

Blood and Fire

Vol. 3 No. 9, April 21, 1945



MARLENE DIETRICH, her gorgeous gams concealed by OD trousers, pauses at the Siegfried Line to speak with Pvt. Don Wilson, of Indianapolis. Wilson, a member of the I & R Platoon, 253d Inf., was one of the first men of the 63d to pass through the German defenses.

63d Is Hailed For Siegfried Push

Commendation for the Division's accomplishment in cracking the Siegfried Line and official recognition of the fact that the 63d was the first unit of the Seventh Army to do so comes from Maj. Gen. F. W. Milburn, commanding the XXI Corps, to which the Division was assigned at the time of the breakthrough.

In a commendation addressed to Gen. Hibbs, Gen. Milburn said:

"It is my desire to commend you and the officers and enlisted men under your command on the proud accomplishment of being the first division of the Seventh Army to effect a complete breakthrough of the stubborn defenses of the Siegfried Line.

"The matchless valor and the soldierly aggressiveness exhibited on this occasion are in the finest traditions of the service.

"The successful penetration and reduction of these defenses are but another reflection of your superb generalship and of the exemplary fighting spirit of the 63d Inf. Div."

In passing on Gen. Milburn's remarks to the men of the Division, Gen. Hibbs wrote:

"I am pleased and proud to pass on to the officers and men who broke the Siegfried Line the Corps Commander's appreciation of their efforts. Coming from a fine commander, this well-deserved praise expresses also my evaluation of your efforts."

Tribute to the Commander-in-Chief

This tribute to the memory of President Roosevelt was written by T/5 Sy Bernhard, and appeared in the April 13 edition of Redlegs, Division Artillery bulletin, of which he is the editor:

Today our nation is heartsick: Heartsick because the wheelchair stands empty in a bedroom in the White House; heartsick because the jaunty cigaret holder lies unused on the desk cluttered with the things of the seafarer; heartsick because the halls are silent of the echo of the booming laugh... our President is dead.

The world need not hurry to erect a monument to his greatness, for he created many in his lifetime. His monuments lie in the hearts of people all over the world, for none was untouched by him.

On the lips of slave-workers huddled in hovels his name was a whispered prayer for freedom. To men shackled by a most powerful tyrant, his name was the faith that broke the eternal night of their lives. To men who wandered the friendless streets of their cities, desolate and discouraged, his name brought labor and restored their human dignity. To the little people of his country, confused and frightened, his name brought protection and courage.

His monuments were built in his day, ever enduring beyond the scorns of Time. Many times he cleared the haze of uncertainty that settled over our land, shared his great courage with us, and so again, even in death, we need not be afraid. He laid firm foundations for the future; the plans are sure and clear before us, for he shared his vision with us and we believe.

In sacrificing his life for his country, he can rest with his comrades on other battlefields, safe in the knowledge that the fight will be won and the freedom maintained. In his greeting was his greatness... he called the people of the world his friends, and that friendship goes beyond the grave to eternity.

255th Noncom Invents Anti-Schu Mine Device

A former insurance salesman has invented a device which will effectively neutralize the Schü mine. He is Sgt. George D. Robinson, Hq. Co., 2d Bn., 255th Inf. His home is in Portland, O.

Sgt. Robinson, who wears the Purple Heart for wounds received from mortar fire near Habkirchen, witnessed attempts to blow Schü mines with artillery, WP, machine gun fire and flame throwers, all of which proved ineffective.

Following an appeal made by Lt. Col. Glenn Y. Williamson, Division Chemical Officer, for ideas on the subject, Sgt. Robinson submitted his device. The machine consists of a series of 15 individual wheels each 12 inches in diameter with 5½-inch steel prongs, two to a wheel. The frame is 42 inches wide and may be guided by a handle 16 feet long. This affords complete protection for the operator.

The device can be operated over any terrain, as the wheels are flexible and will conform to irregularities in the ground. The mines are blown by contact with the steel prongs on the wheels.

The machine, which was first tested by Robinson, was constructed by H. & S. Co., 263d Engr. Gen. Hibbs and Col. Williamson witnessed the demonstrations.



GREER GARSON usually wears skirts down to her instep but when she wears them up to her steps, that's gams what am!

Went Backed by MG Rout Tiger Tank

A Tiger tank is no match for a heavy machine gun and infantrymen with guts. Ask Lt. Charles Rhodes, Co. H, 253d Inf.

The 253d had pushed north of Kleinblittersdorf in Germany and had attacked a woods east of Bubingen. It was the task of the heavy weapons company to secure the center of the woods, thus protecting the 2d Bn's right and left flanks east of the town.

A customary enemy counterattack was anticipated and Lt. Rhodes led his platoon in support of Co. F. to a triangular position at the junction of two roads inside the woods. The lieutenant, whose home is in Shreveport, La., and two first gunners, Pfc. J. R. Edwards, of Mt. Pleasant, Okla., and Pfc. William Schneider, of Staten Island, N. Y., began to dig in.

They hardly had begun when the Nazi counterthrust opened. Lt. Rhodes observed a Tiger Tank, followed by infantry, approaching to his front. There was no potential between the trio and Co. F except a platoon from Co. E.

At approximately 75 yards from Rhodes and his gunners, the tank, its muzzle pointed toward foxholes ahead, opened up with its 88. The lieutenant ordered his gunners to blaze away. The Tiger crunched on, but the Yanks stood fast, their machine gun spitting lead. The hail of metal forced the tank to button up. Then it wheeled about and fled, accompanied by the Kraut infantry.

The stand made by Lt. Rhodes and his men prevented the tank from splitting the defense position of the 2d Bn. and from threatening the security of captured Bubingen.

Lucky Star

It Still Shines for 255th's Carpenter

If there is such a thing as a lucky star, it still is shining for Pfc. I. E. Carpenter, of Minneapolis, a lineman in the communications platoons of Hq. Co., 1st Bn., 255th Inf.

It all started one night at Kleinsmuhl. Carpenter was out on company lines when an American patrol on its way to Jerryland came along. He immediately hit the dirt. "If there had been any trigger-happy Joes in the crowd it would have been TS for me", says Carpenter.

It was near Blies-Ebersing that Carpenter was on a line-laying job from Baker Co.'s CP to a machine gun nest near a railroad bridge just outside town. Unaware that the enemy had retaken some ground nearby and that the situation had changed, Carpenter started to lay the wire. Mortar shells were coming in too frequently and too close. He thought they were from German positions, but found later they were American, plastering the Krauts.

During the attack on the woods near Bubingen, Carpenter, on a reconnaissance tour of the territory crossed open terrain between the woods and the quarry many times without inter-

ference from the enemy. A short while later a man taking the same route encountered heavy sniper fire. Later another man suffered a foot injury from a schu mine.

That same night a platoon from Able Co. was cut off without communications. Carpenter and another lineman started out with two guides to run a line to the battalion CP. After about two miles the guides conceded their inability to distinguish landmarks. The party retraced its route without incident. Next morning the platoon attacked and captured a group of houses and 46 Krauts and uncovered an enemy minefield, all 100 yards from where the linemen had been.

The following night, while trying to find the exact location of Charlie CP, Carpenter and a party of wiremen led by Lt. Boyd Brown, platoon leader, entered Gudingen. A startled civilian shouted "Don't shoot!" With rifles pointed at him, he swore there were no Germans there. The wiremen continued along and finally located the CP at the edge of town. That same night a company of Germans pulled out of town.

Says Carpenter, "It's all in a day's or night's work, but it's a helluva way to make a living."

Ach, Himmel!

Though several issues of **Blood and Fire** have been published in Germany, this is the first actually printed on occupied soil.

As an illustration of what it might have looked like if the printers had had their way, this is set in the type in which they print their own publications.

We thought you'd like to see a sample.

Just Another Thing To Blame On Hitler

Gentlemen, BLOOD AND FIRE offers you an unusual assortment of sizes and kinds of type this week. Charge it all up to Hitler, who wasn't smart enough to make his people change the old-style "Fraktur" (script-like type) to the more modern letters used by the rest of the Western world.

This is the first issue actually printed entirely in Germany. The printers have plenty of "Fraktur", which is difficult for Americans to read, but not enough of any one size or kind of modern type to set BLOOD AND FIRE. Also there are certain shortages of letters little used in German but common in English. The resulting mixture is what you are reading this week.

Our chief printers are our allies - - three Belgians recently liberated from forced labor under the Nazis. One of them formerly was required to work in the local printshop, and he and his compatriots have agreed to help an Allied Army newspaper.

Nine Techs Among 88 Promoted by 254th

The promotion of 88 enlisted men was announced recently by the 254th Inf. Nine men were advanced to technical sergeant, 42 to staff sergeant, and 37 to sergeant.

Promoted to technical sergeant were: S/Sgts. William F. Henkinson, Co. A; Carl M. Mazzaelli, Co. B; Howard E. Homrig, Co. D; Nick Vukmanovitch and Francis C. Clark, Co. I; Leo F. Wright, AT Co.; John S. Stochmal, Co. F; Daniel T. Harman, Co. C, and Charles G. Boudrie, Co. B.

Advanced to staff sergeant: Pfc. William M. Gannt, Co. A, and Gesna Davis, Co. B; Sgts. Kergious Crites, Co. B; Donald B. O'Neill, Co. D, and Edward N. Green, Merlin O. Post, Irving Peak and Robert Gray, all of Co. I; Cpls. Grover C. Sharrock and Leon B. Shoemaker, Co. D; Sgts. James E. Johnson, Jr., William F. Henkinson, and Theodore Panczyk, Co. A; Kenneth C. Mc Kinney, Tony Targon and Robert L. Turner, Co. B; Robert J. Carr, Othar C. Wolverton, Jerry D. Wilson, Alton L. Call, John C. Montgomery and Nicholas B. Morales, Co. C; John P. Cosgrove, Co. D; Harold Gray, Jr., Joseph E. Herlan, Robert W. Enoch, Charles P. Helinski and Walter F. Ammerman, Co. E; T/5 Leonard W. Theodore, Hq. Co., 2d Bn.; Sgts. James R. Householder, Charles C. Quinby, Jr., and Walter J. Olszewski, Co. K; T/4 Henry J. Preeley, Sv. Co.; Sgts. Amos M. Foster, Co. D; Grady Martin and Anthony Berbergiovanni, Co. F; T/4s Jack M. Ward and Jack S. Venin, Co. F; Sgts. J. C. Watts, Co. L; and Gordon M. Gattlin, Gordon E. O'Brien and Louis J. Paulin, Co. M.

Advanced to sergeant: Pfc. Daniel J. Moran, Co. A; Daniel Goldsmith and Donald L. McKenny, Co. B; Cpls. George L. Parnell, Co. D; Francis X. Sullivan, Co. M, and John Messina, AT Co.; T/5 Fred Clarke, Co. E; Pfc. James E. Crow, Co. E, and Edward Roman, Hq. Co., 2d Bn.; Cpl. Thomas R. Barr, Hq. Co. 1st Bn.; Pfc. Howard S. Ripper, Co. A; Norman J. Eurice, Arthur J. Reid and Kenneth L. Carhell, all Co. B; Harold E. Pearce, John J. Hennings, Edward J. Paris, Severin A. Wieda, Victor J. Pacholski, Lee Catoe and Fielding R. Magness, all Co. C; William J. Schildmyer, Co. D; Robert W. Smith, Hq. 2d Bn.; Junior Sloan, Glenn J. Busiek and Orvel E. Stiles, Co. K; Cpl. Henry C. Kofsky, AT Co.; Pfc. Edmund R. Estrella and Cpl. John L. Harpe, Co. D; Pfc. John J. Zanzucchi, Wayne W. Burgess, Harold Smith, Albert E. Swegheimer, Carroll H. Ryerson, Robag Dull, Jr., and Paul E. Long, all Co. F.

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Division Sidelights

863d F.A.--To Pfc. Joe (Sharpie) Komatch, of Btry. A's wire crew, goes credit for capturing the battalion's first German prisoners. "Sharpie," while covering the operations of the crew, noticed a German crawling through the underbrush. He called to the prone one in his best Chicago German and the Heinie and three companions came out and gave themselves up.

255th Inf.--T/5 Herbert Arbitblit, Sv. Co., ended his clothes marking difficulties recently when he transferred from Hq. Co., 3d Bn. Both he and Pfc. Roy Feckley of the AT Plat. have the same last four digits in their serial numbers, 0392. Experts report that these numbers reoccur once in every 100,000.

Here's additional proof that those metal-covered Bibles really help. Lt. Donald C. Brockel, Co. C, had a nasty burn across the chest and a dent in the cover of the Bible he carries in his breast pocket to prove it.

862d F.A.--Members of the battalion discovered recently that three members of the only brother team believed to be in the 63d are in the 862d. At times T/4 Ernest Payette, Charlie FO, can wave to his brother Pfc. Homer Payette; 253d Inf., from his foxhole on the line. In Hq. Btry. T/3 Mike Bencivengo and his brother, Sgt. Frank, are working in the CP. The Payettes are from New Bedford, Mass., and the Bencivengos hail from Plainfield, N.J. Frank Bencivengo was with a field artillery unit in Hawaii before being assigned to the 63d.

Pfc. Jack "Conrad" Nagel, New Orleans, a battery FO driver, probably owes his life to the fact that he grew tired of sitting in his parked jeep one day near Ensheim and decided to take a little exercise. He had hardly completed a turn when an 88 shell crashed in the front of his machine.

First men of the 63d Div. to cross the Rhine were Capt. Thomas Selby, Ludington, Mich.; T/5 J. J. Newburn, Rochester, N. Y.; Sgt. Laurens Beckwith, Richmond, Va., and Cpl. Arthur Kline, Reading, Pa., all of Headquarters Liaison Section. They were attached to the 160th F. A. of the 45th Div.

254th Inf. - Three members of Co. A found that there can be happiness even in foxholes. Lt. George Perro and Pfc. Howard Hisey and Charles Munger were informed that each had become the father of girls while they were sweating it out in the front lines.

Another story of joy spreading comes from Co. C, where it is reported that 1st/Sgt. (now Lt.) Rocap and T/5 Jim Jimborsky took their phonograph from foxhole to foxhole before a recent attack to play such hits as "One Meat Ball," and "Rum and Coca-Cola."

While being treated for a wound in the battalion aid station, Sgt. Albert Murphy, Alliance, O., acting platoon sergeant for Co. G, discovered his platoon leader had been seriously wounded. Murphy persuaded the aid men to permit him to return to the lines and led his outfit in the attack on the Siegfried Line.

To commemorate the smashing of the Siegfried Line Lt. Donald Berman and 1st/Sgt. Bill Hubbard designed a special banner for Co. K, a large "K" with a mailed fist smashing a West Wall bunker. Gen. Hibbs autographed the banner for the "Butcher Boys."

During the Siegfried push a group of Co. I men spotted a sniper in a tree and were adjusting their sights when an arty shell got him. A rifleman remarked "I could have put him away for eight cents and that shot just cost 35 bucks."

861st F. A. - When Redlegs of the battalion rolled into Homburg they were greeted by a crowd of some 2500 Poles, Russians, Yugoslavs and Frenchmen, all of whom had been slave laborers under the "Master Race". So delighted were they at their liberation that they offered to join the US Army immediately. Hundreds also were eager to serve as KPs.

253d Inf. - When S/Sgt. Roy (Pop) Kasner, Ft. Wayne, Ind., and Pfc. Phil Lennon, Cleveland, go on a Kraut hunt they don't fool. An enemy counterattack was pinning down men of Co. G. and machine gun fire sprayed whenever a GI raised his head. Kasner called to Lennon and together they set out to find the Krauts. Before they finished their sortie they accounted for 10 dead Germans, captured sig and knocked out the machine gun nest.

Div. Hq. and Hq. Co. - Two members of Division Band, T/4 Alton Landis, New York City, and Pfc. Solomon Jacobson, Brooklyn, on guard in Mosbach, bagged a couple of German prisoners. The Heinies, wearing civilian clothes over uniforms, made the mistake of inquiring road directions from the Blood and Fire men, who spied the telltale green of the uniform sticking out beneath a civilian coat.

T/5 Ted Tomalski, Terryville, Conn., is the Isaac Walton of Hq. Co. Tomalski netted four fat rainbow trout from a nearby stream by the simple expedient of firing a small revolver near the fish. The impact of the bullets shocked the fish into insensibility.

G-4's Joe Summers is map happy. His map (not his face) is a smart chart with a classy acetate. One arrow marks the direction to the Yankee Stadium. There is no drive in that direction indicated, however.

Hq. & Hq. Btry., Div. Arty.--Although the record established by the mess crew of serving pie and cake daily has been broken because of the rapid moves Division has been making recently, there is some cause for rejoicing. The boys no longer have to worry about mixing sugar and salt in their coffee. T/4 Joe Hadaway, Lubbock, Tex., finally has received word that he is the father of a boy, Joe Dana Hadaway, Junior. He and his colleagues, T/4 Tony Vasques, New York City; T/4 Joe Hamsa, Clarkson, Neb., and T/4 Fred Wolff, New York City, hope to get back in the pastry business soon.

Without the Nazi uniform they all look alike. **BE WISE - DON'T FRATERNIZE!**

Veteran Noncom Becomes Officer

Although the "burrheads" whom he raised from raw recruits at Camp Van Dorn to combat soldiers in Hq. Btry., Div Arty, find it a little difficult to remember, it is now 2d Lt. Nicol Lein, and not "Sarge".

A redleg for the 27 years of his Army career, Lt. Lein has filled almost every job in the field artillery from gunner to topkick to sergeant-major.

Although his ringing voice could - and did - shatter the sturdy walls of his super-clean barracks back in the States, the lieutenant, now known as « Sir Voice » has other claims to fame.

It's a safe bet that he can quote the correct Army Regulation or War Department Circular to cover any question that may arise.

With all his years of service, Lt. Lein is about the best paid shavetail in the Army, pulling down the equivalent of a major's pay.

Born in Leipzig, Germany, the Dolgeville, N. Y., lieutenant had his greatest day in the army when he stepped aboard the transport to get into the scrap. But it still seems funny to the boys in the battery that the "master job" who used to eat out the shave-tails is now one himself.

Arnauts Top Shows Given for Troops

Featured by Kenning and Dolpt Arnaut, veteran vaudevillians, Division Special Service presented open air shows for elements of the 255th Inf., troops of Division DAC and DCP and other attached units recently. To date the Arnaut brothers have appeared 14 times before 63d soldiers.

The brothers team proved, among other things, that a duet can be played on a single violin and that the same instrument can be played in many grotesque positions. Their bird act topped the shows.

T/5 Arnold Spector gave a humorous imitation of Hitler and entertained with several skits. T/5 Paul Taubman was heard in a piano selection, "Begin the Beguine." Heard also was Jack Fiedel, an accordionist. The Division White orchestra with Pfc. Irvin Rocklin and T/5 Artie Engler as soloists, and the Division Red Band with Sgt. John Campbell, soloist, played for the shows.

Now It's Major Kearn

The promotion of Harry J. Kearn, of Tiffin, O., from captain to major was announced this week. Maj. Kearn is Division Artillery Air Officer. His particular squadron is known as the "Black Panty Squadron".

It's YOUR life -- "We cover an enemy tank or SP gun with smoke from grenades or bazooka shells. Almost invariably the tank or gun runs or is abandoned. If it does neither, we close in under the smoke and destroy it."

Medic Midwives Find War's Tough

It is just a trifle snide, to put it mildly, to criticize the Army's medical training program at this late and successful date. In view of a rush of obstetrical business at Ctr. Co., 363d Med., however, a course in midwifery might not have been a bad idea back in the States.

Most notable incident in Co. D's baby business occurred recently on Adolf's side of the Siegfried Line. A woman arrived at 0400 accompanied by two children and a rather uncomfortable appearing Joe Kaput who turned out to be her neighbor and spokesman.

They ushered the visitors in to T/5 W. D. von Meyerfeld, New York City, who slings the gutturals with the best of them. Joe Kaput explained that the frau was in need of a pass that would let her get to her doctor.

A few well placed questions uncovered the sobering fact that Frau Schultz was closer than is fit to print to childbirth. S/Sgt. Owen Burke of Colfax, Ky., was told to get an ambulance and Frau Schultz was placed on a litter. Von Meyerfeld, the two kids and Joe Kaput climbed in and off into the night they roared in search of the family doctor.

The ambulance got just 300 yards when Von Meyerfeld and Burke thought they heard something. At 305 yards they were sure of it. Somewhere in that ambulance — and anyone who ever heard the story about the birds and bees could guess where — a child was crying.

Frau Schultz smiled a tired, womanly smile. Joe Kaput jabbered that they had better hurry to the doctor's. The two kids on the side seat howled. Von Meyerfeld murmured to Burke that combat was getting tougher all the time.

Jeep Jockeys Too Busy To Take Kraut Towns

The appearance of one or more United States soldiers in a German town these days often causes the inhabitants to display their bed linen as quickly as it can be flung to the breeze.

It happened that two of the 254th's jeep jockeys, Cpl. Ken Taylor and T/5 Jim Kirkpatrick, drove into a pair of German towns neither of which had been previously entered by American troops. In the first the people immediately displayed their bedsheets and in the second a convalescing Kraut officer offered to surrender himself and 150 fellow patients. The jeep jockeys were loaded with supplies however, and could not accept.

If It's Rabbits It's Not Fraternizing

In addition to their other duties, two solemn-faced noncoms in the G-2 Sec have been plucking blades of grass in their back yard lately — a concession not to fraternization but to a humanitarian attitude toward our four-footed friends.

Sgt. Arthur Christensen, of San Francisco, and T/4 Dick Hook, of Philadelphia, discovered that, in hastily giving up their home, the householders had left behind two adult rabbits and a litter of six newly-born young.

The spectacle of these piteous animals standing on their hind legs in their hutches whenever the two soldiers came near was too much.

"You can't just stand there and let the dust-bitten little b-----s starve," Christensen said, and he went down on his hands and knees for grass

BERNIE BLOOD

By GILL FOX



"Please close the door on your way out."

Passports to Heaven

Five men recently assigned to the 254th Inf. who were sweating out their rotation furloughs, finally received the go ahead signal and are on their way to the States for a much-needed rest. The men are T/Sgt. William F. Hankinson, Bronx, N. Y.; Pfc. Raymond J. Jones, Henrietta, N. Y.; William H. Yates, Knoxdale, Pa.; and Emmet P. Stocking, Chicago, and Pvt. Thomas H. Smith, Estill, S. C. All five have been overseas since August, 1942.

Ex-Orderly Made Combat His Destiny

They scoffed at Pfc. Robert M. Simpkins, Co. G, 253d Inf., back in the States when his CO made him an orderly and the Forsyth, Ga., boy vowed he'd show them he was cut out for better things. He begged to be returned to a rifle platoon when the outfit moved overseas and he got his wish. He also proved to his buddies he was a combat soldier.

Simpkins participated in only three brushes with the enemy. In the first, near Neunkirch, his heroic action in aiding the repulse of attacking Germans won praise from his superiors. In the second a week later, he helped rout the enemy from a group of farm houses near Buebingen. In the third, Simpkins' buddies were harassed by enemy machine gun fire. The 20-year-old Georgian acted swiftly. He moved toward the German position, but too late. The enemy spotted him and opened fire and he was killed.

The following day Pfc. Simpkins was awarded the Bronze Star posthumously.

Because of mechanical difficulties, the "Awards" list is omitted from this week's issue.

Awards and decorations will be listed in a subsequent issue.

Appearances often are deceiving
BE WISE - DON'T FRATERNIZE