

Blood and Fire

Vol. 1. No. 28

63D INFANTRY DIVISION, CAMP VAN DORN, MISS.

December 25, 1943

Merry Christmas



Today the spirit which has moved the civilized world to celebrate Christmas for hundreds of years and the spirit which rends that world in war seem far removed from each other. As indeed they should, the thoughts of the combat soldier turn from training camp and battlefield to the memory of other, happier Christmas days. To hold that memory for the world and to make possible a universal peace, we are here and our comrades in arms are scattered over land and sea. We study the soldier's art and keep the soldier's faith that we and those we love may foregather again in the safe assurance of a world of good will to men.

On this, the first Christmas on which it has been my privilege to greet the officers and men of the 63d Infantry Division, I extend my wish for happiness and peace of mind; on the threshold of our first New Year together, I join you in wishing success for our common aim, vigor for its accomplishment, and pride in the future it will bring.

LOUIS E. HIBBS
Major General, U. S. Army,
Commanding

W. J. Wilke 43

MAN

1943 Marked Birth and Training of 63d

Review of the 63d Division's Year's Progress

About the same time that President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and other Allied military leaders were meeting at Casablanca to plan the ultimate defeat of our enemies, General Headquarters of the U. S. Army in Washington set in motion the machinery which formed the Blood and Fire (63d) Division.

It was in February, 1943, that the War Department notified a select group of officers that they had been selected to lead a new division to be numerically known as the 63d Infantry Division. To Washington in early March came Brig. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs, Division commander, Col. Frederick M. Harris, Asst. Division Commander, and Col. Edward J. McGaw, Artillery Commander. They conferred with War Department officials and met Lt. Col. Earle G. Wheeler, chief of staff. It was while these first conferences were being held that other members of the General Staff—the key men in the organization, training and operation of the Division, were being picked.

With the General Staff would come the various regimental commanders, the artillerymen, medics, engineers, chaplains, signal and finance officers, special service, a postal officer, and officers to man the ordnance component and the Judge Advocate General's Department. There was also need for

dentists, for Provost Marshals, Quartermasters, and more.

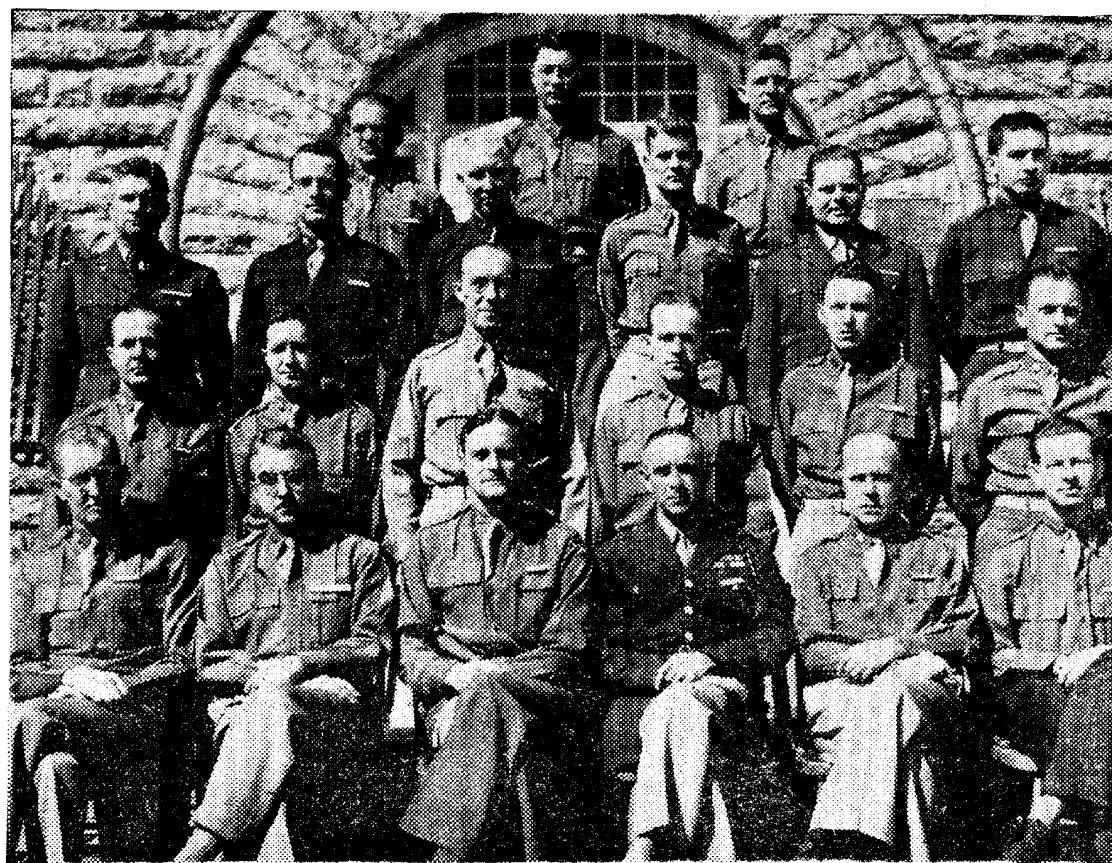
The officers who were destined to lead the 63d were picked from a number of different organizations. They came from every branch of the service, and from stations in every quarter of the nation and from overseas. Some came from the Seventy-sixth Division, the Eightieth, the Ninetieth, the Ninety-eighth, the 100th and other divisions and departments. Some came from Replacement Training Centers and Armored Force Units—from New York, Alabama, Georgia, Washington, from Texas, and from Tennessee.

The key men of the Division were selected in various ways. Some, as with original General Staff composed of Lt. Col. Gordon M. Eyer, Maj. John M. Hardaway, Maj. John E. Brooks, Jr., Maj. Frank T. Ritter, and the Regimental Commanders, Col. Paul W. Mapes, 253d Inf., Col. Paul T. Baker, 254th Inf., and Col. Paul Tombaugh, 255th, were all picked by the Commanding General of the Army Ground Forces.

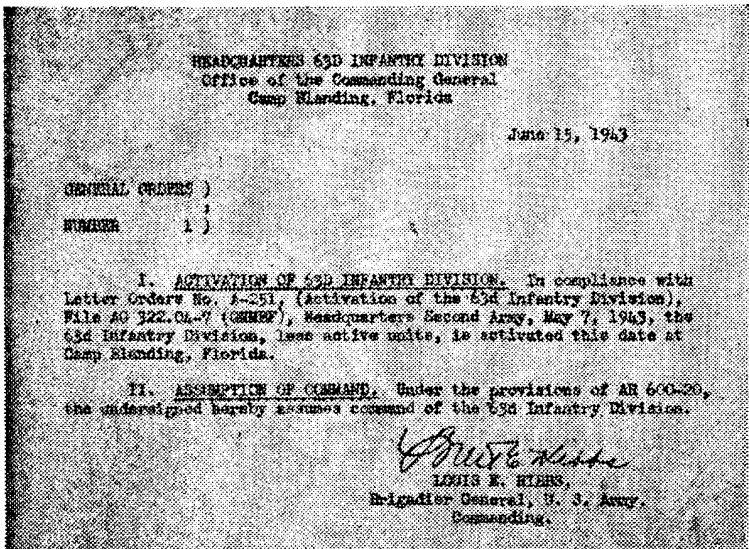
98th Is Parent Division

Others were designated by the chiefs of their departments. Thus, the ranking Engineer Officer, Maj. Jack L. Coan, was called back from South America by the Chief of Engineers to join the Division. Thus also, the ranking Finance officer was selected by the Chief of Finance; the ranking Ordnance Officer by the Chief of Ordnance; the ranking Quartermaster Chemical Warfare, and Signal Officers by the Chiefs of the respective agencies to which they belonged.

The Parent Division, the Ninety-eighth, had meanwhile selected from among its own officers the bulk of the small unit commanders, such as company and battery commanders, and the staff officers



DIVISION staff attended the Command and General Staff School at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., prior to the activation of the 63d. Front row, left to right: Maj. John E. Brooks, Jr., Asst. Chief of Staff, G-1; Lt. Col. John M. Hardaway, Asst. Chief of Staff, G-2; Col. Earle G. Wheeler, Chief of Staff; Brig. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs, Division Commander; Lt. Col. Lucien F. Wells, Jr., former Asst. Chief of Staff, G-3; Lt. Col. Frank T. Ritter, Asst. Chief of Staff, G-4. Second row: Maj. Ralph Lavorgna, Adjutant General; Lt. Col. Elmer L. Thompson, Quartermaster; Lt. Col. Harold O. Pinther, former Inspector General; Maj. Joseph R. Cumming, Judge Advocate; Maj. Charles W. Gibbs, Signal Officer; Lt. Col. Jack L. Coan, Div. Engineer. Third row: Lt. Col. George G. Guiteras, Div. Surgeon; Lt. Col. Frederick C. Johnson, Ordnance Officer; Maj. Glenn Y. Williamson, Chemical Officer; Lt. William M. Gwynn, Jr., Adjutant Hq. Sp. Trps.; Maj. Paul H. Smith, Provost Marshal; Maj. John P. Reames, former Hq. Co. commander. Back row: Maj. Abe Kramer, Actg. Asst. Chief of Staff, G-2; Maj. R. A. Nichols, Actg. Asst. Chief of Staff, G-3; and Maj. Leslie W. McMahon, Actg. Asst. Chief of Staff, G-4. Similar groups were at Ft. Benning, Ga., with the then Col. Fredrick M. Harris, Assistant Division Commander, and at Ft. Sill, Okla., with the then Col. Edward J. McGaw, Artillery Commander.



ACTUAL TEXT of Activation order read by then Brig. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs at Division's Activation, June 15, is shown above.

for the regiments and battalions. From the Ninety-eighth, also, were to come the enlisted men who would form the nucleus around which the new Division would be built.

Having selected the key officers, the men who were going to command the various units of the Division and man the staffs of the unit commanders, the next job was to prepare these men for the responsible positions they had been called to. So back to school they went. All of them, from the Division Commander down to the newest second lieutenant were assigned to various Army schools for advanced or refresher courses.

The Division Commander, the Assistant Division Commander, the Chief of Artillery and the Chief of Ordnance School and the Ordnance School in the East. From there they traveled west to the

Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., where they were met by the officers of the General Staff.

Nothing was left to chance. While the Division Commander was yet in the East, plans were being laid at the Fort Leavenworth school to assist him in his huge task of organizing a division. An instructor was sent from the school to make a detailed study of Camp Blanding, where it was planned to activate the Division. Back to Fort Leavenworth with him he brought maps of the Camp, reports on the size and condition of the buildings and areas available to the Division, information about local towns and cities, about housing, liquor, prostitution, recreation, transportation, schools, hospitals, and all about the thousand and one things necessary for the com-

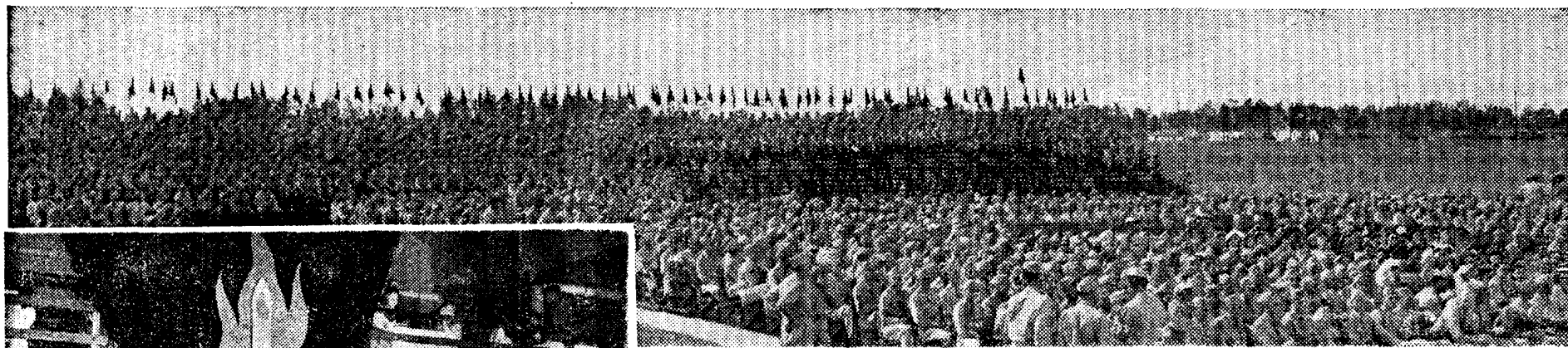
mander of a large unit to know.

Thus, when Gen. Hibbs and his assistants arrived at Fort Leavenworth, a huge mass of carefully compiled information was awaiting him. Assisting him in the digestion of this mass of material were the instructors of the Staff and Command School, men who had gained wide experience in such work in the organizing of countless other divisions before the Sixty-third. It was at Fort Leavenworth that the first detailed plans for the new division were set up.

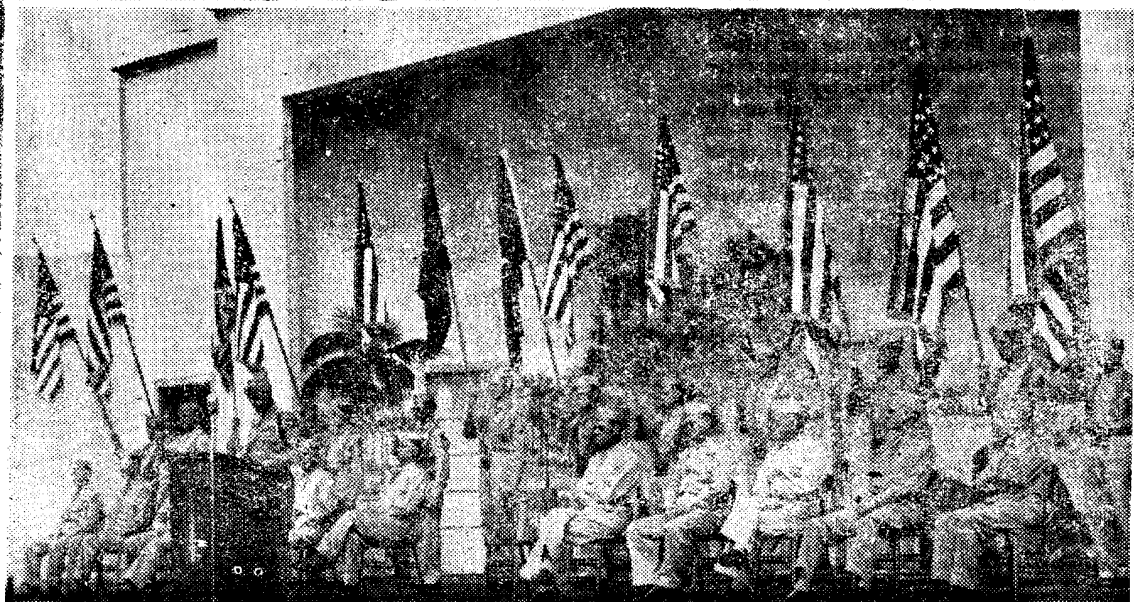
Many Schools Attended

In other Army schools similar aid was being given. At the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga., the regimental commanders and their staffs were listening to the latest reports from the battlefronts of the world. At the Field Artillery

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ACTIVATION DAY was a big affair as photo at top shows. At right, Staff sits before massed flags as Gen. Louis E. Hibbs reads Activation Order. Above—Division bandmen entertain at dance held evening of Activation.



Boxing Training a Help To McGaw, Arty Comm.

He Won't Pull Any of His Punches When He Meets Japs, Nazis

Throw a pair of rough, tough amateur boxers in the squared circle, give Brig. Gen. Edward J. McGaw a ringside seat and the Division Artillery Commander is a happy man.

An ardent follower of the simon-pures since the days of his youth, Gen. McGaw holds a distinction probably owned by few officers or enlisted men of Uncle Sam's Army—that of having boxed his way out of a six-month hitch in Honolulu.

Always pretty good with the gloves, the General, then a 2d Lieutenant, was growing just a little tired of service in Honolulu in 1924 and decided that the quickest and easiest way for him to return to the States was to make the Army Olympic boxing team.

Won Boxing Title

Campaigning in the lightweight class, he managed to do just that, battling his way through all opposition to take the island title.

His return to the States to participate in the championships at Baltimore wasn't quite as successful, he said. The General ruefully admits meeting defeat at the hands of a private in the opening of the Oriole City bouts.

Born in Philadelphia, Pa., on February 13, 1901, Gen. McGaw attended New Mexico Normal School at Silver Lake, N. M., and the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, where he was a classmate of Brig. Gen. Frederick M. Harris, Assistant Division Commander. Graduating from the Point in 1920, the General went to Fort Knox, Ky., to attend the Field Artillery Basic School there and take the school's one-year course—a course he completed in August, 1921.

Schofield Barracks, Honolulu, was the General's next stop and he remained there until 1924, when he returned to the States to participate in the amateur battling at Baltimore. Reporting to Ft. Lewis, Wash., as a member of the 10th Field Artillery, McGaw spent the remainder of '24 and part of '25 at that station, going from there to West Point, where he became an instructor of mathematics.

Five Years at West Point

At the Point five years, he reported to the 82d Field Artillery Battalion at Fort Bliss, Tex., in the summer of 1930, remaining there four years before going to Fort Leavenworth, Kan., to take the last two-year course given at the Command and General Staff School.

It was back to West Point in 1936—this time as Assistant Professor of Mathematics. Three years later the General went to the Army War College in Washington, D. C. There one year, he left to organize the 1st Battalion of the 20th Field Artillery—an element of the Fourth Division—at Fort Benning, Ga., also remaining there a year before going on to Fort Bragg to take command of the 7th Field Artillery Observation Battalion.

In July, 1942, the then Col. McGaw reported to Headquarters, Army Ground Forces, in Washington, where he served as Assistant G-3, holding that position until ordered to report to the 63d Division.

Married and the father of a mar-



BRIG. GEN. EDWARD J. MCGAW

ried daughter, the General long has been a rabid sports enthusiast, playing all team sports during his

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63D DIV. BORN, TRAINED IN '43

(Continued From Page 2.)

School in Fort Sill, Okla., the Field Artillery Battalion commanders and their staffs were learning the newest artillery techniques—the techniques that put the Afrika Korps on the run at El Alamein and Gafsa. And the same thing was going on at the Medical Field Service School, at the Signal School, at the Engineers School, at the Adjutant General's School, and at the Chaplain's School.

On May 3rd the first contingent of the Sixty-third arrived at Camp Blanding. This group consisted of the division commander and his staff—nineteen officers in all—plus chauffeurs, seven of them. Other officers began to arrive soon after.

Units Given Numerals

Unit numerals had been assigned to the various subdivisions of the Sixty-third by the War Department when the division had first been planned. The infantry units were to be known as the 253d, the 254th, the 255th Infantry Regiments. To the artillery had been assigned the unit numerals of the 861st, the 862d, the 863d, and the 718th Field Artillery Battalions. There were also the 363d Medical Battalion, the 263d Engineer Battalion, the 763d Ordnance Co., the 563d Signal Co., the 63d Quartermaster Co., the 63d Reconnaissance Troop and 63rd Military Police Platoon.

On May 8th the first large group of men arrived. They were the cooks and mess sergeants, the M. P.'s, and postal workers, and the officer cadre—all from the Ninety-eighth. The stream of arrivals widened as the Quartermaster and maintenance personnel arrived a week later. With them came the rest of the enlisted cadre.

On May 24th the officers who were to compose the bulk of the division officer personnel began to arrive. They came for three solid days from all over the country. As quickly as they came they were classified and assigned. With this last group of officers, 471 of them, the training personnel was completed.

Prepare to Receive Men

Now active preparations for the reception of the men who were to compose the mass of the division were made. Hutments and walks were repaired. Rifles and machine guns, shelter halves and blankets, canteens and mess kits, shovels and wire cutters, compasses and range finders, and all of the thousands of items the soldier uses poured in on sleepless supply sergeants' to be counted and sorted and stored away until the men to whom they would issue should arrive. Trucks and jeeps newly off the assembly line were rolled into the motor pools stacked high with as yet unsorted tools.

Almost magically, however, order started to emerge from the confusion. Typewriters began to chatter in the various administrative offices, filing cases arrived to replace the corn flakes boxes that had formerly been used. "Coke" machines were plugged in. Electric fans arrived. Things began to look up.

Still Plenty of Work

But there was still plenty of hard work to be done. Division and regimental schools were set up to further the training of the officers and non-commissioned officers who were to have the difficult job of making finished combat soldiers of men newly arrived from civilian life.

There were many difficulties to cope with. The almost entire absence of privates reduced hard-bolted sergeants to K. P.'s. Lieutenants, captains, majors and colonels wielded scrubbing brushes and mops in an attempt to make living quarters more comfortable.

At the same time, training plans were being drawn up as busy staff officers pored over the Army's Mobilization Training Program and made careful schedules for the instruction of a new division. Teams of officers and non-commissioned officers were organized to deal with the problems of housing and assigning the trainees. Carpenters and technicians were set to work constructing training aids. The hum of activity had become a roar.

While the Division was still at Camp Blanding a number of offi-

(Continued on Page 4.)

Commands 63d Division



Maj. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs

CG a 2-Fisted Army Man Intent on Training Men

Gen. Hibbs Is Making His Men Fit for All Combat

Maj. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs, commander of the 63d, is certainly no stranger to any man in the Division.

His familiar figure is seen day in and day out at all parts of the camp, bobbing up at the rifle range, crawling in the mud with his men on the infiltration course, sampling a mess sergeant's turkey to see if it's just right—always on the go to see that his men are getting every break they're entitled to in training, in recreational facilities, and countless other ways the men never know about.

Gen. Hibbs is a two-fisted officer with plenty of get-up-and-go. He looks mild when you first meet and speak to him; but in those sparkling light-blue eyes there's a fire and determination to make this a routin', tootin', self-reliant division of fighting men well able to take care of themselves under any and all circumstances.

There's probably not a better oriented man in the whole division for the general is an avid follower of Allied and enemy troop movements and starts off each day by absorbing all the latest details on the progress of America's fighting forces.

His first stop at the office is usually at the wall maps of the battle area to see in his own mind what ground the Americans and our Allies have covered in the last day, and what lies before us.

He's a Soldier's Man

Though he's a two-star general, Hibbs is definitely a soldier's man. He is a great opponent of all stuffed shirts—he smokes cigars he rolls himself, and he frequently takes time out in midafternoon for a "coke."

On the range he will step up to the firing line and whisper a few words of encouragement in the ears of a nervous rookie, or perhaps give him a pointer or two on position.

In the kitchens he's been known to give a helpful word on seasoning to student cooks, and more than one company commander or first sergeant have found the solution to seemingly impossible company problems in casual remarks by the "Old Man" on his rounds.

Gen. Hibbs has been in the service thirty-one years. During that time he's run the gamut from West Point plebe to two-star general, and he's done a good job all the way.

Born in Washington, D. C., on October 3, 1893, Gen. Hibbs is the only member of his family army-inclined—two generations of the Hibbs' being Navy men. The general entered Culver Military academy in 1909, graduating in 1911. The following year found him a

cadet at West Point and in 1916 he graduated in grade of lieutenant.

A member of the baseball and basketball teams while at the Point, Gen. Hibbs performed on the court under such coaches as Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stillwell, now serving in China, and Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, now in command of the European theater of operations.

Fought With First Division

With the entry of the United States into World War I, the general became a member of the Fifth Field artillery of the First Division, serving with that unit from September, 1917, to September, 1918, when he became chief of staff of the artillery of the Second Army corps.

Always Johnny-on-the-spot as far as action is concerned, Gen. Hibbs was twice wounded in battle, suffering a minor wound at Cantigny in June, 1918, and receiving a serious arm wound in the attack on the Hindenburg line in October, 1918. The latter injury, caused by shell fragments was severe enough to hospitalize the 63d's commander for nine months. Ironically enough the general suffered his first injury on Friday, the second on the 13th, "so I now spend all Fridays—the-13th, in bed," he jokes.

Awarded the Purple Heart and Oak Leaf Cluster for wounds received in action, the general returned to the States on New Year's Eve, 1918, "and believe me, seeing New York on New Year's Eve was a thrill I'll never forget," the general said.

He wears the French Fourragere in the colors of the Croix de Guerre as an individual decoration.

Recovered from his injuries, Gen. Hibbs became adjutant and aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur at West Point in 1919, serving with the hero of Bataan until 1922.

Much Staff Work

Promoted to the rank of major during the course of the first World War, the general held various staff and command positions from 1922 until January, 1942, while serving at Ft. Sill, Okla., Ft. Leavenworth, Kan., Ft. Bragg, N. C., Hawaii, at War college and in the War department in Washington, D. C., and at West Point.

January, 1942, found the general as artillery commander of the 36th Infantry division and in March of 1943 he was placed in command of the 63d—a position to which he brings all the vigor of his years. "This is going to be a real fighting unit," says the general, "anything worth doing is worth doing well. So Hell's Bells! Let's get going!"

Married, Gen. Hibbs resides with his wife at Centreville, Miss., and is the father of a son, Louis E. Jr., 18, who is in the U. S. Marines.

Typical of the zip and spark so much a part of the general is the divisional insignia, created by the general himself. Both gruesome

(Continued on Page 6.)

TWO 63d GENS. WERE AT POINT WITH 255TH COL.

Gens. Harris and McGaw Were at Academy with Col. Tombaugh When World War I Ended

The year of 1918 was a long, difficult one for the United States. The nation, as now, was fighting for its existence, throwing all of its mighty resources into a struggle that was soon, although we could not know it then, to end.

It was in that year that Brig. Gen. Frederick M. Harris, assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Edward J. McGaw, division artillery commander, and Col. Paul E. Tombaugh, commander of the 255th Inf., entered the military academy at West Point. There's a curious and fascinating story behind their class; a story of men, themselves newly acquainted with the standards and traditions set by generations of bygone cadets, left alone to pass on those standards and traditions to generations of cadets to come.

In the very early part of November, 1918, two classes—within just a few days of each other—were graduated from the "Point." And a few days after that, with a suddenness that stunned and overjoyed the nation, the Armistice was declared.

One Class Left

The war was over. And at West Point there was but one class left. To the men of that class it was a sobering realization. For in the hands of these men lay, to a large extent, the future of the academy.

In 1919 a new class entered the Point. For a time there was uncertainty whether this new class would be a regular class or a special group. Wearing the khakis of the cadets, they were dubbed by the men of the class of 1920—Gen. Harris' class—the "Orioles." Eventually, however, this new group was adopted as a regular class and donned the grays of the cadets. It was to this group of men, the "Orioles," that the men of the class of 1920, the seniors of the academy, relayed the traditions they had safeguarded.

Graduated from West Point in 1920—as a second lieutenant, Gen. Harris was sent to the Infantry School at Fort Benning for a period, and from there he was assigned to the 29th Infantry.



BRIG. GEN. FREDERICK M. HARRIS

In 1926 the General was sent to China. He was in Tientsin when Chiang-Kai-Shek, then an unknown revolutionary, attacked that area. He was there through countless little bandit uprisings.

Just a Big Joke

During that hectic period in China, he, along with other members of the American garrison was fired on by bandits many times. "They were pretty bad shots," he says, "and they didn't bother us much. We thought it was just a big joke."

Among his duties was the guarding of the International trains that had to go through periodically. Often opposing armies would adjourn hostilities until the train had passed through. Often they couldn't. In that case, says the General, "some Chinese bandit might stick a pistol in your belly and then you'd have to talk your way out of it." It was a fascinating period for Gen. Harris.

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63D DIV. BORN, TRAINED IN '43

(Continued From Page 3.)

cers and men joined from various replacement centers, and some units began training. Ocala National Forest and Silver Springs were scenes of bivouacs and visits from units, and week-end passes found men visiting Jacksonville, Ponta Vedra, St. Augustine, and Daytona Beach—where held forth the WAC training unit.

Engineers Built Bridge

On one of the runs to Ocala, Lt. Col. Jack L. Coan's 263d Engineers discovered an unsafe wooden highway bridge on their route. They built a by-pass which would enable traffic to continue uninterrupted while they worked on the structure, then entirely rebuilt the bridge.

While the Combat Teams were at Ocala, members of the 563d Signal Company went into action with their SCR 193's, holding two-way voice communications.

The Great Move

Rumors ran wild throughout the early weeks of August, but by the middle of the month the cadre had figured out that the Division was to leave its birthplace without fillers ever arriving there. Almost everyone was given a course in truck driving and first echelon maintenance, and on August 18 the first group of men headed westward and northward towards Camp Van Dorn.

The route of the four-day motor march took the cadre through some of the most beautiful sections of the south, across Florida to Tallahassee, where the first night was passed, along the coast to Pensacola for another rest, then up to Camp Shelby, and on to Camp Van Dorn.

Public Impressed

There was little doubt that the public was impressed with the Blood and Fire boys as they swung those trucks and pieces through towns. Although the convoy maintained regulation 35 m.p.h. convoy speed on the open road, it swung through towns and cities at a considerably faster clip so that traffic in the towns would not be unduly disturbed by the troop movement.

In Tallahassee, men of the Division were given passes in Class B uniforms—with leggings and helmet liners—they cut quite an impressive figure.

Spontaneous Reception

When the Division moved into Camp Van Dorn the 99th (Checkerboard) Division was still there, and they welcomed the cadre almost as wholeheartedly as did the people of neighboring towns. To the men of the 99th, our arrival



HERE THEY COME! was the cry throughout Camp Van Dorn in September when fillers detrained.

marked the end of their nine-month training period at the Camp.

The Checkerboard boys had been victims of unfortunate circumstances in being the first unit at the camp, for to them went the task of building a large amount of the conveniences which our men took for granted. During the early days of their occupancy both service clubs caught fire and burned to the ground. There was only one theater available, and following a disturbance in camp, Centreville was off-limits to soldiers for about three months.

63d Makes Improvements

From the first moment in camp, the men of the cadre determined that the 63d would make definite improvements in the looks of Camp Van Dorn, if nothing else. Details were sent out to repaint and repair everything that needed fixing—barracks which leaked were caulked, mess halls which were messy blossomed forth under fresh coats of paint, and floors in rec halls were sanded and refinished.

Both Service Clubs opened shortly after the 63d arrived, and early one morning in the early part of September, the first of a number of troop trains spewed forth trainees to fill up the Division's strength. They came from Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, the Northeast, the South, the North Central States and then from the

Three Cents This Time

Because this special Christmas issue of BLOOD AND FIRE contains eight pages more than the regular issue, it will require a three-cent stamp to be mailed to the home folks, according to the APO. Ordinary weekly issues of the paper can be mailed with a 1½ cent stamp. The paper is most easily mailed by wrapping it in an envelope from which the ends have been cut before it is sealed.

far West—California, Utah, Washington, Oregon, Montana. Men came from all over the U. S. A.

Even though the men had more recreational facilities available at the camp than the 99th did, Gen. Hibbs proved to be a man of action when he contacted the United Service organizations and the War Department Service division in mid-September and pointed out how far we were situated from towns of any size—it's about 50 miles each way to McComb and Natchez, our nearest neighbors. The results of the general's requests for entertainment were immediate; Songstress Dinah Shore was asked by the Washington officials to get aboard a plane and fly from Hollywood to Van Dorn. She arrived September 22 and passed two and

a half days visiting the men in and around the camp.

At the same time the USO also opened its Centreville branch, and the Military Maids of Natchez, McComb, Ferriday, and Baton Rouge held their initial dances for the men—dances which have become weekly features in the off-post life of the division's manhood.

By October, Division Special service had rounded up writers and actors, and the first of the division's weekly broadcasts was heard October 21 over WJBO, Baton Rouge. Annie Rooney, a pretty and grown-up former child singer, visited the division, and men who visited Baton Rouge over the week end found that cots were being placed in the Legion hall there for their convenience every Saturday night. In October also a number of units of the division were invited to participate in war bond sales in Centreville, McComb, Brookhaven, Woodville, Baton Rouge, and other nearby communities.

Victory Parade Visits

In November Will Osborne's orchestra visited the division as a feature of the Coca-Cola "Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands." The program was broadcast over a national hookup. Thanksgiving—a big event at the camp because of the traditional turkey and fixin's, was a day of work because of the training program, but the evening

St. Nick Presides At 255th Inf. Show

Santa Claus worked overtime in the 255th Inf., and arranged the most gala show of the season in Combat Team Blue Rec. Hall Thursday night, December 16. Star of the evening was St. Nicholas himself, in the person of Pvt. Mordecai Bauman, who acted as master of ceremonies and distributed gifts.

The enlisted men and their guests were greeted at the door with bags of candy and each man and girl in uniform was given a slip of paper with a number. At a drawing later, the lucky number won a free long distance, five-minute telephone call home.

Feature attractions of the party were the games arranged and conducted by Pvt. Bauman, with prizes for the quiz experts. The old favorite, Musical Chairs, drew rounds of applause and Blind Date was the occasion for much merriment.

Music was furnished by Pvt. Daniel Mendelssohn and his orchestra, and the 255th Inf. Glee club, under the direction of Pvt. Elmer Savage, made its initial appearance singing Christmas carols and accompanying the audience in mass song. Pfc. Gilbert Vitale, magician, and Joan Reed and Pvt. William Schumacher, vocalists also appeared on the program.

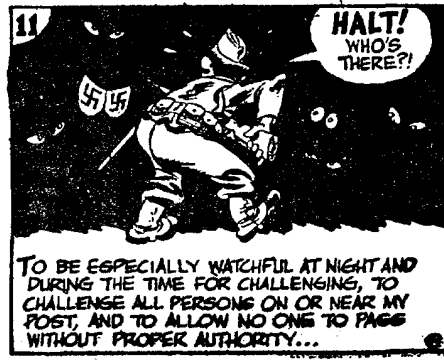
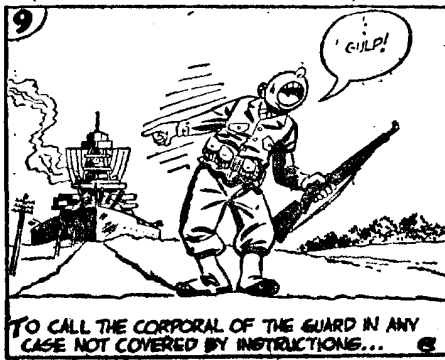
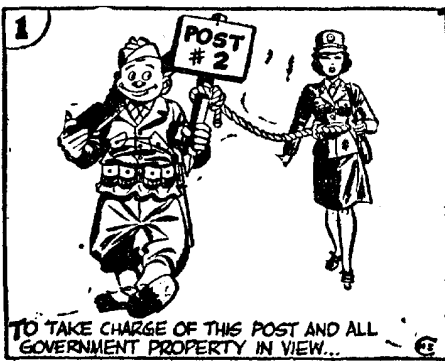
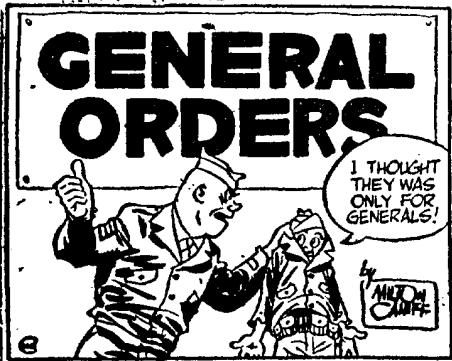
The Christmas atmosphere was heightened by the decorations arranged by Pvt. Robert McCowie, Co. T. Food, drinks, nuts, fruits and candy were served during the evening.

255TH TO HAVE SHOW

There will be a big Christmas night variety show for men of the 255th Inf., in the Combat Team Blue Rec. Hall Saturday. The program, arranged by the regimental special service office, is scheduled to start at 1900.

was one of mirth and variety. The turkey was served for evening meal throughout the division, and many units held parties and shows after the big meal.

December marked continued stress in training of the men, but even though their free time was considerably shortened, men of the Division managed to organize a basketball tournament and to present a show in Baton Rouge, assisted by co-eds of LSU. Men of the Division also were entertained this month in Ferriday, La., and Natchez, Miss., in two fine demonstrations of the warm Southern hospitality which has been extended to the Division by the neighbors of Mississippi and Louisiana.



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MAJ. BROOKS IS A BELIEVER IN HARD WORK

G-1 Was Once Officer In CCC; Comes From Armored Force

There's a tall, blond, bespectacled officer at Division Headquarters who's got a contagious laugh and a big broad smile for all who enter his tiny office. He's Maj. John Edward Brooks, Jr., who is assistant chief of staff, G-1 in charge of Division personnel matters.

Maj. Brooks, in an interview earlier in the year, said his chief



MAJ. JOHN E. BROOKS, JR.

interests outside his work were his wife and small son; but he's also an ardent baseball fan, and a former high school football player and collegiate dramatist.

Born and raised in the quiet little New England community of Winchendon, Mass., he was graduated from Norwich university in 1932, with majors in history and education. He was a member of Alpha chapter, Theta Chi, and other collegiate organizations.

He received a commission as a 2d lieutenant upon his graduation, but entered business with his father. Later, he was employed by the state highway department, and in 1935 entered service with the Civilian Conservation Corps as a company officer and later company commander. At the end of his three-year hitch with the CCC he accepted a position with a financial concern.

Maj. Brooks entered active service with the U. S. Army August 5, 1940, and was assigned to Fort Knox, Ky., with the First Armored Division. He served there as executive officer with Brigade Head-

G2 a Colorphoto Fan, But War Made Him a Linguist

Lt. Col. John M. Hardaway, G-2 of the 63d Div., is a staunch Californian. Born in San Francisco he lived much of his life in California, although while a boy he and his parents spent a year in Honolulu. He was graduated from high school in Sacramento and following that, worked in the advertising field.

In 1934 he was commissioned a 2d Lt. in the reserve corps and in 1935 and 1936 he served as a company officer with the CCC in Yosemite Park, California.

After leaving the CCC, and until he was called to active duty in 1941, he worked for the Public Relations Office of the State of California. This work entailed much traveling and he enjoyed his hobby of color photography. Forced to dispose of much of his equipment due to transportation difficulties, he now finds it easier to further linguistic pursuits which he does in leisure moments. Portuguese is his latest language.

In his call to active duty in 1940, he was ordered to the then 66th Infantry (Light Tanks) at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he was a company commander until July 1941, when he joined the 1st Armored Corps at Fort Knox, Kentucky, as Assistant Headquarters Commander.

In December, 1941, he was switched to the 5th Armored Division, also at Fort Knox, as Assistant G-2. He moved with the

Two Generals Were at Point

(Continued From Page 3.)

Back in the United States in 1929, he spent two years with the famous 1st Division. In 1931 he was made R.O.T.C. instructor at Drexel Institute, Philadelphia, remaining there until 1936.

Stationed in Tropics

From 1936 to 1942 the General was stationed in the tropics, spending two years in Puerto Rico and three years in Panama. In Panama he was Assistant G-2 on the General Staff of the Panama Canal Department. He held this job when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Down in Panama they were expecting to be attacked momentarily, but it never came through.

In May, 1942, the then Col. Harris was transferred to the Military Intelligence Service, Latin American Section, and worked there until joining the 63d Division.

Physically, the General is rugged appearing—broad-shouldered, heavy-set. He smiles a good deal, letting his shrewd eyes peer out of the corner of his sun-burned face.

To fifteen thousand soldiers of the 63d Division Gen. Harris is "the General," but to four people, he's "Pop." He has four children—three girls and a boy—ranging from six to eighteen. His oldest daughter is a sophomore at Goucher college, Maryland.

quarters Company. He was later transferred to command Headquarters Company, Fourth Armored Brigade when the 4th Division was activated at Pine Camp, N. Y.

Becoming Assistant S-3 of the Brigade Staff in October, 1941, Maj. Brooks was assigned a few months later to the Sixth General Class at the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kan. In March, 1942, he returned to Fort Knox, where he was stationed until July, when he was sent to join the II Armored Corps then on maneuvers in the Carolinas.

Following the Carolina maneuvers, this outfit went to California for desert training and he went to San Jose on an assignment which required his assistance in the training of several new divisions.

During March, 1943, Maj. Brooks was ordered to Fort Leavenworth, where he met and trained with the rest of the 63d Division General Staff.

NEW YORK—Thomas Calibori gave in to an impulse. In the midst of having a tooth extracted, he bolted from the dentist's chair, and dived through the first-floor window to a yard. He lacerated his right hand; the tooth remained in his jaw.

Division to Camp Cooke and Camp Beale, California, as Acting G-2 and later Assistant G-2 of the 12th Armored Division.

Col. Hardaway attended the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, three times since he entered service. He was with the 7th New Division Class and the 11th Special Class, and while at Camp Beale, California, orders sent him to the 13th New Division Class, preparatory to joining our Division.



LT. COL. JOHN M. HARDAWAY



COL. EARLE G. WHEELER

Chief of Staff in China As Jap Aggression Began

Col. Earle G. Wheeler, the 63d Division's aggressive Chief of Staff, has had a varied career during his eleven years as a commissioned officer in the Regular Army.

A graduate of West Point in 1932, Col. Wheeler has seen service in China, worked as aide to Maj. Gen. Fred L. Walker, held the position of G-3 in the 99th Infantry Division and served as battalion commander. In addition, he holds four years service in the District of Columbia National Guard.

Born in Washington, D. C., the Colonel attended grammar and high school in that city, receiving his diploma from Eastern High school in 1925. He entered West Point Prep in 1927, later enrolling in and graduating from the Point itself in 1932.

Immediately reporting for duty with the 29th Infantry at Ft. Benning, Ga., Col. Wheeler remained with that outfit for four years during which time he advanced to the grade of first lieutenant. In 1936 he left the 29th to take the Regular School Course at Benning and in June, 1937 he landed in Tientsin, China as a member of the 15th Infantry.

Remembers Panay

In China at the time of the sinking of the Panay, the Colonel says that incident caused everyone to grow a little nervous because of the small detachment stationed there. "Nothing came of it though," he added, "and in March, 1938 the 15th returned to the States, going to Ft. Lewis, Wash., as part of the Third Division."

CG Is Training Men for Combat

(Continued From Page 3.)

and colorful, it portrays a bloody upturned dagger on a background of fire—a flaming oath that the heroic dead of Corregidor and Wake; of Bataan and Manila will be fully avenged; a vibrant reminder that these men have not died in vain.

To sum up the general, he likes his soldiering tough, his language plain—and his most used phrase is "Hell's Bells! Let's get going!"

Boxing an Aid To Arty Chief

(Continued From Page 3.)

younger days. He coached the 13th Field Artillery football team that took the Island championship in Honolulu in 1923 and at West Point was an instructor of "Red" Cagle, Army grid immortal. He is a member of both the NCAA Boxing Rules and American Olympic Boxing Committees.

At Fort Lewis for two years, the Colonel went back to school in April, 1940—returning to West Point as an instructor of mathematics. Made a captain on October 4, 1940, Col. Wheeler left the Point in June, 1941 to become aide to Maj. Gen. Walker.

Later moving to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, to take the Sixth Special Course, the Colonel graduated in February, 1942, the same date he was promoted to the rank of major.

From Leavenworth, Col. Wheeler went to the 36th Infantry Division with which he served as a battalion commander, his service with that outfit taking him to Texas, Florida and Massachusetts.

He left the 36th to become G-3 of the 99th Infantry Division in August, 1942 and while with that organization was made a lieutenant-colonel. He left the 99th to become Chief of Staff of the 63d in March of this year.

Married, the Colonel, his wife and their son, Gilmore S., make their home in Natchez.

Col. Ritter, Navy Grad, Is Now G-4 for Division

A sight familiar to officers and men of Division Headquarters is Maj. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs, and Lt. Col. Frank T. Ritter, assistant chief of staff, G-4, standing together in the hallway before the giant wall maps of the theatres of the war, discussing strategic moves of America's fighting forces.

Col Ritter is seen frequently telling the general how the navy will probably bolster up ground force attacks at vital shore points—and his views on the subject of land-sea-air operations are pretty solid, too, for Col. Ritter is one of those rarities, a graduate of Annapolis with a commission in the U. S. Army.

A native of Philadelphia, but a resident of New Jersey for many years, Col. Ritter graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1935. While at Annapolis he was a member of the track team and twice during his training he participated in class cruises to foreign lands. In 1932 he visited the Azores and Nova Scotia; two years later he was in England, France and Italy.

After Annapolis—Business

Upon his graduation from the Academy, he left the service and accepted a position with the Kimble Glass Co., Vineland, N. J. He joined a New Jersey National Guard unit in 1937 and received a commission as second lieutenant in the Field Artillery of the 44th (N. J. National Guard) division.

When that division entered federal service in September, 1940, at

COL. EDWARDS BEGAN SCHOOL IN CARIBBEAN

Received Legion of Merit Award After Becoming 63d G-3

One of the officers at Division headquarters who has been in close touch with the enlisted men throughout their basic training has been Lt. Col. Morris O. Edwards, assistant chief of staff, G-3, who is responsible for plans and training.

Col. Edwards came to the Division from the Caribbean, where he held a similar position with the Puerto Rican Mobile Force. Shortly after he joined the 63d division, word was received at Camp Blanding that Lt. Gen. George H. Brett, commander of the Caribbean Defense command, had bestowed the Legion of Merit award on Col. Edwards for his outstanding work in organizing and conducting the Mobile Force Officers' school at his Caribbean post.

The letter notifying him of the award read as follows:

"The Legion of Merit Award has been given to Morris O. Ed-



LT. COL. MORRIS O. EDWARDS

wards, Lt. Col., GSC, US Army, for outstanding performance in duty as commandant of the Puerto Rican Mobile Force Officers' School in organizing, administrating, and conducting this school. Confronted with the problem of indoctrinating a large group of Puerto Rican officers in proper instructional methods and planning a schedule which

(Continued on Page 6.)



LT. COL. FRANK T. RITTER

Real Xmas Soon, Says 255th C. O.

Use of the time we have now to improve our training will bring nearer the time when we can enjoy a real Christmas season, Col. Paul E. Tombaugh, Regimental Commander of the 255th Inf., said today in a Christmas message to his regiment.

The text of the message follows: "While many of us will be thinking often of home during the Christmas period, I am sure that all will recognize the serious training job that still lies ahead. Difficult tests are scheduled in the near future. During the few days that remain before these tests we must make sure that every man is thoroughly prepared in every subject.

"We have many comrades in distant lands who are bearing the full burden of the battle while we are getting ready. Many thousands of these will have no Christmas.

"Most of you have worked hard and done well. Furloughs will begin after we have completed our tests. Use of the time we now have to improve our training will bring much nearer the time when we can all enjoy a real Christmas season.

"Although most of our time will be spent on training instead of celebration during the Christmas season, I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a New Year full of happiness."

A ton of paper will make 100 anti-aircraft shell boxes, or 800 small shell cases, or 47,000 boxes for small arms ammunition.

Japan Is Topic At 254th Forum

The second in the series of "Town Hall" meetings conducted by the 254th Inf. will be held Tuesday and Friday afternoons for each of the battalions and the special companies. The topic will be "Our Enemy—Japan." Last week Germany was the subject of the initial meeting.

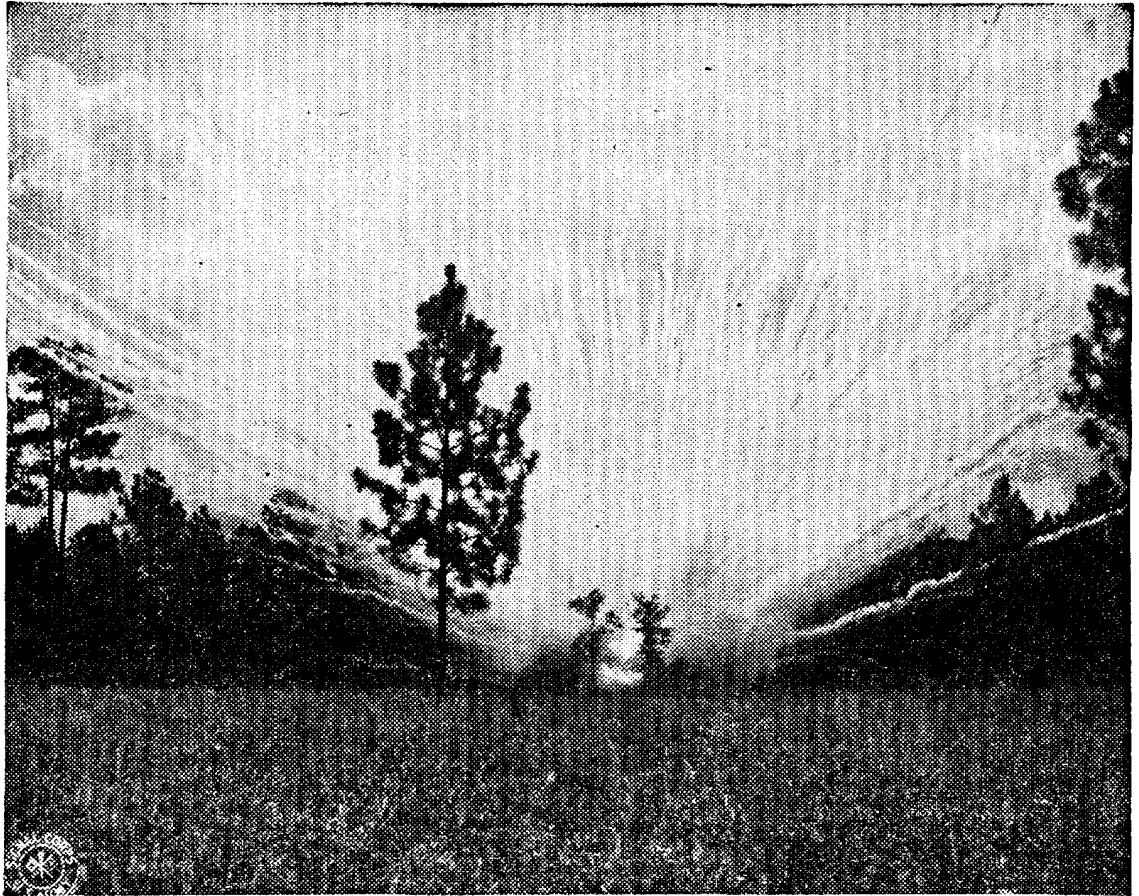
Participants will be Pfc. Gino Bardi, on the political aspects; Pfc. Douwe Stuurman, who will discuss the military situation, and Pfc. Samuel Clark, who will speak on the economic side of the subject. Pvt. Nathan Guttman will act as moderator.

Btry. B, 863d Presents Colorful Yule Display

One of the most elaborate Christmas displays in the 63d is presented by Btry. B of the 863d F. A. Bn. The entire front of the orderly room is rimmed with pine needles. Illuminated wreaths glitter from above each door, and right under the roof is set a cheery, red-lighted Merry Christmas greeting, displayed in Old English lettering.

A large Christmas tree, gaily festooned with lights, stands in front of the building. One of the earliest displays put up in camp, Battery B's festive front has been a favorite with GI camera fans all week.

Lt. James B. Stowe, Btry. Executive, was in charge of the display. He was assisted by S/Sgt. John A. Rice, Sgt. Borden T. Albright, a well-known Baltimore window advertising artist, and Pvt. Charles C. Cichy.



SPECTACULAR is this explosion of white phosphorous touched off by GWS staff while we were at Blanding.

Maj. Lavorgna Is 63d A. G.; Classification His Forte

If you're a square peg in a square hole—if life is just a bowl of cherries in these dark days of Basic and you feel that the best of your qualities are being developed to make chop suey of the monkey men, you can take time off for a thankful bow to Major Ralph Lavorgna, Adjutant General of the 63d.

For it probably was Maj. Lavorgna's department which put you where you are in the Division

Lavorgna, with Capt. Carl Mahder, Classification Officer, set up an SOP to decide the most suitable jobs the individual raw recruits who were soon to come pouring in as filler replacements would have in the division. The division was lucky to have them on hand, too, for both are ideally suited for the tedious job of classifying and placing the new men.

Twice before Maj. Lavorgna has taken hand in sorting the thousands of men siphoned into army combat divisions. Before serving with the 63d he had helped activate the 100th Division and previously had helped put the 80th into fighting trim. In both outfits he served as Assistant Adjutant General and took an active part in the classification program.

Maj. Lavorgna is an old Army man. He first took the oath in 1923 when he enlisted in the Regular Army as a buck private. From the start he went in for administrative work and stayed in that field until 1931, when he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Reserve Corps.

Maj. Lavorgna came back into the Army in 1940 as a second lieutenant. On his new service his first assignment was in Panama, where he was assigned to the infantry and then the Air Force. In 1942 he was transferred to the Adjutant General's Office in Washington, and from there to duty with the 80th Division.



MAJ. RALPH LAVORRNA

today. When the 63d was activated back at Camp Blanding Maj.

Natchez Greetings

The staff of the Servicemen's Center at Natchez has asked BLOOD AND FIRE to extend to the men of the 63d Infantry Division the following Christmas message:

"The staff of the Servicemen's Center at Natchez wishes to extend to all the men and officers of the 63d Infantry Division, heartiest wishes for a most happy and joyous Christmas. We realize that few places can take the place of home for anyone at Christmas time, but we want you all to know that the Servicemen's Center at Natchez is always your home away from home when you are in our city. We are eager to serve you. William Y. Kester, director; Miss Jennie McLin, program superintendent; Miss Natalie Luscombe, musical director; Mrs. Ruth Stewart, hostess, and Miss Treeby Poole, hostess."

Rating of 'Excellent' For 255th Orientation

A rating of "excellent" for its orientation displays was given the 255th Inf. as a whole by a division inspection team last week.

The team was headed by Brig. Gen. Frederick M. Harris, Asst. Division Commander, who said in his report, "all personnel concerned should be commended." Maj. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs, Division Commander, termed it "a splendid result."

Among the 24 displays, four were rated "superior," 16 "excellent" and four "very satisfactory."

Merit Award to Div. G3 Marked Caribbean Work

(Continued From Page 5.) would acquaint these officers with the tactics and techniques of the combined arms and services, Lt. Col. Edwards exhibited a high degree of initiative and executive ability. Through his efforts, the military efficiency of the officers of the Mobile Force have been materially benefited."

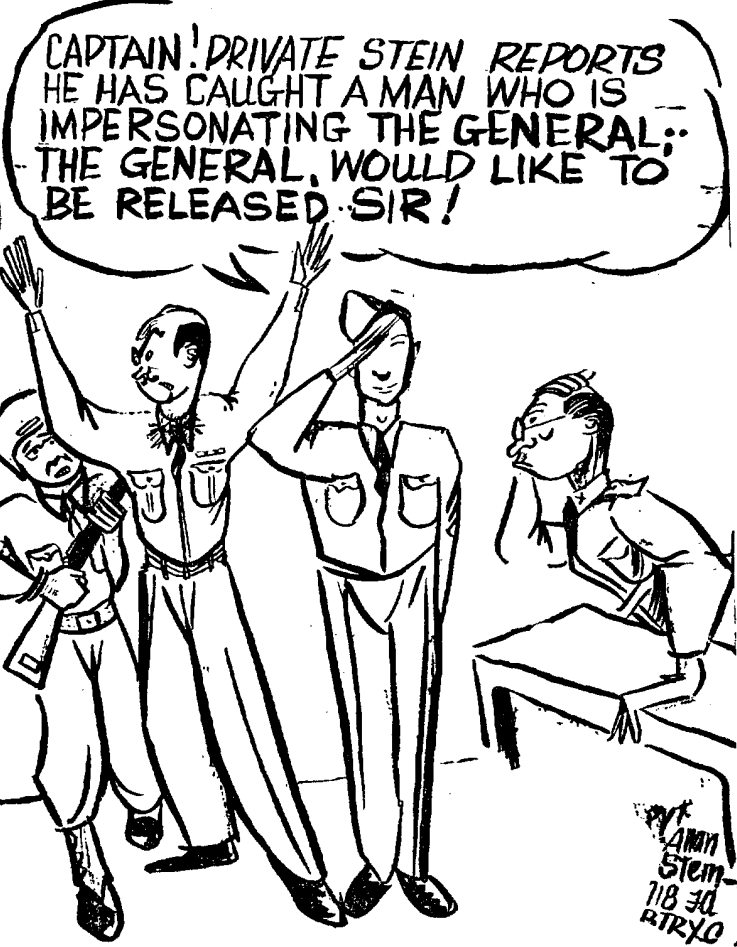
A native of Salt Lake City, Utah, and a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N. Y., the 63d's G-3 acted as assistant commandant of the school under Brig. Gen. Nat S. Perrine from November 17, 1942, to February 9, 1943. He was subsequently transferred to duty in the United States.

Popularly known as "Moe" in the Mobile Force, Lt. Col. Edwards is also co-author of "The Soldier and the Law," a best seller among Army personnel. In Puerto Rico he held several high executive positions in the Mobile Force and its headquarters. Prior to his assignment to the 63d, the Lt. Col. was attending the Command and General Staff school at Ft. Leavenworth, Kans.

Religious Services

- Protestant Services**
Christmas Eve
 Chapel No. 5, Carol Program, service, 1915.
 Chapel No. 6, Christmas Eve Service, 1930.
 Chapel No. 8, Christmas Eve Service, 1930.
 Chapel No. 6, Christmas Eve concert, Div. Arty Glee Club, 2000.
 Chapel No. 10, Christmas Carol, Joint service, 2000.
 Chapel No. 8, Christmas Eve, Eucharistic Lutheran Communion Service, 2030.
 Chapel No. 7, General Carol Service, 2100.
 Chapel No. 7, Midnight Eucharistic Protestant Episcopal Service, 2330.
Christmas Day
 Chapel No. 7, Christmas Worship, 0900.
 Chapel No. 10, Christmas Day Service, 0900.
 Chapel No. 8, Lutheran Christmas Day Communion, 0930.
 Chapel No. 6, Christmas Day Service, 1000.
 Chapel No. 5, Christmas Worship, 1000.
 Chapel No. 8, Christmas Day Service, 1030.
Sunday
 Chapel No. 8, Episcopal Communion Service, 0815.
 Chapels No. 6, 7, 8, 10, 0900.
 Chapels No. 5, 6, 8, 10, 1000.
 Chapels No. 7, 8, 1100.
 Chapel No. 5, 1815.
 Chapel No. 7, 1630.

- Lutheran**
 Chapel No. 8, 1100.
Weekday Services
 Chapel No. 5, Thursday, 1830.
 Chapel No. 7, Thursday, 1915.
Mormon Services
Sunday
 Chapel No. 8, 1400.
Roman Catholic Mass
Christmas Day
 Chapels No. 5, 10, 0800.
 Theater No. 5, 0900.
 Chapel No. 7, 1000.
 Theater No. 1, 1030.
 Chapel No. 10, 1100.
Sunday
 Chapel No. 5, 0800.
 Theater No. 5, 0900.
 Chapel No. 7, 1000.
 Theater No. 1, 1030.
 Chapel No. 10, 1100.
Evening Mass
 Chapel No. 5, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 1830.
 Chapel No. 5, Novena Miraculous Medal, Monday, 1830.
 Chapel No. 10, Monday to Saturday (except Thursday), 1830.
 Confessions at chapels, 1900-2000 Saturday.
Jewish Services
 Chapel No. 1, Friday, 1930.
 Chapel No. 7, Friday night, 2000.
 Christian Science Reading
 Chapel No. 1, Sunday, 1100.
Seventh Day Adventist
 Chapel No. 9, Friday, 1930.



Merry Christmas!

To the Men of the 63d Infantry Division From Col. Robert H. Clarke, Division Chaplain

Greetings! In this year of our Lord, 1943, most of the men in uniform will receive a card from someone, and on it will be the words, "To a loved one in the Service." It is a phrase that is full of meaning both to the recipient and the sender.

And so Christmas is here again with its joy and tender and hallowed memories. It is that time of year when we are reminded of the angel's song, telling of peace on earth and good-will among men. Then we are reminded in camp and at home of our comrades who are away on that far horizon where the battle rages. Can we truthfully say, "A Merry Christmas" or "A Happy Christmas" to our comrades, to those whom we love, or to ourselves?

Yes, I believe we can. But we shall be able to say it with a stronger and deeper feeling than ever before. Why? You remember in the story of the wondrous birth how the wise men brought their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh? These men had been guided by the light of a star and the end of their quest brought them to where love, purity and righteousness were embodied in a child. For who can look upon a babe and not think of these things?

That star! Well, we have stars in our flag and wherever our flag goes, on the high seas, through the jungle, into conquered territory, some of us believe that the light and sight of our stars revive hope, renew strength and carry the promise of a better future.

Those gifts! The gold was and is symbolic of obedience—a soldierly virtue, and the giving of self to accomplish our highest dreams.

Frankincense represents the spirit of reverence and adoration to all that is holy and true. And myrrh is for the healing of wounds caused by the storm and stress of battle. It was another wise man long ago who said that "cheerfulness is good medicine for the heart," so, may we, this Christmas, have a Merry one and a Happy one, and in the words of the old carol let us say, "God rest you, merry gentlemen."

How to Take a Village

Part of the realistic training of the 63d Division doughboys is devoted to village and street fighting. In a visit to the Ranger training area while we were at Camp Blanding, Jacksonville Journal Photographer Leo Witt took these exceptional pictures of our Rangers in action. He has given us special permission to reprint them.

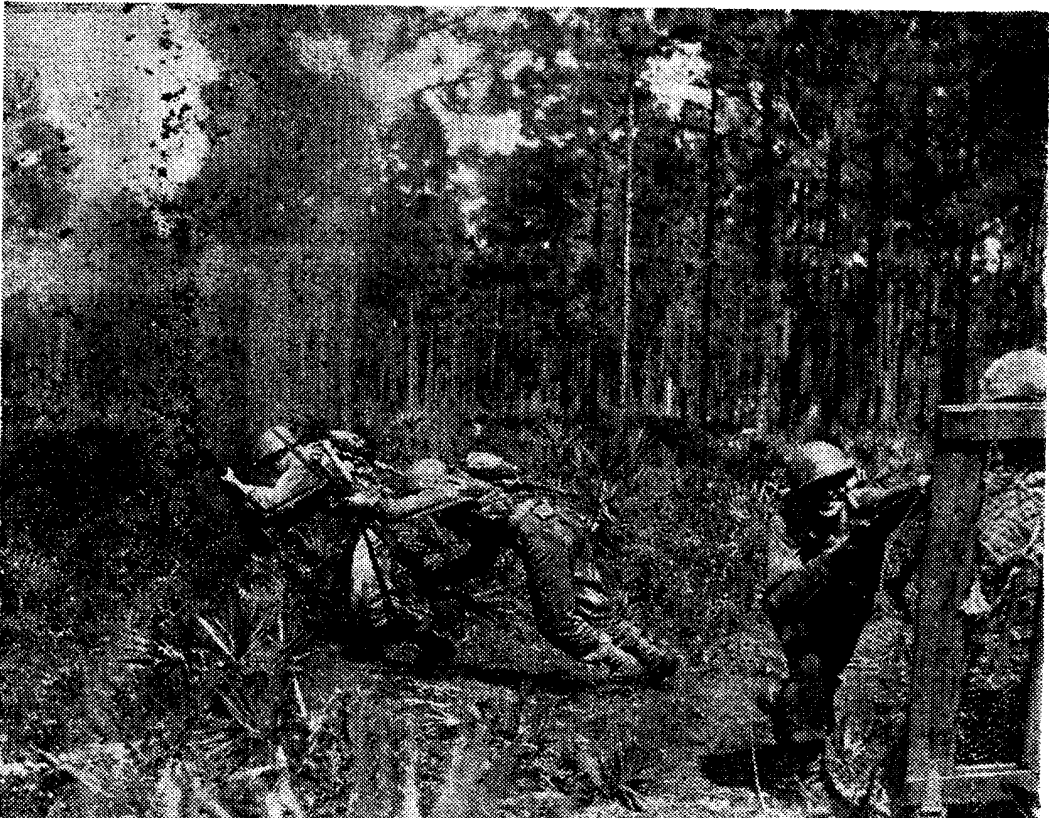
Taking advantage of protective smoke, the fully battle equipped Rangers advance against an "enemy" position with opened bayonets, at left

below. Harassed by a concentration of enemy fire, one of the Rangers lobs a hand grenade to clear the area (at right below.)

Falling hard as the enemy artillery gets its range, the 63d doughboys demonstrate fine form. Notice how the rifles are held, so that the rifle butt will absorb shock of fall. Soldier at right is making short work of an enemy dummy with a bayonet thrust. On his right, a Ranger has thrust himself on enemy barbed wire and a buddy, holding his

gun at port, races over him. Soldier in rear, who also is advancing, "covers" the other pair.

At bottom, tear gas has been used to make this "enemy" sniper emerge from a blockhouse. A grenade would have made it impossible for him to emerge. Finis is written to this photo story by the picture at lower right, showing what happens when our Rangers surprise an enemy machine gunner. A jab from each of the sharpened bayonets tore the dummy to pieces.

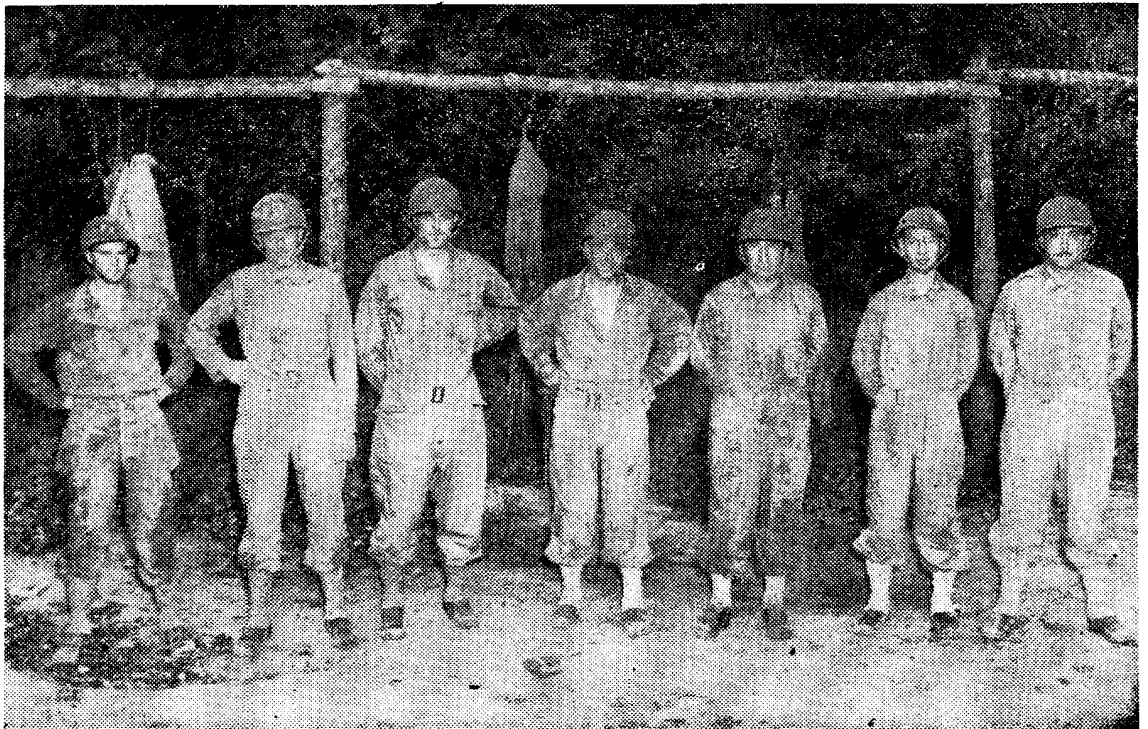




BLOWN OFF A LOG is this 63d Division doughboy as dynamite charge explodes alongside during training maneuvers. Mud spattered 60 feet in the air and almost covered Jacksonville Journal photog Leo Witt who took this unposed photo while we were at Blanding.



MUD-SMEARED are these high-ranking division staff officers shown on the infiltration course, which they covered before any enlisted man was sent over it. Above, Maj. Gen. Louis E. Hibbs, Division Commander (extreme left), is shown leading them under fire. Helmets and fatigues are spattered with red clay, the officers are shown at right. Left to right, they are: Lt. Col. Morris O. Edwards, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3; Maj. John E. Brooks, Jr., Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1; Col. Earle G. Wheeler, Chief of Staff; Gen. Hibbs; Brig.-Gen. Frederick M. Harris, Assistant Division Commander; Lt. Col. Frank T. Ritter, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4; and Lt. Col. John M. Hardaway, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2.



BERNIE BLOOD

Something in Stockings

By **GILL FOX**

