

THE WORLD WAR II DIARY OF C. J. BARNES

An Account of Service in the 45th Division
171st Field Artillery Battalion
March 21, 1942, to September 24, 1945



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Cover / title page photo: C. J. Barnes at basic training,
Fort Bragg, North Carolina, July 1942.
Collection of C. J. Barnes

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Preface

Clayton Junior Barnes, known to his friends and family as either “C. J.” or “Barney,” entered the army in 1942, early in World War II. He served with distinction at or near the front lines for the duration of the war, as a clerk with the 45th Division, 171st Field Artillery Battalion. Starting in North Africa and ending in 1945 in Germany, he participated in some of the U.S. Army’s most important engagements in the European Theater of Operations.

Soon after his death in 1991, Barney’s family discovered his wartime diary, which he began as a 25-year-old draftee at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and kept faithfully through the end of the war in Europe. Most of the family members read the diary with great interest at that time. Later, in 2002, I—Christopher Barnes, son of Barney’s younger son, Douglas—went a step further by preparing a version of the diary, including passages of historical context for the entries and materials from my grandfather’s scrapbook, for an Advanced Placement U.S. history class at Wilson High School, Washington, DC. My deeper motivation in researching the war and preparing the paper, of course, was to get to know my grandfather better, as Barney had died when I was still quite young.

Barney witnessed and took part in the invasion of Sicily and the battles of Salerno and Anzio, in Italy; the invasions of southern France and Germany; and the liberation of the concentration camp at Dachau, near Munich, Germany. Although the war took place on several fronts in Europe and in the Pacific, his division was involved in some of the heaviest fighting by American troops—some 511 days of combat covering thousands of miles. His artillery battalion fired more than a million rounds in combined operations, from July 10, 1943, until the war ended on May 9, 1945. Over the course of his service, he participated in several amphibious assaults, served under General George S. Patton, was promoted from private to technical sergeant, and received the bronze star.

For this paper, I interviewed my father, Doug, and my uncle, Russ, about their remembrances of what their father had said about his experience during the war. Russ and Doug recall their father as having been quite modest about his service. Clearly, Barney was proud to have served his country, yet Russ remembers that after returning from the war, his father said little more than that things “back in the States” were not so exciting as when he was overseas. But, Russ also observed, “You can really tell what he went through, as he had liberated the concentration camps. He would say it wasn’t that big of a deal, but what he was saying is that this was really hard and I’d like to spare everyone from going through what I went through.”

When Russ was older, his father told him that during the invasion of Sicily, when the troops had to go over the side of the ship to their landing craft and brave enemy fire to reach the beach, “some men just could not take it and were down in the hold all the time.”

But Barney did have the courage to stick with it until the end. Russ understood and admired his father for that.

The war was a period of great change for Barney at a personal level. Barney's mother, a strict Calvinist Presbyterian, had never wanted her son to go into the military, and in deference to her memory, he did not enlist. But he went readily when drafted. Doug commented that apart from military service, his father lived his whole life in his hometown of Uniontown, Pennsylvania. He went to South Union High School and married Helen Cluss, whose father, O. C. Cluss, owned a lumber business. They met in high school and married just before the war began. Barney entered the army from a sense of duty for his country—even though his upbringing disposed him against war—and came away from it with a deeper understanding of why the Allies had to defeat the Axis.

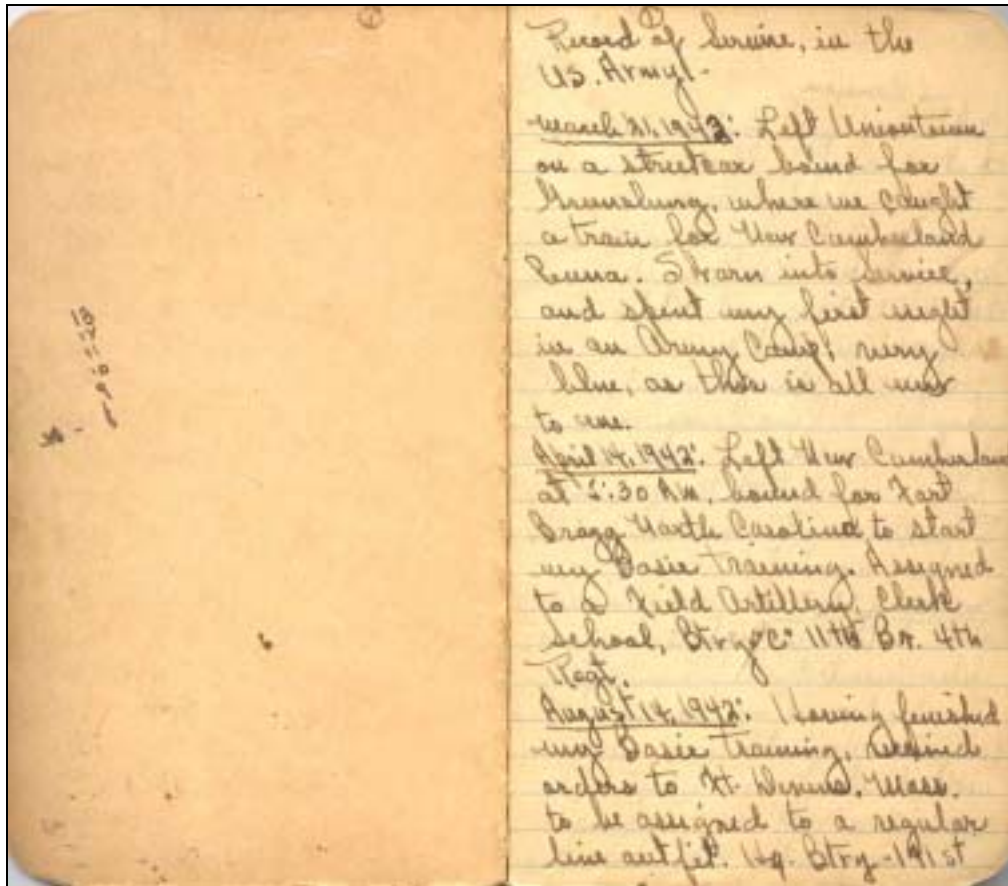
Doug recalled that when his father did speak of the war, it was mostly about the invasion of Sicily, because that was his first experience in battle. He spoke of his admiration for General Patton, his commander at the time of that invasion. He also talked about being in foxholes and a counterattack by the German army, as his unit was shelled out of position as soon as they arrived on the beach in Sicily. Barney often said that he valued the later parts of his life because he knew that he could have been killed at any time when he was in the war.

Doug also related a time when he and his wife, Mary Ann, had returned from a trip to Europe and had visited the concentration camp Dachau, near Munich. They had brought back a large commemorative book on the concentration camp that had many pictures. They were surprised when Doug's father, who had never talked about Dachau, casually mentioned, "You know, my division liberated Dachau." He then spent much of the evening relating his experiences to them. He said that seeing what had happened at Dachau made him really understand why the Americans were involved in World War II. He always wanted to return to Europe and retrace his steps of World War II but unfortunately was never able to do that.

Barney wrote the diary primarily for his wife, Helen. In addition to documenting his thoughts about home and family—particularly the birth of his first child, Russell Lee Barnes, in 1943—the brief entries closely track his military experiences during World War II. Like many soldiers, and sometimes because of the censors, he was reticent about putting pen to paper about the specific horrors and hardships of his service. But the cumulative effect of the narrative does give a strong feeling of the experiences and motivations of the writer. It is the story of a soldier yearning to be home with his new family but knowing he had an important duty to perform for his country in a time of great need and historical importance.

As Barney's grandson, I really did not know much about his experience until I completed the research for this paper. It was amazing to learn about his journey, which was but a very tiny part of World War II. In today's terms, this big picture of World War II might be characterized as made up of many tiny pixels—stories like Barney's. I hope that in sharing the details of his experience I can give people some feeling of what he, as an individual American soldier, thought and felt about one of the greatest struggles of our times.

The historical passages that accompany the diary entries provide a context for six of the major military actions that Barney mentions in the diary. They come mostly from published texts on World War II. However, they also include some less-well-known divisional history materials published at the end of the war that came from Barney's scrapbook. In addition, I inserted, in chronological order with the diary entries, some photographs and letters from the scrapbook. This printing is a slightly revised version of the original history class project, and I thank my dad, Doug, my uncle, Russ, and my dad's friend Paul Wolman for their help in putting it together.



Page one of C. J. Barnes' diary, "Record of Service in the U.S. Army."

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

1. Basic Training and Overseas Preparation, 1942–1943

The Diary

1942

March 21. I left Uniontown on a streetcar bound for Greensburg, where we caught a train for New Cumberland, Pennsylvania. I was sworn into the Service, and spent my first night in an Army camp, very much blue, as all of this is new to me.



Visit with Helen C. Barnes, Philadelphia, April 5, 1942.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

April 14. I left New Cumberland at 5:30 a.m., bound for Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to start my basic training. I was assigned to Field Artillery Clerk School, Battery C, 11th Brigade, 4th Regiment.



Basic Training, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, July 1942.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

Because of a shortage of rifles, new recruits were issued brooms and mops at first.

August 14. After finishing my basic training, I received orders to go to Fort Devins, Massachusetts, to be assigned to a regular line outfit, the Headquarters Battery of the 171st Battalion of the 45th Division. I was made Battery Clerk for Headquarters Battery on October 1, 1942.

November 11. Our outfit moved to Pine Camp, New York, as they have a very good Artillery range. I spent Christmas with Helen and had a wonderful time.

1943

January 23. Our division moved to Camp Pickett, Virginia. Helen visited me here and we had a room in Blackstone, Virginia. We both were very excited about our expected arrival. During training at Camp Pickett, we made an amphibious landing on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay.

May 25. Our division was ordered to Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, a staging area for our overseas shipment. I was rather busy here, adding the last minute touches to my records.

June 4. I left Camp Patrick Henry at 3:30 a.m. in a group picked to check records through the embarkation, which consisted of McNabney, Higgins, and myself. After this was finished, we were loaded on the *USS Thurston*, which was laying in the Hampton Roads, Virginia, Port of Embarkation. We pulled out from here in early morning and traveled approximately 15 miles and weighed anchor.

2. Departure from the United States, June 1943

The Diary

June 8. The convoy formed and we set sail for an unknown destination. I was feeling very bad here as I was standing by the rail watching the shores of the good old USA disappear from view, leaving Helen behind with a baby to be born soon. It sure is a tough life.

The trip from the United States was relatively uneventful. We steamed slowly through the strait of Gibraltar yesterday at high noon, almost as if we were on parade for Axis observers. If the enemy had observers in neutral Spanish territory, they would have seen every transport in the convoy loaded with landing barges and armed with anti-aircraft guns. The men know their ship is a tempting torpedo target, her thin virtually unarmored shell sheltering tons of high-test gasoline and heavy explosives that would send it to kingdom come in a matter of seconds if it were ignited. This ship carried hundreds of men from the 45th Division. Although they have not had combat experience, a large portion of the men have been in the Army since the National Guard was called up in September, 1940, and all are convinced they are the best in the world. The troops practiced net climbing and debarkation into small boats, studied aircraft identification and decontamination, oiled their weapons, and performed other important duties, but time hung heavily. (John Mecklin, United Press Release, 1943, from scrapbook.)

June 22. We docked in the Port of Oran, and made plans for a practice landing in Algeria, North Africa. While we were in harbor, a British ship named the *King George IV* pulled in beside us.

July 5. We left Oran for the Invasion of Sicily. We did not know where we were going until we set sail. Now we have studied maps and are ready for a real honest-to-goodness invasion.

General George S. Patton's talk to the 45th Division at Sea, July 6. This was radioed through loud speakers to the troops aboard the ships. "We are indeed honored in having been selected for this new and greater attack against the Axis...When we land we will meet German and Italian soldiers whom it is our honor and privilege to attack and destroy... During the last year we Americans have met and defeated the best troops in Germany, Italy, and Japan possess. Many of us have shared in these glorious victories. Those of you who have not been so fortunate now have your opportunity to gain equal fame. In landing operations,

retreat is impossible. To surrender is as ignoble as it is foolish... Civilians who have the stupidity to fight us we will kill. Those who remain passive will not be harmed... The glory of American arms, the honor of our country, the future of the whole world rests on you individual hands. Se to it that you are worthy of this great trust.” (Blumenson, 1974: 274–75)

victory, Patton praised the division by stating, “The 45th Infantry Division is one of the best, if not the best division that the American Army has ever produced.” (Whitlock, 1988: 67)

The Diary

July 9. At 12:00 o’clock we glided into our position near the shore of Sicily. Planes were flying over our heads, and our ships were laying fire on the shore batteries. Anti-aircraft fire was very heavy.

July 10. We went over the side of the ship, with a combat pack and 120 rounds of ammunition, ready for the real thing now. We went into position two miles from the shore, near Gela, Sicily. It was a long ride to shore. Once on the shore we were pinned down for a while. I caught the first shelling on the 11th as a shell landed within a few feet of me. I heard the shrapnel fly by my right ear and it landed in my foxhole.

July 14. Our personnel section moved to Vittoria to become part of the 45th Division Administration Center. This will be my home for a while. We moved to Cefalu and set up our Section in an old orchard. It was here that I received my wonderful news of the birth of Russell Lee. I am really a happy boy, as Helen is swell.

September 2, 1943. The following letter was written to O. C. and Helen Cluss.

Letter to Father and Mother in Law

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Cluss,

I meant to write to you sometime ago, but between this actual combat and hearing about my son at home, I have been almost too darned excited to do much of anything. I received your cablegram on August 11th. I really can’t express how I felt, but I will bet I was the happiest soldier on this island, and I haven’t settled back to normal yet. I am so darn proud of Helen as she has taken everything so swell. She is a wonderful girl.

It seems like years since I saw the United States fade out of view. I just stood there on the bow of the ship thinking of a million things. After we had been at sea for a few days, I was beginning to wonder if I would ever see land again, for more than one reason!!! The ship itself was fairly decent, but it was pretty foul at times. We were just jammed down in the holds. In fact, I had four men sleeping above me. We pulled into Oran Harbor around June 23rd. We made a practice landing, and went over the side of the ship like a real invasion. We stayed on land for one week for hardening exercise. I still did not know where we were headed. After we pulled out for Sicily, they told us what the purpose of our mission. On the night of July 9th we were close to the shores of Sicily. The Navy started to fire the large guns, and our planes started bombing. The anti-aircraft fire almost lighted the sky with tracer bullets, and at this point I knew this was the real thing. The next morning I went over the side for the shore landing. When we got about 100 yards

from shore, and we got stuck on a sand bar. While on the sand bar an enemy plane dropped down and strafed us, but I finally made the shore okay!

The second day we were shelled out of position by German artillery, and the shells landed within a few feet of us. I can't say I wasn't scared as I sure did a little praying in that foxhole. There isn't a darn thing pleasant about any of this life, but its something that has to be done, and the American soldiers certainly do there share. We get plenty to eat over here, and this really surprised me, as I didn't expect it.

Sicily is a very pretty country, especially around the shoreline. The Mediterranean Sea is a sight to see, as it is about the deepest blue I have ever seen. But they can have it all, as I'll still take the USA.

I would sure give anything to see you all again, but maybe one of these days I will be home again to pick up things where I left off, and start raising my family. Take good care of Helen and Russell Lee, and thanks a million for everything.

*Love,
Barney*

The following message from O. C. Cluss was attached to this letter.

Dear Russ,

Your Daddy was in the General Patton's Seventh Army in the 45th Division in the invasion of Sicily, which started July 10th, 1943, and was at war when you were born. This letter came to Grandmother and I, which tells us as much as the censor would allow about his experiences in the invasion. I thought it was a very interesting letter and I am putting it away in a safe deposit box, with the hope that one of these days, when you are big enough to understand things, that it will be found and turned over to you. It should be very interesting to you at such a time.

Signed O. C. Cluss, October 21, 1943.

Item from Scrapbook

We have learned that the 45th Division is in Sicily. The 45th Division as you will recall, was at Pine Camp for about two months. They came just as the leaves were departing from the trees in early November last Fall and remained until the middle of January. They were a rugged rollicking group. They made the 4th Armored which had preceded them appear as docile as Dagwood Bumstead. It took us a few weeks to get used to them and frankly speaking, the town was considerably quieter after they were shifted elsewhere. Raw November and December weather never really cooled off their spirits. They cut high, wide and handsome capers on our streets. They broke up a tavern or two.

They gave the local police and the MPs a real workout. Yet we look back with affection upon the 45th. They were fighting men, and woe to anyone who fell in their path. Now, if it is true that they are in Sicily, they will find conditions exactly to their liking. If General Eisenhower wants Cantania taken, let him shove the 45th into battle. They will deliver any town, mused up perhaps but thoroughly conquered. (Watertown Times, Watertown, New York, near Pine Camp, New York, 1943, from scrapbook).

September 13. The Sicilian Campaign was over on August 17, 1943, after 39 days of fighting.

4. Southern Italy: September 9, 1943 – January 28, 1944



Movements of the 45th Division in Southern Italy.

Source: *The 45th Division Artillery* (1945)

Background on the Invasion of Southern Italy

While the battle for Sicily was taking place, both Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill were discussing the post-Sicilian plans. Churchill favored engaging Hitler's forces in Italy to draw forces away from England. Roosevelt and the Americans favored the invasion of mainland Europe. It would take the Americans nearly a year to organize for the operation that landed at Normandy. They agreed to Churchill's idea of attacking in Italy because of the delay. As a consequence, the military planned Operation Avalanche, which was the invasion of Italy. The plan was for the British to invade at the heel of the boot in Italy and for the Americans to land in Salerno. (Whitlock, 1988: 64–66)

After the initial invasion, the British moved up the Peninsula too slowly to join the Americans. After being counterattacked in Salerno, where the 45th division stopped the Germans, the two forces finally met up and moved toward Rome. The Germans were prepared for the invasion and withdrew to a series of mountain fortresses, which proved very costly to attack. The 45th division was on the front lines near Cassino and

Venafro where the movement of the Allied forces was stalled. The invasion began September 9, 1943, and lasted until the fall of Rome in June 1944.

The Diary

September 19. We left Sicily aboard an LST, and landed in Italy on September 20th, 1943. We went into a bivouac area near the shore for the first night. This was near Salerno, Italy. I spent the second night in a building inland, where I picked up a candlestick holder for Helen. We moved from here to Sulphur Springs and set up our Headquarters. Our section had beds here for the first time and took warm sulfur baths. We moved from here to Benevento around October 7th, and set up in the town's school buildings. We witnessed dive bombing. We left Benevento and moved into a small town south of Venafro on December 9th. It is a very small town and the streets are covered with mud. I have a room in an old Italian lady's house. There are eight of us in one small room. Here I am up to date and I am going to try to keep a daily record of events from here on.

December 16. Here near Venafro (and near Cassino) I am very close to the front lines and can even hear the machine guns firing at times. I saw a German plane go down in flames this morning. Our artillery is firing constantly on enemy positions.

One night about eight of our crew were lying or kneeling around a blanket in a big tent playing poker by the light of two candles. Our battery wasn't firing, but the valley and the mountains all around us were full of the dreadful noise of cannon. There was a lull in the talk among the players, and then out of the clear sky one of the boys, almost as though talking in his sleep said: "World war, my friends, is a silly business. War is the craziest thing I ever heard of." Another one said also, mainly to himself, "I wish there wasn't no blankety-blank war no more at all." Then complete silence, as though nobody heard. And when words were spoke it was something about the game and no one talked about war. Weird little snatches like that stand out in your mind for a long time. News dispatch of Ernie Pyle, December 21, 1943. (Nichols, 1986: 179–80)

December 17. There have been no changes in conditions. The artillery is very active, and quite a few planes are overhead. I got a letter from Helen today.

The [45th Division] artillery lives tough, but it, too, like nearly every other branch of the Army, bows in sympathy and admiration to the infantry. One day we were sitting on our steel hats, planted in the mud around a bonfire made of empty pasteboard powder cases, when one member of the gun crew said, "We live like kings in comparison to the infantry."

"What's that you say?" burst in another cannoneer. The sentence was repeated.

"Oh, I thought you said we live like kings," the questioner said. "I thought you must be crazy in the head. But if you compare us with the infantry, that's all right. Those poor guys really have to take it. December 18, 1943. (Pyle, 1986: 177–78)

December 18. I received another letter from you today, and it was a real nice letter. It helped my morale considerably. We are now set up near Venafro, Italy. I wrote a letter and went to bed.

December 19. I went to church today, and sang a few Christmas Carols. This is the first sign of the Christmas spirit that I have seen this year. I finished my payroll today. I sure miss you Helen. I got the proofs of the pictures of you and Russie. They are real swell.

December 20. It rained today and the mud is three or four inches deep. It sure is sloppy. Our Battalion is ready to move again. I received the enlargements of Russie's picture from Jack. It is really swell. I just finished writing to you, and am feeling very lonesome. I had better go to sleep. Good night!

December 22. I finished all of my work yesterday and am going to Naples for a three-day visit. Naples is a very large city and sure looks good after being in a small dirty town so long. I saw a USO show and saw Humphrey Bogart in person.

December 23. We did not do very much except visit the Red Cross building and bought a jewel box for you. The prices are very high so I can't buy much. We had one air raid this afternoon.

December 24. I left Naples at noon and arrived here at 4:30 o'clock. I started a letter to you and went to our Christmas Service at 11:00 o'clock. I received my bracelet today. I sure wish we could be together tonight.

December 25. I had a treat this morning. I had fried eggs for breakfast and they cost 40 cents apiece here. We are having turkey for dinner, with all the trimmings. It does not seem much like Christmas. It is just another day in the Army. I hope that I am with you all next year.

December 26. I sent off the jewel box I bought in Naples. There is nothing new. I am still set up in a small town near Venafro, Italy.

On Christmas Eve, Churchill talked late into the night about Anzio with Wilson, Alexander, Tedder, and some of their staff—all British. All agreed on the necessity for an Anzio landing in at least two-division strength with a target date around January 20... A telegram on December 25 apprised President Roosevelt of the meeting... Churchill explained to Roosevelt what was at stake: "If this opportunity is not grasped, we must expect the ruin of the Mediterranean campaign of 1944." (Blumenson, 1963: 47–48)

December 27. I received two letters from you today. It was darn swell, and you say Russie was to be baptized on the 26th. It is real cold here today, with no snow, but a strong wind.

December 28th. The weather turned very cold, and it has been raining all day. I received a Christmas package. We are still near Venafro.

December 30th. I took the payroll and money to the Battery in Venafro, and the town was shelled right after we left. Boy was I lucky today.



A typical poker game.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

December 31. This is a dull way to spend New Year's Eve., but I am sitting in an old Italian house with Ray Phillips and Murphy playing cards. I hope I am home by this time next year.

1944

January 1. I am starting the new year by going to church this morning. I had a fine meal today of turkey. I wrote a letter and went to bed. I sure do get lonesome for you all the time. I guess that I love my little family more than anyone else in the world. Gee! But I am proud of you.

January 2. Our Air Corps was very busy today, with large numbers flying overhead all day. I worked on the service records most of the day and went to a show tonight. I hear rumors that our Division will be pulled out of line for a rest, and we are to be replaced by French troops.

January 3. The weather is much colder today and we have had a light rain. I worked most of the day, wrote a letter, and went to bed at 7:00 o'clock.

January 4. Our division has been on the fighting line for over 60 days now, and we should be relieved soon. There is quite a lot of snow up there in the mountains north of Venafro. Our Battery Position is northwest of Pazilli, Italy.

January 5. I took a bath and washed my hair today. This is quite an event over here, considering our facilities. I did all of this with only four canteens of water. Our planes were very busy today, as I saw many a lot of them moving up to the front.

January 7. I got two letters from you today, and feel much better tonight. It sure does boost my morale.

January 8. The rest of the Section went to Naples, leaving Murphy, McClary and me here to hold down the office. Rained to beat heck today, and it turned cold.

January 9. I went to church this morning and slept most of the afternoon. There was not much action today.

January 10. The news looks better, as the Russians have crossed the Polish border. I hope the war ends soon.

January 11. The rest of the Section came back and we are still set up in a small town near Venafro, Italy.

January 12. I got two letters from you today, and picture of you and Russie.

5. Anzio: January 30 – June 4, 1944

Background on Anzio

The Allies were frustrated by stalled offensive in the mountains of southern Italy. As the Germans worried about an offensive in southern Italy, Churchill was irritated with the static battle lines and worried that a swift end to the fighting in Italy was slowly drifting away. He thought there must have been a better way to defeat the Germans than by attacking a solid front during the cold and rainy weather. He felt that the Allies should attack by sea and flank the Germans. (Whitlock, 1988: 121).

Plans for this attack began in October of 1943. It was also essential that the attack take place before the invasion of Normandy. A plan named Operation Shingle was drawn up to establish a beachhead at Anzio. The operation involved both American and British forces including the 45th Infantry Division. The commanding general pleaded for more time but was turned down, and the operation took place on January 22, 1944.

The invasion force first encountered light resistance because the Germans were initially surprised. General Kesselring, commander of the German army in Italy, had anticipated an invasion somewhere along the coast and quickly organized his forces to make an attack to destroy the beachhead. Anzio had some of the most intense fighting of the entire war. The 45th Division was at the very center of the infantry at Anzio. The defense lasted through May and due to heavy artillery, the soldiers lived in dugouts. In May, there was a combined breakout in the mountains of Southern Italy and at Anzio. This led to the fall of Rome.

The Diary

January 26, 1944. I have not written for a few days, but I have a little news tonight. Our Battalion reported to a staging area, bound for a beachhead at Anzio 25 miles south of Rome. Our Section will probably leave very soon.

January 29. The beachhead south of Rome is a success, and the Allied Troops are still advancing toward Rome. The Germans lost 85 planes today. I am leaving in the morning for the rest camp at Caserta, Italy. I am still at a point 10 miles south of Venafro.

February 5. I left Caserta at 1:30 a.m. on February 3rd, and arrived here at 3:30 p.m. I had a nice time at Caserta. We had around 3,000 men there from the 34th and the 36th Divisions. We went into Naples for one day and visited the Red Cross. Our Battalion is

now at Vettunio, Italy, 20 miles south of Rome. It will not be long until Rome falls, as our troops are driving the Germans back now.

February 13. The only part of the 45th Division not up on the beach head is the Administration Center. At this point I am in a very safe spot in this war. I heard from our Batteries and they are in their foxholes constantly, as the Germans are doing considerable bombing and strafing.

The main attack had opened with heavy artillery fire on both sides of the Albano–Anzio road. As smoke spread across the battlefield, assault waves struck and overran outpost lines of the 45th Division, which now had all three of its regiments together along a 6-mile front in the critical center of the beachhead perimeter. The battlefield churned as the 45th Division artillery put out an enormous volume of fire. Dogged resistance and the commitment of regimental reserves prevented the Germans from rolling into rear areas. But in the American sector, as in the British, the front had been pushed back a mile, not far from the final beachhead line. ... Despite the fact that they had pushed the British and the 45th Division back about a mile that day, the Germans were disappointed. (Blumenson, 1963: 125–30)

My last letter from you was on January 12th, and my morale is very low at this point. I hope that when you read this diary, I am right along beside you. I hope it interests you as writing it really seems foolish in a way. But I bet you will like it.

March 9, 1944. I am still in the same old spot, and the Battalion is on the beachhead at Anzio, Italy. We have had a few killed and wounded. There is some pretty hard fighting up there. It will not be too long now.

March 31, 1944. I moved from Vairano, Italy, to Baroli, Italy, today. This town is practically out in the water, about 10 miles from Naples. McNabney, Phillips, and I have a real nice room here in an Italian home. They have electric lamps and all. The Division is still on the line at the Anzio beachhead. There is still no second front, but I hope it will come off soon.

May 30. I am still set up in Barroli, Italy. I am going to the Battalion to help pay the troops today at the Anzio beachhead. The battle for Rome is underway, and I will probably see plenty of action.

June 4. I just came back from the front today. I went up from Naples by an LST and arrived at Anzio on May 31st. We went to the Battalion C.P. by truck. This new Allied push on Rome is quite a battle. There are thousands of casualties. Our Batteries expended over a million dollars of ammunition last month. The buildings of Anzio and Nettuno are in total destruction. The odor of the dead near the front is pretty strong. I lived in a dugout while up there, as they have constant shelling and air raids. I left Anzio for Barroli on a Greek ship, loaded with 650 German prisoners. I stood guard over them on the way down. Many of them speak English, and in general they look pretty weary.

Shells and big guns cost money, but it's better to spend money than lives. Along that line a bunch of us were sitting round conjecturing, the other day, on how much it costs to kill one German with our artillery. When you count the great cost

of the big modern guns, training the men, all the shipping to get everything over here, and the big shells at fifty dollars each, it surely would cost twenty-five thousand dollars for every Germany we kill with our shelling. “Why wouldn’t it be better, one fellow said, “just to offer Germans twenty-five thousand dollars apiece to surrender, and save all the in-between process and the killing?” It’s a novel theory, but personally I bet they wouldn’t. News dispatch from Ernie Pyle, December 27, 1943. (Nichols, 1986:183)

6. Rome: June 4 – August 14, 1944

The Diary

June 5. Rome is now in the hands of the Allies. I just received this news.

June 6. Things are happening very fast now, as the Allied troops have made landings in France today. The long awaited second front has started.

June 7. We are ready to move to a new areas someplace near Rome. I will write more after we move.

June 9. We are moving out of Barroli, Italy, at 5:30 tonight. We are moving to an areas near Rome. I guess we will not have beds to sleep in up there.

June 10. We arrived here at 5:30 this morning, after traveling all night by truck. I rode on top of a loaded truck, and almost froze to death as it was really cold. We came up the coast road, and every town from Naples is practically laid flat, and there is a strong odor of the dead who are buried in the caved-in buildings. I got my first view of Rome at 5:00 o'clock this morning. This areas is on the outskirts of the city, and it was a former Italian Military School. It is not a bad set up.

June 14. I had a pass to visit Rome today. I visited the Vatican City, St. Peters Cathedral. It is really a beautiful church. I really cannot describe it as it really cannot be put into words. I bought you a small necklace in Vatican City. I also saw Mussolini's Palace and did a lot of walking, so I am dead tired. It's off to bed.

June 17. We moved from the Division Administration to our Battalion in preparation for a move.

June 21. We moved out of the area near Rome for Salerno, Italy. We moved into a training area. It looks like another boat ride for the 45th Division. I guess I had better learn a little French.

June 27. We formed the Administration Center south of Battipaglia, Italy. Our Section is in an old cow barn, and we are using stalls for offices. I visited Salerno on June 25th, and the town is till in destruction, although a lot of cleanup work has been completed. At this point I am wondering where we go from here. We probably will form a beachhead in France, which I know will be damn rough if it is anything like the others.

June 29. We are still south of Battipaglia, Italy, but it is just a matter of days until we hit the high seas bound for an unknown destination. Our Division is in training for another invasion. It does not seem to scare anyone, as I suppose we are all hardened to this war business now. I am glad you do not know about this, Helen, as you would worry yourself sick. Don't worry about Barney, as he will take good care of himself. I predict the

Germans will fall on September 27, 1944. We will see how close I come with this prediction. That is all for now. Oh, how I miss you. Good night.

July 3. We are on the move again. The division moved into a rest area. We left our station south of Battipaglia at 9:00 this morning, and moved 15 miles south. We are working in a tobacco warehouse. We work on the second floor and sleep on the third floor. This is just another move closer to another big fight for us. The name of this place is Pastern, Italy. I took an airplane ride last night, and it was real swell. I wish I had joined the Air Corps! I sure we will stay here only a short time. I will write later.

The mail just came in and I receive two swell letters from you and two picture of Russie. He is a real little boy, and I have never felt so proud in all my life. I hope I am home soon, as I have got to see you and Russie. Good night!

July 4. I was promoted to Sergeant from Corporal today, and this increases my salary by 15 dollars. This will help out you and Russie. The promotion is SO #107, Headquarter 171, 7A Brigade, dated July 4, 1944. This is pretty swell, isn't it Helen.

July 14. I left Wednesday for a one and one-half day pass with Ray and Murphy. We ended up in Castellamourase. I did not do very much, as we went swimming and just loafed around. We came back through Pompei. It was good to get away for a change. We are still getting ready for a big move, and I certainly hope it is the last one. I had better be careful, as the war is nearing its end.

July 20. We left Paistrem at 8:20 this morning, and traveled north toward Naples. Our unit is set up in Gugliano, Italy. I guess that the next move is by water from here, and where I am going is a mystery to me. It may be France, but that is only a guess. It will be rough, as it probably means that we will have to form a beachhead. Forming a beachhead is one of the most dangerous parts of this war.

July 25. I received the picture of Russie yesterday. I have never seen anything like them, as they were just perfect shots of him. He is the perfect boy. We still are making preparations for a big move. German revolts are now being reported in Berlin. It will not be long now, Helen!! Russie now weighs 23 pounds and 1 ounce, and he is 30 inches tall. He is sure a big boy now, and quite a difference from the 7 pounds 6 ounces last July 28th. I wish I could help him celebrate his first birthday on July 28th.

August 1. We are starting a new month and are still in the same area waiting for the next big push in Europe. I hear all sorts of rumors as to where we are going, but there is nothing definite. A large part of our Navy is in various harbors around Naples, so we are in for something big. Otherwise nothing is new and we sit and wait.

August 2. I received some very important news today from Helen. Russie officially walked on July 24th. He is turning into a real little boy and I am proud of him walking before his first birthday. That is all for now.

August 10. It rained today for the first time in months. The dust around my tent was ankle deep, so now I have mud.

The old 45th Division is about to make some more world news again, as we are ready to make another beachhead. Our mail has stopped and probably will not start again for 30 to 60 days. Helen, this is why I do not get my mail, and I cannot tell you this in my letters. It

is probably a good thing you do not know about this, as you would be a worried girl. But don't worry. I will be sitting right beside you when you read this, as I will be coming home, hell or high water!

Ray Phillips and Mr. Schofield are gone on a five-day leave, and I am running the section. Well, that is all for now.

August 15. The 45th Division participated in the invasion of Southern France early this morning. The landings were made on 140 fronts from Marseilles to Nice. There was very little opposition.

August 19. We went to Naples on a pass today, and I entered two of Russie's pictures in a Red Cross Baby Contest. It will be judged on Labor Day, and I expect Russie will walk off with honors, as the others cannot compare to our boy. I have not had a drop of mail since August 1. I do not expect to get any for quite a while yet.

August 22. I mailed a bracelet and necklace to you today. They are nothing much but I know you will be happy with them. Our division is in France, but I hope we go soon as I have had my fill of Italy. I am still hoping that the Germans will fall in September. I am sure ready to come home.



Fred Knowles and C. J. Barnes.

From a rare color photo in the collection of C. J. Barnes, August 26, 1944.

August 31. I am still in Italy with the Division Administration Center. I do not know when we will leave for France, but it will not be long. We are still in Gugiliano, and we are all tired of it. If the drive keeps rolling, this war should end soon. I sure hope so!

September 10. I mailed my picture to Helen today. We crated up our equipment today as we are getting ready to move to France. I am adding another country to my credit. I hope France is nicer than Italy. I will probably be there when the war ends.

September 16. We are moving tomorrow morning. We will be boarding a transport ship bound for France. I sent you a radiogram from Naples yesterday. Well Helen, this is one step closer to the end of the war, and I hope it will not be long now. That is all for now. Good night.

September 17. It is 5:30 in the morning and I am waiting in the port of Naples to get on the Army transport. Right now I am seeing the first signs of daylight. We are bound for France, Helen!

It is now 8:30. We boarded the ship and we were assigned to a hold. We moved out of the harbor at 6:00, so with Italy fading out of sight, I am one step closer to home.

7. France: August 15, 1944 – March 20, 1945



Movements of the 45th Division in France.

Source: *The 45th Division Artillery* (1945).

Background on the Invasion of Southern France

Less than two weeks after the fall of Rome, the 45th Division would be sent for another amphibious landing in France. Despite being on the front lines since the beginning of the battle of Sicily, the 45th Division would lead the offensive in Southern France. While this happened, the battle of Normandy began and opened a new front. The plan was to pressure the Germans from both the north and the south on the mainland of Europe. As opposed to the Normandy invasion, the troops invading the South met little initial resistance. The 45th Division pushed quickly into the heart of France, moving their headquarters eleven times in seventeen days. The

idea was to join forces with troops that landed in the invasion of Normandy. As they neared Germany, they were once again put under the command of General Patton. They quickly advanced in France until they arrived in Epinal, where the Germans put up stiff resistance. The Germans retreated out of Epinal and went back into Germany (Whitlock, 1988: 315–25).

The Diary

September 19. We landed in the Port of Marseilles, France, at 4:00 p.m. in a heavy rainstorm, and I got soaked to the skin. France seems much nicer than Italy, and I am sure that I will like it better. The trip was real nice, and the water was very calm. That is all for now. I hope that my next boat ride is to you and Russie.

September 24. We are in the outskirts of Marseilles, but our equipment is still on the boat, so we are all just loafing around. We expect to unload the equipment tomorrow.

September 25. Our equipment came in today and we are set up in a cottage overlooking the sea, and it is quite a beautiful picture. It is getting rather cold.

September 30. We received orders to move today, and we are now in boxcars headed for the front lines to join our Division. The trip will be over 500 miles. There are 18 men in our car and it really is a mess.

October 3. We arrived in Epinal, France, today, and we have setup in a German garrison. The trip was okay, but it was cold and crowded. We saw a lot of pretty country, as France is really beautiful.

October 6. I can hear our artillery firing from here, and we can see plenty of FFI in this area. It is still cold and damp.

October 8. We are still set up in Epinal, France, and there is plenty of work to do. This section of France is not as nice as the southern coast, but it still beats Italy. I have received plenty of back mail, and I was darned glad to hear from you again. The Germans are putting up stiff resistance in this sector. That is all for now.

October 15. I received a big surprise today as my watch arrived. Gosh, I am so darn tickled with it. It was mailed on October 5th, so it only took 10 days to make the trip. This is an early Christmas present, but I am glad it cam early. I will write you a nice big letter tonight, as I think you are pretty wonderful. I also am pretty homesick, as I miss you so much, and wish this damn war would end as I sure want to see you and Russie. I have had so many lonesome days.

Epinal, France, is not so bad, but it is pretty well bombed out. I was up to the battery a few days ago and there is not much activity at this time. There was some firing, but not as much as usual.



C. J. Barnes, Bermaring, France, March 14, 1945.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

October 20. My address is still Epinal, France, and I believe we will be here for sometime. They had a call for blood today, so Hanna, Higgins, Kline, and I volunteered. We went to the 59th Evacuation Hospital at 9:00 o'clock this morning, and I gave one pint of blood. There were no ill effects, but I am a little weak. Who knows, I may have saved some wounded boy's life.

March 7. The mail has pick up considerably, and I received four Christmas packages so far. We are still set up here in Epinal, France, although our Division is being returned for some rest now. I have not heard when they will go back in the lines yet. That is all for now, and I will write you a letter and go to bed. Good night.

November 14. My address is still Epinal, France, and no signs of moving anywhere. We had our first snow on November 9th, and it has turned real cold. I sent you a package today, including cologne and powder from Paris.

November 17. I bought Russie a little suit in Epinal today, and it is real cute. I also mailed it this afternoon. The front line has moved up quite a way now. I expect that we will move soon!

November 25. Today is our third anniversary, and I am spending it in Epinal, France. I hope I am home by the fourth anniversary. I have bee away for almost 18 months now, and I expect to be in Germany soon. On November 3rd, at the age of 15 months, Russie weighs 24 pounds and is 31 and one-half inches tall. He is growing up for sure. I expect

to move closer to the front in a few days. I wrote you a letter tonight, and I hope you liked it. That is all for now.

December 1. We moved from Epinal to Saverne, France, on November 29th. I now am working in a one thousand room building. It is a swell place!! I went up to the battery today to pick up the payroll, and they are only 1,000 yards from the Germans. I received you picture today, and I think it is really swell! Very pretty!! Well that is all for now.

December 3. We move from Saverne to a small town by the name of Buchweiller, France. We are in range of German artillery and several rounds have come in so far. Higgins, Ray, and Knowles and I have a room here in the center of town, which is pretty nice. The people all speak German and are not too friendly. Our Headquarters is in an old University here, and we are about 30 miles from Germany!!

December 7. I bought you some perfume yesterday for a Christmas present. I also bought you a small box of face powder. It should be the real McCoy as it came from Paris. I am sure you will like it. I am still in Bauxweiller, which is the French pronunciation. It is really just a small village, but much nicer than the small towns of Italy. No German shells can in last night, so I guess the front had advanced again. I have completed 18 months over here today, and it sure seems too long for me. There has been no mail for quite awhile! That is all for now.

December 14. Today I heard that we will be moving very soon. I suppose this will be my last move before we enter Germany. I was hoping to spend Christmas here in Bauxweiller. They say we will be in range of German Artillery from now on, but do not worry Helen. I am pretty lucky!! I received two more Christmas boxes from you, and they are really nice. I try to write cheerful letters, but I am so awfully lonesome for you and Russie.

December 24. Well Helen, here it is Christmas Eve, and I am in Bauxweiller, France. This is another Christmas away from you, and I feel awful homesick, but it will not be long now.

December 25. It really does not seem much like Christmas, but I did have a really swell dinner. Outside of the dinner, it was just another day. I thought real hard about you and Russie, and I hope you had a real nice time. I sure do miss you.

December 31. I am up with my Battery tonight, which is very close to the Germans. There has not been much activity here.

8. Germany: March 20 – July 1, 1945



Movements of the 45th Division in Germany.

Source: *The 45th Division Artillery* (1945).

Background on the Movement into Germany

On December 12, 1944, the German army withdrew the fortified lines on the German border. During this time, the invasion of the North was also under way. The 45th Division was to play a major roll in occupying southern Germany. They had to penetrate the forces that Germany had set up on their borders. The German line consisted of a series of bunkers, which had to be conquered. On December 31, 1944, the Germans launched a series of counterattacks on the Allied positions. After twenty days of heavy fighting near Saarbrücken, the German Army retreated, and the 45th moved freely into Germany.

The Diary

1945

January 1. We crossed the border into Germany today at 11:00 o'clock. I have been waiting a long time for this. I returned back to the Administration Center at 1:30. A German break through was reported and we are withdrawing to Phalshavig. I am glad you do not know about this as it seems to be very serious. This is the first time we have ever moved backwards since we left Sicily, but everything will be okay Helen.



C. J. Barnes and Murphy in Pfalzburg, on the road to Germany.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

January 4. I received four letters from you today. I just finished pulling guard duty today. We are still set up in Pfalsburg, France. The Germans have been beaten back on a 20 mile front in this area, so we do not have to worry right now. Your letters are the only thing that keeps me going. I have completed almost 20 months over here now, but I still have hopes of being home for Russië's birthday. I hope so!!



C. J. Barnes with 45th Division staff car, January 26, 1946.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

February 1. I just came back from the battery at Wimmenau, France. It was rather quiet up there, with no German activity. We went up on the 31st and stayed overnight. Everyone is rather excited about the Russian drive on Berlin. Nothing else has happened, as we are still in Pfalsburg.

February 14. I finished my payroll for February today, and I am going up to the battery tomorrow to get it signed. Things have been very routine.

March 2. We have not moved yet and are still in Pfalsburg. Our Division has been pulled out of line for a rest. No one knows when we will go back in. It is hard to tell. In most of your letters, you seem to think that I am in Strasbourg, and you are not far wrong. Strasbourg is only about 20 miles from here.

March 13. We left Pfalsburg at 8:30 this morning, and we moved to a new Sector. We stayed all night in a small country village named Bermaring. On March 14th, we moved into Marhange. Our setup here cannot compare to our last one, as in this town all of the people are gone. The town is pretty well beaten up. I do not imagine we will be here very long as our Division is about 40 miles from here, and they pushed off again today. It will not be long now, as we are heading straight into Germany.



C. J. Barnes and Lewis McClary in Epinal, France, January 10 and 16, 1945.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

March 27. We are still in Marhange, Helen, and we are waiting for trucks to move into Germany. I hear our Division made a crossing of the Rhine River this morning, but there is nothing to confirm this. I imagine that it is true since our Division is waiting on the east bank. When we move it will be about 130 miles, so it will make quite a long trip. I will write more when I hear some more news. It looks like this is the beginning of the end for the Germans. I really hope so, as I am so homesick for you and Russie. Love you and good night.

April 5th. We left Marhange this morning at 7:00 o'clock, and moved into Germany, and crossed the Rhine River at 1:00 p.m. today. We arrived in Aschaffenburg around 5 o'clock. It was a fairly nice trip, and we good a darn good look at Germany. It looks very clean, and the buildings are much the same as at home. Of course, now that we are in Germany we cannot talk or have anything to do with the people. I expect to move again soon, as our Division is still about 100 miles ahead of us. It will not be long now Helen.



Germany, April 7, 1945.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

April 11. We moved out at 12:30 today, and headed for Konigshafen, which is approximately 145 miles from Aschaffenburg. We arrived here at 6:00 this evening. We are living in a house here, as we moved the people out and just took over. This is pretty rough for them, but they are Germans and we do not have much love for them. The people seem scared to death of us, as we cannot even say one word to them to calm their fears. I do not expect to stay here long as the front is moving fast.



DUKW amphibious transport on the way to Konigshafen.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

April 13. I just heard this morning that President Roosevelt died yesterday afternoon. It is hard to believe, and we certainly need him now to straighten out this world.

April 28. We are still in Konigshafen, and the Division is approximately 165 miles from us now, so we should be moving soon. I received 10 letters from you a few days ago, and it was real swell. It was reported that we linked up with the Russians yesterday, so I guess it is just a matter of days now. Higgins and I fixed up an old car here, and we have been running all over the place, just like a couple of kids. But it is pretty darn lonesome here, as we can not even say good morning to the German people. I am leaving tomorrow for the Battery and expect to be gone for a few days. I miss you, Helen.

May 2. We move out of Konigshafen tonight at 6:30, and headed for Munich, about 200 miles from here. I will be there at about 4:30 tomorrow morning.

Background on Munich and Dachau

After moving through the broken German army, the 45th Division was ordered to take control of Munich. The Allied position during World War II was to defeat the German army and not to liberate concentration camps. At the end of the war, as the German resistance crumbled, the Allies began the process of concentration camp liberation. In their march toward Munich, the 45th Division was the closest to Dachau and was ordered to liberate it. On April 28th, one day after the Russians and Americans had linked up at Elbe, the 45th Division was ordered to liberate Dachau. As they approached the camp, they discovered boxcars full of dead bodies. They discovered an SS barracks next to the camp. During the surrender of the SS camp, some of the SS soldiers were killed in a controversial incident. The thirty two thousand living prisoners in the camp were ecstatic to see the 45th Division. Just before the liberation of the camp, many prominent prisoners were force marched seventy miles south. The civilians living near the camp claimed that they knew nothing of the horrors of the camp (Whitlock, 1988: 374–390).

The combat days of the 45th Division ended in Munich, Germany.

The Diary

May 3. We arrived in Munich this morning after traveling all night. We crossed the Danube River, but could not see it as it was too dark. We are set up in a German Barracks here, and it is not bad. Munich is really a mess, as most of the buildings are bombed out.

March 7. We are still in Munich, and our Division has been pulled out of the line, and it looks as though our fighting days are over in Europe. The official end of the war has not come down yet, but it should in a very few days. Well, I feel very lucky, Helen. I have been two years over here, and I am still okay. I am just lucky I guess!!

May 8. The War in Europe is over, effective at 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, May 9, 1945. The surrender was signed at 1:41 a.m. Monday. Boy am I ever happy!!



End of war in Europe, Munich, Germany, May 9, 1945.

Source: Left, "45th Division News"; right, photo, both in collection of C. J. Barnes.

May 13. I have been living on excitement the past few days, and it is still hard to realize that the war is really over. The point system has been announced and I have 98 points toward discharge. Isn't it wonderful Helen. We are sending five men from my Battery tomorrow to be discharged. I sure am a happy boy. We are still in Munich. Good night!!

May 23. I am still in Munich, Germany, and we have much work to do now that the War is over. I am taking over Ray's job as Personnel Sergeant, as he is ready to leave any day now. I expect that I will be home in four months. I hope!! We have seen some things in Munich that I cannot write about here.



Tanks parked at end of war, Munich, 1945.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

May 29. Well Helen, I was promoted to Technical Sergeant today, SO #117, Headquarters 1717A, dated 28 May, 1945. But all I am interested in at the present is that trip back to you and Russie.

From the beaches of Sicily to the Birth-Place of the Nazi party in Munich, Germany has been a long and circuitous way. It has been an historical one, with high points that shall be forever remembered--Salerno, Voltorno, Venafro, Anzio, Rome, Southern France, Vosges, Sar, Rine, Bavaria. Not everyone who started on that July day in 1943 made the whole conquest which we have completed now--in some units, not many made it. They made another conquest; they were the sacrifice. To these our comrades is this day and this occasion dedicated, and of those names to be remembered, their names shall stand above all. Memorial Day Services, 45th Division, Munich Germany, May 30, 1945. (From scrapbook)

June 1. We still are in Munich and are now breaking in new men for our jobs. Everything is a mess. I expect to hear something soon about what is going to happen to us, but nothing has come down yet.

July 1. Today my Section and I were transferred to the 103rd Infantry Division, so it looks as though we will come home with them. It was hard to leave the 45th Division, but if it means a step closer to you and Russie, I will not complain.



C. J. Barnes sitting near a German spotlight, 1945.

Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes.

July 5. I said good-bye to all of the boys in the 45th Administration Center today, as a new section came in and relieved us at 12:00. We started for our new outfit, the 382nd 7th

Brigade, 103rd Infantry Division. All of the men with 85 points or more were transferred to this Division for redeployment to the USA. I think in two months I will be home for good. We arrived in Innsbruck, Austria, at 5:30 today, and we took over our new section.

July 7. We moved out of Innsbruck at 3:00 this morning bound for Landsberg, Germany. We are again about 50 miles from Munich. I hear this is an assembly area for us, so that means it will not be too much longer. Gosh, I hope not as I am sick of this life here, and just pretty homesick for you and Russie. That is all for now.

July 12. We are still in Landsberg, and I hear we are exactly a month ahead of schedule, so I am feeling darn happy about that.

July 21. I was presented the Bronze Star Medal in a formation held at Division Artillery. The award was made at Headquarters, 45th Infantry Division, dated July 13, 1945. The General of Division Artillery made the presentation, and his name was General Wicks.

The Bronze Star Citation from Scrapbook reads: Clayton J. Barnes, Field Artillery, Technical Sergeant (then Corporal and later Technical Fourth Grade), Headquarters Battery, 171st Field Artillery Battalion, for meritorious service in direct support of combat operations from 10 July, 1943, to 30 April, 1945, in Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. Entered the military service from Uniontown, Pennsylvania.

July 28. Russie is two years old today! I wish I could see him and give him a real birthday present. It will not be long now, though.

August 7. We are still set up in Landsberg, Germany, waiting for word to move out to a staging area. I hear it may be a month or more yet. My name went in on a quota last Saturday, and if I make this one I will leave here around August 14th, and will fly home. My fingers are crossed!!

Dear Russell Lee:

This letter will introduce you to ex-Technical Sergeant Clayton Junior Barnes, veteran of the European theater, World War II, wearer of the E.A.M.E. Ribbon with six battle stars and one Bronze Arrowhead, the Good Conduct Medal Ribbon, the Bronze Star Medal Ribbon, The "Thunderbird" patch on the upper right sleeve, the "Cactus" patch on the upper left sleeve, four overseas bars on the lower left sleeve, and various other folderol. Unless you've seen an Oklahoma Indian or General Patton in full battle dress, you've probably never seen anybody as bedecked and adorned as this warrior. Do try, however, not to manifest any agitation on first sighting this formidable specimen of the human race.

Doubtless, your mother has already sought to soften the shock of the meeting by showing you at tactful intervals reasonable facsimiles of this man, and furthermore has probably told you with due apologies that he's what is known familiarly as "your old man." We who have been with him during the arduous days of combat feel duty bound to warn you that "your old man" is exceedingly brittle, and must be handled with care. No rough stuff at first, understand. In time as he gets adjusted to civilian life, as he dons the smooth-

draped pinstripe and gleaming white shirt, as he sets about the task of putting the Penn Rail Road back on its feet, he'll probably toughen up, and when you can step in and show him who's boss; that is, if your mother is willing to forfeit a little authority. Don't take anything from him. He's learned in the Army not to talk back to anything over a warrant officer, and there's no reason why you should take any of his lip.

Above all, don't let Mr. Barnes get started to telling you about how he won his six battle stars and Bronze Star medal. He'll undoubtedly have a yen to tell you about how he won the war, but a few well placed yawns on your part should convey the idea to him that you've read all of that stuff in the newspapers and that it's definitely an old story. Now if you really want the inside story as to how these decoration were gained, contact any of the undersigned. We know!

You must be tolerant during this trying rehabilitation period for your father, Russ. Remember that he's not only a product of the Army, he's also a blend of the worst that Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany have to offer, and there's no doubt about it--even at their best these countries just don't have the refinements of our own United States. But as your dad gets to look and act more like the men you're used to, you'll find that he's really quite a likable chap—"underneath that rough exterior beats a heart of gold"—and all that sort of stuff. In fact, we sincerely believe that soon you'll be pointing him out to the neighborhood gang and saying proudly, "That's my old man, veteran of the European theater, World War II, holder of the E.A.M.E. Ribbon with six battle stars, the Good Conduct Ribbon, etc., etc. He may not be able to lick every other dad in the neighborhood, but he out to be able to take on some of the ones smaller than he is.

In closing, we're turning ex-Technical Sergeant Clayton Junior Barnes over to you and your mother, and only hope that you'll get to be as fond of him as we are. Frankly, he's ceased to be of any use to us, as he won't do a lick of work. See what you can make of him. Uncle Sam tried.

Best Regards From

*Fred A. Knowles
Charles R. McNabney
Floyd E. Higgins
Leslie E Schofield
Trexler E. Kent*

August 13. I am being transferred out tomorrow on Par. 8, 20#, 185, Headquarters 103rd Infantry Division to the 14th Reinforcement Depot. We start from here in Klosterlechfeld near Landsberg at 3:00 o'clock in the morning, and I will go to Munich to catch a train for the 14th Reinforcement Depot, which is in Thionville, France. We are drawing three days' rations, so I guess it will be a three-day trip in boxcars. It really won't matter though, as we will fly from there. I am pretty happy Helen, and I really can not believe it is true. I will write more later.

August 16. We loaded on a train in Munich at 8:00 Tuesday morning, August 14th. We got up at 2:00 o'clock in the morning and went to Munich by truck. We arrived at the 14th Reinforcement Depot at 8:00 August 15th, and I was assigned to the 468th Company.

August 23. I am leaving the 14th Reinforcement Depot today, and I am in charge of 36 men going to Indiantown Gap. We leave sometime this afternoon.

August 27. I arrived at Camp Le Grand, which is 40 miles from Le Havre. Boy am I having troubles, as I am acting group commander for my men, and ever since I hit this place I have done nothing but fill in forms and papers. This camp is a mess, as there must be millions of men here. I have never been so sick of seeing GIs in my life. I am rally looking forward to seeing our little boy. We are going to be so happy.

August 30. Dearest Helen Coming by Boat Will call when I arrive. Your own Barney. Cable sent via Western Union.

August 31. We were alerted for movement to the Port of Embarkation today. I leave at 7:45 tomorrow morning for Le Havre.

9. Departure from Europe and Army Discharge

The Diary

September 1. I left Le Grand at 7:00 o'clock this morning and load on a Liberty Ship named the *William Floyd* at 11:00 o'clock.

September 3. We arrived at Swansea, Wales, at 3:30 this morning, and the ship is taking on ballast for the trip across the ocean.

September 4. We left Swansea, Wales, at 7:00 this evening. Our rest stop will be New York, and the crossing will take 10 to 12 days.

September 5. We are still sailing away!!

September 8. We hit a storm and everybody is sick. I am feeling pretty bad.

September 9. The sea is still rough and I am still in bad shape. What a life!!

September 10. I am still in bad shape!!

September 14. We are now 388 miles from New York. Gee, I am happy. We should dock on Saturday or Sunday.

September 15. This is the happiest day of my whole life. I am back in the USA. We disembarked from *the S. S. William Floyd* at 8:00 p.m. this evening in New York Harbor, and were received by the American Red Cross with coffee and doughnuts. I then boarded a train for Camp Kilmore, New Jersey. I put in a call at 12:55 and talked to Helen at 1:15 a.m. Gosh, the sound of your voice was Heaven, not to mention the feeble attempt of Russie to say "Hi Daddy." Boy, this is all too good to be true.

September 16. I left Kilmore at 6:00 p.m., and arrived at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, at 11:00. We were broken up into groups for discharge. We have nothing to do now but wait!!

September 17. Still waiting.

September 18. Still waiting.

September 20. I went to Headquarters to meet Helen. I was never so excited in my life. She looks wonderful and I am a lucky fellow.

September 22. I was discharged today at 11:30.

September 24. Helen and I left Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, today and headed for Uniontown to see Russie. I can hardly wait to see that little fellow. Mr. Cluss met us in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I saw Russie around 8:00 p.m. standing on the corner of

Eggleston Street and Dixon Boulevard with Daddy. I shed a few tears when he called me Daddy. I guess I am the luckiest fellow in the world!!

Well, this brings to a close my Army career, so I will end this September 24, 1945.

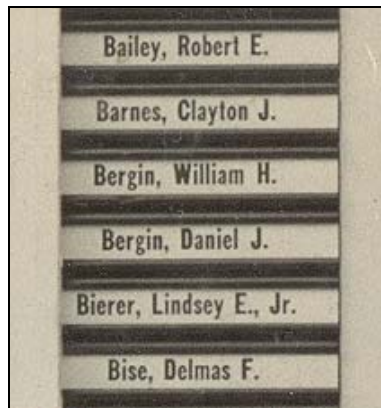
Clayton Junior Barnes

10. Conclusion

The experience of C. J. Barnes was very typical for the average soldier during World War II. He came from a small town and had never traveled outside the United States. When he sailed overseas, he left behind a wife and family and career to serve the country. He experienced a lot of new and unimaginable things and yearned to come home throughout the course of his tour of duty. Nonetheless, he toughed it out and stayed for as long as he was needed. He was very relieved to come home in one piece and rejoin his growing family. There have been many books written about the war and the “Greatest Generation.” In his letter home after the invasion of Sicily, C. J. wrote, “I would sure give anything to see you all again, but maybe one of these days I will be home again to pick up things where I left off, and start raising my family.” His generation did endure great hardships during the war, and many did indeed return home not only to raise their families but also to work and make valuable contributions to their country. These small individual contributions revitalized the country and made possible the success of future generations.



South Uniontown Honor Roll for Soldiers Who Fought in World War II
Source: Collection of C. J. Barnes, circa 1950.



Detail from the above.

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