

The Hand of God

*By LeRoy "Pete" Peterson
As told to Tricia Goyer*

There are many memories of war that last a lifetime. Memories of buddies lost right before one's eyes, of prisoners, of battle. Sometimes these memories meet me at the strangest times, but there's one memory above all that has changed me forever.



Bastogne, and the Battle of the Bulge, can be considered no picnic. I was wounded there, and I remember sixty years ago as if it were yesterday. Our unit had been corralled in a low area. I was a medic, and this is where we'd based our headquarters.

As a medic, you go where you're needed. One day we received a radio message that they were desperate for medics in the next town. The infantry had taken severe punishment, and they'd lost two medical men who'd been shot.

My medical officer approached me. "Come on, Pete, we've got to move out."

I'd been over talking to a couple radio operators, my good buddies. I said goodbye to my friends. Then I jumped into the jeep as the driver, with Major Harold G. Stacy beside him, and we headed off. But to get to the next town we had to cross a high point, a very high point. We didn't know it at that time, but the Germans had that area pegged with their big 88 guns.



As we hit the top of that hill, a gun shell went over us. It landed about 50 feet away—at the most. The next one landed right in front of us. We knew then we had to abandon ship. The Major jumped out one side, and I dove out the other. On my side of the road I spotted the slightest gully, and into it I jumped.

I knew I had little protection and figured I was a goner since the Germans were firing from my side. Then, something amazing happened. As I lay there, I felt someone pushing on my back, pushing me deeper into the ground and telling me to get down.

Rounds three, four, and five landed on the jeep. There was nothing left. But as I lay in that ditch I had a sensation of protection, one I'll never forget. When it was over, blood dripped from my nose and ears.

The Major was okay, but I had concussion problems from the

shells that shook the ground. It took five days of rest before I could resume my duties. And even though I looked fine on the outside, something had changed within.

I'd been a Christian since I was a small child, but I had even greater faith after feeling the protection of the Lord pressing upon me. I'm still a strong Christian today because of that experience. Many people can deny the fact that God exists, but not me. I've felt His hand . . . and heard His whisper in the midst of war.

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