

Company clerk did more than just type

CULLEN, from Page 1

over a hedge row, and there was a German officer lying on his back. I reached over and poked him with my rifle to make sure he was dead. He didn't move, so I jumped over the hedge and took his guns, a little .22 caliber which fit in the palm of your hand, and the P-38, which I still have."

Cullen said he also cleaned out the soldier's pockets, and took the insignia off of the uniform.

He said he trained with the 103rd division, and left the States on July 3, 1944 for Great Britain. He crossed the English Channel in a landing craft on June 13, and waded through five feet of water to the beach. When Cullen and his comrades reached land, they were strafed by German fighter planes.

"Not much really," he said, "just enough to harass us."

They went up a road and were met by army trucks which would haul them to the front lines.

"There were about 30 of us going to the 4th Division, and we were loaded up in the truck and rolling," he said, "when we were strafed again. The drivers were the first out of the truck, then the rest of us jumped over the sides in the dirt. Luckily, no one was hurt."

Cullen met up with his company a few miles from St. Lo, France. The first sergeant asked the new arrivals if any of them could type.

"Thank God I told him I could," Cullen said. "It made it easier on me."

He became the company clerk. His main job was to register the dead, wounded and injured. He did more

Midnight crawl supplied gun crew

Headquarters, 4th Infantry Division

Subject: Citation to Award of the Bronze Star Medal.

To: Corporal Maurice M. Cullen, 37447773, Company "D," 22nd Infantry.

Citation: Maurice M. Cullen, Corporal, for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against an enemy of the United

States near Buchet, Germany, 6 February 1945. Corporal Cullen was a company clerk in a battalion which was fighting in a heavily mined and shelled area.

The intensity of the enemy action made it impossible to get supplies to the forward machine gun positions by vehicle. Corporal Cullen volunteered to carry the supplies to the forward areas.

Through darkness and intermittent

artillery and small arms fire he brought the vital supplies to the gun crews. His aggressive action enabled the machine gun crews to deliver such effective support to the rifle units that they were able to successfully deliver their attack.

Corporal Cullen's courage and devotion to duty reflect credit upon himself and the military service.

By command of Major General Hays

for three weeks, while both sides were building up for the Battle of the Bulge.

"Before it started, there were a lot of planes flying around," he said. "You couldn't see the sky for all the planes."

The division took heavy losses when the Germans broke through allied lines, Cullen said, and two regiments were almost wiped out. Cullen's regiment, the 12th, held up pretty well, he said.

"We were fortunate," he said. "We were on a right flank and didn't take as many casualties."

Afterwards, he said, he watched about 10,000 captured SS troops being marched to the rear.

"Those were the tough guys," he said. "We knew when we ran into the SS it was going to be a tough fight. It was quite a sight."

The division regrouped, he said, took in fresh batches of replacements, then fell in with Gen. George Patton, and crossed the Rhine into Germany, the first division to do so.

"Not far across the Rhine, we were going through a small town, marching with a single column on each side of the street, and our own fighter planes popped over a hill and strafed us," Cullen said. "Boy, that was a surprise. No one was hit, though."

About three days into Germany, Cullen came down with what he later learned was hepatitis. The company commander carried Cullen in his jeep for a few days, then the medic decided to send him back to the aid station.

A doctor there ordered him to the hospital, Cullen said, and he was taken by train to an airbase, where he was

flown to a makeshift hospital on the Riviera in France.

"I was in the hospital 30 days," Cullen said. "On my way back to meet the division, which was somewhere in Germany, there was a huge fireworks display. We were told the war was over."

"We were all jubilant, to say the least. It was a very exciting time."

When Cullen reached the base where his division was supposed to be, most of the soldiers had already gone home, he said.

"All that was left was the younger soldiers who hadn't earned enough points to go home," he said. "I had enough points, but because I missed out, I had to stay and return home later."

Cullen said he was overseas for exactly a year. He left for Europe on July 3, 1944, and landed July 13, 1944. He left Germany on July 3, 1945, and got to the United States on July 13.

"When I say I was over there for a year," Cullen said, "I really mean, I was over there for a year."

Cullen said sometimes when he was sleeping in a foxhole, he wished he had joined the navy before being drafted by the army.

"In the navy, you get a good place to sleep and good food," he said. "I've always thought that the reason I got sick at the end of the war was because of the food I'd been eating."

Being in World War II was an important part of his life, Cullen said, but it hasn't been his whole life.

"I knew it was something I was going to do, and I did it, but I didn't have a lot of choice," he said. "It was something everyone was doing."

than just type, though. He often delivered ammunition to the machine gun placements when they were under heavy fire.

"The ammo was heavy, about 500 rounds per case," Cullen said. "You crawled on your elbows, and would drag a case in each hand. You didn't want to stand up."

His Bronze Star citation says Cullen volunteered to supply the machine gunners while under heavy small arms and artillery fire.

"Well, you either volunteered, or else," Cullen said.

Cullen said when the Germans retreated from St. Lo, they left behind hundreds of dead horses, which had been used to pull artillery. Army engineers had to bulldoze their way through the dead animals and abandoned carts, Cullen said.

As the division followed the retreat-

ing Germans, they faced small arms fire from enemy bunkers, and the company commander died when he stepped on a land mine about 30 feet from Cullen.

Cullen recalls that one of the soldiers apparently decided he had come far enough, and ran from the battle.

"I know his name, but I'm not going to say it," Cullen said. "The platoon leader turned around and shot him. You can't have people running. If one guy runs, everyone might start running."

Cullen's company found itself bogged down in a forest, with evergreen trees 40- and 50-feet tall, and artillery creating what Cullen calls "tree shrapnel."

"The Germans had a big howitzer, which must have been about three miles from where we were," Cullen said. "They camouflaged it, and moved it on a rail car. They would

move it down the hill and shoot at us at night, then move it back up before daylight. When shells hit those trees, pieces would come flying off, and could really hurt you.

"We covered our foxholes with branches and tree limbs for protection. One lieutenant decided to sleep on top of his branches one night, and got shrapnel in his butt."

Cullen earned his Purple Heart for getting shrapnel hits twice in the leg. "They're just superficial wounds, nothing serious," he said.

After getting through the forest, at a rate of about one mile in six weeks, the division stopped near Luxembourg, its first rest from fighting for 199 days.

"I went with the sergeant and another guy about 20 miles to Luxembourg and stopped in a beer joint," Cullen said. "That first beer sure tasted good."

Cullen said the division stayed there

Authorities, friends find it hard to believe college student is a bomber

RENO, Nev. (AP) — Friends can't believe it and even local law enforcement officials admit the college student from Minnesota accused in a string of pipe bombings doesn't strike them as the typical terrorist.

"He looks like the average college kid from the Midwest," Washoe County Sheriff Dennis Balaam said of Lucas John Helder, 21, who is accused of placing homemade bombs in mail-

boxes in five states.

"He's a quiet, polite, well-behaved, well-mannered kind of kid. When I talked with him, he shook my hand and called me sir," the sheriff told the Associated Press in Reno.

Authorities were left to reconcile that portrait with the young man they said confessed to making 24 pipe bombs out of tape, paper clips and Christmas tree bulbs. Six people were

injured from the bombs, which were packed with smokeless gunpowder and BBs or nails.

The FBI said Helder placed 18 of the devices in mailboxes in Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Colorado and Texas, along with anti-government notes. Helder had six bombs with him when he was arrested Tuesday, authorities said.

"He indicated to FBI agents he knew people would be injured if these pipe

bombs were detonated," Assistant U.S. Attorney Craig Denney said Wednesday.

Helder faces federal charges in four states. At a brief hearing in Reno on Wednesday, he was ordered held without bail for transfer to Iowa, where he was scheduled for an initial court appearance Friday. The Marshals Service in Cedar Rapids could not confirm when he would arrive. Helder could be

sent to prison for life if convicted.

U.S. District Court Magistrate Robert McQuaid Jr. denied a request to release Helder to the custody of his parents. "It's apparent to me that he suffers from some apparent mental health problems," McQuaid said.

Asked by the judge if he understood that he does not have to make any statement, Helder replied, "most definitely." Asked if he understood that any

statements he made can be used against him, he replied, "for sure."

The public defender said Helder was willing to face the charges.

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