

The following is from a 3x5 notepad written in pencil by Pfc. William Dan 'Jiggs', 'Judd' Managan of Bellows Falls, Vermont who served in World War II with the Fifth Army, Cannon Company, 351<sup>st</sup> 'Spearhead' Regiment of the 88<sup>th</sup> 'Blue Devil' Division from 1943-1945.

Left the States Nov. 12, 1943 aboard the U. U. Griffin.

Landed in Africa on Dec. 3, 1943.

Left Africa Feb. 2, 1944.

Landed Italy Feb. 6, 1944.

Left Italy June 6, 1945.

Arrive U.S. June 19, 1945.

Days on line

351<sup>st</sup> Reg. 88<sup>th</sup> Div

Mar. 6 - April 12, 1944 - 38 days

May 5 - June 12, 1944 - 39 days

July 6 - July 28, 1944 - 22 days

Sept. 20- Nov. 1, 1944 - 43 days

Nov. 10, 1944 - Jan 12, 1945 - 64 days

Jan. 12 - March 11, 1945 - 49 days

Apr 11 - May 2, 1945 - 23 days

Total 27 - 8 days

1.

April 10-16

What we think might be the last push.

We leave the training area and arrive in position on the front line. Somewhere in mountains near Manovara. The fellows dig themselves in ready and waiting.

It turned out to be good position as no shells came in the stay there - three days. Word came down that we were to be moved to another part of the front. So we pack up to move ten miles.

2.

April 16-17

But before we arrive in our new position we drive for maybe five or six hrs. and park for the night. We stay all day. That night we take off again. Word comes down that push is going good. Everything has to be moved forward. It seems they all start at same time. Roads are crowded with cars and trucks. So we move along at the speed of three or four miles an hour.

3.

April 17-20

The roads are real dusty, trucks are moving guns of every size, troops are marching along the roads. Empty trucks coming back for more supplies. We have already seen about four trucks loaded with Jerry's moving them back to our P.W.

In our trucking we come to bridges that air corps have bombed so nothing to do but go around the country and these small roads just wide enough for wagons.

4.

April 17-20

We catch up to our troops and set up. Then the troops have moved forward so we eat fine and support them and pack up to roll. March Order is the expression we used.

So the fellows are waiting for orders to jam up the roads. Our chow wagon has been held up back in the Battle of Roads. So we do the next best thing - make the coffee and hunt through our bags for something to eat.

5.

April 20

One fellow finds some beans from home. Others have sardines to say nothing of K-rations. Well at least we are not hungry. The word is about forty yds away, we can see the troops moving along. Some of these tanks and trucks have the front covered with these large orange color panels. That is so the planes can tell from the air where the front lines are. This morning we pass Jerry prisoners

6.

April 20

that our troops haven't taken. Some of these towns are pretty well smashed up. We are still waiting for March Order and the chow truck as well. Some of the fellows are laying around, others are playing chicken. As the traffic keeps rolling along and the planes are flying overhead, it is getting close to six and the chow truck has just arrived. I believe most of the fellows will enjoy hot meal.

7. Last night the troops that we passed had to catch their supper while marching along. We had March Order three times tonight. It is getting close to eleven-thirty as we turn in for the night.

8.

Apr. 21

Everybody was up at seven, had chow and ready to move. We are in the Po Valley. From this position we can't see any mountains. It is flat as bowling alley. One end of the field there is one of our planes that was forced down. But it looks like not too much damage. It has been reported the 34<sup>th</sup> has taken Bologna. All the fellows are in badly need of a shave and work up. Most of them are ill tempered this morning.

9.

Apr 21

These are checking the map some where along highway nine near Angola. We are out in the highway moving along slowly. The troops are laying along the road all in from walking. Our mail man arrived with mail, two letters date 13-15 first time. The day is beautiful but the roads are covered with dust. Some of the planes are still burning from last night along the route. One house is burning pretty good.

10.

But I don't see any fire department tossing coins to see who will take over. There are lots of Jerry big guns left behind, all burned up. As we pass these little towns the people are hollering and wave at us. They wave the opposite to us. To say good bye they wave

in manner of come here. One thing I notice that all these cemeteries have the picture of the person who died on the grave stone.

11.

Apr 21

We pull off the road at ten thirty and set the guns up again, the fellows are eating. Some packages arrive for the gang today, after reading the paper I see I am behind on the date by one day. Every field we pass is loaded with trucks and tanks. Everything and everywhere is flat as a pool table.

In the distance we can see smoke. It looks like the Jerry ammo was hit. We can hear the Jerry shells flying by.

12.

Apr 21

We have March orders at one thirty arrived in new position around three. The guns is set up. So off we go to wash up close by. Some of the fellows are debating to go swimming. But the air is real chilly. Strong wind is blowing in from the east. But it feels good to get most of the dust off and shower up. With this wind blowing it looks like it was snowing. It is blowing all the blossoms around.

13.

The chow has arrived. There are snipers close by he has the fellows a little jumpy. They keep us in position as the foot troops are building a bridge across the canal. Tanks have been rolling by for hrs. We fixed our bed for the night. Jerry plane flying over and bombing the highway. One day close to the finish.

14.

Apr 23

We again start the same routine up at seven and chow. There is so much dew that everything is all wet this morning. We have March order and leave, arrive in new position close to ten. Some of the towns we pass Angola, S Giaamoo(?), Cente San Feleica(?). I guess we must be on a bush road as the traffic is not so crowded this morning.

We had chow waiting for March order.

15.

Apr 22

One place we pass a canal that runs along the road, had benches about ten ft. apart. It would remind one of a park, also, they have one place where all the woman gather to do their washing. March order about three. Move out on the dusty road, tanks line the road waiting their call. That bright orange panel stands out. To our front we can see smoke light, the houses were on fire.

16.

Apr 23

It's about four and we find our position. We can hear the machine gun fire out in front. We pass two different columns of Jerry prisoners the English had captured. There are four dead Jerrys in the ditch about forty yds. away. The planes are bombing where all this smoke is coming from. We see these English troops from North Africa, they wear this turban for hats. Their hair is long as the women.

17.

Apr 25

Those Jerrys in the ditch have lost their shoes, the Ites(?) come along and strip the dead. It has been reported of our gun breaking out horse drawn Jerry artillery. They have no gas to use. The Jerry's are going against us, they land two shells about ten yds. out in front of us. It didn't take long to find cover. Nobody was hit. They are bringing Jerrys in by the 100's. One MP said they had captured over 2500.

18.

Apr 23

They are giving up by co's. Word comes down that we don't move. So everybody fixes up a place to sleep and wait for chow. The prisoners are still coming in by the 100's. It time to feed about nine at night also March order. All the fellows are cursing and swearing as we all hate to be on the road at night. We move out 9:45 and everything is going along pretty smooth. From out of the sky we

19.

Apr 24

hear and see traces coming right at us from this Jerry plane. They stop the truck and we pile or fall out to seek cover. To me that is worse than ducking shells from the artillery. We again pile in the truck, some still shaky. We arrive in position and set up get ready for bed. So we call it another day close to 1:30.

20.

Apr 24

Tues finds up for chow another day. While having chow they captured about 30 more Jerrys in the house close by. Word comes down the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain and the 85<sup>th</sup> has crossed the Po River. It was rumored that the 350<sup>th</sup> was surrounded by the Jerry's until they start laying down their guns and surrendering to us. It's now close to nine in the morning, lovely day. Word comes down to move. We hit black top road.

21.

Apr 24

It's nice to travel along without the dust for a change. The town we hit in Pojubo(?), nice little town. But everything looks like the Jerrys just woke up and left. Plenty of Jerry horses and tanks parked here and there. Lots of ammo lying around. Some of the G.I.'s are having a swell time riding their horses around. Some are even riding in Jerry tanks and cars that are left laying around.

22.

Apr 24

We are doing lots of firing. They have the first troops up to the Po River. I guess three waves have crossed already. We might have to cross to-night. But I hope the Jerry plane is not around. Jerry prisoners have been passing all day on trucks. It is getting close to five-thirty. We have chow and then wait word for March Order. Every-body is sweating out crossing the river in the dark as well as, the Jerry planes.

23.

Apr 24

Word comes down to move. But at the eleventh hr. it was cancelled as the congestion(?) hold up the crossing. So we all bed down for a good night sleep. Thank God. Tomorrow they will have most all the mines cleaned out and our own planes flying around. The mail man could not locate Services Co. he tried five times. Another day and dollar richer.

24.

Apr 25

It is cold and damp this morning when we get up. Word comes down that foot troops are moving ahead pretty fast. It is close to eleven and we are waiting for March order. All the fellows are arguing about the river crossing. It has been reports that over 40,000 Jerrys have been taken since this push started.

One Jerry general has said this was in Italy

25

Apr 25

would be over in 8 days. I hope he might be right. Out on the pond I can see those ducks going by. We might not use them as they will have bridges up this morning across the river, they say it is about 500 yds. across. All the trucks are loaded we are waiting to move up. Some of the fellows are shaving and cleaning up. Sitting around until about seven-thirty, we move up they said the bridge is up.

26.

Apr 25

We arrive at the sight where the bridge is to go up, but not finished. It is getting on to nine at night. Boy it's like a crowd at the Army N.D. football game. It is reported that there might be close to 8,000 cars all parked hup to hup. Nothing to worry about, one bomb from that lone Jerry plane would only make one real big fire. The trucks are loaded with guns and ammo.

27.

Apr 25

Over to our left, one fellow has an accordion, he is singing and playing. Not sure in ?. It is getting close to 9:30 and we get our first visit of the night. That Jerry plane. Everybody is trying to get under the trucks at the same time. It looks like Christmas a tree with all ock-ock? Firing at this plane. They drive him away before he can do any damage.

Apr 25

We got close to one hr. of sleep, again Jerry comes back. This time it looks like they hit him. He comes flying down, just clearing the tree tops and gets away. Everybody was cheering their head off when it looked like they had him. We all get to sleep in trucks, under trucks most and any place until about 3:30, we have another visit again before daylight. That again brings us to another day.

Apr 26

After getting about forty winks someone comes came around to tell us to get ready to move across the Po, They have the bridge complete so they move the trucks across first. It is very slow as only two can go at one time, so much weight. In mean time our chow start to make coffee. Just about that time we start to move so they dump the coffee. We move maybe 100 yds. and stop and wait another hr. Well it is about 9:30.

Apr 26

Then we get to cross the Po. It is about as wide as the Conn. where the arch is. The bridge is made of this large platoons and boats? With heavy steel strips for the floor. They had stuck quick sand on the far side, so bricks and rocks had to be filled to keep the bank from washing out. Some General was checking and stopping all these Jerry cars and trucks that our fellows had picked up.

Apr 26

All along the river there is all kinds of Jerry trucks, tanks and cars knocked out by our planes. They have three large buses all painted up like Red Cross or hospital cars, thinking we would let them pass. The Jerrys left all kinds of horses on one side of the Po.

After getting across the river we hit good blacktop road and ride maybe 20 miles before we go in position, that is how fast the Jerry are moving. We lost one day at the river. After we set up we have dinner and breakfast together which was three eggs, bread and coffee. The farmers have lots of eggs and butter. They call this part of the country the bread basket of Italy, good farmland with plenty of rich soil for crops.

Again we wash up and shine. All kind of prisoners are giving up. We have March order. We set up again in new position, our flanks are wide open

Apr 26

but the Jerry doesn't know it. All the ? Are running around with shot guns looking for those Jerrys that are wandering around. In these farms close by we are set up. They found this big swastika. It is about 14 to 16 ft. long all red in the center it has large circle with German swastika. We have our tent up tonight as it looks like rain. We turn in for the night.

Apr 27

It has rained mostly all night and still raining. When we got up this morning everything pretty wet. We have chow and mail call. Early this morning they hold Mass close by Fifth Army Chaplin drops in. Fellows from the 913 and Cannon were there. We have March order and pack up and move, set up in new position. Some of the fellows bought eggs. We had hard boiled eggs and coffee. We wait around until about 5 for March order.

Apr 27

We can't cross the river so we have to thirty miles back to get three miles forward. It was raining all the way. We set up and park for the night close to 2 in the morning. The rumors are that Mussolini has been captured also that Milan and a couple of big cities up north have been captured. We are now going to Venice.

Apr 28

I get up I am soaked from head to toe. My blankets are pretty wet after chow. March Order. So we roll the wet blankets and pack the truck. Then it has been changed so we unload again they take our trucks to shuttle the foot troops. The sun is out so maybe our stuff will get dried up. It is close to 12 and time to feed our faces. Steady stream of water is running from the blankets.

Apr 28

The trucks get back around 4 and we have March Order after we eat. Out on the road for about 5 miles and park. It has started to rain again as we pass these small towns. The people are all along the route waving white flags getting soaking wet.

We pull in position and what a position, Jerry's laying around all shot up. In the truck outside three are still groaning almost dead. The Germans have just left this town about one hr. ago. Another day.

Apr 29

We all get up after spending more or less a restless night. The March Order comes and we move out. The troops are walking along the road moving up. Our right flank is wide open. We pass through towns. The people are throwing flowers and giving out wine? also they have this baked bread, they throw it to the troops - just like getting hit with a brick it is so hard. One lady I guess all ? of ? about 15 eggs. We pull in position, set the guns one way have to turn around.

Apr 29

The first thing we know, there is a large bunch of Jerry's are behinds, everybody grabs a gun and spread out all over the place. They capture them after a fashion. They have them marching by now I guess there must be around 150 of the,, I guess, they are all around the place from all reports. In fact they have our gun out on the road using it direct fire on tanks that are reported coming this way. It is raining pretty hard and getting close to 3:30.

April 29

March Order and move up to another position, set up. It has been reported that 913<sup>th</sup> Artillery who we work with has taken almost 2,000 Jerry's in that position. One fellow was driving from our company to the artillery late at night, he stops to ask one fellow if might know where it is, come to find out he is Jerry walking around funny ? at times. We bed down for the night. During the night we hear the bell from this small town ringing but

Apr 29

just another town being liberated from the Jerry's.

Apr 30

Up early and have chow after eating we wait around most of the day as another bridge in front of us, blown out by bombs. But not so much excitement as yesterday. It is cloudy and threatening rain. Couple of the fellows are having the time of their life riding around on a Jerry motorcycle, mail arrives and papers two days old. Hardly know there is a war. Everything is quiet.

Apr 29

Everywhere along the route you can see them bringing Jerrys by the 100's. We move to another position. March Order and move again. In these position we have March Order set up again. March Order is constant?. It gets late and we move set up at 11 at night and call it a day.

May 1

Up at 5:30 March Order after chow. We move about 4 times that morning. We are stopped in railroad station called Cisman Del Gruppe. It sits in the foot hills of the Alps. Back home in the mountains. They are straight up to the sky. We had to go across this mountain as there was a bridge out. We had to stop 6 or 7 times and unhitch the gun and by hand around this curve. We reach the main road

May 1

from there we move along in line at very slow pace. As they are having firefights all along the road. It has been raining all day and it is damp and cold. We just pass one town where the 350<sup>th</sup> Cannon who have been held prisoners for three or four days. It is getting late around 8, we move up and set up for the night. This mountain weather is darn cold. Our company and the 913<sup>th</sup> Artillery are in the middle of Jerry and no foot troops around.

May 1

We spend another night in a restless manner. But our luck holds. Just before we pull in position along the road was what looks like Jerry supply train drawn by horse - what a job. The place was covered with dead horses and Jerrys and cloths all over the place.

May 2

Up early this morning. They make coffee and we do push ups, everything is all wet. Just throw it in the truck and take off. We travel until about 11 and stop and have breakfast. Move out on the road and catch up with the foot troops and follow them at slow pace ready to stop and get the gun in action if needed. We arrive in this town of pretty good size. While park ? learns that some Jerry General was about to surrender to our

Regimental Commander to ?? his outfit. Another word has come down that 3 hr. armistice has been signed. Not a soul is living in fair size town. The fellows visit the cellars and bring out wine, beer, Groppe (?) in ? most everything to drink. We leave town and set for the last time in E.T.U. Word come down that all Italy has laid down their arms. So we shall have to stay in position until the war is over in Germany.

So the last night of big push we spend in ? by ? house ? few ? ? the gun. No more firing for us. We will have to wait here, so most of the fellows are heating water to wash up. It has been over a month since we had a shower and change of clothes. So I will bring to close in the town of Dudge, Italy.