

Miss F. Lennon  
160th Gen. Hosp.

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We landed in France on June 16th at Omaha Beach and assembled in Area 5. Spent the night there and the next day went to Cretteville and took over from the 82nd Airborne Division.

On July 4th we started to attack south. Nothing particular took place from that time until the time I was captured that helped very much. We were up against Paratroopers and several armored Divisions and some S.S. troops.

We took the town of Sainteny. We sent an ultimatum to the Germans in the town to surrender and they refused and we then started an artillery concentration to the center of the town which lasted about 4 hours. We destroyed every building in the town, and the civilians were evacuated.

We still continued the attack to the South. On July 18 our Battalion was given an assignment to take some high ground on the far side of a swamp at Carentan. We were to attack at night. There were 3 bridges across a small river. <sup>One</sup> of them ~~bridges were~~ <sup>had been</sup> blown <sup>out</sup> several days before. The importance of the mission was emphasized by the Divisional Commander, Major General Macon. The attack jumped off <sup>on</sup> to time, ~~about~~ 0200 hrs. Fighting <sup>were</sup> was not too bitter and casualties few. We crossed two of the

bridges without any trouble. The third bridge which was a small concrete one of from 15 to 20 ft. was ~~found to be~~ <sup>blown</sup> ~~blown~~. <sup>the one that had been</sup>

We pushed through to the objective without difficulty. We dug in and set up a defensive position. ~~Two tanks were~~ reported to the right front. There was a turn in the road and woods obscured our Division. They were too close to our own front lines for artillery fire. These two tanks were firing into our lines, and one worked around to our rear. Our position then was completely surrounded.

I was Artillery Liaison Officer with the Infantry Battalion Commander. I knew we were surrounded and tried to get through to a swamp where I could hide and escape later to my Battalion. I crawled for about 200 yds and came to a space where I had to stand to get over a small ridge. Automatic pistol and gun fire was heavy. I <sup>had</sup> just started to rise to my feet when I was knocked to my knees by a bullet which hit me near my right eye. The bleeding was terrific ~~and~~ <sup>but</sup> somehow I managed to stagger to another soldier. He bandaged the wound. I could not see where I was going. I could hear the Germans coming. Before long they came to where I was lying. Two German soldiers stood over me with rifles. They then called an Officer. He picked up <sup>me</sup> ~~me~~ off the ground, shook my hand and patted me on the back. Then the ~~other~~ two soldiers carried me away.

I was then put in a German Staff car and taken to a

spoke English. I had him ask the Doctor how badly my eye was injured and he told me I would have to have it out.

The next night I spent in an Ambulance on the way to another German hospital. This was about the 19th of July. Here we changed from the ambulance to a truck. There were also 2 German soldiers with me, and they gave me some of their ration of cigarettes and candy. It was then that I told them I was a U.S. Army Officer.

Our first stop was in Rennes where the German wounded were taken out. I was taken to an old Nurses' College which they had taken over and converted into a hospital. A French Professor was in charge. There were several French and American Doctors. They had been captured on "D" day.

On July 21st a German sergeant came through with some letter-forms and <sup>each of us was</sup> ~~we were~~ permitted to write a short letter home. These letters were taken to Gestapo Headquarters across the street and were never sent.

The food was very bad, consisting only of potatoes, but otherwise we were treated pretty well generally. There were very few cases of violence, <sup>though</sup> once an Officer was slapped. I was at this hospital from the 20th July to the 4th of August. On August 3rd we could see the German troops moving up to meet our troops. There had been heavy firing all through the night. We knew by a secret radio we had in the hospital that there was a big break through. The hospital was also shelled by our own troops. It was hit twice but there were no casualties.

The German Gestapo had moved out, using their own private vehicles. They took everything they could and we could see them from the hospital. On the night of the 3rd August, a small party from the hospital raided the Gestapo Hq and took all the food they could find, which included cigarettes and wine. We also found American R rations and cigarettes, *and our letters* -

On the morning of August 4th, at about 10 o'clock in the morning, 2 jeeps from the 8th Division, 13th Infantry, drove up to the hospital. The French underground movement had reported this hospital to the Americans, which fact saved us from a terrific shelling. There <sup>were</sup> wild scenes in the hospital when we saw the jeeps, some men even throwing their crutches away and attempting to walk down the stairs. I even saw one man get quite hysterical with joy!

The Americans took the serious cases away and then took 2 days to evacuate the whole hospital. There were 650 men altogether. We were then taken to England.

There were French nurses in the hospital. They were volunteers and when the hospital was shelled they were told to go home but refused to leave us.

A British Officer in the hospital built a radio set. We tied it to a string and placed it through the rafters in the attic. One Officer used to go and listen to the news and tell us about it later. We also ran our own newspaper, which was run by a Major Marshall, a British Officer. This was circulated throughout the wards every day giving the news and

even contained a comic strip and a column containing a menu of food which we would like to have had every day. Most of our money was spent on buying food, mostly eggs, which however proved to be bad.

It was here that I met Major George H. Harrington of the 193rd Engineer Base Depot, who was brought in two or three days after I was and is with me now at the 160th General Hospital in England.

I should also mention that there was a German Doctor who was particularly good to us and told us he came from Pennsylvania, where he took his degrees and returned to Germany a year or so before the war.