

PATRICK SEAWRIGHT
LT. COL. F.A.

Savannah, Ga.
Feb. 5, 1946

Dear Mr. Crawford:

Thank you for your letter which finally reached me at my home. I left the 197th in Germany on the 30th of June. The battalion was on the move from date until it arrived at Fort Jackson, S.C. in September. The battalion was inactivated on November 25.

I will try to give you an account of the part your son played in the achievement of the battalion and of the 30th Infantry Division (the 197th was a part of the 30th Div.).

Your son joined us during the first part of October 1943, while the 30th Div. was on Tennessee Maneuvers. He had been with the 87th Div., which had just completed the same maneuvers. I was impressed with the way in which he went right to work.

His first assignment was Assistant Communications Officer in the Headquarters Battery. Captain J. P. Costello (address 21-44 74th St., Jackson Heights, Long Island, New York). He knew what had to be done and did it. It wasn't necessary for him to have the usual orientation period.

After Tennessee Maneuvers, the 30th Division was sent to Camp Atterbury, Indiana, where it completed its training prior to going overseas. We left Atterbury on Feb. 2, 1944 going to Camp Myles Standish, Mass. (near Boston) where we were staged, that is we received such clothing and equipment that we were to take overseas. On Feb 11 we entrained for the docks at Boston and boarded the U.S.A.T. Brazil. On board besides the 197th was the 119th Infantry Regiment, our combat team partner, that is the infantry regiment that we were teamed with and supported thru out the war. Also some elements of the 105th Engr. Battalion, 105 Medical Battalion, 30th Division Artillery Headquarters. All these units were a part of the 30th Division. There were a few other units aboard besides division units. In all there were 5100 troops on board. The remainder of the 30th Division were on the John Erickson and the Argentina. We left Boston on Feb. 12 in the first large troop convoy to leave the States, about 150,000. After an uneventful voyage we docked at Liverpool, England, on Feb. 22. We stayed on board 2 days awaiting train transportation to our bivouac area. Then early on the 25th we entrained at Liverpool and that night detrained at a station near Horsham, Sussex, and went to our camp, called Five Oaks about 7 miles west of Horsham. The camp was of Nissen Hut construction. The officers quarters were at the Manor house, the home of Lady Fielding.

At Five Oaks, I was further impressed with your son's ability. Captain Costello was in the hospital for about 2 weeks and Lt. Crawford assumed command of the Battery during his absence. At this time we were changing our radio methods and Lt. Crawford held the classes, explained and taught us the new procedure. Communications is one of the most important part of an artillery's ability to function properly and the grounding and there way in which we were instructed by your son paid dividends later in combat on the continent.

When the invasion became imminent, the troops in the south of England were moved out to make room for the ones who were to make the initial assault. So around the 1st of April we moved to Bowerwood Camp just south of Beaconsfield, Bucks, about 40 miles west of London in the beautiful Thames valley country. Here we continued training, spending a week at Dumwich on the North Sea, firing in combined tactics with 119th Infantry. Then we spent another week at the artillery range near Tilshead in the south central portion of England. Here we fired with the other artillery components of the XIXth Corps, of which the 30th Division was a part. The 30th was also a part of the First Army and remained with it until the Ninth Army was formed.

On the 10th of June the battalion loaded up and started for France. It was necessary to strip down and had to leave approximately 1/3 of our vehicles to join us later, Lt. Crawford stayed with these vehicles and personnel. The battalion went to Southampton and was in one of the staging areas near the docks. Each battery went on a different vessel, some on L.S.T.s and others on Liberty ships. "A" Battery was the first part of the battalion to land, this was on the 13th. Part of the Headquarters Battery landed on the 14th and the rest of the battalion landed on the 15th. The rear detachment, which was in the charge of Lt. Crawford joined us on the 16th or 17th. We all landed on famous Omaha Beach and that portion known as Dog Red.

Our first position was about 1-1/2 miles west of the bridge on the road between Isigny and Carentan. Our first mission was reinforcing the fires of the 230 F.A. Bn. supporting the attack of the 120th Infantry Regiment to push the Germans back of the Vire et Taut Canal.

After this successful attack, the American troops in this area went into a defensive position, awaiting the arrival of sufficient troops and supplies for a major offensive. On the arrival of the rest of the 30th Div. the 119th Infantry took up position along the east bank of the Vire River, north and south of Airel, France. The 197th was in position along the road between Airel and Lison about 1 mile east of Airel. We remained in these positions until the build up was completed and

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the attack was resumed on July 7. During this time Lt. Crawford went out as a forward observer and did an excellent job. On the 7th the division crossed the Vire River and the 119th was committed on the 8th. Lt. Crawford went with one of the rifle companies of the 119th as an artillery forward observer.

About July 13, the battalion needed a liaison officer and for this important job Lt. Crawford was selected. He was Liaison Officer with the 3rd Battalion, 119th Infantry, Lt. Col. Brown, commanding. A liaison officer of artillery is the artillery adviser of the infantry battalion commander. He supervises and coordinates the work of the forward observers with the infantry companies of the battalion (there are 3 rifle companies, 1 heavy weapon company and headquarters company). It is his job to plan the fires (artillery) for the infantry attack and to see that proper fires are set up to protect the infantry when not attacking. He keeps the artillery commander advised as to the location of the different elements of the infantry. Lt. Crawford's work with the 3rd battalion was outstanding. His handling of the artillery fire aided materially the advance of the 3rd from Belle Lande, thru Le Mesnil Durand to the stream just north of Hebecrevon. After getting to the line before St. Lo, the U.S. Forces waited until the weather cleared to allow proper air support. So on the 25th, the division jumped off, with the 119's mission to take Hebecrevon and move on south toward Tessy-sur-Vire. The 3rd battalion had the toughest assignment, having to move up hill to the town. But by nightfall of the 25th, the town was taken. The next morning, the 3rd battalion C.P. where Crawford was, was in a field in front of the church at Hebecrevon and one of the heaviest barrages of German artillery landed in this field and it was here that Lt. Crawford and his Liaison Corporal Charlie H. Parker were killed.

The citation Lt. Crawford received, I believe was for his outstanding work in aiding the infantry to take the town of Le Mesnil Durand.

The fighting during the period July 7-26 was the fiercest that the division encountered during the whole campaign. The hedge rows often only 75 or 100 yards apart afforded excellent defensive positions and the Germans took advantage of all this and made the Allies pay dearly for the ground gained. But the breakout from these hedge rows was the finish of the Germans, altho it took almost 10 months more for them to be convinced.

The position your son held called for a captaincy and he would have been promoted as rapidly as regulations would have permitted.

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I haven't the battalion records at hand and this account has been entirely from memory, so excuse the sketchiness. I expect to get some of the records later.

Lt. H. O. Connor address is F.A.R.T.C., Ft. Bragg, N.C.

In closing I wish you to know that your son was a credit to the organization. His determination, fearlessness and ability stood us in good stead when such qualities were really needed.

I am enclosing a copy of the Memorial Service program, this Memorial was held in the church at Wegeleben, Germany, shortly after V-E Day.

If there is any point that I've been too hazy on, if you'll write, I'll try to get the correct information.

Sincerely,

Pat Seawright