

WW II

About March 1945

Box 30c

REC 2007a-055

It was a sunny day in France -- at least around the village of Perriers-sur-Andelle. Many in the 412th will remember the idyllic setting Captain Mo had picked for Battalion Maintenance: a quaint old farmhouse where we could all spread our bedrolls in semi-private quarters. The 25-cycle electric power was still intact -- we never did hear who paid the light bill. There was a fair-sized barn, so appreciated on a rainy day, with a courtyard ample to handle a tank, half-track or trucks that were being "T.I.'ed", customized with hooks, brackets or baskets or whatever was suitable or requested, with room still left for the wrecker which often had a barrel of water hanging from the boom in the sun to take the chill off for showers all around at the end of the day.

Mort Gross had built a jig to hold the bent re-rods for welding. Ole Erickson, the welder, and I attached the finished baskets to peeps, halftracks, and other vehicles. All went well until Ole, finishing a weld, flipped his mask up and at the same time struck the gas can with his electrode, creating a mini-flame thrower spraying gasoline up his arm. His bellow must've been heard all the way to Rouen!! Thanks to a lot of cuffing and a fully-charged CO<sub>2</sub>, he wasn't seriously burned.

This was also the day that Captain Mo had announced that Ordinance personnel would stop by to inspect all weapons. They were nearly finished when a couple of guys showed up that had been on another detail, or perhaps another adventure, and hurried into the house for their weapons. Moments later, a round was fired in the hallway. All eyes turned in that direction, but no one seemed in a hurry to check out what had happened. No more rounds followed, so we went in to find T/4 Sanford and T/5 Wire there, smelling their gun barrels.

It seems Sanford was running down the hall, with Wire in hot pursuit with his grease gun swinging back and forth. Oh no!! As you know, if the little cover was up more than 1/4", the bolt was easily slid back to inject a round to do its thing. So we have Wire running behind Sanford. When the round fired it hit the wall beside Sanford and went through the heavy door ahead of him, about 30" above the floor, tearing chunks of wood from the outside and perhaps narrowly missing Captain Mo, who had started in to check on them. At any rate, as far as I know, Ordinance probably listed their guns as "in working order" and left with a shrug.

In a test one time, we shot a carbine round through an agate pail, no sweat. Then, doing the same test with a .45, the slug made a hole through one side and dented the opposite side -- it stayed in the pail! I'm sure you guys who carried those little monsters all the time must have some interesting experiences or experiments to tell of....

Sgt  
From *Memories of Fifty Years Ago*, by Harold E. Brown

Attached 20 Armored Division