and writes weekly for The News.

The News

Wednesday, August 11, 1993

The death of friends brings the realization of war

The deaths of our two friends Ray Conley and Paul Foley made us fully realize how terrible and heartbreaking war can be. For each of us, it was like a body blow to the pit of your stomach, a blow that left you sick and nauseous and somewhat bewildered. Thankfully, those turned out to be our only losses in our first time "on line" in combat and three days later we were relieved and rejoined the other members of the 26th Division a few miles south.

Always, when we were relieved and had the opportunity, we attended a religious service. Most of the time there was a Protestant chaplain available, but on many occasions we had a Catholic chaplain and on rare occasions a Jewish one. To men in combat and facing the possibility of death the differences in religion or forms had no meaning as far as not participating. We felt as one since we were all in the same boat and our world at that point in our lives was with the small circle of people we were involved with and we stuck close together for our own comfort.

On a beautiful Sunday morning I stood near the road and got a close up view of General George Patton going by standing up in his half-track with his shiny helmet liner and wearing his two pearl handled pistols. He was on his way down a mile or so to address the officers and First Sergeants of our division and to welcome them to his U.S. Third Army and to let them know what he expected of them. Despite the talk Patton was highly respected by his men and we often kidded about the references to him as "Old Blood and Guts" (our blood and his guts). He was a fearless leader and there are times in war that this kind of leadership is

Charles Fretwell

needed.

Shortly after his vehicle went by a German 109 fighter plane came in low over us straffing the whole area. Anti-aircraft fire opened up and as the plane went over a nearby hill, black smoke poured out and it crashed in the distance.

After a couple of days rest our company was ordered to relieve another outfit in the small village of Coincourt. We entered the town near dusk approaching it along a small road leading into it. We walked 10 paces apart on each side of the road and the frequent shells landing nearby from time to time would force us to dive into the ditches to take cover. My mind wondered back to the many times I had seen the same scene played out in newsreels from the battlefronts and could hardly believe that I was now a part of the real thing.

My buddy, John Krasnauskas, and I took over a foxhole that had been occupied by other mortar squad members from the unit we were relieving. It was a deep hole located just to the left of a large cemetery that was full of tall sculptured tombstones and one that was obviously real old. We were told that we should not get out of the hole during the daylight hours and we observed that the first day or two. Sgt. Mole decided that we should fire one of the mortars in order to get an accurate distance marker in case of enemy attack.

We followed his orders but in less than five minutes we underwent a tremendous artillery barrage and the incoming shells blew the

cemetery headstones in all directions. It was the last time we fired the mortars in that location. I remember finding a Lynchburg newspaper in the hole we had taken over. It was a comforting piece of home for me.

After two more days we were relieved by another unit at about 10 p.m. and we walked about four miles back to a new location which turned out to be behind the Moncourt Woods. We arrived there about 1 a.m. and were ordered to dig in. The ground was hard and rocky and after getting down about six inches my buddy and I looked over a few feet and saw a couple of guys had layed down on the ground and had their overcoats pulled up over them. We figured it couldn't be too dangerous so we quit digging and went to sleep.

The next morning when daylight came and we woke, we noticed the two men again and seeing a helmet with a large hole blown through realized that they were two dead Americans whose bodies had been brought out of the woods and placed there until they could be picked up.

Our positions there was on the back side of a hill leading up to the woods which was on the far side. There was heavy shelling in the wooded area but none where we were. After four days there we were ordered to relieve K

Co. and so began moving up. There was a certain amount of noise on our part and the troops coming out told us to hold it down until they got out and we could make all the noise we wanted to. Their nerves were somewhat shattered and we soon found out why.

■ Charles Fretwell is a long-time Radford resident and writes weekly for The News.

The News

Friday, August 20, 1993

Enemy worked to frazzle the nerves

Editor's Note: Columnist Charles Fretwell continues his memories of World War II and his own experiences. A member of Co. I, 328 26th Infantry Division. His company relieves K Co. and enters the Moncourt Woods in a front line position.

In the Moncourt woods no one moved around at night and very little during the daylight hours. Both sides used psychological warfare with big loudspeakers trying to get on the nerves and to break your morale. At night the words would drift in, "Why are you fighting here a long way from home. Your wives and girlfriends are home dating 4F's (ones who were excused from service because of disabilities) and having a good time. Surrender and come over and get a hot meal and a shower. When we captured one of the enemy soldiers later we found out the Germans hadn't had a hot meal in weeks.

Four of us were fortunate to be placed in a bunker that has been prepared by the Germans prior to their being driven out of that position by our 104th Inf. Regiment. It was well built with logs across the top and dirt piled high for protection. A trench three feet deep led about 20 yards from the rain hole. All around the position we had tree limbs piled to keep from being surprised by the enemy at night. At night we took two hour shifts of guard duty beginning at dark.

One night I had the 2-4 a.m. watch and as I kneeled at the far end of the trench my knees resting on an empty K ration cardboard box and thinking about Radford and home I heard a sudden rustle of the brush and grabbed a hand grenade placing my finger in position to pull the pin. All of a sudden there was a loud thump on the box where my knee rested. I re-

Charles Fretwell

sisted the impulse to pull the pin and toss the grenade and instead rushed to the dugout and wakened the others. We figured later that what had happened was a tree limb broke off and fallen on the pile and in the next moment an acorn plopped on the box where my knees rested. In the darkness it was a real scare.

We were shelled in the woods periodically and the sound of the shrapnel ricocheting throughout the woods lent an eerie feeling to all of us. Since we could not fire the 60 mm mortars in the woods our job was to make a couple of trips each day back up the hill to carry cans of water and K rations to provide to the company. It was a long and difficult climb particularly when you had a load on your back. After we had been in the woods for five days I returned from a trip with a can of water only to find out we had been relieved. My three buddies had already packed up and left and they left the 42 pound mortar for me to lug out.

Already sweating from the load down the hill I took off up the hill with the gun on my shoulder and my pack on my back. When I arrived at the top of the woods and proceeded down hill to the assembly point I found that the jeep had already left and I was going to have to carry the gun on further. For two miles I walked along with some others in my outfit to a rear area. We crossed fields wet with the rain and at each step sunk into the mud.

We had been relieved to get a rest and to receive our PX rations and to get hot showers. When we arrived in the rest area we discovered the fox holes at water in the bottom and we had to bale it out and put some straw

in the bottom. The rains continued to pour and it was a miserable night for everyone. There were times I wished I was still back in the woods in the good warm and dry bunker.

The next morning we fell out on the road to wait for trucks to take us to the shower point. The trucks came about an hour late and we stood out in the driving rain. When they did come they were all open trucks with no cover and we rode several miles to the shower point located beside a small stream. The water was pumped into tanks and heated. Each side of the truck had three shower heads and three men stood on each side and was given 30 seconds to get wet. Then time was given to soap up and then another 30 seconds to rinse off.

We had stepped into a large circular tent and disrobed waiting our turn to go through the procedure and meanwhile shivering from the cold when suddenly the sergeant in charge came in and told us the pumps had broken down and there would be no more showers. We put back on the wet clothes we had taken off and set out once again in the rain for another destination.

Finally we arrived in a large barn area where we received our PX rations and got somewhat warm. Later we were herded into a long silo that had been built along the ground instead of the usual ones that went up into the air. In here where it was dark we watched an Abbott and Costello movie entitled "In Society." It was a comedy as all their films were and it's hard to explain what a sense of joy and pleasure it gave to us. It brought belly laughs in circumstances where it was hard to find anything to be happy about.

■ Charles Fretwell is a long-time Radford resident and columnist for The News.

The News

Wednesday, September 1, 1993

Recollections of the war



Photo Courtesy of Charles Fretwell

Mortar squad from Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division, just prior to going overseas in July 1944. (Back row) John Cyanowitz (killed), Ed Caffrey (wounded), Ray Conley (killed), John Cenkner; (kneeling) Charles E. Fretwell (wounded), John Krausnaskas (killed).

Soldiers paid a high price in war

Editor's note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

RADFORD — Many of those who read The News have expressed a real interest in these columns and the reflections of what went on in World War II and in particular my recall of the small role I played in those war years. In this column I want to share a part of the role of the infantry and the price the infantry units paid as they engaged the enemy in battle. My company was just one of many thousands of infantry companies that took part in the battles but from the statistics you can see the terrible cost involved in war.

The picture accompanying this column is of my mortar squad taken at Fort Jackson in

Columbia, S.C., in June 1944 just about the time of D Day and the invasion of Europe by the Allied forces. Of the five in the picture that went overseas, three were killed and two others were wounded.

Since infantry units both in the Army and in the Marine Corps suffered most of the casualties, you may be interested in the statistics and what happened to our company, Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

We left Fort Jackson at full strength — 184 enlisted men and officers. We were in battle a total of seven months and suffered the following: 60 men were killed, 161 men were wounded by enemy fire, and 10 were missing in action (some were accounted for later). A much larger number of men suffered from trench foot that resulted from cold and wet feet for long periods of time that led to numbness and in severe cases could lead to amputation. In addi-

tion, a few men were evacuated because of battle fatigue, or inability to cope with the trials they were experiencing.

A total of 800 men were on the Company I roster at one time or another, meaning that in the seven months of active combat, the company was replaced more than four times. The infantry is sometimes referred to as the "Queen of Battle," but I recall a letter from my late brother, Martin Hutchens, who served in the Navy. In his letter written to me from his ship while I was in Germany, he went on to say that the infantry was simply "cannon fodder" for the big artillery guns that each side pounded each other with. The above statistics go a long way toward proving his observations of life in the infantry in combat more nearly correct.

■ Charles Fretwell is a longtime resident of Radford and amateur historian.

Wednesday, October 13, 1993

Important lesson is learned during the early days of combat in France

Editor's note: Charles Fretwell continues his personal memories of World War II and his service as a member of Co. I 328th Regiment of the 26th Infantry Division to combat in Europe in 1944-45.

It was during my early days in combat that I learned a most important lesson that has remained with me over all these years. Our battalion had moved up a mountain near Bezandge La Grande in France, arriving at the crest just before dark and we were ordered to dig in. After we had finished our foxhole, there was a mail call and I received a number of letters that had backed up in the mail process. It was very appropriate since the next day was my 2nd wedding anniversary but since it was dark I had to wait until the next day and some daylight before I could read them.

During the night water leaked through the ground into our foxhole. We kept stuffing blankets and finally our overcoats under us but finally had to get out of the hole early in the morning. It really wasn't my idea of how to spend a wedding anniversary but I did enjoy reading the mail from home.

Charles Fretwell

Shortly after breakfast a call came to our Company for a mortar squad to report to the Lt. Col. in charge of our battalion and to bring the gun prepared to fire. T/Sgt. White, our platoon Sergeant went with us and we reported to the far side of the hill where there was an overview of the valley spread out below the hill we were on. There was a large haystack in the area below and they suspected an observer was in the haystack and giving firing directions to the German artillery. Our mission, of course, was to destroy the haystack.

Sgt. White gave us orders to set the gun up and prepare to lay a barrage on the haystack. Krasnauskas prepared the gun for firing. He set the mortar on its baseplate, lifted the tripod legs out and adjusted their height. He then estimated the range and adjusted the gun until both the forward and sideway bubbles in the fun sights were level. When he was ready he nodded to me and I dropped the shell into the barrel of the Mortar.

When the shell came out of the gun there was a tremendous recoil with the sights popping off of the gun and the baseplate sliding in the soft and wet ground to one side. The tripods wound up a few feet away and no one knew or saw where the shell landed. All of us were somewhat amazed as we had not had to deal with an emergency like this in training or in combat up to that time.

During the night water leaked through the ground into our foxhole. We kept stuffing blankets and finally our overcoats under us but finally had to get out of the hole early in the morning. It really wasn't my idea of how to spend a wedding anniversary but I did enjoy reading the mail from home.

tion. He picked up the baseplate and located a more firm piece of ground. He stomped the baseplate into the earth as firm as he could. He then took just the barrel of the mortar and set it into the slot of the baseplate. He then kneeled behind it and held the barrel of the gun between his legs keeping his hands between the gun and his body. He then told me to drop a round into the gun.

The first round landed a few yards over the haystack and Sgt. White then raised the barrel slightly to shorten the distance. The second round landed just short of the target. He then adjusted the barrel slightly and nodded to me again. The third round landed squarely on the target blowing it up. When it was over, White turned to us and said "that is what you call battlefield expedience for there are times when the situation is such that there is nothing in the manual that tells you how to adjust to a given circumstance in life and there are times you have to improvise and don't forget it."

I have never forgotten that lesson and many times in my own life I have had the opportunity to recall the words Sgt. White spoke and to make use of his words in my life. He was a most unusual man, a great and learned soldier, he understood tactics, he could field strip a number of weapons blindfolded and put them back together and he knew how to lead men.

Sgt. White had the unusual ability to get into some trouble on occasion, mostly from a desire to drink now and then. He was busted to a private twice while I was with him but bounced back and when I returned to my outfit from the hospital some months later he had received a battlefield commission as a result of his quick thinking and reaction to battlefield circumstances.

He was one of the most unusual men I ever knew and I am thankful for the lessons I learned about life from him as well as his leadership during a stressful time for those of us who were several years younger than he was.

■ Charles Fretwell is a regular contributor to

The News

Wednesday, October 27, 1993

Air raid did not spell the end of World War II

Editor's Note: Columnist Charles Fretwell continues his story on World War II and his personal experiences with Co. I 328th Infantry Regiment of the 26th Division with General George Patton's U.S. Third Army.

On the morning of Nov. 8, 1944, we awoke to a drone of aircraft fly-

ing overhead. As far as the eye could see the sky was almost black with a giant raid heading into Germany to pound the enemy installations. The 800 to 1,000 plane raids gave us the feeling that the war would soon be over but that was not to be, at least for several more months.

Later that same day we were

notified that Patton's Third Army was to launch an all out attack all along its front and early the next day the assault began, first with a tremendous artillery barrage and bombing followed by the movement of troops. Our regiment moved out before noon and began the walk on a road leading into Moyanvec and arrived there late

in the afternoon amid heavy shelling by the German forces. As usual we were walking 10 yards on each side of the road and hitting the ditches when shells got too close.

We crossed the bridge into town and were directed to a barn area about two blocks away where we

Please see RAID, Page 8A

■ RAID

Continued from page 3A

were to spend the night. The mortar section was in one end of the barn and the machine section in another area. My buddy and I cleaned out a section of the barn in the corner where pigs had been kept and after shoveling we then put straw down where we would try to sleep later. Just before dark we experienced a tremendous artillery shelling and buried ourselves down in the straw lying as flat as possible. The shrapnel tore through the sides of the walls just like it was paper and it seemed that there was no way we were going to survive this.

Had we known then that just outside the barn door stood a truck belonging to the engineers that was loaded with pole charges (dynamite on the end of long poles used to push against bunkers



Fretwell

and breach their walls), we would have really been concerned. When the barrage was finally lifted only two of our numbers had been hurt. One with a broken leg and one with both shoulders broken by shrapnel. There is simply no way to describe the helpless feeling that goes with being bombarded and terrorized by huge guns fired from several miles away.

My late brother Martin, who served in the Navy, put it this way — "The infantry is simply cannon fodder for the big guns." He may not have been too far wrong in any case the shelling made me realize that my first attempts to avoid the infantry showed that I had the right idea.

The next day following another shelling of the enemy by our artillery and bombing by the Air Force we moved out through the woods onto a small road leading into the direction of Wuisse. We moved down the country lane and I was carrying the 60MM mortar on my back. All alongside the road was knocked out guns the enemy destroyed by the early morning barrage. In the middle of the road we came upon a knocked out German Panzer tank with bodies of the crew lying alongside. The tank had come to rest with the tank commander under the tank tread and only his head and blonde hair and two hands and shoulders showing outside the tread.

We continued on down the road passing an enlarged ditch area and in a deep section of the water there was the left hand of a man sticking above the water line and he was wearing a wedding ring. The hand was the only sign that there was a body underneath. It's hard to describe the thoughts that you have in circumstances such as these. You find yourself in an alien world and wonder what you're doing here and how and if, it will ever end.

I remember that we soon passed into a cleared field that was lined with a battery of our 105 and 155 Howitzers, big guns that could shoot for miles and here I was lugging a comparatively "pop" gun on my back, a gun that could shoot only several hundred yards. We passed through the battery and continued down through the woods until we came to a large open draw and as we emerged in the direction of a large farmhouse we began to come under heavy shell fire.

As we neared the farmhouse we saw that it was a large complex with the barn area and the stock pens and the living quarters all joined together. This was in the Alsace-Lorraine disputed area that I mentioned earlier. Its control over the years had gone back and forth between the French and the Germans and as we found later the people still living there were pro German and were working to assist the German Army.

It was bitter cold and hard to dig into the ground so my buddy, Kline, and I decided to use our bayonet knives and dig an area out of a haystack in order to try to stay warm and to protect ourselves from the shelling. This period was to be known later as the Battle of the Farmhouse and it was to be where, for me, the war took a different turn and I was to leave the battles for a short period of time.

■ Charles Fretwell is a Radford resident and columnist for THE NEWS.

Wednesday, November 17, 1993

Buddies help each other survive the brutal cold

Editors note: Columnist Charles Fretwell continues his story on World War II and his personal experiences with Co. I 328th infantry Regiment of the 26th "Yankee Division" with General George Patton's US Third Army in Europe.

The following morning, November 15th we awoke cold, tired, and miserable and having had little sleep.

Eugene O'Brien called for us to come help him lift his buddy Ed Lynch out of the shallow



Fretwell

foxhole they were in. Ed was unable to move his legs as a result of the cold. We lifted him out and carried him into the large rambling farmhouse and into the kitchen. There was a fire in the kitchen stove and warm inside. I was pleased to be inside and stayed there.

In a few minutes someone carried another of our soldiers in the same condition as Lynch only he was somewhat delirious and in far worse shape. He had been an outstanding soldier and a fine physical specimen but his ordeal was too much. He was placed on the large kitchen table and as he began to warm, tears began to flow

down his cheek and he began calling for his Mother. In a scene I will never forget, "Doc" Werpe, a medic assigned to our Company leaned over the table, pressed his cheek against his cheek and stroked his head saying, "I'm your mother, I'm right here".

There are moments in life that have a profound effect on you and for me, and the others present, this was one of those moments in our lives. War creates circumstances and conditions that are many times filled with unsung heroes who rise to the occasion and do what is necessary as "Doc" Werpe did at this moment.

Later in the day we discovered that one of the men in this family of civilians at the farmhouse was on the back side of the barn signaling to the German troops a short distance away. We then gathered the men, women and children and confined them to one large distance away. We then gathered the

men, women and children and confined them to one large room in the house. Meanwhile occasional shelling took place around the house and barn area.

We had been issued K-rations for only two days and they had run out the previous day. We were somewhat cut off and had not been resupplied at that point. My buddy Kline had found a can of beans hidden on a shelf and we opened

the can using our bayonet. Having no utensils, we ate the beans by simply pouring them out of the can into our hands. When we were just about finished, a member of the crew of a disabled American tank came in and caught us in the act of eating. It turned out it was his beans and we almost had a private fight over the situation. It ended on a friendly note as it turned out he had some others hidden away.

Along about dark the shelling began picking up in intensity and the shells were landing closer to the house. We moved to enter the door leading downstairs into the cellar (which we had located earlier in the day). We discovered the door had been locked. I ran into the room where the civilians were located and told the young lady standing near the door to "Ou'vare Le port Tout De suite" (open the door quickly). (I know my RHS French teacher, the late Dorothy Miller would have been proud of that and very surprised that I knew that much French). The young lady responded and unlocked the door.

I was the first person on the stairway and for some unknown reason stopped 3 steps from the bottom. The room filled quickly with more than 20 of us in there as the shelling got heavier. Another soldier sat down beside me on the step. Suddenly there was a crashing of debris from a shell hitting the house. I remember standing and then falling into the arms of those below me. I had been hit in the left thigh as well as in the

right one and in my right hand. The fellow beside me had a hole through his wrist.

Dr. Werpe went to work taking the packet of sulfa powder from the pouch on my belt and pouring it into the wound and then placing a large bandage over it as well as dressing the other places. I deferred taking a shot at that time thinking I would not need it. After the shelling was stopped I was carried on a stretcher to the top of the stairs on the main floor to wait until we could be evacuated. Meanwhile the wounds began to hurt and I asked for the shot which Doc gave me.

In a few minutes I began to have a warm sensation all over and to become somewhat sentimental. I asked Doc if he had ever seen a picture of my wife and when he said he hadn't, I asked him to unbutton my shirt pocket and look at it which he did.

It was strange having other soldiers looking down at me and to lie there on the stretcher but it was a scene I had witnessed many times looking on others who had been wounded. Finally a jeep came to pick the two of us up. The driver was somewhat of a hero as he had been coming in and out all day under fire taking the wounded to safety. I was placed on the back of the jeep and as we headed across the fields I grunted with every move but told the driver I was O.K. His reply was "as long as I grunting I know you are still living". Thankfully, I'm still grunting.

The News

No. 222

Sunday, November 28, 1993

He experienced horror of war

Editor's note: Columnist Charles Fretwell continues his story on World War II and his personal experiences with Co. I 328th Infantry Regiment of the 26th Yankee Division with General George Patton's U.S. Third Army in Europe.

As the jeep carrying the two of us that had been wounded reached a road after crossing several fields we ran into a company of tanks sitting alongside the road and new troops walking slowly up the road. Even in the dark I could see their faces looking at us lying on the litters and knowing what was going through their minds for I had experienced what they were experiencing. It is an uneasy feeling and one of apprehension.

We arrived back to the Regimental medical unit and were placed in an Army ambulance for the rest of the night. The drivers started the engines to provide heat as the weather was very cold. The following morning we were



Fretwell

sent back to the Division collecting point where the wounded were sent from there to the Third Army collecting point. Finally just after lunch we started for the Third Army hospital center located in Nancy, France.

I arrived at the hospital about three in the afternoon and was carried to a large area where there were others wounded arriving and my litter was set down on the floor. Shortly an army nurse stood over me in her white starched nursing uniform and startled me when she said, "Soldier, just what do you mean coming into our nice clean hospital looking as dirty and filthy as you do?" (I hadn't had a bath in weeks nor shaved although I had little beard but I really was dirty etc.) She then laughed and said we will take care of you and I was just kidding. She turned out to be from Danville, and I felt like she was homefolks.

Two orderlies (soldiers) knelt down and with scissors cut my clothing down from my shoulders

"I arrived at the hospital about three in the afternoon and was carried to a large area where there were others wounded arriving and my litter was set down on the floor. Shortly an army nurse stood over me in her white starched nursing uniform."

to my feet on both sides and simply lifted me out of there. I was then washed, placed on a rolling litter and placed in a long line of wounded to await my turn in the operating room. I couldn't help but think of the common gripe of those in service that you even have to stand in line to get operated on. There were litters in the line as far as I could see down the long hallway.

Slowly I began getting closer and closer and when I was third from the doorway a major came out to my side and told me he was going to take care of me as soon as one of the operating bays was available. He asked who I was, where I was from and what had happened to me. This of course, was a way of trying to put you at ease but at this point I wasn't too much concerned about what was going to happen next.

About the only thing I remember from the large operating room was when the doctor administered the penethol in my arm he told me to start counting. I remember getting to and everything faded. About three hours later I came to in a large room with several others and heard the comments, "He's coming around, sleeping beauty is awakening, etc." All of them had experienced what I had and this was their way of chiding a newly operated on soldier.

We were kept at the hospital until the next afternoon when we were loaded into ambulances and taken to Toul, a city nearby which was a rail center. Here we were

placed in large tents overnight and to be placed on a hospital train the next day. Ironically, my litter was placed beside a wounded German soldier. The only way you could tell the difference was that my blanket had the olive color and the one he had was a gray one.

Later that night an Army captain, a doctor, came by and checked my medical forms. I had discovered that there were three things they would do at the point — mark your records France, U.K. or ZI. France meant of course that you would be sent to a hospital in that country to recuperate. UK meant that you would be sent to England for hospitalization and ZI stood for zone of the interior and meant that you would be shipped back to the States. He kiddingly asked me where I wanted to go and my reply was "just as far away from here as possible." He laughed and noted on my card UK. One thing I learned about the whole process was that the line was always kept moving. It had to be for wounded were coming in all the time and caring for them meant that it had to move in order to make the process work.

The following morning we left Toul on a hospital train. Most of the cars were empty of seating and had straps hanging from the ceiling to the floors with loops dangling at certain points. The ends of the litters were then placed in these loops and formed beds three patients high so the medical personnel could reach each patient if needed. We arrived in Paris late that afternoon and ambulances backed up to the cars and four of us were loaded for transportation to the hospital.

I was in the upper litter just behind the driver looking out at the big broad avenue we were traveling down. Suddenly a French taxicab came out of a side street and hit us broadside turning the ambulance over and coming to rest on its top with the four wheels up in the air. We fell all over each other but fortunately no one was injured further and passing soldiers hailed another ambulance and they took us on to the hospital. The colonel in charge came to check on us stating that it was a shame to get us 300 miles behind the front and then kill us.

Story on World War II experience continues by ...

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Role in war was small one compared to others involved

As many of you know for the past several months I have been writing a series of articles about World War II and in particular, my personal experiences in that war. I want to express my appreciation to so many of you that have made kind comments and complimentary remarks about the content of those columns. That is always gratifying to those of us who write for the newspaper.

At the request of The News I began these comments on WWII to put the events in perspective

and to give the reader an opportunity to see the events that I had a part in through the eyes of a typical 19-year-old youngster who like many others, lived through that period of time, experiencing those events.



Fretwell

I feel that I need to remind the readers that my particular role in the war was a very small one and that compared to the efforts and the sacrifices of so many others, mine was fairly insignificant. I was one of more than 12 million American men and women who served in the armed forces during that conflict. More than 300,000 Americans gave their life in the war that raged in battles all over the world and hundreds of thousands of us were wounded during the conflict. In addition, many others were afflicted by their involvement with such encounters as "battle fatigue," "trench feet," and other forms of stress that takes its toll in battle.

While I was in service almost three years, many others found themselves involved for more than five years. My time in combat conditions was slightly over

seven months while many served for more than three years in North Africa, Italy, and later in France and Germany or in the Pacific area.

In 1985 here in Radford, we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the ending of the war in Europe. We had many WWII veterans fill out forms giving a brief history of their service and involvement in WWII and where they were when the war in Europe ended. Under the leadership of Dr. Harold Mann we published a booklet listing over 300 men and women from the Radford area who served. Those brief biographies revealed many who had served valiantly and with distinction and were highly decorated for their exploits.

I have found, as have many others, that the older one gets the more he appreciates those who shared a common experience in one's youth and in particular an experience fraught with danger and lived to reflect on it. This is why service unit reunions are a gathering we all enjoy.

It is a special time to remember those who were a part of one's service outfit and gave their life in the service of their country. I suspect that nostalgia plays a greater role in our lives than we would care to admit, at least I know it does for me. This past summer on our way out West we stopped overnight in the small town of Belvidere, Ill. to visit the gravesite of one of my special friends — Raymond Conley.

Ray and I were close friends and shared many common experiences meeting in the Air Corps at Greensboro, serving together at Providence College and later in the 26th Infantry Division overseas. He had attended Virginia Tech the year before he entered service and his name is inscribed at the Memorial at the

■ ROLE

Continued from page 2C

entrance to Tech. Ray was the first casualty in the 26th Division along with another friend,

Paul Foley.

As I stood by his headstone in the beautiful St. James Catholic Cemetery in Belvidere, I recalled the words his mother had written to us when his body was brought back home from Europe in 1948 — "Ray was a wonderful son and the darling of Belvidere. The whole town turned out when his body was brought home."

We had visited the Conleys in 1946 and later in 1958 and shared happy memories of Ray with them. They have all passed away now and are buried side by side.

As I continue to write about WWII as I experienced it you, the reader, needs to keep in mind you are simply following one very small part of a tremendously large play that was carried out on a world wide stage in a crucial time in the history of our country in the years 1941-45.

■ Charles Fretwell is a Radford resident and columnist for THE NEWS.

Please see ROLE, Page 4C

Story on World War II experience continued by Radford columnist

Editor's Note: Columnist Charles Fretwell continues his story on World War II and his personal experiences with Co. I 328th Infantry Regiment of the 26th "Yankee Division" with General George Patton's U.S. Third Army in Europe.



Fretwell

The day following our arrival to the hospital in Paris a nurse came in to change my bandages for the first time since the operation. The large bandage on my left leg was wrapped all around my leg with wide adhesive tape and when that came off it hurt worse than anything I had experienced. When she had completed taking it off and removing all the things from inside the wound, she helped lift me so I could see it. When I looked I let a moan and fell back on my pillow convinced that I would never walk again.

The nurse laughed and told me that the leg would fill out in time and that I would have no trouble getting around once they had irrigated the wound area for a few weeks and then have an operation to close the wound. She was right and over the years it hasn't bothered me very much.

I stayed in the hospital there for three days before being moved out to the airport to be transported to England. We stayed at the airport (the one where Charles Lindberg landed on his famous solo flight across the Atlantic in 1927) for three days waiting for the weather to clear and on Thanksgiving Day had a big turkey dinner in Paris and then flew aboard an ambulance plane to England.

We landed in Southern England and was taken to the 131st General Hospital Unit for our convalescence period. When we arrived at the hospital and was placed in our ward it was about 6 p.m. and they wanted to know if we had eaten turkey. Those of us with a big appetite said no and they brought us large platters of turkey for supper that night.

Our hospital was typical of the others. They were a series of wards each holding about 30 beds and they were connected at one end by a long enclosed boardwalk that tied them all together. There were all types of wounded men in our ward, those with arms off, those with one leg off and one person who had lost both legs. One of the men that I got to know well was John Merrill from Hollywood, Calif., who had one foot that was blown off by a land mine. In the bed next to mine was Terry DeMars. Terry had been a professional golfer before the war and we were entranced by his experiences on the tour and the many entertainers and golfers he knew. He lives now in Orlando, Fla. and we have stopped to see him several times.

One of the things we enjoyed while there was listening to BBG, the British Broadcasting Co., and the music of Major Glen Miller and his Air Force Band at night. One night, the announcer stated that

the next Glen Miller arrangement was the tune "Stomping at the Savoy." In the interval between his announcement and the start of the music, John Merrill (he had lost one foot), yelled out for some of us from now on it's going to be "Stumbling" at the Savoy. Despite the severity of the pain there was a lot of levity among the men. Glen Miller lost his life on a flight from England to Paris just before Christmas in 1944.

One of the most memorable things I remember from the time there was what happened to a young Army nurse who was a regular in our ward. She was very popular and outgoing and simply a nice person. One morning while she was in the midst of working with a patient she suddenly started crying and broke down, rushing out of the ward. It wasn't until some time later that we found out that her fiancée, an

We landed in Southern England and was taken to the 131st General Hospital Unit for our convalescence period. When we arrived at the hospital and was placed in our ward it was about 6 p.m. and they wanted to know if we had eaten turkey. Those of us with a big appetite said no and they brought us large platters of turkey for supper that night.

American pilot, had been killed over France the previous day. She had tried to do her job and to cover up her grief but finally broke down under the strain.

About a month after I had been there I was taken back into the operating room to close the wound and have it stitched back in place. As it began to heal I told my doctor that I would just as soon stay there and help him, all things being equal. He laughed (I'm sure he got that line from a lot of soldiers) and said they wasn't allowed to have us have any involvement with battle veterans who had experience. I replied that a few minutes under shelling would make anybody "experienced."

About the first of the year I was moved into a large area and prepared to go to Birmingham, England to a replacement center arriving there about the middle of the first week in January. We were given a two day pass and I went to Bournemouth, a seacoast town in the Southern part. The Battle of the Bulge was going on and for a while Hitler's forces threatened to force us back. My division, the 26th, and the 80th division, along with the Fourth Armored Division, had been sent to aid in the battle.

■ Charles Fretwell is columnist for THE NEWS and long-time Radford resident.

The News

Vol. 124, No. 3

Friday, January 7, 1994

35 c

Recalling his wartime experiences

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

In the middle of January of 1945 we left Birmingham, England by train for the seaport city of Southampton arriving there in the late afternoon and were immediately loaded on board an



Fretwell

IST for the overnight trip across the English Channel to Le Havre, France. Mid-January is a bad time to cross as the seas are especially rough and the flat bottom LST's are not the best ocean going ship to be on in rough seas. I was sick all night and so were a great many others who made the trip.

We docked at Le Havre early the next morning and our group of about 50 walked in a somewhat disorganized formation down the street that had large warehouse buildings on both sides. Le Havre, meanwhile, had become a port handling new replacement troops coming from the States and a GI in one of the buildings, thinking we were fresh troops, yelled out, "Welcome to the E.T.O., it's rough over here!" The young paratrooper lieutenant in charge of our crowd yelled back "come on down here and I'll show you just how rough it is." We were in no mood for wise-

Charles Fretwell

cracks.

It's very difficult to describe one's feelings in circumstances like we were in. As I said earlier the first time you go into battle it's like something new, a first football game, etc. You don't know exactly what to expect. The second time around is completely different. Few want to go back. You know what it's like. You are fully acquainted with the field conditions,

"It's very difficult to describe one's feelings in circumstances like we were in. As I said earlier the first time you go into battle it's like something new, a first football game, etc. You don't know exactly what to expect."

the mud, the rain, the misery, and the terrifying sound of shells landing and people getting killed and wounded. Added to that is the fact that for an all too brief time you have had a taste of comfort. A warm bed, good food, and for that time you have been free from the sounds of war that can destroy your nerves.

We spent the rest of that day in a tent city located on the outskirts of town. Here we were given our

PX rations of candy, cigarettes, etc. and two blankets. We were to spend the night but late in the afternoon were notified that we would be moving out. It was several miles to where we would catch a train and we began the long hike with short rest stops along the way.

I knew that my brother's ship had been in the harbor there and during one of the rest stops I asked a young sailor if he knew if PC-567 was in the harbor. He told me it was and it was berthed near his ship. I asked him to notify my brother who was storekeeper on that ship that I was passing through on my way back to rejoin my outfit. I learned later that he did.

If I had it to do all over again I would have simply dropped out and caught the next group passing through. I could have visited with him for a day or two and it would have made no difference.

On reaching the rail yards we discovered that our transportation was to be on the French 40 and 8's a term left over from WWI. I recalled the late Bradley Scott and Saul Simon and others talking about them. They are cattle cars that can hold 40 men or eight horses. The sides are boards that are slanted with air spaces between them that lets the rain and wind blow through and as it was January we got plenty of rain, wind, and snow.

We spent three days and nights on them and each time a train hauling ammunition or other supplies came we were placed on a siding as those trains had priority over us. When we stopped a lot of the fellows would run into a

nearby village and try to locate some wine. There was wine everywhere in France and in almost every house.

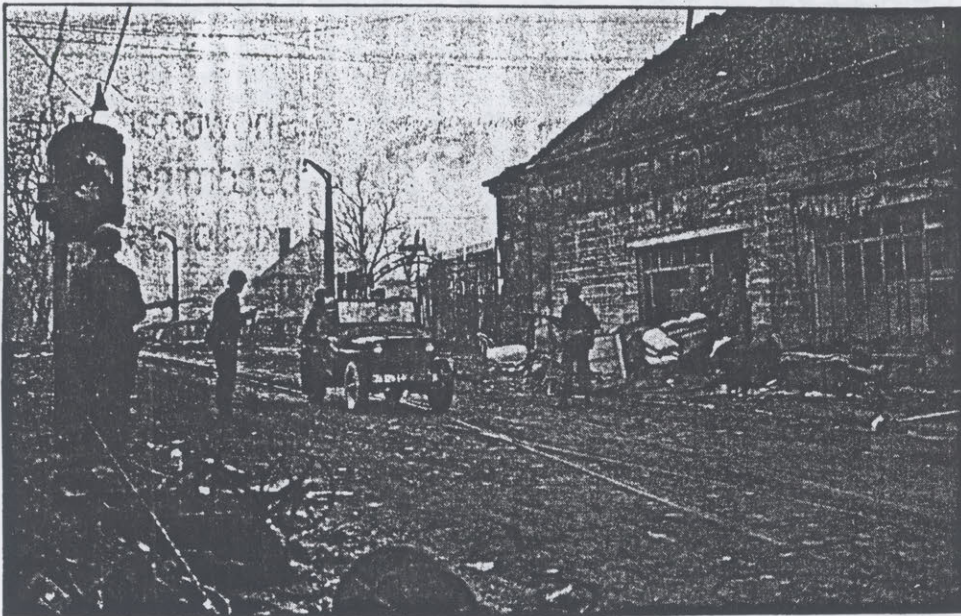
We arrived in Metz after the three day train trip and after an overnight stay were picked up by two and one-half ton army trucks to be transported back to our individual outfits. It was late January when I finally arrived in the small French village of Coume. I had been gone almost three months and had traveled by jeep, ambulance, hospital train, airplane, train, boat, and finally, truck before once again reaching my outfit.

As I got off the truck I saw a group of soldiers coming down the road. It wasn't until many of them had passed that I recognized anyone and realized this was I Co. So many had been wounded, evacuated for Trench feet, and killed and there was so many replacements that there was in reality an almost new company of men. We arrived overseas with 184 officers and men. During our seven months in combat almost 800 men had gone through the company as it was replaced almost four times. Such is the expectancy of life in the infantry in combat conditions.

While I was not glad to be back I was pleased to meet once again some of the men I had been with before. We compared notes and got reacquainted and brought ourselves up to date. I Co. was in a rest period but was preparing to move into new positions in a couple of days. I wondered what my role would be and soon found out.

Charles Fretwell is a long-time Radford resident and columnist for The News.

Looking back with Charlie Fretwell



A jeep leaves the Seoar River Bridge and rolls into Saarlautern Germany in the 25th sector. This photo appeared in the Army newsletter "Yankee Doings." Columnist Charlie Fretwell is driving the jeep.

Columnist continues look at war memories

RADFORD — The morning after I returned to Company 1 after almost three months away I reported to First Sgt. Bob Hover at the I Co. CP (command post). He welcomed me back and asked about my physical condition. I explained to him that my leg wounds hadn't healed and that walking was still difficult. Those in hospitals during that time (Battle of the Bulge) were rushed back without the usual 30 day period of rehabilitation and many were not in shape. After seeing my legs he instructed me to come back the next morning to see him.

When I reported the following morning he asked me if I would like to drive one of the two company Jeeps. To use an old expression, "Does a hog like slop?" It really was an answer to my problem for I was simply in no shape to go back to my old job and I loved to drive. During the next two days I practiced a lot with the Jeep learning its ways and getting familiar with its handling and smiling all over myself about my relative good fortune in getting that particular

assignment.

Three days later we left Courme for Sarrlautern, a rather large town on the Sarre River. It turned out to be located much like Radford and Fairlawn. Our kitchens and supply area was located in Sarrlautern but the fighting was taking place across the river in Fraulautern which was located in much the same way as Fairlawn is here. To go to the Co. CP we had to travel west along the river, then cross the bridge (just like the New River bridge), turn right and drive along the road on the other side across a straight stretch until you reached the area of the fighting.

The fighting there was house to house and in some cases our troops and the German troops occupied rooms in the same house. Each side set off pole charges to blast the enemy out. It was there that I fully realized just how lucky I was to be driving a Jeep and be able to deliver ammunition, food, mail, and water, and to get back into the Jeep and beat a hasty retreat to our kitchen area located on this side of the river.

One night while delivering supplies and a couple of replacements we got caught in a big artillery barrage and had to spend the night there. Early the next morning while driving in the fog across a straight stretch we came upon a knocked out mortar that had been piled into the center of the road. I swerved to miss the gun and we went sliding sideways and bounced off a knocked out German tank beside the road. The impact ripped my field jacket and drew a little blood in my side but no serious damage. In a Jeep there are no side doors for protection.

We spent about 10 days in the Sarrlautern area before being relieved by the 65th Infantry Division. I found out later that Madison Mayre of Shawsville, a

member of the House of Delegates, was a member of the outfit at the time.

The transition took place at night and I was sent to lead two big two and one-half ton Army trucks into the wooded area to pick up some of our troops. All this took place in the dark and one of the trucks slipped off the wet shoulder of the narrow dirt road and slid into a ditch. Being so close to the front lines we were careful about noise so rather than race the motor of the truck to try to get out I went back to get the other truck to come down and winch the stalled vehicle out of the ditch to hold the noise down. We were all greatly relieved when it worked and we were able to load our troops and move out.

We finally formed a long convoy and pulled back from the front line area and began traveling north to our new location. This was my first experience in driving a long distance at night in, as always, a complete blackout. The vehicle in front of me was a three-quarter truck pulling a 37 MM gun with the barrel pointed toward us. On the very tip of the barrel was a small reflector that was my guiding point. The night was a rainy one and many times I would lose sight of the reflector and speed up to catch up only to all of a sudden come upon the convoy stopped in the middle of the road. It was a harrowing experience for a novice

driving under these conditions, but I soon got the hang of it.

We arrived at our new position on the Sarre River near Sarrburg and our Regimental headquarters was located in Serrig, about 15 miles away where all of the company kitchens were located. From this position we supplied the troops located about four miles away up on the crest of a large mountain.

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Sunday, April 3, 1994

He remembers war experiences

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of Radford columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

We had relieved the 94th Infantry Division in the Sarre area and assumed their positions. The following day my assistant driver, Leo Wurtzel, and I made the run up the mountain to take the mail, ammunition, food and water supplies to our company. The company was located some four miles away and the main road was under shellfire at times until you reached the small trail leading along the crest of the mountain. Then you were safe as the mountain top was between you and the enemy shells. The trail was along a side slope that led just below the top of the ridge and below you was a long, long, way down to the Sarre River.

When we took supplies up each day (sometimes twice), we always dropped off a water can full of wine for our old weapons platoons as it was one of the few luxuries front line troops could enjoy. Wine in Europe was like water to most families and it was plentiful. Many used it as a substitute for water.

After unloading the supplies for our troops we followed the narrow trail back under the protection of

the mountain crest out to the main road, where on many occasions we came upon shelling by enemy guns. The road was full of pot holes left by the almost constant shelling. On one occasion as we came out and began to run the gauntlet of enemy fire our Jeep hit a pot hole and the empty trailer jumped the hitch and went off sideways into the ditch.

Naturally, we didn't stop to pick up the trailer and I dropped Leo off at a crossroads to watch if someone else got our trailer while I went to get help. When we got

Charles Fretwell

back to the crossroads Leo told us another outfit went whizing by with our trailer. He said they almost ran him down when he tried to stop them.

A search of our regimental area failed to turn up any trace of our missing trailer. Sgt. Green informed us that the company would be moving out to a new location in a few days and that we had better have a trailer to haul the company equipment, supplies, etc., in. The whole affair bothered me a great deal but Leo Wurtzel was a New York City native and it didn't seem to concern him all that much.

In any case when we moved out several days later we had a trailer to haul our things in. Leo was a master at improvising and no one asked too many questions.



Fretwell!

After about five days there our regiment launched an attack by the second and third battalions. The attack was to begin after a large artillery attack by our division artillery. At the agreed time our battalion, the third, moved out not knowing that as the 2nd Battalion had begun assembling for the assault, a large enemy bombardment had caused a large number of casualties, killing and injuring hundreds and preventing them from moving out on their assigned front.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion which included Co. I had moved way out. I was driving our company ex. officer, Lt. Wachs, and we were trying to reach the company by use of the walkie talkie (in those days the range was very limited). We drove frantically along the mountain road to get closer and finally were able to make contact and to notify them they were out on an exposed front with no support on their left. They immediately began pulling back to the original lines and fortunately suffered only four or five casualties as a result.

That night 300 replacements were brought up the mountain to resupply the 2nd Battalion. It was not until the war was over that I learned that our good friend, Charles Garwood, 1944 RHS graduate, was among them.

We didn't know it at the time but this was to mark the end of the fixed position fighting and from this time on the Allied Forces would be on the move forward as the war progressed relentlessly toward Germany.

Armored division launches attack

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

RADFORD — About the middle of March, 1945, the Third Army's Fourth Armored Division launched an all out attack and drove some 50 miles stopping only when they reached the Rhine River. German troops in front of us began pulling back as they were in danger of being cut off behind their lines.

Our front line troops began moving forward and in the first day we moved some 15 miles which was great when you consider that we counted our advances in the number of yards for so long.



Fretwell!

After the big advance through the towns of Mettlach and Merzig, Germany, I drove back with Lt. Wachs and Sgt. Salata to pick up a new replacement officer, Lt. Alan Milne, who turned out to be from St. Louis, Mo., and also to pick up the bed rolls for the troops they had left behind.

When we arrived in Merzig a couple of photographers from the Third Army Headquarters stopped us and asked us to pose with a nude mannequin in front of a road sign which we did. The picture was later distributed and printed in many papers in the U.S., including the Radford News Journal, in March, 1945. Unfortunately, just a few days after the picture was taken Lt. Milne was shot in the stomach while leading his platoon in an assault. I drove him back to the aid station in my Jeep and he bled to death before anything could be done for him. He was a fine, hand-

some young man and like many others, lost his life just as it was opening up for him. It reminded us of what a waste war was, and is.

The following day our troops reached the town of Neustadt and we commandeered a number of homes which were vacated, for our troops. Lt. Wachs, our Executive Officer who rode with me, located a small German civilian car and took it over. He was somewhat of a scrounger and ready to try anything. Some of the other troops in our company had located a large wine cellar in their home and notified Lt. Wachs. He got several of the men to help him carry about 150 bottles of wine, champagne, assorted whiskeys, etc. and put them in the trunk of the little "Beetle" car.

The next morning our company convoy lined up with the lead Jeep in front and several two and one-half ton Army trucks behind and my Jeep and Lt. Wachs bringing up the rear. The little civilian car was behind us with my assistant driver, Leo Wurtzel, at the wheel. When the convoy started moving out Leo frantically tried to get the car started, but to no avail. Finally with the convoy disappearing from view Lt. Wachs had to motion for Leo to get in the Jeep with us. We left the little car and its cargo setting there by the railroad tracks. I kept my eyes straight ahead as I hated to see a grown man cry.

A couple of days later we reached the outskirts of Mainz, a large city on the banks of the Rhine River and after a two day stay there we moved a few miles south to a small village of Oppenheim to await our place in line to cross the mighty Rhine River on a pontoon bridge the engineers had spanned the river with. The pontoon bridges were erected by placing a series of small boats together and tying them in with laced network of steel that held them in place. Then road treads were laid across the surfaces of the boats

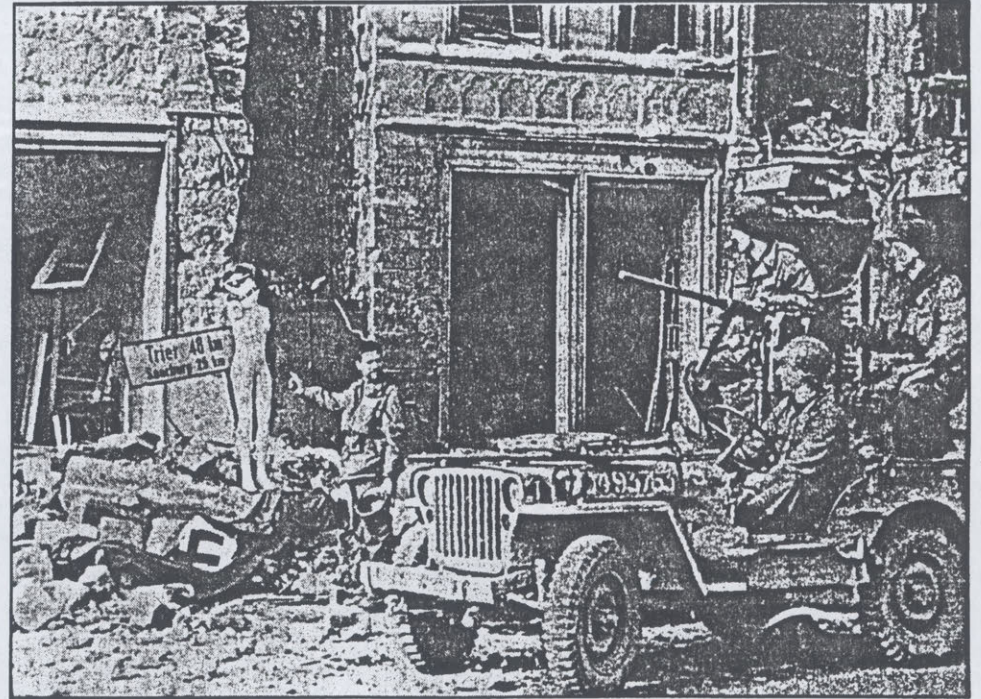
making for a great makeshift river-crossing. We crossed at night and a small German plane appeared overhead. Almost immediately machine gun bullets and tracer bullets filled the sky making it like the Fourth of July.

We slept that night in houses on the outskirts of the town of Grausouheim and about 4 a.m. we awakened to the sound of a heavy German counter-attack designed to throw us back toward the Rhine. I was sleeping on the third floor and I put my shoes on and rushed down to the first floor. The captain told me to get the First Sergeant out with the company records. We rushed out front only to find a German tank firing point blank down the street. We rushed out the back but soon found the attack being repulsed by our own counter attack from men in our company.

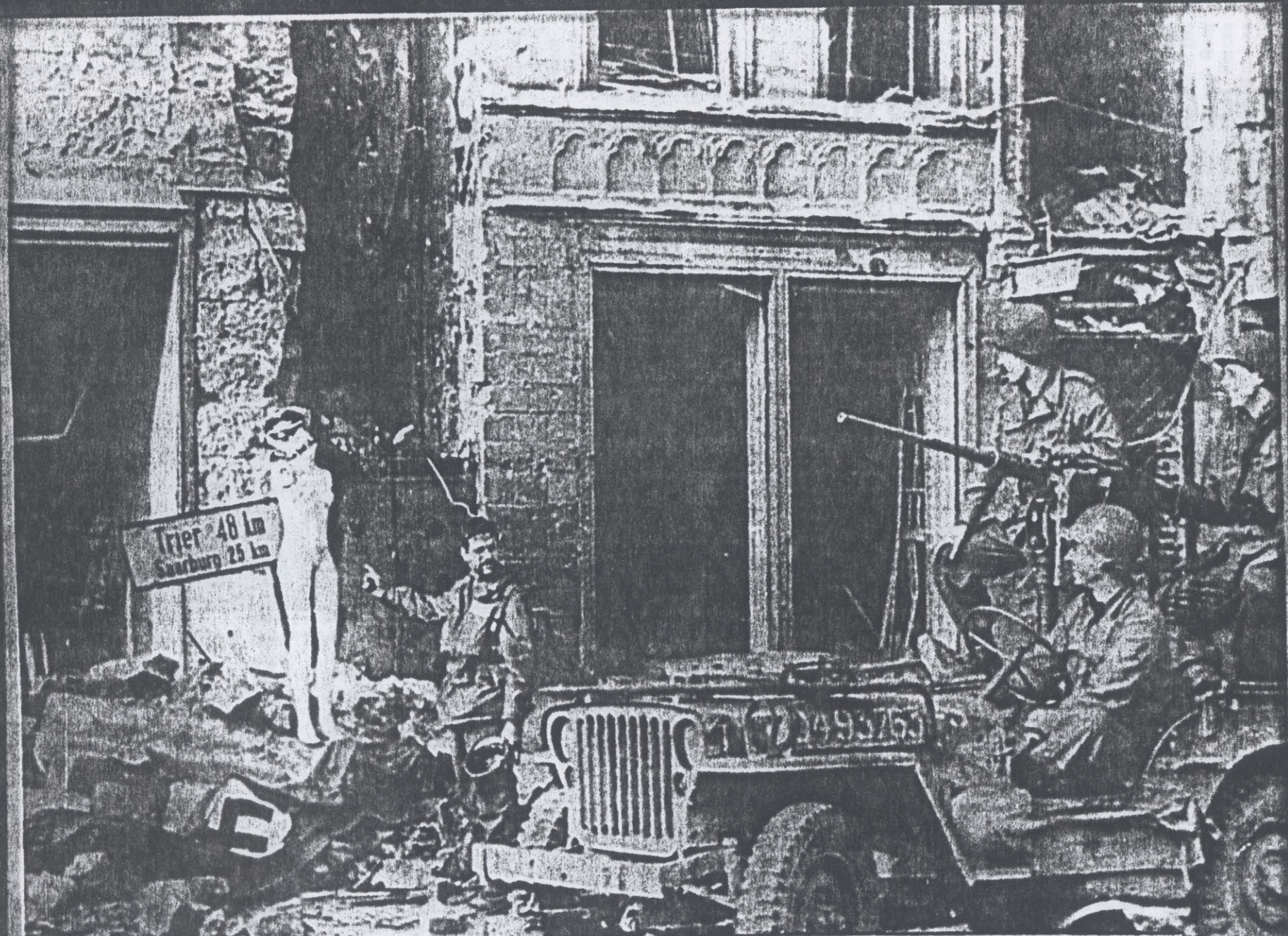
Later when relating this incidence my wife asked the question, "Why was it so important to get the 1st. Sgt. out with the records?" I replied that I had never stopped to wonder. I simply looked at it as a message from my fairy god-mother and followed orders. I didn't want to be a statistic like

the soldier in the old refrain "ours is not to reason why — ours is to do or die."

One of the big events for me was the arrival one day of some 80 letters that had come to my outfit and then presented to me in the hospital in England and again shipped back to my outfit. Included were Christmas packages. One was a box of homemade cookies that by then had become a mass of crumbles because of all the handling. They still tasted good!



Three days after this picture was taken, Lt. Milne was shot and transported back to the aid station on this jeep. He died hours later.



Lt. Ray Wachs
Albuquerque, N. M.

T/Sgt. Mike Salata
Pittsville, Mass.

Charles Fretwell
Radford, Va.

Lt. Alan Milne
St. Louis, Mo.

Three days after picture was taken Lt. Milne was shot and transported back to aid station on this jeep. He died hours later.

The News

4, No. 52

Sunday, May 1, 1994

Remembering war experiences

Editor's note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

RADFORD — By late March of 1945, the war had begun as a series of falling back by the German troops and carefully controlled advances by our armies.

Because of the need for speedily advances our soldiers traveled in trucks stopping only to engage the enemy where they stopped to make a stand. Frequently our convoys were held up at points where we would be shelled by



Fretwell!

German artillery. A small spotter plane from our division artillery would go aloft and fly above to try to locate where the enemy fire was coming from, dancing around in the sky as air bursts from enemy guns would try to knock the plane out of the air.

When the spotter plane pilot located the artillery by sighting the flashes from the big guns he would radio the map coordinates back to the 9th technical Air Force command and they would send out a wing of four fighter planes to knock out the enemy gun positions and soon our convoys would start moving forward again. It was simply marvelous to see the cooperation between the different units and to witness how well they worked together to keep the enemy armies on the run.

About this time I got an opportunity to take on a new task which meant leaving my old company, Company I. The liaison officer that operated between Regimental and Divisional headquarters needed a new driver and I was recommended for the job. I hated to leave but looked forward to seeing another part of the war and so I joined Service Co. of the 328th Infantry Regiment.

For the next several weeks I drove between Division and Regimental Headquarters in circumstances that meant being on the road most of the time. The liaison officer carried messages back and forth between the two headquarters. At this stage of the war the headquarters were constantly moving to new locations. By the time we got to one we would find that the one we had left had been relocated forward to a new position.

The tires on our Jeep were old and well worn which meant flats were frequent and so I carried two spares mounted on wheels and simply exchanged wheels when flats occurred. Immediately on arrival at a location I went to the motor pool and patched my flats and mounted them back on the wheels so I would be ready to move out when we received new instructions.

A frequent sight at this stage of the war was the white surrender flags that hung from the public buildings in each community our troops went in. The change from a line company back to the regimental service company meant for me an opportunity for me to once again eat hot food prepared in the

field ranges instead of the "K" rations that were doled out to the troops in the line companies.

By this time in the late stages of the war we began to see many sights and witness many things that made you realize the terrible toll that war takes and to witness man's inhumanity to man in those circumstances. Many "slave" laborers had been brought into Germany by the German armies when they conquered a country. As the war began to wind down we came across many bodies of these people who had been ruthlessly slain by the retreating forces and left like cattle slaughtered in the fields.

Another sad factor of the year was the fact that the German civilian population suffered greatly as food supplies were very low and old men and women as well as young children scrambled to find food and other necessary supplies.

At meal times we would go through the chow lines and get our food in our mess kits and when we had eaten we would dump any leftover food into a large garbage container before washing our mess kits in hot water. By this stage of the war we would have old ladies and children waiting for us. They brought cans and other containers and have us dump our leftovers in those cans so that they would have something to take back to their homes to eat. I found it very hard to really eat what I wanted knowing that they were waiting there for what we had left. It's another of those scenes and memories in life that stay with you forever.

■Charles Fretwell is a long-time Radford resident and columnist for The News.

Friday, June 24, 1994

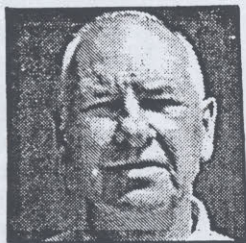
News of FDR's death was shock to troops

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

RADFORD — On April 12, 1945 we were in Sonnenberg, Germany when word reached us that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died in Warm Springs, Ga. He had been our president for more than 13 years and was in the first year of a new four year term.

The news of his death was a blow and a shock to the troops as he had provided leadership and inspiration to our

country as it fought back from the devastation of Pearl Harbor. We all felt regret



Fretwell

that he had not been able to live to see the climax of his words of pledge that "we shall gain the inevitable triumph, so help us God."

Located in Sonnenberg was a huge German supply depot that was a repository for a number of items that included guns, ammunition, clothing for the Air Corps,

ski troops, etc. Lt. Johnson and I made a visit there and I came away with a souvenir flying jacket and a pair of German ski boots. The boots were fitted at the heel with an inset to provide for its use with skis.

My regular Army boots had become well worn and sometimes leaked water when we got in bad weather. I immediately tossed them aside and put on the new German boots that were great, comparatively. The following day we met General Paul, our Division Commander, along the road and he waved us over to give the liaison officer a message to deliver. He happened to glance at me and spotted the German boots. He didn't say anything to me but told Lt. Johnson in no uncertain terms to see that his driver got rid of those foreign boots and get a pair of GI issued ones. I hastily complied by changing back to my old boots. I still have the German boots after almost 50 years.

One of the real hazards of traveling on the roads particularly at night was the fear of getting killed or injured while the war was entering its final stages. I remembered the many accounts from World War I where soldiers lost their lives in the final moments through carelessness and being unaware of the danger that still confronted those in battle zones.

Like many others I was determined to see that it didn't happen to me. For a long time we rode with our windshield folded down on the hood so we could see better,

particularly at night, but in rear guard action, German troops many times stretched small thin wires across the road ways at a height that would catch the driver of a Jeep just under the throat. In those final weeks we kept the windshield as well as the top of the Jeep up so as to prevent that sort of thing from happening.

During those closing weeks of the war because of the mission of the liaison officer we found ourselves up on the edge of the action that was taking place. We witnessed many examples of the atrocities that had taken place. Saw the results of some of the concentration camps as well as nationalities from many countries that had been brought into Germany to provide slave labor for the German war effort.

After crossing the Rhine River near Mainz in late March the mission of the 26th Division led us into a Southwestern direction through such cities as Darmstat,

Please see **DEATH**, Page 5

■ DEATH

Continued from page 2

Hanau, Mennigan, Sonnenberg, Bayreuth, Nurnberg, and across the Danube River into Linz, Austria. Our division received the surrender of over 200,000 German troops anxious to surrender to the American rather than fall into Russian hands. The Russians had taken a tremendous pounding from the Germans in the early stages of the war and were anxious to gain a measure of revenue. I was to learn later that my friend Bill Tienveri was a member of the 11th Armored Division that we fol-

lowed across the Danube into Linz. This was on May 1, 1945.

The 26th Division pulled back out of Linz and turned North into Czechoslovakia. The war officially came to an end on May 8, 1945 when we reached the small quaint town of Prachatice. Then came a period of adjustment for everyone. It was hard to get used to being able to drive at night with lights after those many months of moving in complete blackout. It was difficult to realize that you no longer had to fear enemy actions and being shot at or sabotaged in some way. No longer did we have duties of taking messages back

and forth between regimental and division headquarters as communications could be resumed in the normal way via radio and telephone where those facilities were available.

It's difficult to explain the feeling of exhilaration at knowing the war was over and in time you would be coming home to your wife, your mother, and other members of your family. While the war was taking place there was this feeling that you might never see home again and now all of a sudden it was all changed. The feeling of joy seemed too much to be true.

EVERETT

Wednesday, July 6, 1994

End of war brought other problems

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

The end of the war in Europe and the fighting brought with it a great number of logistical problems and circumstances. How to handle all of the manpower and the weaponry and how to systematically dismantle a tremendous fighting machine called for a new way of thinking and decision making for those in charge.



Fretwell!

While the war in Europe had officially ended on May 8, the war in the South Pacific with Japan was still raging. Most of the initial planning at the end of the hostilities in Europe centered around the planning for sending a number of fighting divisions, artillery, air wings, tank corps, etc., to support those already in combat with the enemy there.

In connection with those decisions our Division, the 26th, was ordered back to Germany and sent near Hammelberg where the German army had operated a training center for many years. This was in early June and at that time very few people had any prior knowledge about the atom bomb which would bring the war with Japan to a quick halt, once the decision to drop the bomb was made by President Harry Truman, in consultation with a number of others involved. It was estimated that American forces could suffer up to half a million casualties in an invasion of the Japanese home-

land.

The war with Japan officially ended when the Japanese surrendered to the American forces. This event again changed the mission of the troops in Europe. No longer was there need to send units to the South Pacific so plans were changed and units were reassigned and plans made to ship more men home faster. The 26th Division was assigned to the Army of occupation and in August of 1945 was assigned to Linz, Austria and the surrounding area.

This was my second time into Linz which is a large city located on the Danube River. It was a center for a large number of prisoner of war camps and it was our assigned duty as a division to take over the operation. We realized the 65th Division and inherited a baseball team that they had formed. It was composed of some former minor league and major league players who were in service.

At the first opportunity I attended a game between a team from the First Division and the 26th Division team. I noted on the small scoreboard that an Everett Fagan was a pitcher for the visitors so I made my way into the dugout and inquired about Fagan.

He turned out to be the same Everett Fagan that pitched for the Pulaski Counts. I had last seen him pitch for Pulaski in the 1942 season. He and Don Black who later starred for the Cleveland Indians hooked up in some fine pitching duels. Fagan and I had a great time talking about his days in Pulaski. After the war he pitched some for Philadelphia in the majors.

In late July I turned my name in for a tryout with the Regimental

football team soon to be formed. It turned out that due to excessive prisoner of war camp duty that there would be no Regimental team and my name was forwarded

to the list of tryouts for the 26th Division football squad. I was joined on the squad by another Radford High School graduate Charles Garwood. Charles had graduated in 1944 and joined our outfit as a replacement in February 1945. He had seen a picture of my wife in the division newspaper as one in a series of pictures of individuals on "Why We Fight" and had contacted me.

We both played for the division football team and a full schedule was planned with the Ninth Air Force flying us to various locations in France and Germany however after two games were played the team was disbanded as the Division was scheduled for redeployment home.

Assignments for redeployment home were made on a point system. You acquired so many points for each month served overseas, so much for each battle star, each medal, each child, etc. As I made preparation with the others to leave Linz by troop train I said goodbye to my good friend Charles Garwood and told him I would see him back in Radford when he had accumulated enough points to get home.

Little did I know that when I walked into my father and mother-in-law's living room two months later I would find Charles sitting there waiting for me. He had signed up for a three year enlistment and they had flown him home for a 30 day leave. He retired as a colonel several years ago after spending a career of nearly 30 years in service.



LOGUE GARDNER KELLEY ZIMMERMAN KIRK LUCASINELLO MESSMER HEYN BECKER ~~WEATY~~ (WELT) FRETWELL

26TH DIVISION FOOTBALL TEAM

LINZI, AUSTRIA 1945

Radford resident recalls the war



Photo Courtesy of Charles Fretwell

Charles E. Fretwell and Frank Williamson of Vinton as World War II fighting ended in Europe in May of 1945.

World War II remembered

Editor's note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

A couple of days after the war had officially ended and we had stopped in place where we were, Lt. Johnson and I took a trip into the Russian controlled sector to meet and greet the Soviet soldiers. We waved and smiled at the many soldiers we saw along the road and entered a small village about three miles inside the Russian lines.

A German family came outside and invited us into their home. They immediately began trying to make us understand what had happened. The language barrier was difficult but we began to realize that they were complaining to us about the Russian soldiers who had taken some things from their home, and had

abused their teen-age daughter. While we sympathized with their situation it was not a circumstance that we could do anything about because they were in complete control in that particular area.

While not trying to excuse their behavior one had to understand the events that had taken place. Hitler and his armies had attacked

The bitter cold, Russian winter weather and the magnificent stand of the Russian armies at Stalingrad had turned the tide of battle and forced a German retreat. Also, the landing of the Allied forces in France had forced a fight on two battle fronts. These events led to a rapid deterioration of Germany's ability to resist.

The Russian army, unlike the Allied forces, literally "traveled on its stomach." They had no formal or organized supply units and much of the time the field soldiers ate off of what food stuffs they could acquire as they moved along in battle. Thus, they had a different attitude about what action was appropriate as they considered things as being the spoils of war.

With the war over and more free time on hand a large number of USO Shows came over from the States to entertain the troops. One big one took place in the steel city of Pilsen, located about 50 miles from where we were quartered.

Russia and wrecked devastation on much of their country. They had driven to the gates of Stalingrad and other big cities after destroying much of Russia's army and wrecking devastation on the countryside.

'With the war over and more free time on hand a large number of USO Shows came over from the States to entertain the troops. One big one took place in the steel city of Pilsen, located about 50 miles from where we were quartered.'



Fretwell

■ FRETWELL

Continued from page 10

number of people. Each troop unit was allocated so many tickets for each day's performance.

The show featured performances by Jack Benny, Ingrid Bergman, Larry Adler, and Martha Tilton. I failed to get a ticket but managed to hitch a ride on the back of a truck and went anyway. I found that others had come without a ticket too and we got lucky as they seated us in a side aisle and we wound up with great seats for the performance. The theatre was one of those great old auditoriums complete with loges, balconies and ornate features.

Jack Benny was master of ceremonies and kept everyone in stitches with his comedy and his violin act. He used it as comedy but he also was a master performer on the instrument when he got around to it. Ingrid Bergman did a scene from her great performance as "Joan of Arc" as well as other acts. Larry Adler was a super harmonica player and thrilled the crowd with his rendition of some of our favorite songs. "Lilting" Martha Tilton, who sang with Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and a number of the big bands prior to and during the war, was a great hit with all of us fellows who were starved for entertainment and loved every minute of these performances by the greats of the entertainment world.

This particular show group performed in Pilsen for several days as troops from all over our area were trucked in daily. While the big USO shows such as this got the lion's share of the publicity because of the big stars, etc., we need to remember and to appreciate the large number of small time performers who did their act near the front lines in improvised circumstances and under all sorts of handicaps, to bring a little bit of home to the boys at the front. They sang, they danced, they played harmonicas, or a violin, a guitar. They were unknowns as far as name identification but to those of us that were entertained by them they were the real heroes for they brought a little of "home" to us when home seemed so far away and the possibility of ever seeing home again seemed so remote.

■ Charles Fretwell is a columnist for THE NEWS and a resident of Radford.

Please see FRETWELL, Page 11

CHARLES FRETWELL

Continued from page 10

number of people. Each group was allowed to have many more for each day's performance.

The show featured performances by Jack Barry, a young soldier, Larry Fox, and Marie Linn. I tried to get a ticket but managed to catch a ride on the back of a truck and went anyway. I found that some had come without a ticket and we got lucky as they seated us in a side aisle and we went to our seats.

The show was one of the best I have seen and the audience was very good.

Jack Barry was a very good performer and had a number of songs which he sang with his band. He was a very good singer and had a number of songs which he sang with his band. He was a very good singer and had a number of songs which he sang with his band.

Marie Linn was a very good singer and had a number of songs which she sang with her band. She was a very good singer and had a number of songs which she sang with her band. She was a very good singer and had a number of songs which she sang with her band.

Larry Fox was a very good singer and had a number of songs which he sang with his band. He was a very good singer and had a number of songs which he sang with his band. He was a very good singer and had a number of songs which he sang with his band.

The show was very good and we had a very good time. The show was very good and we had a very good time. The show was very good and we had a very good time.

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Why We Fight



PFC Charles Fretwell, of Hqs Co, 328th Infantry and Redford, Va. presents his Frau, Mrs. Eveline Fretwell, as one very good reason.

Printed in the "Yankee Division" Newspaper- THE Y.D. GRAPEVINE the summer of 1945 in Austria

Troops make preparations for their long trip to America

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

Following the notification that our division was scheduled for re-deployment back to the States, plans were set in motion to make preparation for the trip home. It was a day we all had looked forward to with a great deal of anticipation and one many of us feared would never come.

It is hard to describe the feelings of joy that we had as we went through the motions of making ready for the big move.

Having been assigned to Service Co. as a result of playing on the Division football team, I found myself in the middle of collecting and disposing of the equipment and weapons that we were to turn in before we shipped out.

We collected more than 400 wrist watches that had been issued to officers and certain high ranking non commissioned personnel and along with two others we drove them to a small town located some 40 miles from Linz to be turned in.

I was driving a three quarter ton truck and as we drove down the two lane highway we came upon a section of the road that had a six foot drop off on each side. We hit a large section of ice on the highway and the truck began sliding and twisting.

It was a helpless feeling as it approached the bank sideways only to begin straightening out and sliding in a new direction in the opposite lane. All of us turned pale and my thoughts were of how foolish to live through the war only to get killed needlessly on an Austrian highway.

When the slide finally halted we breathed a sigh of relief and I drove about 30 miles per hour the rest of the way.

The following morning we left Linz in a large Jeep and truck convoy with each vehicle loaded with a large number of military ordinance to be turned in at the huge Army supply depot in Munich, Germany. These included such Army issued items as pistols, bayonets, M-1 rifles, carbines, 81 and 61 MM mortars, 30 and 50 caliber machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, anti-tank guns, artillery guns, etc.

After a several hour trip we came to the outskirts of Munich where the large open fields were filled with the weapons of war. As far as the eye could see, there were rows of large artillery

guns, tanks, trucks, Jeeps, etc.

I remember the big guns, the 155 Howitzer artillery pieces that had signs on the barrels such as "Casino Christened," "One for the Fuheur," and "Hitler's Nemesis."

There were more than three million soldiers in Europe and it took a lot of equipment to maintain them in the war. A great deal of that equipment was stored in the fields around Munich in late October of 1945. You can't help but wonder what they did with all of it

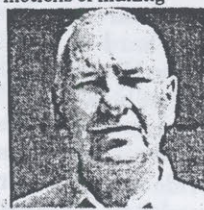
Having been assigned to Service Co. as a result of playing on the Division football team, I found myself in the middle of collecting and disposing of the equipment and weapons that we were to turn in before we shipped out.

and where it wound up. Of course the units still assigned to the Army of occupation, guard duty, etc., in Europe, retained all their weapons and equipment to meet any possible emergency where they might be needed.

In order to process troops for shipment home in an orderly fashion, redeployment camps were set up in the areas surrounding Paris. Most were named after popular cigarettes such as Camp Lucky Strike, Twenty Grant, etc.

Here, troops were sent to await shipment to Le Havre and to Marseiela or other ports where they would be assigned to ships for the trip home. Sometimes the wait in these camps were short and sometimes long.

We left Linz, Austria on Nov. 3, 1945 and boarded the familiar 40 and eight (40 men and eight horses) box cars that I had become familiar with when returning from the hospital. This time, however, the ride was more pleasant for we were at last on our way home. My friend, Charles Garwood, saw me off at the station and there was great celebration and cheers from all of us as the train moved out and slowly began the long journey that was to lead us back to our beloved homeland.



Difficult task to describe trip that took them home

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

It is very difficult for me to fully describe the wonderful feeling we all had as we began our journey that was to take us home. Our troop train left Linz, Austria on Nov. 3, 1945. The war in Europe had been over for six months and the war in the Pacific had ended just three months earlier and here at last we were on our way home. It was even hard for us to complain about the bitter cold and rain and winds that blew through the slated cattle cars we were riding in.

After a two day train ride we arrived at the big re-deployment camp named after a popular cigarette, **Camp Lucky Strike**. We were quartered in large tents that held about 20 men each.



Fretwell

This was to be our home for the next several weeks as we awaited our turn to be assigned to a boat for the trip home. Here we all took our turn in handling supplies and various chores necessary to maintain large numbers of soldiers. In addition we played touch football, etc. to keep occupied. Writing letters home with good news was another pastime we all enjoyed.

Each day a number of soldiers were given three day passes to visit Paris which was less than two hours away. When my turn came I went with a friend who had a brother in the medical corps and was stationed in Paris. The brother made sure we had a good time and took us to the various tourist attractions such as the Louvre, The Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, etc. He also took us to a couple of the big night life shows that Paris is famous for.

In Paris there was a huge department store center where we could order through a catalog and have items of jewelry, etc., sent to

our loved ones back home. Most of us had accumulated some extra money and here was a wonderful opportunity to enjoy spending it.

The monotony of the camp got to most of us but the thing that kept us going was the reminder that soon, at last, we would be on our way home.

Finally, our time came and we were notified that we would be leaving the next day on a train bound for Marseilles in the south of France. The trip took about six hours and we arrived again at a staging area located on a hill overlooking the city. We were held here for another few days before being assigned to a ship.

Meanwhile, those in charge of the staging area informed all of us that we could take only one souvenir gun home and that if we were caught with more than one we would be scratched from the list as we were boarding the ship. I had accumulated six pistols and like many of the others the threat of being left behind for a longer time worked. Along with many others we threw them in a pile. As you might have guessed, when we finally boarded the ship no one inspected anything and we have been victims of rear echelon soldiers who took advantage of their position and of us.

Our company was assigned to the USS Chapel Hill, a victory ship that held some 1,500 troops and we sailed out of the beautiful harbor on Dec. 22, just three days before Christmas. The Mediterranean became choppy as we got outside the harbor breakwater

barrier and having been seasick on the way over, I stayed on deck as long as I could before going below into the hold of our ship where our bunks were located. We slept on hammock type canvas bunks which were three high with the canvas stretched around an iron frame. It was, as with most troop ships, tight quarters and had an oily smell.

Sometime after midnight we passed through the Straits of Gibraltar and into the South Atlantic Ocean and as the ship began to pitch and turn it didn't take me long to join the many others already suffering from a severe case of seasickness.

Wednesday, September 28, 1994

Seasickness is hard to describe to those who never had it

Editor's Note: This is a continuation of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

Seasickness is a malady that is hard to describe to someone who hasn't experienced it. There is an old Navy expression that seems to sum it up well — "One minute you are afraid you are going to die and the next minute you are afraid you aren't." In any case, I had it bad and even though we were on our way home it didn't relieve the feeling.

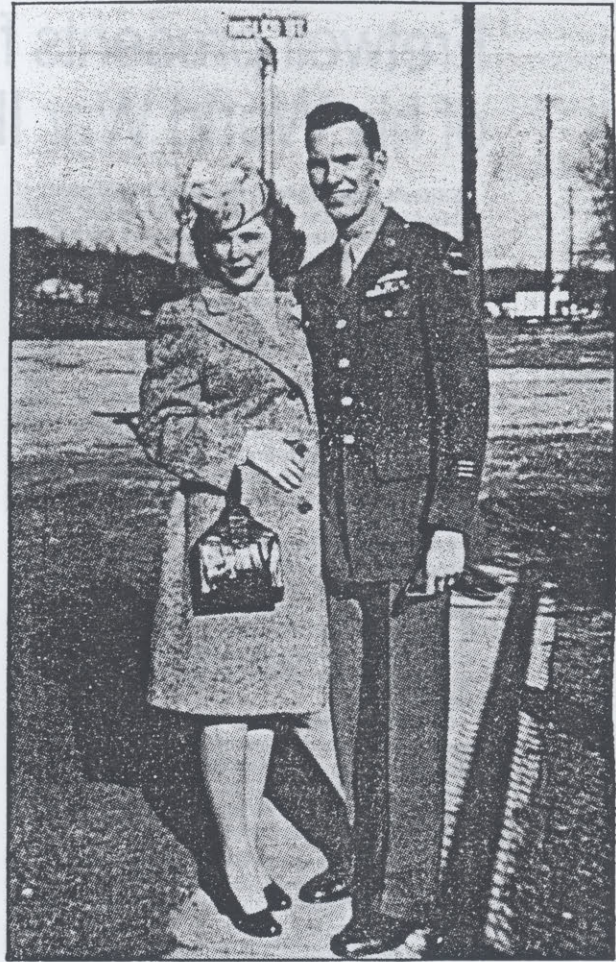
My buddies persuaded me to make an effort to get out of my bunk and get some food. So on Christmas Day 1945, I got my mess kit and stood in the line leading to a small twisting stairway that led to the chow line located on the deck above. As I reached the corkscrew stairway the ship tossed us in all directions but I managed to hold on and get to the deck above. As I started down the food line, sweat was pouring from my face and my stomach was churning.

Someone in the serving line put in steak and gravy, another put in mashed potatoes and gravy, and a third put in a slab of apple pie and ice cream. At that point I set the whole thing on an adjoining table and rushed to the top deck and hung my head upside as the ship continued to pitch and roll.

At this point they realized just how sick I was and took me to the ship's infirmary where I stayed for the remainder of the trip. I felt a little better about having to give up and seek help when the colonel who was in charge of the men aboard ship, was carried in and placed in the bed next to mine. They gave us several bottles of dextrose through the veins. The infirmary had clean white sheets and air was circulated from the outside making for a much better environment. We stayed in the infirmary and rode out the storm for the next several days until someone yelled land had been sighted and we rushed out to take a look.

Our ship docked at Newport News and we were loaded onto train coaches that took us to Camp Patrick Henry, located about two hours away. Upon our arrival there we were given tickets that admitted us to a large central mess hall and a welcome home dinner consisting of a T-bone steak with all the trimmings, topped off with apple pie and ice cream. I had lost some 12 pounds on the trip home and wound up eating two complete dinners.

I ran into some of the men from another company that had left four days before we had, aboard a small liberty ship. I asked how long we had to stay at this camp. They replied they didn't know as they had just arrived that morning. It turned out that due to the



Charles and Evelene Fretwell on the day of his arrival home after 18 months in Europe, Jan. 9, 1946.

rough seas they had a longer crossing than usual and it took them four days more than it did our ship.

We were notified that we would be shipped to Fort Meade, Md. for discharge and I called my wife in Radford to tell her. She arranged to get off her job in the Lynchburg Foundry payroll office (located on First St. where the Radford Museum is now). Her fellow workers there drew her a map of the roads to Baltimore (there were no interstate highways in those days), and she and my brother left for Baltimore. We met at the Emerson Hotel, then one of Baltimore's finest.

It had been 18 months since I had said goodbye to her and left with my infantry division for combat in Europe. It would be very difficult to share with you the emotion that we both felt at this reunion. Perhaps only those of you who have gone through similar experiences could truly understand the exhilaration we both felt to be together again after those long months of separation.

I arrived back in Radford on Jan. 9, 1946 and resumed my place in society as a civilian after my nearly three years of service. The "victory" parades had been held months before but I was happy just to be home.

The News

Wednesday, October 12, 1994

Fretwell presents final installment of his World War II experiences

Editor's Note: This is the final installment of columnist Charles Fretwell's account of World War II and his personal experiences with Company I, 328th Regiment, 26th Infantry Division.

During this past year in about 35 newspaper columns I have shared with you the story of my experiences in World War II. In it I tried to let you understand my feelings as a typical 18-year-old draftee and to walk you through the events that happened to me during those years. My role in the war was far less than that of many who served and at the same time was more involved than many others.

It has been estimated that only one out of 15 soldiers in WWII experienced combat conditions and for the first part of my Army career it looked as if I would be among those to escape it. I started in the U.S. Army Air Corps and then got into a college training program only to finally wind up in the infantry when that program was suddenly canceled.

Combat does many things to those involved. It kills some, it injures and maims others. It leaves marks on others that they carry throughout their life and no one can predict who will be affected and how. The reaction to strain and stress differ and one is never quite in control of their emotions.

A few years ago at a WWII celebration in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Harold Mann, Mrs. Mann asked me the question, "How did the war affect your life?" My answer then and my answer now is the same. It gave me an appreciation of life that I could have never had in any other way. I have never taken life for granted. It gave me a greater appreciation for so many of the things we enjoy without thinking. The joy of being together, of going to church, to have the freedom to choose a vacation spot or a sporting event, to go to bed at night between clean, white sheets in a warm room, to take a shower or to do any one of hundreds of things that service and combat can deprive you of.

In looking back, now that it is over, perhaps the best thing that happened to me was being placed into the infantry and to serve in combat, for it taught me a lesson in gratitude that I couldn't and wouldn't have learned any other way.

I recently read the late Eric Sevareid's best seller entitled "Not So Wild A Dream." It was his personal story of youth and the war and the American faith. Eric, the brother-in-law of Tar Sevareid of Radford, was a war-time correspondent and a close colleague of Edward R. Murrow of TV fame. He covered the war in Europe before we entered the war and later in Indo-China was lost for over 30 days when he and others were forced to bail out of their plane in the jungles.

In one of his final Sunday broadcasts from Europe, Eric summed it up in a wonderful way some of his thoughts about war and about the men who fought the war and the difference in being a correspondent and in being a combatant. He went on to say, "The army treats all men alike, but the war does not. Not this war. It's too big and far flung. It has a thousand faces and a hundred climates. It has a fantastic variety of devilish means for testing a boy's brains, for stretching his nerves, for making him ashamed or making him proud, for exposing his heart or for burying his heart. It treats no two exactly alike; it has no



Fretwell



The late Eric Sevareid, author, war correspondent and television commentator. Photo taken when he was visiting his sister-in-law, Tar Sevareid, in Radford.

cure to master the homesickness that comes with sunset.

Only the soldier really lives the war. The journalist does not. He may share the soldiers' outward life and dangers but he cannot share his inner life for the same moral compulsion does not bear upon him. We can tell you this war is brutalizing some among your sons and yet ennobling others. What happens inside a man it happens to one man alone. That is the tragedy and perhaps the blessing.

If in time, those who have participated can open their hearts and the right words come, they can share a little of their feelings and we can learn more of

It has been estimated that only one out of 15 soldiers in WWII experienced combat conditions and for the first part of my Army career it looked as if I would be among those to escape it. I started in the U.S. Army Air Corps and then got into a college training program only to finally wind up in the infantry when that program was suddenly canceled.

what war and combat is really like."

This has been my effort to fulfill Eric Sevareid's words and to share with you these memories of youthful years filled with a great variety of memories that have helped formulate my life and my attitude. My thanks to the many readers who have seemingly enjoyed my comments.

YANKEE DOINGS



EVER ALERT for infiltration by enemy through our lines, sentries halt jeep for password as it leaves Saar River bridge and rolls into Saarlautern, Germany, in 25th "Yankee Division" sector. 104th Inf. Regt. (Official U.S. Army Photograph — 2/18/45)

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY, 1974

Y.D. VETERANS ASSOCIATION — NATIONAL CONVENTION

High Point Motor Inn, Chicopee, Mass. — June 13, 14, 15, 1974

Published Continuously Since 1921

I was surprised to find my jeep with me at the wheel on the cover of the January-February issue of our Division magazine "Yankee Doings"- They had obtained a random battle scene photo from the Army Photo Lab in Washington, D. C.