

Tuesday, 29th August 1995

Dear Ruud

I'm a little late in answering your letters. Yes, I received the pictures on the 16th of February. They were very good and help to complete my photo album of Christmas at "De Chark". I don't know when any of us from WW-II will get back to Maastricht. Perhaps in a year or two. I'll let you know when we do. As you remember, I was the only one to come back at Christmas time. It is very difficult to get anyone to go at Christmas. Also, everyone is getting a little old. I would like to come back one more time at Christmas in three or four years if I can get someone else to come with me.

You ask me about my experiences during the war. That would take too long to do. But will give you a short sketch. You must remember that the 127th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion had four Batteries of 90mm guns. Each gun weighed 9 1/2 tons. And each Battery had four guns. The American 90mm's were equivalent or better than the German 88's. We first saw action and did most of our shooting on the white cliffs of Dover. Our Battalion shot down about 89 Buzz Bombs [V-1 Flying Bombs] in August and September of '44. We were also shelled very heavily from the German 16-in guns across the channel near Calais. We were subsequently stationed around Longres for a short while; moved on to Geilenkirchen area of Germany north of Aachen, but had few targets to shoot at. One Battery helped out with Field Artillery assignments. Just before the Battle of the Bulge, my Battery moved to Gulpen to shoot Buzz Bombs again. However we were never allowed to engage them for fear of dropping them on you local Dutch townspeople. On December the 19th the Battalion was assigned to provide heavy AA to defend the outer reaches of Liege, and bridges at Vise. My Battery was stationed just outside of Gravenvoeren. We were bombed a couple of times and shot at a number of German planes. Some of our Batteries were further south near Liege and fired on German tanks. Many Buzz Bombs flew over, but we were never allowed to shoot at them. On January 9th, 1945 we were moved to one kilometer north of Huisden and stayed there until the 2nd of March engaging still more German planes. On that day we were moved to a place one or two miles north of Maastricht. We were assigned anti-tank positions, but there was no action. On the 10th we pulled up and followed the Ninth Army to Hoenchengladbach until the 27th of March; after that crossing the Rhine at Wesel and defended the 'Bridghead' until April 17th. We moved on to Gutersloh and ended the war on the 23rd of April. Our men were killed and eight wounded at Dover from shelling. One other man was killed and no others were wounded near the end of the war.

I hope this gives you a little flavor of where we were at and what we did.

Sincerely
Allan English