

Deep In The Heart Of Texas

By Mack R. Ferren

Yoo Hoo! In Hood Country

In the summer of 1944, General “Yoo Hoo!” Ben Lear reviewed out marching at North Camp Hood, he was the General that did so. He may have been the only one who had time on his hands. Why “Yoo Hoo?” He was playing golf in Arkansas when he saw and heard some GIs passing in the back of a GI truck calling “YooHoo!” to some pretty girls near the golf course. He had the Military Police take out after them; the newspaper’s picked it up, and had a heyday with it. I’m not sure what ticked off General “YooHoo!” It could have been jealousy, or he dubbed, or sliced, or hooked a shot. Some golfers have to blame it on someone. The disgusted public picked it up, and the newspapers captioned his new nickname with editorializing. “What the hell was General doing futon the golf course when there is a war on?” The public was short of fickle what way about what their Generals do during time of war.

I don’t know who was at the wrong place at the wrong time, the truck full of GIs or General “Yoo Hoo!”

Anyway, it made us sort fo proud to be marching with military bands playing and all those sharp commands being given like “Eye Right” when we passed the General standing on his reviewing stand, He was probably saying to himself about Arkansas at the same time. “I’se right”

DIT-DAH SCHOOL IN OUR OUTFIT

I took a 107th Cavalry radio school at Hood. I really liked it, it was taught by a Mexican GI, and I really liked him. On break I would sit and listen to him talk, and I was always interested in languages, I would ply him with questions about Spanish. He taught me Spanish words, and pronunciation. This was my third radio school in the service, this school lasted from July 27 to August 28.

DESTINY ORDERS A SWITCH

We were scheduled to meet on a train in LeHavre, and go to our staging area, a tent camp called Lucky Strike. We disembarked into a LST boats, arrived on shore in the darkness, loaded on trucks instead of the train, Orders had been changed, and I believe, divinely changed.

We drove about twenty miles or so to Camp Lucky Strike. Sitting in that canvass covered truck in the middle of January almost froze us to death: I have never been so cold in all my life. It seemed the ride was endless. We finally arrived thee, ad when we dismounted it was with considerable effort, I was stiff with cold. I could hardly walk, on top fo that we had to stand waiting in the subzero weather a long while to be assigned to tents.

We were told the we were the first troops to come into the camp. WE finally got into our tents pre-dawn, we set up canvas cots, got our sleeping bags, put them on the cots, took off our combat boots, crawled into the cots, We got warm then, and we spent until 11AM. And it felt good.

The troops , who took our lace on the train met with death and injury when the train was sabotaged, wrecked. It was a Divine switch for us. While we were in our cots sleeping they were going through maiming, pain, suffering, and death, plus freezing. And how long did it take for help to get to them? It makes the torment of the cold and freezing we endured a light thing. Why were we spared? Only our Heavenly Father knows.

ALL ABOARD

August 10, 1945, we started boarding the USAT General Elating at Marseilles, France on the Mediterranean.

Destination: The Philippines via the Panama Canal to make the invasion of Japan.

Pre-shipped were our vehicles waiting for us in the Philippines (inside my M-8 Amoured Car was a German Army rifle which I had stowed away for my arrival there, some Gi in the Philippines inherited it, and he was welcome to it.

Au Revoir, Europe!

Still vivid is the scene of our moving our into the Mediterranean, and still strong is the picture of Marseilles becoming smaller and smaller until it disappeared from view, and now we were surrounded by water, and only sea in all directions. We passed through the Straits of Gibraltar, and new where out in the Atlantic Ocean. Sometime later we passed the Azores over 899 miles from where we started, We passed to the south of the island, and we could barely see them. I had not known then, but later in life I learned that the Azores had been reached by European sailing vessels before Columbus discovered America, It had never occurred to me that Christopher Columbus wasn't just a shore huger! I had a lot to learn.