



*(Above) 348th Combat Engineering Battalion Company A working on bridge spanning the Sieg River outside Siegburn, March 1945.*

*(Below) Members of the 348th Combat Engineering Battalion at a U.S. Army depot in Siegburg, Germany.*



lying about their involvement with Nazi ideology and support for Hitler. By May, as the war winds down, his letters home become more thoughtful and sympathetic to the civilians who had suffered over five years of war. The letters also reveal a humorous and playful side. In one April 17 letter home to his sister Dorothy, Frederick boasts, with a great deal of exaggeration, about his brave exploits in capturing German soldiers.

Some of the most compelling letters are from April 1945. Frederick's letters give voice to the scenes of defeated German soldiers surrendering the emaciated slave laborers and concentration camp victims, and, most of all, the shattered lives of civilians and innocent children. The tone of the letters become more serious and thoughtful as he reflects on the pervasiveness of Nazi ideology among the German people. For the first time he experiences war as a conqueror. Unlike Belgium in 1944, where they were received as liberators, he and other GIs were perceived by German civilians as the victorious enemy. In one April 22 letter Frederick, speaking of the German civilians he encounters, states "50% despise us and the other 50% fear us."

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Somewhere in Germany

March 10, 1945

Dear Dot,

I'm still doing fine and dandy. Mail call really caught up with me last night. I received your letters of Feb 23 and 28th, letters from the fellows and a letter from Lt. Waldron. I have been receiving all the newspapers regularly.

I suppose you have been reading of our sensational work. We all are enthused. We are like a football team that has the ball on a touchdown drive. We took the ball on the one yard line and we carried it up to our fifty and now we are pounding deep into enemy territory. This is the touchdown drive and any day our next play will be the touch down play.