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**The following radio script appeared on the program COMBAT DIARY for Sunday April 1, 1945. It was handled through the Public Relations Office, 435th Troop Carrier Group, by Joel O'Brien of the Office of War Information.

O'BRIEN: This is Joel O'Brien of the American Broadcasting Station in Europe speaking from Supreme Hqs in Paris....Here in the studio tonight are two glider pilots who figured in the recent assault East of the Rhine with the 435th Troop Carrier Group. They are Lt. Floyd W. Hand, acting commanding officer of the Group's 3rd platoon, and Flight Officer Elbert D. Jella. Not only did the pilots of this group ferry in airborne troops, but they stayed to fight through the night, forming a platoon composed entirely of officers....Lt. Hand, how did this come about?

HAND: Well, this was the first time in glider operations that the pilots were assigned a definite job after landing. We landed about 10 miles East of the Rhine and our job was to establish a road-block at an important junction near Wesel, to prevent the Nazis from retreating as the British pushed them toward us from the Rhine. All of us, but mainly the airborne troops, were to clean up and hold an area about four miles square.

O'BRIEN: How did things look when you first hit the ground?

HAND : Things looked as hot as I ever want to see them. We went down through tracers and flak. One of my boys was hit. And when we hit the ground there seemed to be lead coming from everywhere. But it died down like a summer squall. Even before I could get out of my glider I saw nine or ten Jerries piling out of a house with their hands up shouting, "Kamerad!". Within an hour, most of my pilots had come together at the assembly area and we already had about a hundred prisoners, plus civilians.

O'BRIEN: How did the Nazi soldiers look?

HAND : They looked in very good condition, young, clean uniforms. And they were well prepared for attack. They had chest high trenches from house to house, and field to field. Lots of ammunition, lots of 88's. But they still seemed eager to surrender. And I can't tell you it didn't make us at all mad. We had mainly small arms, sub-machine guns, automatic rifles. But luckily, Flight Officer Jella here had a bazooka.

O'BRIEN: It sounds as though you got a chance to use it, Mr. Jella.

JELLA : Yes, I did. It was around midnight. Everything had been quiet but we were well dug in along both sides of the road. Then far away down the road we heard the clank of tank treads and got ready for action. There were about 75 to a hundred Jerries with the tank, but when they let go with their high velocity machine guns, flak guns, and yelling their heads off, they sounded like a regiment. I remember the tracers over my fox hole were so thick they looked like mosquito netting. The tank was letting go with its 88 and jockeying in nearer and nearer. I was afraid to fire the bazooka at a distance, so I waited until it was about 15 yards away. And at that distance it looked like a mountain.

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I fired a round and felt the blast as it exploded. The tank caught fire and retreated. And luckily the Jerries on foot retreated with it. The fight had lasted about half an hour in all. The rest of the night we just sweated it out, waiting for dawn.

O'BRIEN: What were the results of the fight?

JELLA: Well, when it got light enough to see, we found fifteen dead and twenty wounded. We had suffered only three light casualties. We felt that we had done pretty well, but an xx airborne artillery officer who had been farther behind us in the night said, "Why the devil didn't you let that tank go through. I had a new weapon I wanted to try out!"

O'BRIEN: That's not much thanks, is it...What impression did you get from the civilians in that area?

JELLA: Well, the old man and his family in the house behind us were helpful and matter of fact about the whole thing. Of his own accord, he brought us straw for the bottom of our fox holes and the next morning his wife brought out coffee and indicated we could wash in their kitchen. The old man pointed to the crosses on the hill and asked, "Americaniche?" I shook my head. Then he said, "Deutcher?" and I said yes. That seemed to be the extent of his interest. By and large the civilians seemed disinterested. They paid absolutely no attention to their own soldiers, and little to ours. There was no demonstration of any kind.

O'BRIEN: And how did both of you like being artillerymen for the night?

HAND: It was okay--now that it's all over! But I feel safer in the air!

O'BRIEN: Well, thank you Lt. Floyd Hand and Flight Officer Jella for telling us about the first all-officer platoon. This is Joel O'Brien of the American Broadcasting Station in Europe speaking from Supreme Hq in Paris....I return you now to London.

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The entire story of the battle that Flight Officer Jella and Lt. Floyd Hand were involved was dubbed the "Battle of Burp Gun Corner." The book the *BATTLE OF BURP GUN CORNER* tells the complete story of the battle including more narrative about what happened by the Officers who fought this epic battle. Also included are exceptional photos taken by these men. All proceeds from the book support the Silent Wings Museum.

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