

LUITTEN, C.H.
EINDHOVEN

DUTCH

10/1/28
J. H. Luitten

Box 122, #28

Amsterdam-Buitenveldert,

Date as postmark.

We understand that you may have been involved either directly or indirectly in the fighting that took place as a result of the airborne assault on Holland in September, 1944. We are therefore writing to ask your help with some research Cornelius Ryan, the American author of THE LONGEST DAY and THE LAST BATTLE, is doing on the battle. Would you kindly answer the following questions:

1. What is your full name?	LUITEN, Cornelis Hendrikus
2. What is your present address and telephone number?	Driekoningenweg 6, Nijmegen. Tel. 25365
3. Where were you born, and when?	January 1, 1922, The Hague
4. What is your present occupation?	Director of an industrial oven factory
5. Where were you in September, 1944? How old were you then? What was your occupation at that time?	In Eindhoven 22 years old Metallurgist with N.V. Philips

<p>6. Where you at that time: Engaged? To whom? Married? To whom? Any children? How many, and what was their age?</p>	<p>No -- --</p>
<p>7. Where you, in September, 1944, involved in Resistance activities? If so, to what organization or group did you belong, and what was your function?</p>	<p>Belonged to Resistance group "Van Kraay" (have forgotten structure and official name). Assembled information on German military positions south of Eindhoven and reported such. Also made observations of Germans during special situations, as after the airborne landings.</p>
<p>8. Tuesday, September 5, 1944, was known as "Mad Tuesday". What do you remember most vividly about that day?</p>	<p>I was in Eindhoven at the time and have no special memories. Was officially reported sick at Philips, but with permission to walk about and ride a bicycle. Possessed a Philips <u>ausweiss</u> (special permit) with "S" "stufe" (S grade or classification). I believe it was that day that together with <u>Sjang Roeymakers</u> (a friend and colleague of the Resistance group, son of the then director of the Council of Labor) I went to Dommelen to collect the latest Allied information and news from the <u>maréchaussee (Dutch Constabulary)</u>.</p>
<p>9. When did you learn about the airborne invasion? Where were you at that time? What was your reaction?</p>	<p>At home and, after a call-up, I went to attend a meeting of the Resistance group. We discussed whether we should occupy the DAF (motorcar) factory to prevent its being destroyed by the Germans. Also the Telegraph and Post Office on Keizersgracht where Germans had carried cans (of gasoline?) inside. In both cases this proved unnecessary. Then went home. We had to "keep ourselves ready!"</p>

10. What happened to
you during the battle?

On September 18, 1944, was fetched at about 5 o'clock in the morning to scout around toward the south, together with friend Sjang. We went by bicycle and finally encountered Irish Guards beyond Valkenswaard. Went back to Eindhoven to report this and as proof had with me the "News Chronicle" issue of Sept. 16, 1944 (still have it). In the course of the morning I crossed the lines again with information about German concentrations beyond Helmond. Was arrested by Germans and in a machine-gun pit near Aalst along Genneperweg was interrogated and searched. Was released after telling some complicated story and in the end managed to reach Aalst and report the information as well as my own observations underway. Planes with 'rockets' were sent up at once to bombard the positions indicated. Didn't dare go back and in the course of the day ~~xxx~~ advanced with the British to Eindhoven. Unforgettable. Also the "feast meal" with soldiers next to a tank of the Irish Guards around mid-day. 19, 20 and 21st September arrested N.S. Bliers (Dutch Nazis) and acted as interpreter with British army units.

September 22. Went on reconnaissance for Resistance group with seven men and a car to study positions of Germans in area south-east of road to Nijmegen. Established contact with civilians and Resistance leaders in Veghel and Grave. ^{Were} ~~xxx~~ almost cut off by German attack on the road; spent the night in the open field with Prinses Irene Brigade near Grave. On Saturday road was opened up again by (British-American) counter-attack. Saturday night back to Eindhoven where they had almost written ^{us} ~~xxx~~ off.

Subsequently joined the British army officially as Second Lieutenant in 15 Scottish Infantry Division (rear Rgt.). Interpreter and security work. Later via Interpreters Corps held the same position and next in October 1944 transferred to '102 anti-tank regiment' with whom I stayed till January 1946. Was with them when Oirschot-Tilburg were liberated. Winter 44/45 in Peel (Helden-Panningen). Subsequently in Germany up to Schleswig Holstein. Next was liaison officer with military government in Cologne till July 1946. Then went back home.

11. Did you by any chance keep a diary of what happened to you during September, 1944? Do you still have it or do you have any other documents or photographs dealing with the battle that we might see? We will, of course, return them immediately.

No diary. Do have correspondence and various papers and photographs, as well as references, pay-book, etc. and the "History of the Northumberland Hussars" (anti-tank regiment). Moreover I have an extensive account drawn up by my twin brother P.H. Luiten who, independently, had parallel experiences to mine in an American Parachute Regiment. A copy of this report is enclosed.

12. Do you know of anyone else whom we should write to? Please also include full name plus last known address and telephone number, if available.

The present address of my brother is:
P.H. Luiten, 1146, E. Lemon Avenue, Monrovia,
California, U.S.A. *(report in English)*

*already mailed
to C.R.*

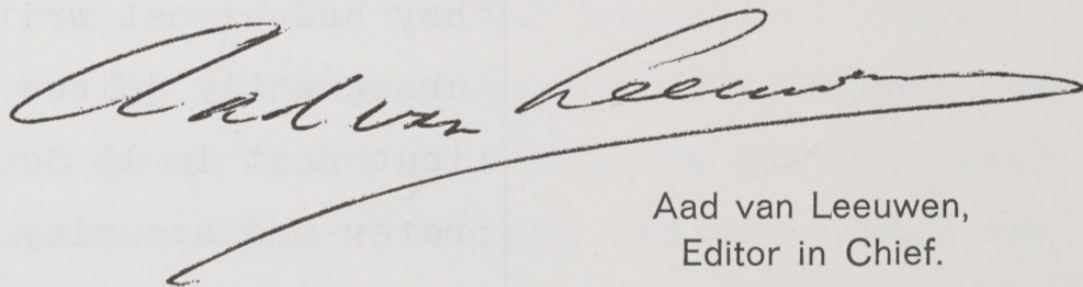
Van Os

Please let us have this questionnaire as soon as possible so that we may include your experiences in the book. We hope that you will continue your story on separate sheets if we have not left sufficient room. Full acknowledgement will be given in a chapter called "Where they are today". Your name, occupation and address will be listed.

Thank you very much for your help, also on behalf of Mr. Ryan.

Very truly yours,
was signed

HET BESTE uit Reader's Digest



Aad van Leeuwen,
Editor in Chief.

EINDHOVEN.

Luiten, Cornelis Hendrikus

Additional statement by Mr. Luiten, in writing, in English:

"From 'Kees' (short for Cornelis, pron. Case --JvO),
"height 6 ft 3 in, fair complexion. When referring to
"me in publications use first name only, otherwise prohibited.

"Sunday night we were instructed by our Resistance group to
"be ready for a possible alert. So at home I slept downstairs
on the couch, half-dressed.

"At about 5 in the morning, Monday Sept. 18, 1944, my friend
"'Sjang' woke me up with a ring of the door bell and the
"message that he and I had to find out how far the Allies had
"progressed, coming from the South.

Both of us were very familiar with the country South of
"Eindhoven.

"Off we went, on our worn-out bicycles with bad and patched-up
tires. In the early morning light we took the back roads first
"but later decided that we could better be more cheeky and simply
"take the main road, Aalsterweg (weg = road) down south because
"this might look less conspicuous.

"On the parcel carrier on the rear I had an old bag and an empty
"milk bottle to show that we were only on a food-trip to col-
"lect rye and milk from a farm. I was dressed in an old plain
"suit, did not wear a coat. Further, had an Ausweis (laissez-
"-passer issued by the Germans, JvO) showing that I was employed
"by Philips, and a medical statement indicating that I was not
"able to work but was allowed to be out in the open.

"We only saw one German army truck passing by and heard some
"machine gun fire from a far distance. For the rest everything
"quiet and nobody about.

"About 7 o'clock we passed through the town of Valkenswaard
"(four miles south of Eindhoven, six miles from the Belgian border
"if following the road, JvO) and then a mile further on the road
"to Dommelen (just outside Valkenswaard, to the south, JvO) we
"suddenly noticed a group of people and ... tanks standing along
"the road ... British tanks!

"We threw our bikes down and ran to the crowd and cheerfully wel-
"comed the soldiers who seemed to have passed the night there.
"Some were shaving, some drank tea from huge cups. It was all real!
"I do not remember my emotions of that time but we were in a
"hurry to get back and report. After finding out that they belonged

Luiten, Cornelis Hendrikus

"to the Irish Guards and would be moving on soon, I persuaded one
"soldier to let me have his new copy of the News Chronicle on
"Saturday 16, 1944 (which I still have). We grabbed our bikes
"and went back to our home town Eindhoven, still occupied by the
"Germans.

"However we had lost our caution and I remember on our way back,
"shouting to the few people that we saw that the English were al-
"ready in Valkenswaard, waving the News Chronicle as a proof, and
"Sjang finally telling me not to be so crazy to show the newspaper
"so openly ... but we did not meet any Germans.

"After reporting our findings I took the newspaper home and to my
"friends, the Faessen family where I had been hiding sometimes
"during German roundups.

"A few hours later I went south again, alone, with information
"about German military activity East and South of Eindhoven, im-
"printed on my mind, to be reported to British Headquarters.

"I remember going to confession with our parish priest van der
"Linden first, but I did not feel actual fear although I wondered
"how it would be if I would not survive to see the actual libera-
"tion of Eindhoven.

"This time I took the familiar back roads and ran into a German
"machine gun post along Genneperweg near the village of Aalst (just
"S. of Eindhoven). They pulled me into the pit, turned my pockets
"inside out, asked all kinds of questions and finally did believe
"that I was on my way to my bombed-out and evacuated family in
"Aalst. But I had to go back the way I had come because 'Da sind
"die Tommies,' that's where the Tommies are, and I had to make an
"envelopping detour to get into Aalst.

"Still remember suddenly seeing British soldiers in action, moving
"cautiously along a hedge, branches on their helmets, less than a
"mile from where the Germans had checked me half an hour before.

"They told me where to find their headquarters where I could explain
"my story on a map to a security officer who then briefed the Air-
"force accordingly.

"I felt deep satisfaction, immensely grateful and safe for the first
"time since many years.

"The hot meal that I shared with a tank crew, subsequently, sitting

Luiten, Cornelis Hendrikus

"on the ground alongside a tank made me feel so happy that it
"still sticks in my mind as the best meal I have ever enjoyed.

"I talked and talked trying to answer their many questions and
"to separate the actual English from the Army slang, which did
"not yet make any sense to me.

"Even without that misinterpretation occurred -- 'What kind of
"a town is Eindhoven, are there many pubs?'

"'What are pubs?'

"'Oh, public houses.'

"'Well, there may be some but I wouldn't know where...'

"Of course, I wrongly trans^mlated the word 'public house' in
"the Dutch sense and then it meant a disorderly house!

Kees."

Peter H. Luiten.

Report about my activities with the United States Army.

In Eindhoven, Holland, which was my residence at that time, I belonged to a small underground group (connected with the P.A.N.), which was formed with the purpose of contacting allied troops as soon as possible to supply them with any information desired. I remember only the name of one other member, Theo Mattaar, present location unknown to me. Originally I was introduced to the group by my twin-brother C.H. Luiten (now liaison-officer with British 808 Mil. Gov. Det. in Cologne, Germany), who himself was concerned with underground intelligence and who crossed the German lines three times.

When the airborne landings took place in the Southern part of Holland on the 17th of September 1944, the closest allied troops landed at a distance of about 7 miles N.E. of us (SON, near Eindhoven). The next morning I contacted them, which was not too difficult since the Germans were pretty confused and evidently did not understand what was going on around them. One of the first ones I met was Capt. WINTERS (later on Maj. Winters, 2nd Bn 506th P.I.) and he was leading an infiltration into the town. I explained my situation to him and he inquired about the mining of some bridges which were their objective and about some enemy positions, which information I was able to give to him. He took me along for a while until suddenly I was asked to go along on a little reconnaissance back in the direction of the drop zone; we went in two vehicles, Lt. Col. Strayers, the 2nd Bn C.O., was in it too. I acted as a guide and we ran around for some hours, in the meantime twice chasing a small group of Germans whom, however, we did not get.

There was not very much fighting going on that day, just some casual shelling and shooting, both Allied and German, and late in the afternoon the whole town could be reported FREE. Some hours later the British tanks arrived from the South, they rushed right through without stopping.

Upon returning from that reconnaissance I had a talk with some soldiers of the 2nd Bn 81mm-mortar platoon (506th Pcht. Inf.), who had seen me that morning already, and I was introduced to their platoon-leader Lt. FRANKS (Steele, Missouri). Upon my question he admitted that I could be of much use in the fighting to come, and he allowed me to stay with them. That is the way I entered my service with the U.S. paratroops; the next afternoon they moved out, and I went along with the mortar platoon after half a day of theoretical training.

That night, the 19th of Sept., EINDHOVEN was severely bombed by the enemy; at that moment we were about 6 miles east of the burning town, but we moved back into the eastern outskirts since a German counter-attack was expected. Seventy enemy tanks were reported to be approaching from the East and we had to cover the roads from which they could come. We stayed in that position for two days, during which time my "training" was completed with digging foxholes, rifle practice and throwing handgrenades. The tanks luckily did not show up; they just let some shells go and turned off at a distance of several miles.

We moved into the direction of NIJMEGEN, but got stuck in VEGHEL where the Germans broke right through our convoy. That was the start of the bloody battle for "Hell's Highway", as it is called in our regimental history. It lasted for several days, German tanks breaking through our lines every time and then we had to cut through their

spearheads again. There around VEGHEL it was that I saw the first guys being blown up in the air when direct hits hit their foxholes, right next to my own dugout.

We had terrible artillery barrages coming towards us several times. My job was to straighten out the troubles of the civilians, who were trapped sometimes together with us, quite a thing in that place where I saw even paratroopers get so scared that they just froze. Pulling night guard was part of my duties too, and I'll never forget those miserable rainy nights when we stretched ourselves out in the muddy foxholes and got almost too stiff and soaked to get up again.

We moved again. Now I looked more like a real G.I. with my beaten up helmet, combat suit and M1-rifle. Quite a bit of equipment came free at this battle, dead soldiers don't need any.

The truck which I organized to carry our ammunition and mortars broke down again; but it was not too bad because we gave only five packs of cigarettes for it to the local "underground" who had it first. Moreover we got hold of a British truck somehow.

On a dark night we reached the dike of the RHINE river where we set up our mortars just east of the little town of OPHEUSDEN. The following week I spent obtaining information about German positions across the river, partly by observation from our forward O.P., partly by contacting civilians who were evacuated to a brick-factory in no mans' land between the dikes.

I could not manage to stay longer than a week because the Germans had our position zeroed in by that time and threw a barrage at us just when we were preparing to move a bit. The very first shell got five of us. Two were killed immediately, Lt. FRANKES and Pvt. GIBSON were wounded in the legs, and I received damage to my left hand.

This happened on or about the 8th. of October 1944, in the afternoon, and the barrage was followed by a German counter-attack on the village of OPHEUSDEN, which, by the way, one day was in our hands to be taken by the Germans the next; we took it back and lost it again, and this went on for a long time, until it became no mans' land too.

All three of us who were wounded managed to get out of the barrage and we were evacuated together to a field hospital. From there we went by ambulance to NIJMEGEN, on which trip we almost had it again when a shell burst close behind us on that long NIJMEGEN-bridge.

The British, who handled the transport, dropped me at a big civilian hospital in NIJMEGEN, in spite of the efforts of Lt. FRANKES and him to have me go along with them; no serial number, no rank, so no army hospital.

My wound was treated by a Dr. JANSSEN, it was not very serious. The next morning I left him and started to look for my wounded friends. I discovered that they had been evacuated again and I managed to talk the British Major concerned into sending me along on the following transport. For four days I was taken almost through all of liberated Europe, by ambulance, aeroplane, jeep, and train, and finally landed in the 62nd. General Hospital, just outside of Paris, France. (Eaubonne).

I passed through some five British hospitals without finding any trace of the ones who were wounded with me, but two minutes after I arrived at the Paris Hospital, I had not even entered the door yet, I heard my name called. There they were, just being unloaded on stretchers, out of another ambulance; that was grand.

That hospital I thought marvellous, the treatment was perfect. I talked practically the whole day explaining my position, and my roommates always fooled the nurses about my serial number and rank, which were supposed to be written on a little board on your bed. I had neither one.

My hand recovered very quickly and two weeks later I was ready to leave. One morning they woke me up very early. I dressed and had breakfast at the same time and hurried down to where a whole group of G.I's were awaiting transportation back to their units. After a long time the colonel (surgeon) came in and asked for the Dutchman. He told me that I could not go back but that he was to take me to the Dutch Embassy in Paris, since I was not a real G.I. I tried to persuade him to let me join some boys of our outfit who were going back too, but it could not be done, he said. So that afternoon he personally took me to Paris where I first did some interpreting for him, until he all of a sudden noticed that he was late (17.00 hrs). When I answered that I could find the Embassy myself just as well if he had no time, he handed me a slip of paper which confirmed my release from the hospital, shook hands and went back.

There I was in my old combatsuit with bloody pants, helmet with shrapnel hole, and my trenchknife, and a lucky thing was that I had my 101st Airborne patch.

The Dutch Consulate had closed already, as I found out, and it started to get dark. I did not have a single penny so I decided to go and see a friend of mine of the F.F.I., whose address I remembered (Gambetta, metro Père la Chaise). I never saw anyone more overjoyed than he when we met. I had to stay with the family, share their dinner, and everyone treated me as their personal liberator, especially when they heard me speak French. The next day he took me all over Paris until we parted in the afternoon, and I went to the Dutch Embassy.

At that time it was located in the "Rue de Grenelle", and when I arrived there a big car drove up and out of it came a Dutch Captain. First I thought that he was English since I did not know the new Dutch uniforms. To this Captain Kwantes (now Lt. Col. Kwantes and military Attaché) I was sent up after a while. I told him my story.

"Yes", he said, "That's a very nice story, but, it's ~~amazing~~ just a story because there were no American paratroops in Holland at all! British paratroops jumped at Arnhem, and EINDHOVEN was liberated by the tanks of the Second British Army!".

I gasped for breath, and that was the start of an argument that ended with his statement that I could either sign up for the new Dutch Army and get transported to their barracks in Belgium, or I had to stay in Paris in a D.P. center. My idea of going back to the 506th could not be realized.

I left, feeling pretty low, since I could not forget our regiment up there in Holland and desperately wanted to go back to them.

Some G.I's on the street fixed me up for supper, after which I decided to go to that D.P. center where I figured that at least they could put me up for the night. It was located in a large school building "Lycee Jean de la Fontaine, metro Michel Ange-Auteuil". There I had a morale booster; an American guard was standing at the door and he called me. I explained again and his answer was literally:

"You fought with the Yanks, so you're just as good as one of them. Don't go to those damn D.P.'s because they'll starve you; just hang around for half an hour until I'm off guard, and I'll fix you up".

The situation was that ~~in~~ the school building was an American barracks, of which a couple of rooms with an entrance of their own, had been separated as a Dutch D.P. center. Half of these D.P.'s were collaborators and they formed altogether a pretty lousy bunch.

That guard was swell; he took me to his C.O., got me a set of O.D.'s (I was still running around in that old combatsuit) and I

stayed at that place for a week, interpreting for French and figuring out some way to go back.

Then all of a sudden I heard that a group of Dutchman was to leave by plane to Brussels the next morning as recruits for the Dutch Army. I thought that it was a chance and joined them in the bus to the aerodrome "Le Bourget". No troubles arose until they started to check the names, after we arrived at the aerodrome. The leader of that Dutch group was all right though, and when I told him that I had to go back to the frontline in Holland he added my name on the list that was checked upon entering the plane.

We reached BRUSSELS and there the whole group was taken into a truck and left. I managed to stay behind, nobody asked any questions since my name was only on the copy which was still in Paris with the group leader, who himself had stayed behind too.

After I obtained some sandwiches in the aircrew mess hall some G.I., who was the only American around, slapped my shoulder and inquired about something to eat. I got him sandwiches too and we became friends in a minute. He came from a hospital in LONDON and had to re-join his armored outfit at AACHEN (Germany).

The guard at the aerodrome exit let both of us pass on his travelling orders and on the same orders both of us obtained billets and meal tickets at the British town majors' office, in Brussels. The next afternoon both of us got fixed up with a ride. He went to LIEGE, and I hooped a Scottish truck that went to Holland. We shook hands, inquired about each other's name as far as we had just called each other "buddy" and parted.

Late that night I arrived in EINDHOVEN. I stayed with my family that Sunday and visited the RAF information center, where I heard that our regiment was still up somewhere between the WAAL and RHINE rivers. So Monday morning I left again, hitch-hiking, and had lunch in UDEN with a family whom I had known long before. Some boys of our mortar platoon had been there a few times with me when we were fighting there. Then something very coincidental happened. I had not been there for more than twenty minutes when one of the daughters came in and said that two American soldiers were asking for me, at least they had written my name on a piece of paper. I could not imagine how anyone in the world knew that I was here, but I went out to see and there O'Leary and Roshen, both from the old mortar platoon, were standing. I don't know who was more surprised, they or me, and we almost embraced each other. The coincidence was that they had been given a rest that day and had decided to go and have a look for me since nobody knew where I had gone to after I got wounded. The best place to inquire, they thought, was my home and they just dropped in here to ask for my address as they knew that the people knew me personally.

After a long talk I hopped into their jeep and we reached the frontline that night after dark, where I had to dive into a foxhole right away since shells were dropping all over the orchard.

So I came back after an absence of about four weeks. I felt like coming home and everyone seemed to be interested in my trip. It even appeared in the regimental newspaper, headlined: "BERLIN BOUND !?".

The next day our new platoon leader, Lt. PITCHER, took me to regimental headquarters where, they figured, I could be of more use. I was introduced to Col. SINK and his staff. The leader of the IPW-team Capt. GION could use me, he said; so could the regimental staff, and I started to work for both of them. Major Kent, the doctor, was a good employer too with all his wounded and sick civilians to take care of. For Capt. GION I translated captured German documents, and the rest of

my work consisted of casual things and all the civilian troubles.

So I remember how on a night suddenly whole groups of farmer families, with all their belongings, and cattle, came strolling into our area, drawing enemy mortar and artillery fire and stumbling across the numerous telephone wires. And all this in a pouring rain, through a foot of mud. None of them knew what to do or where to go; they just knew that they had been given strict orders to move out right away.

"Pete, for Christs sake, find out who is causing all this trouble and stop it!", Col. SINK told me. It took me a night and a day, then I reached the source. Major ALLEN from another regiment (501st. P.I.) had moved into a new position and had ordered all civilians out at once. The origin having been found it could be stopped.

One of the last days of November we were alerted to move. The end of the trip would be a camp near REIMS, France. I could go along unofficially, and some officers were going to help me enlist in the American Army. They overlooked that as an alien you can only enlist in the United States, which I found out later on.

With regimental headq. Co. I moved one early morning. We had an eighteen hours truck ride and finally reached the camp "Mourmelon-le-Grand" in the middle of the next night. By the end of the following day everyone had arrived and I reported to KIDNAP (reg. headq.) where they had work for me at once when they heard that I spoke French.

Everything had to be organized and during the two weeks we spent there I visited electricians, carpenters, painters, hardware stores, champagne and beer factories, photographers, laundries and dry cleaning places. With the intelligence section we also organized an instructional play, concerning how to process military information and how to handle P.W.'s. We showed it a couple of times in the local theatre and I played the part of HITLER, uniformed and bodyguard-ed.

My enlisting, as I mentioned above, failed because I was an alien. Then they suggested that I should stay anyway as some kind of essential employee, but I preferred a military status since our unit was not what you call a "peace-time organization". I visited OISE BASE and SEINE BASE headquarters and the Embassy, after which I concluded that an attachment from the Netherlands Forces to this unit would be the only possible way.

Then about a week before Christmas we were alerted to move up front again in half a day; our re-supply priority jumped from the lowest to the highest, which by the way, did not help much since no supplies were on hand right away.

But I had just made an arrangement that I would visit some office in Paris again the next day in connection with my status, so Capt. Berry (the adjutant) advised me to stay behind for a day or so, and follow up front with the re-supplies. That afternoon the greater part of the outfit left in big cattle trucks; destination: "Somewhere in Belgium", details: "Unknown".

The Dutch Embassy had bad news for me when I came there, no possibility to be attached to an American unit. They claimed to have obtained this information from the temporary Dutch Headquarters in BRUSSELS. I decided to take a chance and go and see those people myself.

Lt. Col. SCHMITT, the division A.G., thought it a pretty good idea. He supplied me with papers with which I could military aircraft to go to BRUSSELS, or Holland if necessary. I rushed back to Paris, but I got picked up by the M.P.'s before I had a plane. They believed me to be a German spy, dropped behind the lines by parachute, and I first thought

that they wanted to shoot me right away. I was taken all over the place, came at the Provost Marshal who treated me as a crook, at G-2's office everybody had taken off because it was Saturday, and finally we landed at the CIC headquarters, after a long ride through Paris with a loaded carbine pointed in my back.

At the CIC some American major with a Russian name wanted to know my whole life story. Still they did not seem to believe me, so I suggested that he should call Col. SCHMITT by phone, who signed my orders and who could confirm my identity.

"ALL right, what is the code name?",

"KANGAROO-rear"!, and he called.

He was connected after some time, explained, asked a description of me, listened, started laughing and disconnected. Then he stood up and shook hands with me, which apparently embarrassed the M.P.'s pretty much. They started at once to return me my property and papers; even my handkerchief they had taken away and examined.

The description which Lt. Col. Schmitt had given through the phone was pretty short by the way, he only remarked that when I smiled my smile started at the right side of my mouth.

Anyway I was free again and the M.P.'s brought me to a hotel.

The next morning it was very foggy. No planes were leaving and I just started to wait like all the others, when a British wing commander offered me a ride in his fighter plane. There was room for two beside himself and so far he had only one passenger. I accepted and there we took off. The plane was so small that I was not supposed to move, in order not to disturb the balance. We flew very low since there was no radio aboard and the pilot had to follow the railroad tracks.

However over St. QUENTIN the fog got so thick that we had to turn back to Paris if we did not want to get lost completely. We landed again on Le Bourget after an absence of forty minutes.

That afternoon a C.47 (Dakota) took me to Brussels.

There I noticed that it was Sunday and that the office where I had to go was closed. Since I knew that there were branch headquarters in Hindhoven I hopped a plane that went that direction and arrived there about an hour later.

I learned that a number of Dutch Army personnel had been attached to British units, through intermediary of a certain military bureau, and Monday morning I went there to make inquiries. There they were really "on the ball". After a long talk and after showing my papers my attachment to 12th. Army Group (101st. Ab, Div-506th. P.I.) was made out, effective from the 3rd. of Januari 1945.

I returned to France.

After I arrived back in the camp I stayed with the rear echelon until a transport went up front. In the meanwhile I heard details about the bloody battle that was going on. Our division had been thrown in at BASTOGNE in the "Battle of the Bulge". They had been cut off almost immediately after they came up there and the transport with which I went along was one of the first ones to reach them. Very coincidentally I had missed a tough part.

When I arrived at our regiment they were so busy that I had to start working even before I could explain my new situation to anyone. A whole group of German P.W.'s had to be interrogated, and it was past midnight when we finally decided to transport them to the rear. I got a whole truckload to handle and I stayed in the stockade for the rest of that night.

The next morning they came to pick me up; on the way back another jeep passed by on the narrow path in the deep snow. It was mmh.

Col. SINK, the regimental commander.

"I'm damn glad to see you made it back Pete; I'm damn much in a hurry now, but look me up one of these days", he said when we shook hands, then he took off again.

We stayed in the same area until about the end of January. Then we moved again and I was sent along with the advanced billeting detail. A long ride took us to ALSACE-LORRAINE, and I believe that DIEMERINGEN was the name of the first little town where we stayed. Requisitioning billets for the different platoons and sections remained my job for a while since we moved almost every other day, until we finally reached the HAGENAU area.

In the meantime I had a talk with Col. SINK about my new status and when he heard that I could be promoted he at once sent a letter through channels in which he requested that I should be promoted to a 2nd Lt. in the Netherlands Forces, in order to work as a liaison officer. The result was that two days later I had to report to Col. Moore of Division headquarters. They had Col. SINK's letter, but they could not understand my attachment and were afraid that they would violate certain regulations when they had me as a Dutch liaison while they were fighting in France.

I explained that I had been attached for special work, regardless of the place where this was to be done. But the bad point was that I lost my wallet with all papers (and money) when we left BASTOGNE, so I did not have any proof.

First they wanted to send me to the Dutch Embassy to straighten things out, but I did not like this very much after the unpleasant experiences I had with those people before. Then they suggested that my case should be handled with the Dutch Army headquarters through the channels of Corps, Army and SHAEF headquarters. I remarked that in that case I might as well try to settle it with the Dutch Army without taking all that way around. It altogether resulted in a ride back to the base camp; orders for me would follow. And so I arrived once more there at MOURMELON around the third week of February.

Upon arrival I was informed by Capt. Max PETROFF that the division judge advocate was looking for me, so I contacted him. He had to go to Holland to investigate a Court Martial case about some safe that had been blown up and looted by some soldiers of the 501st, when we were fighting up there.

We went in a command car, reached Holland All right, went all over the area between the WAAL and RHINE rivers, found a couple of witnesses, had official statements made out, and left again. On the way back I was dropped at Eindhoven where I had duplicate papers made out at our Dutch Headquarters. I also received an accompanying letter in which several regulations were explained. My pay, about one fifth of the pay for an equivalent rank in our unit, would be paid by the Dutch Army to the American Finance and would reach me through channels. My commission could not yet be effected since a T/O limit had been reached in the group to which I belonged.

Again I returned to the camp, where all the troops were expected home in three days. They came, and then we all moved out of the barracks into a large tent camp, which just had been set up by some engineers.

A training schedule was made and I completed my drill. Night hikes rifle range practice, day and night problems became customary. During the problems the IPW-team, myself included, was dressed up as German soldiers. We had to be captured and interrogated and not to speak a word of English. Some funny situations arose when some passers-by (Air Corps Officers and French civilians) got the idea that it was more than just a problem and that we were real Krauts.

They started to help our troops capture us, threatening with pistols and throwing with stones.

Then I managed to enter jumpschool in order to qualify as a paratrooper. But I did not finish; halfway through some G-1 order sent me back to the regiment to await the result of an investigation whether or not I could qualify in an American jumpschool, being a member of the Dutch Army on detached service.

Before I could enter a new course we were alerted again, a jump across the RHINE was the rumor, and the 17th. Airborne division, which was located next to us indeed took off on a Saturday morning. I have forgotten the exact date. In the afternoon the returned troop carrier pilots came over to our tents and told us about the operation. They had jumped across the RHINE, near WESSEL, Germany.

Our turn was coming now. We were fully re-equipped and ready for action. The next day we left, but not by plane; a long truck convoy took us all the way up to the RHINE between COLOGNE and NEUSS, Germany.

The first two days I still was with KIDNAP. Then I was transferred to 3rd battalion S-2, Lt. Schroder, who desperately needed someone who could speak German. It was an interesting time. During the nights our patrols always captured something that had to be interrogated. The days were spent running about seven burgomaster offices of little towns in the area. Those offices were almost completely taken over by Lt. WILLIAMS and me. All the inhabitants had to be registered and all of them came to us with their troubles too. D.P.'s started getting the idea that they were allowed to do anything, and especially the Poles always got very much excited when you took their fire arms away. The Red Cross Club had come up here with us and I was given the honour of providing them with billets, furniture, personnel and bakeries to make the donuts.

Altogether there was plenty work to be done and it was a good thing that the fighting was restricted to patrols across the river and shelling, the latter both ways.

Then on a Sunday we marched out of that NIEVENHEIM, got into trucks, changed these for a long train and we started rolling. For three days and nights we kept on travelling in these cattle wagons until we arrived in LUDWIGSHAFEN on Wednesday morning. There on the platform we were awaited by Red Cross girls with their inevitable donuts. There was music too, I never found out why.

After this glorious reception we moved again. In trucks we passed through HEIDELBERG, kept on going and finally stopped in a little town, ROSACH. The next day to another municipality until on Saturday we packed everything together again and started out on a long ride in "ducks". The DANUBE river was crossed at ULM and late that night we reached LANDSBERG, where the frontline was about to start. I was given my old billeting job again and had to move whole streets of Germans out of their houses, the most fashionable by the way. It was past midnight when everything was set.

The following morning we loaded our stuff on our backs and started a march. The idea was to cross the LECH river and to move into the other half of the town, which was across that river. However no bridge was available anymore so we had to get across through some kind of underpass (electrical power station), some miles downstream. No troubles arose and the few Germans who were left in the town surrendered without any resistance.

With 3rd. Bn. headq. we moved into a large prison building, in which HITLER himself had been imprisoned years ago when he failed at his first attempt to get control of the German government.

In this prison he wrote MEIN KAMPF, the Nazi-Bible.

German soldiers kept on surrendering and liberated prisoners kept on trying to kiss your hands.

A funny thing happened to me personally. One dark, muddy night I took two high ranking German officers, both of whom were invalids, across the river to the regimental stockade, by car.

To go there I crossed the river at a railroad bridge some ten miles north of our position, and after I delivered those two Germans I stayed at regimental headquarters that night. The guard who had gone along with me returned by making a risky crossing over the bridge wreckage; he made it though.

Early in the morning I left again, however I had to go down to SCHONGAU to get across the Lech river, since convoys were coming across the above mentioned railroad bridge where only single line traffic was possible. In SCHONGAU, which is some twenty miles south of LANDSBERG, another division had just put up an emergency bridge and had started to move into the "virgin territory" at the other side. I crossed too and decided to take a little mountain road which led back to the other side of LANDSBERG, alongside the river, but I did not realize that I was the first allied person to enter there.

The area seemed deserted until suddenly coming out of a bent in the road I saw a whole group of German soldiers right in the middle of the road in front of me. They were perhaps twenty or thirty.

I really do not remember what my first thoughts were but I drove up to them, grabbed my pistol in my hand and got out of the car. I think those Germans were just as surprised as I was, they did not expect to see somebody in American uniform come out of a German vehicle, and all of them put their hands up when I shouted at them.

They told me that their officers had run away and that they had decided to surrender, so now they wanted to surrender to me; I was lucky because I never could have fought a whole bunch of Krauts alone with just a 7,65 pistol.

On the map I found that a little path nearby led to the highway which was on some miles distance, on which some American convoy was very liable to be moving up. So I told them to line up and I marched them down that path. Halfway I returned and continued my way back to our battalion, where I arrived without further difficulties.

Moving again, our next objective was STARNBERG which town we occupied without any difficulties. I believe that some American tanks went through it already, I may be wrong, but the whole military situation was becoming so complicated that it was hard to understand. One thing was sure however, the Germans were losing their heads; more and more deserters showed up who had hidden themselves in barns and haystacks when their units were retreating. For us the war became an interesting game: Speeding up, liberating grateful prisoners and slave laborers, capturing all kind of German supplies and discussing rumors about the end of it.

From STARNBERG we drove up to MIESBACH, where a bunch of negro troops who moved in at the same time, had a good time wrecking numerous German vehicles.

The morning after we arrived we pulled out again, now we had a good objective: BERCHTESGADEN, the hide-out of the FUHRER had to be taken. Until INNZELL everything went all right, then we ran into the French division "Le Clerc" under command of a general with that name. They had been attached to the 7th American Army and were desperately trying to take BERCHTESGADEN, our objective. Capt. DENNISON, at that time a first Lt. and adjutant, came to me and I had to go along with him to act as an interpreter for Col. SINK, in the latter's discussion with the

French Commanders ,about the attack.They talked and talked.Messengers came in reporting counter-attacks.Colonel SINK took over the command since the French couldnot make their minds up.too well.

We moved again and that night I stayed with a group in the hotel WEISSBACH,alongside the mountain road to BERCHTESGADEN. The next morning a part of our outfit was reported stuck between a number of blown-out bridges,which would take a couple of days to be repaired. After a discussion with the officer in charge of the part that had stayed behind the little rivers,to which part all our vehicles belonged,we decided to turn back and drive up to BERCHTESGADEN from another side by making a great detour through SALZBURG. GLATZ from third Bn S-2 would go along with me and we would check the roads for the convoy to come.

We left and reached SALZBURG all right.It had been taken already by some American unit,which however did not leave anyone behind but probably just went right through,at least we did not see any allied troops but the red and white Austrian flags were hanging all over the town.But we stayed alerted and this caused some confusion when we arrived at an area where a lot of aeroplanes were standing in the woods.All of a sudden we heard shooting,definitely German burp gun shooting,and two minutes later a German halftrack came racing around a group of trees.Naturally GLATZ and me opened fire on them, the halftrack stopped with a jerk and five Germans jumped off,scared to death.Upon quwstioning we heard that they had been prisoners of war already since the night before and were just straightening out some things for the American troops,who,by the way,were the ones who fired the burp guns,just for the hell of it!

We continued our way and we saw whole battalions of German soldiers strolling down the Autobahn,going to surrender but not knowing to whom or where,everyone had sent them into a different direction, and everyone of the American troops that had passed had searched them for.....pistols!

When we finally arrived at BAD REICHENHALL the convoy caught up with us and together we reached BERCHTESGADEN.It had just been taken by our regiment and French troops moved in at tha same time. Those French caused troubles,they started to loot right away and I got into a fight with one who trýed to steal my vehicle.Finally they were ordered to stay out.

There in Berchtesgaden we stayed for a couple of days.We inspected the surrounding area;with Lt.SCHROEDER I investigated all NAZI-headquarters in BAD REICHENHALL;Berchtesgaden civilians were put to work cleaning the streets in front of our billets,and all of a sudden the war was over.We heard it on the 8th of May,around midnight,andthe next morning we moved again.This time the objective was ZELL-am-SEE in AUSTRIA,where no allied troops were yet and where we had to take care of the occupation.Divisionheadquarters were to move into BERCHTESGADEN.

It was along ride to ZELL am SSE,through a beautiful country, ZELL was beautiful too but our battalion moved right through it into some deseted town,rather village,way out in the mountains,where we had more soldiers than civilians,STUHLFELDEN.

Regimental headquarters stayed in ZELL am SEE and the rest of the regiment was scattered all over the area,altogether covering a very large territory.Dr,Robert LEY,some top-NAZI was captured and when we arrived in the territory we also found Hermann GOERING.He was at a castle ,together with some men from the 36th.Division with whom he had

arranged his surrender. His wife and daughter were present too.

After the whole set up had been established a training schedule became effective again and I was granted a furlough to Holland to see my relatives who had been liberated now too since the war was over.

Upon returning from that leave everybody wanted to know how things were up in Holland and in the other places where I had been through. Dave PHILIPS, the ditor, even interviewed me and published my whole story in the regimental newspaper. I thought it a good idea after it was out, now I always could refer to it when someone started to ask me the same thing again for the hundredth time.

With third battalion I moved to SAALFELDEN and gradually I was getting busy when a request from the IPW-team sent me back to KIDNAP. A discharge center for German soldiers had to be established and all of them had to be processed properly. I received the interesting part of the CIC-screening, together with somebody from the CIC-detachment. Each P.W. had to be checked and for a solid month we daily talked German and handled "Soldbuecher" (paybooks) until they became a real nightmare. Several thousands went through that discharge center.

In the meantime Independence Day was celebrated in a grand way, parades, sports, horse races, an exhibition jump into the lake with which Lt. HORNER made a free jump alone, music and fire works made it a rael succes.

Gradually rumors about a new move had gained strength and indeed we were alerted by the end of July. Then I had a talk with mr. ROBINSON of the Military Government CIC, who had taken over the security service for the area and who would appreciate it very much if I could stay to work for them, since I had become familiar with the local situation as a result of my work with our IPW and CIC teams. After a talk at our headquarters I found out that the regiment would return to France and might leave for the States pretty soon. Then I asked and obtained permission to try to work out a transfer to the local CIC-detachment, and when finally our regiment pulled out by train I stayed behind to visit the CIC headquarters in SALZBURG.

Here I arrived the next day and found that I was welcome but had to produce my orders attaching me to the 101st AB DIV, in order to work it out through the proper channels. They advised me to go and see my headquarters in Holland again, I did.

When I came back to Holland however I was told at our bureau that they would transfer me to some British unit in Germany in case my work with the Airbornes was finished. Transfer to that CIC was not possible. I returned to our regiment immediately; they were in France now, in JOIGNY (Auxerre).

There I was back somewhere around the tenth of August, just in time to shake hands with Capt. GION and Sgt. COUELIN of the IPW-team; they went home together with many others who were no longer essential.

The next day I was making some inquiries at the regimental orderly room when an old friend came in, who now had been appointed provost sergeant, and who was looking for somebody who spoke French. So I got a new job, special investigator they called it and smiled. First I started receiving the French phone calls; then I was sent out to investigate accidents in which French civilians were involved, and gradually my duties accumulated to Division Court Martial Interpreter, cognac purchaser, cab driver, seller of captured stuff in order to obtain cash for several clubs and I even achieved to become an

interpreter in a G.I.marriage.He said "YES" and I translated "OUI", no kidding.

My commanding officer at that time was Capt.Mario COMOLLI (Chattanooga,Tennessee),with whom I've become very close friends.

In October the regiment,or rather the whole division,made a couple of training jumps which were compulsory for G.I.'s if they wanted to keep their jump pay.I managed to participate unofficially, officially I couldn't,and got my wings pinned up by my "buddies".

By that time too I started trying to obtain papers to go to the States.The compulsory affidavits os support needed for an immigration visa were taken care of by Capt.COMOLLI and Capt.CANN (from RUSTON, Louisiana).When however the end of November arrived we learned that transport through army channels could not take place;the plan failed.

Then the whole unit was alerted,everything was broken up and the end of my 506th.P.I. career had arrived.

After I promised at least a hundred fellows to come and see them in the States,I shook hands with Col.SINK,who by the way,had become assistant division commander.Then I left,back to Holland,to report to my own headquarters and get my discharge,for which I had been eligible since the 6th.Of November 1945.

A surprise awaited me there.The U.S.Military Intelligence Service had put in a request for me to work for them a while,with a detachment that worked in Holland to investigate and reconstruct cases of pilot evasion during the German occupation.I accepted, and so it happened that I came home on a Tuesday,reported back as a civilian on Wednesday and was back in uniform again Thursday,to start working as an agent-investigator for 6801 MIS-X detachment on Friday.I believe it was about the tenth of December 1945 when I was introduced to Capt.COSLETT and his staff,and I have worked for them ever since.

Wassenaar,Holland.
April 27th.1946.

sgt. Peter H.Luiten

This report is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and believe.I have read it and understand it.

present address (dec. 1967)

*P. H. LUITEN
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