



Letter from Mr. Bill Mackin to Mr. Bill Warthen

5-31-2001

Dear Mr. Warthen.

Bill Mackin 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt Co A 10<sup>th</sup> AIB – 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Div. Drafted 4-23-1941 – sent to Pine Camp N. Y. where the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division was being estimated became part of Co "A" 10<sup>th</sup> Armd Inf Bn, Capt Lange commanding. After training at Pine Camp – Tenn – Major part – sent to England – 1-4-1944 – Landing in France, Omaha Beach 7-14-1944

5 Battle stars

- Normandy (unleserlich)
- Northern France (after St. Lo unleserlich)
- Ardennes (liberated 101<sup>st</sup> at Bastogne)
- Rhineland – Nancy – Metz – Koblenz
- Central Germany (Hammelburg captured 3-29-1945)

2 Purple Heards, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Combat Inf Badge, President Unit Citation

Louisville, Ky Born 2-8-1913, 88 years old – Married 2-9-1946, Wife died 3-23-1981, no children. Retired 4-1997 from Schenley (unleserlich) in Louisville, Ky.

Co A

3 Platoon

- |                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| • 3 Rifle Squad           | 33 men |
| • 1 MG Squad              | 10 men |
| • 1 Mortar Squad          | 10 men |
| • Total 5 Halftracks      | 10 men |
| • Maintenance 1 Halftrack | 10 men |
| • Command 1 Halftrack     | 10 men |
| • Command 3 Jeeps         | 12 men |
| • Medics 1 Jeep           | 2 men  |
| Total                     | 90 men |

6-2-2001

Around midnight 4-22 our Co was alerted to get ready to move out in combat formation. We waited several hours and then began to move into the city of Aschaffenburg which had been cleared by Co D - 14 IB - as we cleared the outskirts of the city the Germans closed up behind us and we were on our own. We had been told to liberate a POW camp at Hammelburg with about 200 POW's didn't know how far. In the early part of the day we had very little opposition and told not engage in a deaf (?) (fire fight) just punch our way thru and keep on the move. As the Germans began to notice what had happened thinking a major thrust was in progress more roadblocks were reacted and we began to have casualties. The wounded were put in one of the half-tracks to be taken care of by a medic. The CO of the Company rode in Jeep about midway in the column. I rode in the command halftrack with a radio .50 cal MG in turret 2 .30 cal MG on each side - the last vehicle in our column with Maintenance Sgt - Supply Sgt - Mess Sgt - 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Ex Officer - Driver - Radio Operator. Early in the afternoon we stopped. So I went forward on foot to see what the delay. A small bridge was hard defended by the Germans across a small river. Just as our 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon tried to cross they blew the bridge we lost a Lt about half of the Platoon. We had pick a new route this side of river and had more wounded in our halftrack (That was our largest loss). The book tells pretty much what happened on the rest of the way to Hammelburg.

(unleserlich) it is my duty to talk to Squad leaders after a battle to find out WIA - KIA - MIA and present to inform Battalion after for replacements. This I was never able to do. I never knew the number who were captured we were taken in small groups. The CO was wounded in assault on the camp. The tanks were in front with our Inf on the ground. A German from the camp came to my halftrack and asked to be treated for wounded. I told him our wounded were very triated an he would be next in line - I asked about the fire power in camp he said only small arms (maybe rifles). So I called on radio for halftracks to move into pick up our men and break into the camp which we did when the POW's came out of the camp we gave them all of our K-Rations. Assuming we were headed back to our outfit. They swarmed over our halftrack ready to back with us. I would go down the line explain we must fight our way out and could not take them with us.

All the wounded were placed in a large barn marked with a huge Red Cross (people went to show we were Americans for the Air Force). We formed up and tried 4 times to get off the hill during the night each time we were forced by roadblocks to return to top of the hill loosing a tank each time.

The next morning Baum ordered us to drain the gas from the Halftracks in order to supply the tanks and Jeeps - and ride the tanks back to Division. While this was going on, the Germans having brought in heavy tanks and antitank equipment during the night made a drive on our right flank. The final target was the barn blowing it completely to bits (with all wounded) Word came down to destroy our vehicle and take off in small groups on foot heading east. Three of us went down the hill on the back side of the attack at the bottom there was a draw covered by German MGs we covered our scheme with tall

gras intending to try to move at night thru the draw. We fell asleep (after 48 hours) and awoke looking at a German rifle. The soldier said in perfect English (The war is over for you)

We were marched back to Hammelburg and saw about 2/3 of the Co in the Camp. Two days later we were on a train to Nürnberg staved by our Air Force several times. From Nürnberg we walked with about 25.000 for 10 days to Moosburg. Liberated 4-30-1945 by the 14<sup>th</sup> Armored Division.

I have attended Reunions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division like the one to be held in Sept at Myrtle Beach, SC when Baum gets together with survivors. I have not been able to attend for the last 5 years. Once a year in the spring Co A meeting is held in Louisville, Ky we have about 20 to 25 people in attendance that includes wives, children and some widows.