

C O P Y

Historical Section, G-1
Hq. V Corps, APO 305
% Postmaster, New York City

20 June 1944

Lt. Col. John M. Kemper
Historical Section
War Department, G2
The Pentagon
Washington, D. C.

Dear Colonel Kemper:

In accordance with instructions given before we left Washington, I am writing this letter direct to you in regard to our progress in historical work to date.

Colonel Taylor will have told you the major details of our progress up until the time we went to Corps. He has told you, I am sure, that I was assigned to this Headquarters with Lt. W. J. Fox of Hq ETOUSA. Lt. Fox was in the historical group at ETOUSA for some 7 or 8 months before we came over. He was a UP man in New York before entering the army. He came over here in 1942 with one of the units here and had been in a line company until coming to ETOUSA Hq. In the historical section, he had an opportunity to go on several exercises and to visit most of the units in England. As soon as we were paired off together we had a frank talk concerning War Department and ETOUSA ideas and I believe that we have succeeded in reconciling any differences in viewpoints which might be involved in having personnel from two different sections.

On reaching our Corps we set about getting firmly established. The Chief of Staff and Colonel Patterson had us draw up a memorandum which was sent out as a Corps memorandum to the lower units explaining our work. The draft was made by Lt. Fox and I made a few additions. It went out in much the same form that it was written. You will note from the copy that I am enclosing that it makes clear that we are both combat historians. Lt. Fox has always drawn to the attention of everyone that we are collaborators and we attend most conferences together. Most of our decisions are reached after the two of us have discussed matters together. This has made my situation a congenial one .

In order that we might have some space in which to work, the Chief of Staff attached us to G-1. It was made clear that we were not to serve as regular members of the section and no effort has been made to require specific duties of us. We offered to help in a pinch and we have put our typewriter at their disposal on occasion. Otherwise, we are pretty much free agents. This has been possible largely because we

were almost entirely self-reliant in the matter of equipment. We have no organic transportation, but Lt. Fox discussed the matter with the Commandant here and so far, we have been provided with jeeps when we needed them. In England, they once turned over to him a jeep for five days and one to me for three. We try not to abuse the privilege. On several occasions, we have made trips with liaison officers and at other times have gone on special trips with Major McKnight, who is over from Washington.

While in England, the Lieutenant went to two major units and I went to two in order to make contacts with unit historians. We got their names, saw the records they were keeping and got promises of help. I showed some of them the Bizerte pamphlet and they seemed interested in the idea, although some thought it should be at division level and all believed that it should be distributed to all troops who took part in the action described. We were also asked for a check list to follow. Unfortunately, we were preparing to leave at the time, but I drafted a list from material which I had studied in Washington and Lt. Fox, after making some changes, sent it back for distribution. This was changed considerably, but was sent to lower units for their guidance. I don't believe that they got it before moving out, however. It is unfortunate that we did not have more time with the units before coming over, because we find that in those cases where we made friends ahead of time, the path has been made easy.

In coming over, we were put with several liaison officers and a War Department representative, Major McKnight, who knows you. They have been very helpful.

in We were in the forward echelon, but did not come/immediately. However, we got a ringside seat for some of the naval shelling and got a good picture of the beach from $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles out. I tried to make a rough estimate of tonnage in sight and one or two fellows of our party made some rough sketches of the ships.

Once over here we set about assuring ourselves that records here were in proper shape. There are some gaps on the first day, but otherwise they seem to be in excellent form. After checking on this we visited the beach to get an idea of the landing. The other day we drove over all of it with the Army historian and with an historian who is writing the Engineers' history. We located a number of the points on our maps and I took time to pace off one part of the beach. Both Lt. Fox and I explained some of the things we needed to an artist who is doing sketches for the historical section. Lt. Fox saw still another one and gave him some special jobs to do. Unfortunately, we have no camera, but Capt. Ferriss took three pictures as he came in.

We have inspected most of the emplacements which have been cleared and have visited some observation posts inland.

On our second day here, we began to contact units which landed early. The Lt. and I went to one of the Hq and started the task of reconstructing the story of the landing. I went to one of the regiments and moved slowly all the way down to each company in it, talking to the privates, noncoms and many of the officers. I have made no attempt to get to general officers, since it is somewhat easier for the Lt. to make those contacts and since they are rather busy. Two of the units we want to see have been on the move almost constantly. We state our business without being apologetic and without being intrusive. Most of them have some idea of our program (from the memorandum) and indicate willingness to help. We try not to disturb them. If a man is digging, we take our notes on the side of the foxhole; if he is cleaning his rifle, we borrow some patches and work on our weapon too. I got lots of information from some soldiers by acting as interpreter for them and I found that one day when I carried along a bottle of wine which had been given me, it helped to gain entree.

The lieutenant has several friends among correspondents over here and they have given him some leads. I ran into Ernie Pyle, Jack Thompson, Whitehead and another correspondent the other day. They asked me about our work and seemed interested.

There has been no trouble in getting men to talk seriously about this action. I tell them what I want to know and they begin to call in noncoms and officers to help settle vague points. Sometimes 10 or 15 will be gathered around. We drag out maps and they point out the way they came over the ridge and then reached their present objective. We carry our rations, but we are usually invited in. At various Hq we have found the personnel helpful. One Sgt. saw to it that several officers gave us their stories, while they were stopping by at his place.

Our work has not been completely satisfactory to us, despite our good fortune in some matters. We have been unable to contact some of the units because they are moving. It is difficult for the two of us to cover all that we should like to cover, but we are trying to enlist the help of competent people at each unit who will do much of the work for us.

We are living in the field and naturally find, as others did in the Pacific and Italy, that much of our time is taken up in living and moving. We have no trouble in persuading the troops that we understand something of their experience, since we look about as battle worn as they do.

The special equipment you got for us has been of great help.

I have seen Capt. Ferriss, but find that Garth is not yet over. Lt. Fox is going to see Ruppenthal today.

For the most part, we have received complete cooperation and we should be able to get some interesting parts of the story. We were not set up soon enough to get a 100% story, however. For the moment, however, "we are doing about as well as could be expected", which is the old time medical diagnosis that frightens about as much as it consoles.

I am enjoying my work and I want to thank you for the opportunity to be over.

Sincerely,

/s/ Forrest C. Pogue
Sgt. Forrest C. Pogue
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