

draw along which his men would have to move to their objective. The company crossed the draw and had reached the nose of the ridge when severe artillery and small arms fire hailed upon them from the concealed and snow-banked bunkers on the hill. B could not dig in, for mortar and artillery fire was falling heavily. When Captain Stough saw that his line was becoming disorganized, he asked for permission to pull his men back across the draw in order to regroup.

Meanwhile the 36th Engineer Regiment suffered a similar fate in the vicinity of REYBACH to the east. They were unable to push up and establish contact with the 1st Bn.'s right side.

That evening, orders were issued for the 2nd Bn. to relieve elements of the 1st Bn. of the 315th Infantry Regiment, 79th Division, which was holding between the 180th Infantry and the 157th Infantry on the right.

The relief was to be completed by noon the next day so that the 2nd Bn. could secure the 157th Infantry's left flank by extending southwest from it to the north-south trail, tying in with the left side of the 3rd Bn. and the right side of the 180th Infantry.

The 3rd Bn., encamped upon its two hills and the saddle between them, was likewise ordered to hold and set up a strong defensive line. In this manner the 157th Infantry prepared to stem enemy counterattacks from the north and have both flanks protected against possible infiltrations to the rear. The 1st and 3rd Bns. would be set up in a straight line while the 36th Engineers sloped to the south-east on the right and the 2nd Bn. extended southwest on the left and was flanked by the 180th Infantry.

The night of January 15-16 was spent in cold, wet, snow-filled foxholes while the ever-present artillery shells whined and burst overhead, all about them. The 1st and 2nd Bns. prepared to move at daylight to tie in with the 3rd Bn.'s east and west flanks respectively. The 3rd Bn. strengthened its positions on the exposed ridge against further probable enemy attacks, pulled back its antitank platoon in reserve, and used its Headquarters Company to evacuate the many wounded personnel which the three forward companies had suffered that day, as well as to bring up rations, medical supplies, and ammunition to these companies.

Needless to say, the companies were now more understrengthened than when they took up their positions two days before. Men who were not injured suffered from exposure and battle fatigue. The close of the following day would find the position of many of them critical.

After being subjected to a heavy mortar and artillery barrage, Company C moved out as planned at 0830 hours on January 16 with the purpose of extending the right flank of L. Following the 3rd Bn.'s route along the trail and up the draw, by-passing enemy strongpoints, the Company advanced.

At 1120 hours L reported small arms fire to its right rear, undoubtedly C fighting its way up, but contact had not been established. A half-hour later the two companies were joined. The company placed 25 men in the gap between L and I with the remainder dug in along the east

side of L to secure the right flank and rear of the 3rd Bn.

A short time later Lieutenant Floyd, commanding Company C, radioed back that Germans were infiltrating below his men and along the route he had used to come up. Thus began the enemy's scheme to envelope and wipe out the 3rd Bn. and its two adjacent companies on the high ridge.

While this push was in progress on January 16 a concentrated effort was made to get supplies to Company C. At 1330 a 1st Bn. ration train was ambushed by German riflemen supported by two machine guns aiming crossfire along the road. One of the four survivors, Cpl. Alfred Miller said:

"I was just returned from the hospital and was riding up with the ration trucks to rejoin my outfit. We rounded a bend in the road and all hell broke loose. We were fired on by riflemen and by machine guns so emplaced that they commanded the road. We all hit the ditch on the side of the road. I rolled down the embankment until I found myself in a semi-covered position.

"After covering the road with small arms and machine gun fire, the Germans began firing rifle grenades at the men on the ground. I saw one man take a direct hit in the face and fall over dead. Grenades fell around my position and I crawled to another position without getting hit. By crawling and running from one covered position to another, I succeeded in getting back to our own lines."

The day of January 16 proved to be one of continuous counterattacks in the 3rd Bn.'s zone. With the coming of daylight continuous small frontal attacks were staged by SS groups, but they were knocked back, for the battalion was "looking down the enemy's throats" from its vantage positions on the high ground.

Enemy artillery fire remained as strong as ever, inflicting a mounting toll of casualties. At about 1300 hours, Company K received a staggering blow on its left flank and soon the Germans, SS mountain troopers fighting with fanatical and expert skill, were hitting all along the line in an effort to pierce through the 157th Infantry defense.

At this point they inevitably discovered the 3rd Bn.'s bared flanks. Abandoning their slamming frontal assaults, by 1400 they were moving to the sides. An hour later Company K reported that the enemy had moved around its left flank.

Similar penetrations were meanwhile taking place on the 3rd Bn.'s right flank where German troops had moved around to prevent Company B from making contact with C, which was already tied in with Company L.

All officers were aware of this enemy activity, but believed that Company B and Company E would be able to break through to either flank the following morning and thereby remove or relieve the ruthless pressure on them.

Shortly after 1600 hours on January 16, K and I reported that they were being surrounded on all sides. The 3rd Bn.'s antitank and pioneer platoons, with twenty and twenty-five men respectively, were sent out from the CP to make contact and clear the enemy along the supply routes



so that much-needed rations and supplies could be taken up that night and the wounded taken out.

The two platoons, later carrying supplies and serving as infantry, had with them a section of two light tanks under the command of 2nd Lt. William J. Lewis of Company D, 191st Tank Battalion, started with the mission of reaching the 3rd Bn. to lend it support. However, before they could give their assistance, they too were required to beat off constant German attacks. They too were cut off, with the rear platoon of Company I on January 17. Like Companies K, L, I, G, and C, they never came out.

At 1700 hours on January 16, a provisional composite regimental company was organized under the command of Captain Robert Cannon to be attached to the 3rd Bn. as a reserve force. It was made up of two sections. The first had fifty men in charge of 1st Lt. Francis P. Farley including command post and military police guards plus the intelligence and reconnaissance platoon. The second included two 20-man regimental antitank platoons under 1st Lieutenants Berg and Hainey.

They were ordered to set up for the night along both sides of the supply trail to reinforce the battalion in the event of an enemy breakthrough. The antitank platoons took up positions on either side of the road half way up the draw, while Lieutenant Farley's men occupied the ridges behind them.

The 158th Field Artillery Battalion had expended 2505 rounds of ammunition during that day's efforts to stave off the enemy attacks. The six assault guns of the 191st Tank Battalion had fired 493 rounds, Cannon Company 296 rounds, making a total of 3294 rounds fired on that day.

The barrages were kept up throughout the night in an effort to break up whatever enemy attack might then be forming and to prevent the encirclement of the five companies upon the ridge. All the while the Germans answered with their own tremendously massed fire power upon the helpless infantry dug in atop those hills.

Plans for January 17 called for a coordinated drive by all three of the infantry companies to continue the attack northward, tie in their defenses, and secure their objectives. Company C was unable to jump off: its men filled the vital gap between L and I Companies, its personnel were pinned down by continuous murderous fire, and last the enemy was dug in to the rear as well as to the front, and in superior numbers. Company B was pinned down by small arms, rocket, and artillery fire as the men left their foxholes. Company A also was unable to move. Thus orders came for a coordinated attack by the 1st Bn., minus C now definitely cut off, to attack to the west and northwest for HILL 363. In the western sector of the front, Company E tried bitterly to fight its way back on HILL 400 to reach its command post. An unsuccessful effort was made to bring up rations but the supply train had to return. The situation was thus when the enemy, who had built up a fairly solid front the length of the 3rd Bn.'s rear, repelled efforts of the beleaguered units to break out or the composite company to fight their way in. An unsuccessful attack by the latter made it all too clear that no supplies could be deliv-

ered to the 3rd Battalion and no wounded could be brought out.

Early on January 18 the 157th Infantry made a formal request of the Division Artillery commander for a running barrage at the rate of one round per gun per minute of one battalion, to be lifted on the call of the infantry commanding officer to support an attack of the 1st Bn. in a series of attacks to clear the enemy and reach the cut-off companies. After a conference it was decided that the whole of the divisional ammunition allowance of 1080 artillery rounds would be used for a ninety-minute period.

These efforts proved in vain: by the end of the day it was apparent that the surrounded units were no longer within any sort of physical contact, and that they might never escape.

It was emphasized that the beleaguered companies had not fallen into a trap. Permission was requested to withdraw the troops from their salient in the commanding ground back into line with the 180th Infantry Regiment and the 36th Engineer Regiment. That they had to remain there as long as possible and finally be engulfed was part of the fortunes of war. It would mean greater danger to the Allied front and more lives lost if the enemy had regained the positions in the dominating terrain. Orders were to hold the line as long as possible to keep from creating weakness in the front.

On January 18, concerted and heroic efforts were made to clear the enemy from his positions behind the forward companies. Coordinated drives began at 6030 hours. The 1st Bn. minus Company C and with Company F, the Headquarters Provisional Company, and Company G of the 179th Infantry attacked. Their purpose was to move northward toward the road junction west of REYBACH in order to seize the ridge line between HILLS 415 and 390, particularly the strongly defended HILL 363. Then they would continue the attack to clear the nose of land running eastward from HILL 390 to that road junction, where contact would be established with the 36th Engineer Regiment.

The 2nd and 3rd Bns. would collect their command post and other personnel to attack and fight toward the surrounded units. It was felt that if the 1st Bn.'s drive was successful, pressure would be taken off the beleaguered companies and the German troops which had infiltrated behind them could be mopped up. For that reason the priority for artillery and mortar fire was given the 1st Bn.'s attack, though the guns were still in direct support of the other two battalions.

The provisional company and Company B were forced to discontinue the attack by 0910 due to heavy casualties and dug in, unable to move for two days, because the enemy on the surrounding hills directed continuous rocket, mortar, and artillery barrages upon them. The positions of Company G of the 157th Infantry were overrun. The composite company, reduced to eighteen men, was able to finish with sixty because a number who were removed for exhaustion the previous day were returned and incorporated into a platoon.

Company G of the 179th Infantry moved out at 0800



hours but was forced to hold up and dig in when it reached the southwestern slopes of HILL 363 due to the volume of enemy artillery and nebelwerfer fire.

All in all, the 1st Bn.'s attack was totally unsuccessful. Against devastating artillery concentrations, overwhelming obstacles, and tenaciously held positions manned by forces always building up in numbers as fast as they were cut down, it proved entirely ineffectual in driving out the enemy or in any way alleviating the situation of the cut-off companies.

Once more the 1st Bn. was alerted to be prepared to attack at any time after 1500 hours. The attack did not begin because as the 179th Infantry's two companies, E and F, scheduled to come abreast and join the attack, came up they were immediately pinned down along the left flank of Company B and were never able to advance beyond that point. The 157th Infantry's 2nd Bn. was scheduled to join the coordinated attack and move toward Company G of the 3rd Bn. The attack was called off after it had got under way because a radio report from the company's commanding officer stated that his positions were overrun and that he had been forced by a frontal attack plus fire from the rear to withdraw to the position of Company I with his remaining men. The enemy quickly secured this gap by setting

up six machine guns there, and the 2nd Bn. was never able to clear it. Other positions were repeatedly attacked by the enemy seeking out weak spots to continue their infiltration operations.

Results to rescue the five companies on January 18, like those of the preceding day, accomplished nothing. Although no physical contact was made and it was impossible to maintain wire lines over the artillery-torn route, radio communication was kept up with the companies to the very end. Orders and information were given in code.

By this means they could notify battalion and regimental headquarters of their plight, of the counterattacks which they repulsed, of the enemy infiltrating constantly behind them, of their steadily diminishing slender reserves of strength due to casualties and lack of supplies, of the ceaseless destruction wrought upon them by the enemy's artillery, mortar, and rocket fire to which they were subjected on the ridge. Each of them had less than one-quarter of their normal strength capable of manning the defense of the ridge. Realizing that their situation was becoming increasingly hopeless, especially since no air support or artillery liaison was possible here in snow and overcast weather, Colonel O'Brien presented the true picture of his regiment's situation to Division G-3. The Commanding General

*Prime mover and jeep attempt to pass on narrow and muddy road typical of the Raon L'etape Area.*







*Cot heaped with personal belongings is carried dripping from flooded tent. Constant rains have flooded much of the front.*

ordered the Regiment to hold its position as long as possible in order "not to show its weakness."

Friendly artillery fire reached its peak on January 18 as the twenty-four 105 millimeter guns fired a staggering total of 5,018 high explosive rounds, 3,617 of them fired by the 158th Field Artillery Battalion. Some 541 were fired by the tanks' assault guns.

A rolling barrage of 1427 rounds was fired to describe an arc north of the 1st and 3rd Bns. requested by Colonel O'Brien in preparation for the effort to reach the surrounded companies and disperse the enemy between by a series of attacks. Some 3299 rounds were fired in counterattack measures to destroy reported enemy assembly areas and halt the repeated attacks upon the five hard-pressed companies. The mortars, too, worked tirelessly to keep up a perimeter ring of fire against the enemy's continuous infiltrations and assaults. Nevertheless, the German SS troops appeared stronger than ever at the end of day in their operations to methodically capture or annihilate the five companies which they had cut off, one by one, and around which they were now tightening their grasp.

On January 19 the 157th Infantry attacked again to reach their companies. By now, the ranks were so badly mauled that help was necessary from the 179th Infantry. One column moved out to encounter the resistance which was keeping Company B from moving up to Company C, an

estimated company in strength in well-camouflaged snow-covered dugouts, impossible to detect, firing from both sides of that trail. Part of the attacking force escaped after being brutally assaulted, part were forced to take cover until dusk, despite their firing more than 5000 machine gun rounds in the effort to remain on the hill.

A half-hour later a company from the 157th and the 179th were scheduled to attack. Their tanks moved up and fired heavily into the enemy positions, but found that they would have to get up on the hill to move the enemy infantry out of their holes. They could not negotiate that terrain with the tanks: the trail was difficult enough. To reconnoiter a possible route for the tanks, a party went up the hill on foot. They encountered felled trees which would take a day and a half of work by the engineers to clear. No ground whatever was gained by any unit on January 19.

It was now too clearly apparent that a successful breakthrough was impossible. Repeated attacks had failed consistently, heavily sapping the strength of units not yet surrounded. The vitality of the cut-off companies was being drained at an alarming rate by artillery, mortar and rocket fire plus the enemy's repeated thrusts. The lack of food and medical supplies aggravated the situation, and the chance to bring them up was obviously hopeless. To alle-





*An infantryman runs through sniper fire in Nieder-Wurzbach, Germany, on the 45th Division front. 3/20/45.*

viate matters Colonel O'Brien made plans to supply the five companies by air on January 20. The 1st Fighter Bomber Air Resupply Detachment of the XII Tactical Air Corps was alerted by G-4 of the Seventh Army. Ammunition, rations, medical and signal supplies arrived at headquarters close to midnight and were packed and loaded for delivery to the airfield.

Attacking was continued on January 20 although little hope remained that the entrapped companies would be able to break through the encircling German lines. The Germans continued to mass their artillery and rocket fires on the 157th Infantry sector, where heavy and continuous barrages were received throughout the day.

At 0725, plans for aerial supply went ahead. The take-off was set for 1245. The weather, with driving sleet and snow and extremely poor visibility, prevented the takeoff. A message was sent to the isolated men to attack toward the southwest.

The 411th Infantry Regiment of the 103rd Division was attached to the 157th Infantry and prepared to jump off at 0655 hours on January 20. Its immediate mission was to seize HILL 363, then continue toward HILL 390, then clear the nose of land running toward the east. A company each of the 157th and 179th Infantry Regiments feinted their usual attacks and the attached regiment began its drive; but

were stopped an hour later under the same resistance which had held up all other efforts.

All three attacking companies drew back to their line of departure to reorganize, then resumed the drive at 1030 hours in a driving snowstorm while the 157th and 179th Infantry units fired their weapons in support. The results were the same: the 2nd Bn. of the 411th Infantry was forced to hold up, unable to reach Hill 363.

By noon it was borne in upon all elements that the chance of retaking the ground and reaching the five companies that day was extremely remote. Nor could supplies be got to the positions by air in the snow and sleet. 45th Division Headquarters issued orders for the 157th Infantry to pull out its entire front and delaying positions on orders, preparatory to being relieved of its mission in order to reorganize. When Colonel O'Brien received this order he instructed the remnants of his companies by radio to pull out and attack to the southwest.

At 1530 hours on January 20, as every available weapon created as much din as possible, the companies attempted to make the break. "We're coming out. Give us everything you've got."

An hour later, Company K reported that it was impossible to break through the cordon of enemy troops and fire about the ridge.



toon of Company L, 180th Infantry, infiltrated into enemy positions in the northern edge of SAEGMUHL and captured sixteen enemy soldiers in a brisk fire fight. Other units of the 180th engaged in skirmishes and hammered away at enemy positions and patrols with their artillery. Apparently unaware of the depth of the Division's withdrawal, the enemy maintained nervous patrol action. Then, by January 29 it became obvious that the Germans had shifted the bulk of their forces to the UPPER ALSACE PLAIN.

Not until the clearing of the COLMAR pocket did the strength of the German positions in ALSACE begin to deteriorate rapidly. In the 45th Division sector, however, the enemy began to depend on strongpoints rather than on an established defensive line. He relied on these, and on the ruggedness of the terrain, to contain the 45th Division and discourage immediate offensive action while the emphasis was shifted elsewhere. Sharp patrol clashes were still frequent in the 180th Infantry sector.

Only token barrages made their way into the line and areas of the Division as the month closed. The reappearance of the 6th SS Mountain Battalion northeast of REIPERTSWILLER indicated that the enemy was using them as a thin defensive line in this mountain sector while withdrawing the VOLKSGRENADIER units for action elsewhere.

The 45th Division consolidated its positions and sent out numerous patrols to contact the enemy. The patrols revealed that the enemy was outposting the area east and southeast of the SARREINSBERG-MEISENTHAL-ALTHORN line and the area of WILDENGUTH, SAEGMUHL, and REIPERTSWILLER. Bitter cold continued to plague the men in the lines in the second winter for the 45th Division of snow-filled foxholes, guard duty and patrolling in freezing wind and sleet.

The enemy's actions indicated that he anticipated offensive action on the 45th Division front. During February, however, the Division largely limited its action to aggressive, strong patrolling and harassment of the enemy's troops as French and American troops elsewhere on the ALSACE front carried out the reduction of the bulk of the German forces in ALSACE.

Maintaining a strong defensive line from SARREINSBERG to ROTHBACH, the Division watched the enemy struggle to maintain his line with a reduced force as wire and mines increased and harassing fire from his camouflaged emplacements marked his main activity against the 45th's front. Division patrols carried out a program of keeping the Germans in a state of great uneasiness with raiding platoons and concentrations of fire.

On February 1, a fifteen-man patrol of the enemy's crack SS mountain troops charged into positions of Company G, 180th Infantry, losing eleven of their fifteen men. The 180th retaliated promptly by sending three strong combat patrols into the enemy line near REIPERTSWILLER to harass the enemy, inflict casualties, and withdraw, with only one casualty of their own.

During the following days the enemy intensified efforts

to keep off the Division's patrols, reshuffling his outposts, laying more mines and trip wires. Nevertheless, the Division's infantry continued to engage the Germans in close fire fights, with needle thrusts which took heavy toll of their materiel, killed and captured their men. At times of greater anxiety and apprehension on the part of the enemy, their artillery barrage increased, as did the intensity of their defensive measures.

In REIPERTSWILLER, the Germans clung tenaciously to three fortified houses in the eastern part of the city. Their outposts were well-manned and engaged probing patrols in savage fire fights. They also maintained an observation post on the hill immediately above REIPERTSWILLER.

The enemy shifted his outposts frequently to give signs of greater strength. A patrol sent into the town with the mission of reconnoitering territory there was virtually surrounded, but succeeded in fighting its way out. Another patrol to the northeast wounded several Germans and captured two. Still another inflicted casualties on a German patrol, then withdrew.

Direct fire from tanks, tank destroyers, and antitank guns was placed upon the enemy's holding positions by the 179th Infantry. By this time, such positions had been well established. The Germans offered brisk resistance by small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire against Division patrols. In the eastern sector of the Division front, however, patrols could come and go almost at will, probably because of the limited number of hostile troops in the area.

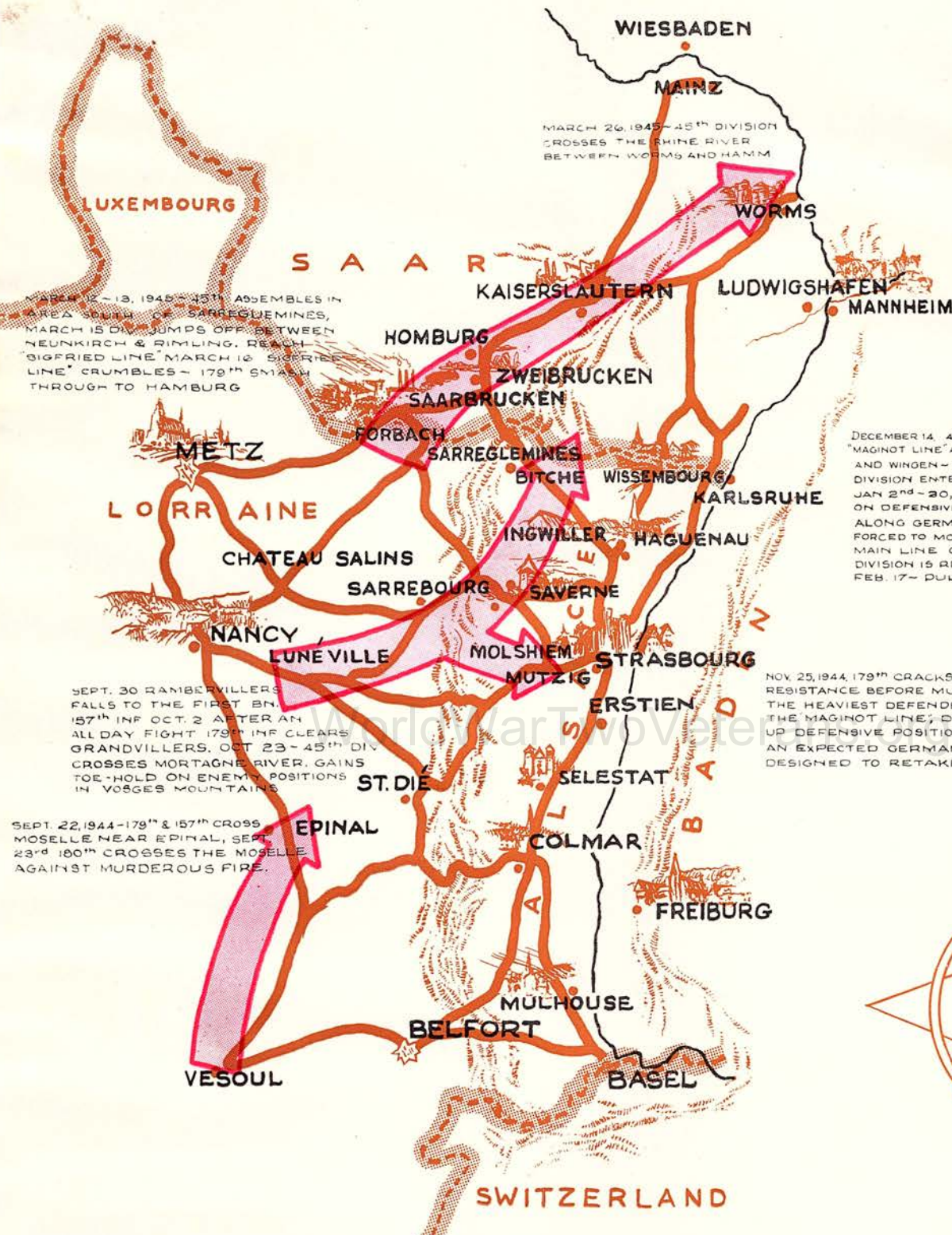
The enemy continued sending over his concentrations of 50 millimeter, 80 millimeters, and 120 millimeter mortar fire into the Division's lead elements. By February 13, the enemy on the eastern flank had taken their cue from other units to the front and moved their outposts closer to the Division front. The Division's patrolling activities kept the enemy in an increasing state of alarm, as was evidenced by their alertness to patrol movements. In the REIPERTSWILLER area, German mortar and artillery fire became more intense. In ALTHORN, it reappeared after a complete two-day lull.

The 2nd Bn. of the 157th Infantry sent out a 26-man patrol to slash the enemy line. It successfully trapped a German patrol and killed two of the enemy. The 179th Infantry engaged the enemy in several sharp patrol clashes, with the Germans always reacting quickly, with heavy machine gun and small arms fire. Reconnaissance parties were beset by mines and road blocks to the front of the Division main line of resistance.

By the time the 45th Division was relieved by the 42nd Division, the offensive in ALSACE had cost the Germans more than 25,000 men. Like the Belgian Bulge, it dwindled under constant and repeated defeat after which the Germans could not make another strong offensive stand.

Moving into a reserve area in the vicinity of the French towns of EPINAL, BACCARAT, and LUNEVILLE, the Division set about the task of reorganization and put into effect an extensive program of training and rehabilitation prior to the beginning of a new all-out campaign in mid-March toward the smoking industrial chimneys of the SAAR.







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# THE RHINELAND CAMPAIGN

The general attack by the Seventh Army on March 15, following a preliminary attack by the armored divisions of XX Corps of General Patton's Third Army, would be made for the purpose of reducing the SAAR POCKET, an area of tough resistance, a necessary springboard for the drive across GERMANY. The Seventh Army was given 14 divisions for this monumental task. The Third Army would make a subsidiary effort from north to south across the MOSELLE southwest of KOBLENZ to complete the pocket.

On March 14, General Patton established his bridgehead across the MOSELLE, then broke out to the south, while other Third Army forces drove east from TRIER and the Seventh Army attacked northward between SAARBRUCKEN and the RHINE. Through dense minefields and formidable SIEGFRIED LINE positions, the Seventh Army gained ground steadily, pinning down the enemy front while the armor cut across the rear, enveloping the SAAR BASIN and the RHINELAND cities in that area.

Once the 45th Division had been alerted to make the assault crossing of the RHINE. Now it was given the gruelling task of first reducing and mopping up a sector of the grim SAAR region in a grinding campaign which would end at the RHINE on March 26.

While going through intensive training for the final blow in reserve in the LUNEVILLE-BACCARAT-EPINAL Area, it had practised river crossings in assault boats, had tackled scouting and assault problems, and had pored over maps and aerial photos of the strategic areas through which it

must operate west and east of the RHINE.

On March 12 the Division received its orders to proceed by motor to an assembly area near SARREGUEMINES, FRANCE, where it would become a part of the United State XV Corps for the SAAR-PALATINATE campaign.

The initial objective of the 45th Division attack was to breach the enemy's defensive lines east of the BLIES River, then crash through the SIEGFRIED LINE and move on to capture the key German city of HOMBURG. The 63rd and 44th Infantry Divisions had been holding the sector through which the 45th Division had to advance to begin the attack. According to information received from these units, elements of the German Army occupying the area of the immediate attack some 15 kilometers south of the SIEGFRIED LINE included a battalion of the 19th Volksgrenadier Division and five battalions of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division.

The 45th Division Command Post opened in a former Prisoner of War Camp at STEINBACH, FRANCE, on March 14, and all units reconnoitered routes toward their lines of departure for the coming attack. The Division would strike out through lines held by the 44th Division in a sector between NEUNKIRCH and RIMLING, with the 180th Infantry on the left, the 157th on the right, and the 179th in reserve.

In support would be Company A of the 353rd Searchlight Battalion. The plan for the attack by darkness called for the use of searchlights, upon request of infantry battalion.





*A 3/4 ton truck from the 180th Infantry destroyed by German shellfire at Bobenthal, Germany, December '44.*

commanders, to furnish artificial moonlight for the illumination of the areas to their front.

At 0100 hours, after the bombing of ZWEIBRUCKEN and HOMBURG in the Division sector by bombers of the British Air Force, the attack jumped off. Just before H-Hour, shattering time-on-target concentrations were laid down upon the enemy's positions. They caught the Germans by surprise as the assault got under way. In addition, devastating and accurate fire by Division Artillery, together with the activity of the bombers, completely disrupted the enemy's communications and silenced his artillery until after daybreak. Fighter bombers flew in close support missions after daylight, bombing and strafing REINHEIM, HERBITZHEIM, GERSHEIM, WALSHEIM, WITTERSHEIM, BREITFURT, and BEBELSHEIM.

Fighter bombers controlled by the Division Air-Ground Liaison remained in close support of the Division as the attack pushed forward. In the sector north of SARREGUEMINES, the 180th Infantry stormed across the BLIES River on its assault boats and rafts, encountering many mines on the approaches on the north side of the river, but establishing a bridgehead and hurrying on to take its first objectives.

Aiding the infantry in the crossing operation were Companies B and C of the 120th Combat Engineer Battalion.

Later, the Engineers constructed an 84-foot bridge across the river and converted a ferry into an assault bridge, joining the end of a trail on the far side of the river to enable the vehicles to cross and move upward swiftly. There the engineers laid 200 yards of somerfeld matting. Both bridge and bridgehead were shelled heavily from daylight to mid-morning.

The attacking battalions by-passed enemy strongpoints to thrust inward through the outer German line, and by daylight had penetrated the forward positions and were pushing hard toward the main line of defense. The Germans had been in these same positions since the preceding November, and had spent four months utilizing every advantage for the improvement and strengthening of their defensive positions, which they accomplished in their usual thorough and habitually methodical fashion. In the 180th Infantry sector they had the added advantage of the BLIES River. On D-Day this river was from 75 to 144 feet wide in the Division sector and had an average depth of 10 to 15 feet.

Later in the day, regimental and a portion of Division reserves were used to mop up the strongpoints and pockets of resistance by-passed by the forward elements of the 180th Infantry in their attack through the enemy's forward defense positions. By the end of the day the villages of





*From a position in a tree, a sniper coach is teaching the riflemen of the Division at the Sniper School near La Petite Pierre, France.*



*Two mail clerks with the 45th Division bring mail to the troops of the front line battle in an area in France.*

HABKIRCHEN, BLIESMENGEN, BLIESBOLCHEN, and OBERGAILBACH had been seized and secured. Five enemy tanks, three trucks, one flak wagon, and one artillery piece were listed as destroyed, an artillery radio was captured, and four 75 millimeter assault guns were damaged.

After its initial attack, the 157th Infantry Regiment ran into bitter resistance south of NIEDER-GAILBACH and was held up there at nightfall. Extensive minefields in the right portion of the sector hampered the advance. While the 2nd Bn. of the 180th Infantry struck a bitterly resisting force at HABKIRCHEN and finally wrested the positions from the Germans, the 3rd Bn. advanced on its first objective, ALLENBERG.

Since there were no clouds to reflect the rays of the searchlights, they gave only partial illumination to the jump-off. However, their beams proved useful in maintaining the direction of the attack.

The 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion had a highly successful day firing high explosive shells at enemy personnel, harassing enemy positions and engaging machine gun nests. Two tank destroyers were credited with destroying two German tanks and one armored vehicle at 1100 hours.

The blow delivered against the enemy on the initial day of the attack was a stunning one. He did not recover im-

mediately, and, unable to regroup his somewhat shattered forces for a determined stand, he had no choice but to withdraw to the concrete and steel security of the SIEGFRIED LINE. In order to delay the Division's advance as much as possible, the Germans busied themselves laying minefields and demolitions and setting up tank-supported strongpoints on the critical approaches. However, the Division continued to advance ruthlessly on March 16, regardless of delaying actions, and by the close of day was literally at the portals of the SIEGFRIED LINE once more.

The 157th Infantry resumed its forward sweep, with the 1st Bn. advancing rapidly to capture the town of SEYWEILER and the wooded area to the north. The 2nd Bn. resumed its dogged attack on NIEDER-GAILBACH and reduced that town, then sprinted ahead to seize the town of HOCHWALD. Not stopping until after nightfall, it maintained the pace of its forward dash until halted to enable the 3rd Bn. to pass through, preparatory to its attack set for the following day.

The 179th Infantry, committed in the center of the Division line, dispatched its 2nd Bn. to attack north astride the BLIES River. It captured WELSHEIM and the section of GERSHEIM lying east of the river.

The 180th Infantry, on the left flank of the Division sec-





*Top: In the frozen forests of Alsace, France, near Wingen sur Moder, the 120th Engineer bulldozer crew build a new road.*

*Above: Bailey bridge spanning the Blies River, which separates France and Germany in the Frauenberg area.*

*Top: Civilians of Doncieres, France, were so impressed with the cleanliness, orderliness, and good behavior of Company E, 179th Infantry, they showed their appreciation by changing the name of the town to "Learyville" after Capt. Wm. J. Leary, commanding officer of Company E. Here at a Company formation, the Mayor, M. Poirot, presents the key of the town to Capt. Leary.*

*Above: River crossing demonstration. Infantrymen loading into assault boats. These boats are carried down to the lake at intervals to make the crossing in waves as soon as the storm boats have taken off.*

tor, sent the 1st Bn. generally north from its positions of the night before to take the towns of ERFWEILLER, BALLWEILER, WECKLINGERN, WOLFERSHEIM, and RUBENHEIM by 1840 hours in a seven-kilometer sweep. The 2nd Bn. moved with equally astonishing speed and power, attacking astride the MANDELBACH River. It made a dash of nine kilometers and overcame sharp and

determined resistance in BEBELSHEIM, WITTERSHEIM, and EHLINGEN. Coming under streams of fire from machine guns, mortars, and tank guns at ASSWEILLER, the Battalion launched a successful three-company assault to reach the outskirts of the village by afternoon. Fast, heavy fighting continued until nightfall, but the village was cleared



enemy. One platoon of Company G continued on its axis of advance to attack the town of SEELBACH.

In all, by the close of day on March 16, the Germans had lost 267 prisoners, three vehicles, nine artillery pieces, large quantities of ammunition, and 15 towns and villages.

### THE SIEGFRIED LINE

The assault on the SIEGFRIED LINE began March 17 as the 45th Division's address became "Somewhere in GERMANY." The Division attacked north with the 180th Infantry Regiment on the left, the 157th Infantry on the right, and the 179th Infantry in the center clearing out the corridor of enemy rear guards along the BLIES River until it, too, reached the solid defenses of the SIEGFRIED LINE in the vicinity of BLIESCASTEL.

The 157th Infantry attacked at 0300, the 3rd Bn. in the lead. At 0700, the 1st Bn. passed through the 3rd and moved forward until it reached the grim defenses of the LINE and came under fire from pillboxes emplaced behind a row of concrete "dragon's teeth" tank defenses. Company A launched an attack with artillery support, but was promptly beaten back by the enemy's well-organized fire. A platoon of Company B, detailed to clear the town of HENGSTBACH found that town held in strength, and the

enemy there supported by fire from HILL 321 in the 3rd Infantry's Division's zone.

The 2nd Bn. followed the 1st into the woods west of HENGSTBACH, where it underwent a terrific saturation of artillery and nebelwerfer fire at dusk. Late that night they had won the town and moved into the high ground beyond to secure the sector.

The 180th Infantry, too, assaulted the SIEGFRIED LINE on March 17. The 2nd Bn. moved up on the right, the 3rd Bn. on the left, and the 1st Bn., advancing earlier in the day from WECKLINGEN, trapped five enemy tanks and an undetermined number of infantry troops in the town of BEISLINGEN.

The 2nd Bn. spent the day hammering away at the SIEGFRIED LINE pillboxes. Despite the most intense machine gun and artillery fire, it captured two emplacements in the LINE.

The 3rd Bn. also battered its way to the SIEGFRIED LINE and by midnight had reached an area just south of ALSBACH, where Company I repulsed a small counterattack at nightfall.

That day the 45th destroyed one Mark VI tank, two 88 MM guns, one prime mover, and two personnel carriers. It captured 96 soldiers, one 88 mm gun, two amphibious jeeps, and 12 machine guns.

*DUKW loaded with troops and equipment crosses a river in the Heming area, France, as part of amphibious training. DUKWs and powered rafts are also tested for seaworthiness. 157th Inf. and 40th Engr. C Gp.*







*American white phosphorus shells burst on hill above the town of Nieder-Wurzbach, as infantrymen move through to continue the fight.*

All three regiments pounded at the ramparts of the SIEGFRIED LINE on March 18, but the row of "dragon's teeth," the antitank ditches, and wide minefields hampered armored attacks and left the assaulting infantry at the mercy of the enemy manning his machine guns from the well-protected steel and concrete forts of the LINE. Thus the Division developed a technique of close coordination between the infantry and the 191st Tank Battalion and 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Infantry and armor would advance under an artillery barrage. Then the artillery and armor would fire at the apertures of the pillboxes while the infantry blew gaps in the lines of "dragon's teeth," enabling the armor to get through and up to the anti-tank ditch, from which it would fire into the enemy positions while the infantry assaulted them. Then Engineers from the 120th Combat Engineers Battalion would come up with tank dozers to fill the anti-tank ditch. This was a slow, laborious, and costly process, but by the close of day great gaping holes had been gouged in the SIEGFRIED LINE by the capture of 24 pillboxes. The Germans were sufficiently concerned about a possible breakthrough by the 45th Divi-

sion to commit elements of the 937th Regiment, 245th Division, which had been in line in the REIPERTSWILLER area and had been withdrawn for a rest in the interior of GERMANY.

Fighter bombers flew four missions in the Division sector to bomb and strafe the SIEGFRIED LINE towns of NIEDER-WURZBACH, WATTWEILLER, LAUTZKIRCHEN, and BIERBACH.

With paths hewn through the belt of fortifications by the fighting of March 17, the way was now open for a death blow to the SIEGFRIED LINE defenses in the Division sector. Each regiment thoroughly and methodically blasted its way forward through the fortress belt on March 18 against the most bitter opposition from an enemy experienced and well-protected. Nevertheless, 86 pillboxes were reduced in closely coordinated fighting by infantry and armor beneath a supporting shield of artillery fire. A total of 268 prisoners was taken, together with five key towns: ALSCHBACH, BLIESCASTEL, WEBENHEIM, WATTWEILER, and the portion of NIEDER-WURTZBACH south of the river.





*This is a view of Dragon's Teeth Tank Obstacles in the Siegfried Line near Hengstbach, Germany. 2d Bn., 157th Inf.*

The backbone of the enemy resistance on the SIEGFRIED LINE in the Division sector had been broken. The enemy's only choice, if he would avoid destruction, lay between counterattacking to restore his lost and blasted positions, and withdrawal. He was unable to muster force of reserves sufficient for a large-scale counterattack. Thus a few small furtive counterattacks by night as he withdrew marked the last gasp of the enemy's strength along the SIEGFRIED LINE in the Division sector. The "impregnable" west wall was broken.

Fighter bombers, given detailed instructions via radio by Major Studebaker, close support missions against pillboxes and communication trenches, and helped shake the grim defenders loose from their prepared entrenchments in the area northeast of WEBENHEIM. Infantrymen capturing a telephone switchboard system intact set up a monitoring guard. One of the items of information which they overheard was that the entire 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division was to withdraw to the east side of the RHINE, the movement beginning at 2300 hours.

The 157th Infantry's 1st Bn. fought off a counterattack

in the early morning of March 18, and shortly afterward the 3rd Bn. passed through their positions into open terrain, well-covered by crossfire from German pillbox fortifications. With the aid of a smokescreen, the 3rd Bn. was able to advance to a line just south of WATTWEILER.

After the 120th Engineer Battalion filled the anti-tank ditch to its front, the 3rd Bn., supported by armor, took WATTWEILER despite anti-tank and small arms fire from the front and both flanks. Meanwhile, the 2nd Bn. advanced less than one kilometer during the day as each yard of its attack was bitterly contested, the one day's route containing 20 enemy pillboxes.

The 3rd Bn. of the 179th Infantry, committed on the left, pushed ahead as the three jumped off abreast. Elements of the 1st Bn. were sent back to BLIESCASTEL and WEBENHEIM to clear out enemy groups who had infiltrated under cover of a heavy fog during the preceding night. With the support of tanks and tank destroyers from the attached battalions, the 2nd Bn. renewed its assault on pillboxes in the high ground northeast of WEBENHEIM.

The 180th Infantry's 2nd Bn. resumed its attack during





*Commanding General of the German 256th Division, who had led the defense of the German border in Alsace, was captured by the 179th Inf. Regt. near Birnfeld on April 9, 1945.*

the hours of darkness, and by morning had forced the surrender of nine pillboxes and had gained access to the open terrain south of NIEDER-WURZBACH, where smoke-screens facilitated the advance in early afternoon and enabled Company G to attack the town. By nightfall the town had been captured and cleared of the enemy after the Germans were engaged in close and house-to-house fighting. Companies E and F in the same period had pushed forward through resistance to the nearer slopes of the high ground south of the WURZBACH River.

Meanwhile, the 1st Bn., in reserve, had reconnoitered sites for crossing the river. The 3rd Bn. pressed its attack throughout the night in the ALSCHBACH area. All three rifle companies attacked abreast and by nightfall had virtually eliminated all resistance between ALSCHBACH and the BLIES River. By midnight the 3rd Bn. also had patrols along the river engaged in a search for crossing sites.

Orders of the Commanding General of XV Corps of March 15 had given the 45th Division the mission of cracking the SIEGFRIED LINE and capturing the city of HOMBURG. By the close of March 19, the Division was on the verge of success in accomplishing its mission. The next day found the men achieving both major objectives, crashing through the remaining barriers of the SIEGFRIED LINE and smashing into the HOMBURG area, scattering the German defenses as they went.

Unable to withstand the heavy losses inflicted during the first five days of the attack, the enemy troops withdrew. With only the crumbling ruins and remnants of their "impenetrable" Westwall behind to shield them from the Thunderbird forces, the enemy drew back during the night behind a covering force to protect their rear while they extricated their battered units from the debris of their defenses.

The decision, however, was too late, and the covering force mustered to screen the withdrawal was too small. The Division renewed the attack early the following morning to quickly brush aside the crust of defending forces covering the retreat and turn the struggle into an unrelenting pursuit, pressing hard upon the rear and flanks of the fleeing units. The pursuit ruthlessly overtook the enemy and caught large columns of infantry and vehicles on roads leading out of the sector. By nightfall, the enemy's disorganization was complete. Germans prowled the sector in small groups attempting frantically to escape.

The Division gave up trying to count all captured and destroyed enemy materiel. Indicative of their severe losses was the total of 1,910 prisoners processed by the Division. Towns seized and cleared by the Division included LAUTZ-KIRCHEN, NIEDER-WURZBACH, BIERBACH, HUBENHAUSEN, WORSCHWEILER, KIRKEL, KIRRBURG, LIMBACH, ALTSTADT, INGWEILLER, and HOMBURG. The day's drive ended in the wooded area northwest of HOMBURG, scattered resistance in the town having been overcome and cleared by night.

On the sixth day of the campaign, with the shattered Westwall defenses lying behind the Division, pursuit of the enemy was begun. The Division Command Post moved into the shattered HOMBURGER HOTEL in the bombed-out city of HOMBURG.

The 179th Regimental Combat Team was motorized and reinforced with the 189th Field Artillery Battalion, the 191st Tank Battalion, and a platoon of the 45th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop to expedite the rapid pursuit to the RHINE. The other two regiments engaged in mopping up operations around HOMBURG, as the armored elements of the Third Army slowed down the Division's advance while they cut across the enemy's rear from northwest to southeast, chopping to bits the German communications, supply lines, and rear areas.

Some 2055 prisoners were taken on March 21, although no strong resistance was met. Of these, 1245 were captured by the 180th Infantry in its mopping up operations.

On March 22 the Division continued to move eastward toward the Rhine, clearing the territory to the west of the Rhine of hostile troops.



MARCH 26 1945 - WITH THREE REGIMENTS  
ABREAST, FOUR BATTALIONS CROSS MAIN  
RIVER 2MM SOUTH OF ASCHAFFENBERG  
MARCH 29 - BITTER BATTLE BEGINS WITH  
GERMAN CIVILIANS FIGHTING OUR INFANTRY  
APRIL 3 - ASCHAFFENBERG SURRENDERS  
TO TWO DIVISIONS, TOUGHEST FIGHT IN  
GERMANY, 1500 NAZIS KILLED AND 3000  
CAPTURED

APRIL 9 1945 - 179<sup>TH</sup> CAPTURES GEN MAJ  
FRANZ, COMMANDING GENERAL OF NAZI  
INFANTRY DIVISION 45<sup>TH</sup> OPPOSED IN ALSACE.  
APRIL 14 - BAMBERG, IMPORTANT BAVARIAN  
INDUSTRIAL CITY, FALLS.

APRIL 1 - BATTLE FOR NURNBERG  
BEGINS - 45<sup>TH</sup> SURROUNDS CITY. APRIL 16  
ASCHMUTL BEGINS WITH THREE REGIMENTS  
ABREAST. WAR PRISONER COUNT FOR THE  
DAY REACHES A HIGH OF 4889. APRIL 20  
NURNBERG FALLS. APRIL 27 - 45<sup>TH</sup>  
CROSSES DANUBE

APRIL 29 - THE VICIOUS CONCENTRATION  
CAMP AT DACHAU SEIZED - ONE OF THE  
HIGH POINTS IN GERMAN WAR CRIMES.  
APRIL 30 - MUNICH FALLS WITH SUR-  
PRISINGLY LITTLE RESISTANCE.  
MAY 5 1945 - WAR ENDS IN  
EUROPE.





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# CENTRAL GERMANY

## THE RHINE CROSSING

During the critical week in the Allied operations ending March 22, preparations for the crossing of the RHINE were made all along the front. During the last week of March, the Seventh Army placed the XV Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. W. H. Haislip, on a 15-mile front from GERN-SHEIM to MANNHEIM, GERMANY. The 3rd and 45th Divisions, supported by the 40th Engineer Combat Group, were selected to make the RHINE crossing as the spearhead of XV Corps.

March 23, 24, and 25 were spent in intensive preparation for the Division crossing. The Third Army had crossed on the Division left flank the night of March 22-23. The Division would assault and clean out the Wehrmacht in the MAIN RIVER VALLEY as the Seventh Army swung across Southern GERMANY to keep Hitler and his generals from holing up in the GERMAN ALPS for OPERATION GOT-TERDAMMERUNG.

The Engineers were to construct two infantry support rafts, one heavy ponton ferry, and one Dukw ferry in each assault regiment's sector. In addition they would construct one heavy ponton bridge, one floating treadway bridge, and one dummy bridge in the Division sector.

In addition to its organic artillery, the Division had 15 attached battalions of light, medium, and heavy artillery.

Due to the rout of the German First and Seventh Armies and their lack of organization, little could be learned of the strength and dispositions of the enemy beyond the river. Nevertheless, the remnants of the 21 German divisions contacted by the Corps in the SAAR-PALATINATE operations were known to be somewhere ahead in the area to the east of the RHINE.

As H-Hour approached, information gained from aerial photographs, from reconnaissance patrols and ground observation, and from prisoners taken, indicated that in addition to Landeschutzen and Alarm Companies, replacement battalions and similar units, the 1119th and 1120th Regiments of the 553th Volksgrenadier Divisions were present and capable of contesting the 45th Division's objectives.

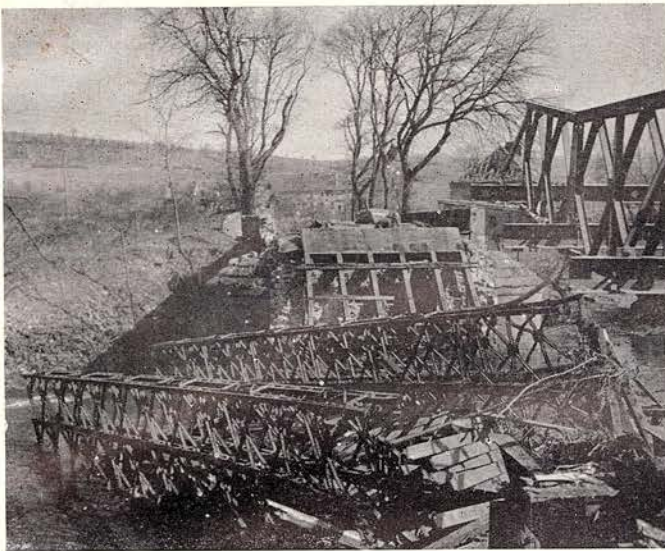
The 157th Infantry was engaged in patrolling the west bank of the RHINE. The Division Command Post moved up to the town of WESTHOFEN on March 24. All was in readiness for the assault crossing.

At 0230 hours, in a heavy spiralling fog through which the moonlight picked out the dim figures of the 3rd and 45th Division infantrymen, the crossing of the RHINE was forced. Even before the engines of the assault boats began to roar, the wary Germans probed into the mists with streams of fire. Then as the small craft reached the eastern shore, heavy resistance met the assault troops as the Germans strove to hold them back, supported by enemy fire from 88 millimeter guns, 20 millimeter flak guns, and machine guns.

In the face of the strong initial resistance on the shore line, the assault troops leaped ashore on the low bank as their boats struck, then fanned out into the misty darkness to carve out a bridgehead. By dawn they were firmly established on the eastern bank, and by the close of day they had secured a bridgehead 104 square kilometers in size.

The initial resistance was strongest in the 180th Infantry sector, where more than half the assault boats in use by the 40th Combat Engineers were lost in the crossings. After the edge of gunfire resisting the assault on the eastern bank was broken through, however, no further heavy





*Engineers tear down demolished bridge blown by Americans in withdrawal December, 1944. A new bailey bridge is to be built. The bridge spans the Blies River.*

prepared defenses were encountered until the troops pushed their way into the cities of KLIENHAUSEN and GERN-SHEIM.

All combat troops and one battalion of artillery had crossed the bullet-spattered river by the close of day. Construction of the treadway and ponton bridges was progressing rapidly. The Air Corps furnished a canopy of protection through the entire operation. Every 20 minutes a flight of eight planes would check in by radio with the Division control. The flight would hover over the Division front for 20 minutes, then proceed on its prearranged bombing mission across the RHINE while another flight of eight planes checked in. During the day, ten close support missions of 80 sorties were executed at the Division's orders: one on GERN-SHEIM, three on KLIENHAUSEN, three on BENSHEIM, two on AUERBACH, and one on ZWINGEN-BERG.

The Division took 1047 prisoners March 26. Materiel destroyed and captured included 16 88 millimeter guns, three 105 millimeter artillery howitzers, 17 20 millimeter flak wagons, four four-barrelled anti-aircraft guns, 70 machine guns, 30 panzerfausts, and unestimated quantities of small arms, machine pistols, hand grenades, and ammunition of all types.

The evening of March 25 preceding the attack found the three battalions of the 179th Infantry poised in order near EPPELSHEIM, HANGENWEISHEIM, and FLOMBORN, and the three battalions of the 180th Infantry at HINDEN-HEIM, BOKENHEIM, and MONSHEIM, with the 157th in reserve.

At 0230 hours the assault crossing began in the general

area between WORMS and HAMM, while the Germans laid down heavy fire with their 88's, flak guns, and machine guns. The 1st Bn. of the 179th Infantry on the left had all its foot elements across by 0315. After breaking through the resistance on the shore, the Battalion attacked GROSS ROHRHEIM, which it cleared by 0640. Company B mopped up resistance in the woods behind the town. The attack to the northeast was resumed and by the close of day road blocks were established on the REICH AUTOBAHN several miles from GROSS ROHRHEIM.

The 2nd Bn., on the Regimental left, met small arms, mortar, and artillery fire in the assault crossing, but succeeded in getting all its units across the stream by 0315. As the Battalion moved northeast along the east bank of the stream toward GERN-SHEIM, it took a considerable number of prisoners. Company G encountered withering fire from GERN-SHEIM, Company F pushed its way on into the town despite resistance and flak fire, while a platoon of Company E broke into the village of KLIEN ROHR-HEIM.

The 180th Infantry on the right of the Division sector forced its initial crossing with the 1st and 2nd Bns. abreast. During the moments of the actual crossing, resistance was comparatively light. Then, as the assault boats touched the eastern shore, the treacherous foe opened up with heavy machine guns, flak, and sniper fire as the crouching infantrymen dashed inland through the fog. The 1st Bn. blasted its way to its first objective at 0520, then briefly held its advance while by-passed pockets were cleared of the stubborn, sullen enemy. By 0730, resistance had diminished somewhat and the next objective was obtained. Advancing to the edge of heavy woods near GROSS HAUSEN brought a hail of flak fire and artillery at 1140. After close air support had bombed and strafed GROSS HAUSEN, the attack was resumed and all resistance ended there at 1720 as the Battalion reorganized and dug in for the night.

The 2nd Bn., less Company G in regimental reserve, crossed the RHINE at 0719 and moved to an assembly area near BIBLIS. Company G, when it crossed, was given the mission of mopping up the by-passed resistance on the east bank. The Company encountered 15 flak wagons, but completed its task by 0700.

The 3rd Bn. crossed the RHINE near NORDHEIM, and that town fell to its troops at 0445. It then moved east and took the town of WATTENHEIM. BIBLIS itself, where strong resistance had been centered, was overcome, and by 1500 the 3rd Bn. had cut across the REICH AUTOBAHN to take up its defensive positions there with Company I and Company K disposed along the superhighway.

The attack was continued with all three regiments in



March 27. Each Regiment was required to maintain one battalion in reserve, to be committed only on Division approval.

The Germans showed the effects of the mauling they had received on the previous day and were allowed no time or opportunity to recover. Moderate small arms and machine gun fire met the Division in AUERBACH and sniper fire in BENSHEIM. Elsewhere in the sector, now that the first formidable crust of fortifications beyond the RHINE was broken, only uncoordinated and disorganized attempts were made to delay the advance, and these proved ineffectual.

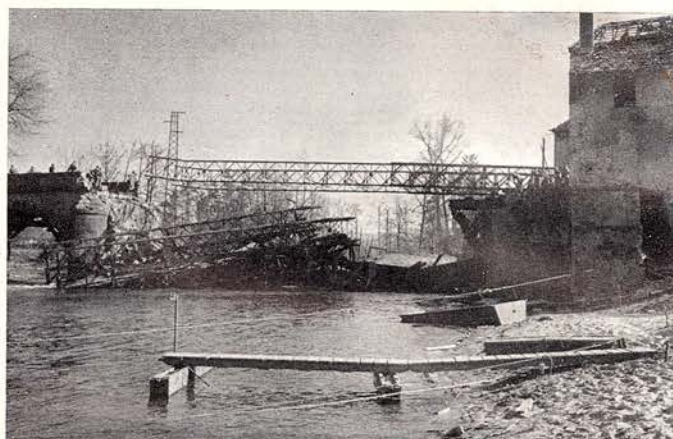
The 157th Infantry on the left flank advanced 31 kilometers to the east, and patrols pushed on some 22 kilometers further to the MAIN River. The 1st Bn., in reserve, moved to HAHN. The 2nd was mounted on tanks and tank destroyers in the morning and made contact with elements of the 2nd Cavalry Group of the Third Army. They continued to advance until night and then held up with companies in SEMO and ZIMMERN. Tanks in support of the Battalion's forward patrols penetrated as far as the MAIN River and observed a party of 15 or 20 Germans on the east bank. The 3rd Bn. moved up rapidly: by noon one company was in SPACH BRUCKEN, two others in REINHEIM. A motorized patrol supported by tank destroyers moved from the latter town to GR BIERAU, where it observed an enemy-held train which was taken under fire by the tank destroyers.

The same patrol moved back along the railway track to BRENSBACH, then to GRUMSTADT, where it located an enemy hospital of considerable size. RADHEIM, GROSTHEIM, and NIEDERNBERG on the MAIN River were covered by the patrol in its itinerary.

The 179th Infantry advanced in column of battalions through HOXHOL, ALSBACH, JUGENHEIM, SEEHEIM. The 3rd Bn. in column of companies moved out along the route GR ROHRHEIM, GERNESHEIM, HAHNIEHN, JUGENHEIM, OBER BEERBACH, ERNSTHOFFEN, OBER MODAU.

The 180th Infantry continued the attack at 0800 with two battalions abreast, encountering the first resistance in BENSHEIM. Two companies overcame sniper fire to stamp out resistance there by 1100. The elements continued to the northeast toward SCHONBERG, where they were halted by machine gun fire from high ground south and west of the village.

At BENSHEIM at midnight, following the capture of the city, Capt. R. W. Geunthner of the CIC Detachment found the beginning of a long chain of ruthless, bloody crimes of the German Gestapo. While interrogating a group of arrested Gestapo suspects, information was obtained of the



*Bailey bridge pushes out to span the Blies River.*

burial place of three American soldiers who had been murdered to enable the Gestapo agents to make a swift unhampered escape. This was only one of thousands of war crimes; these were only three of tens of thousands who died. This first link in the chain began a search which was to continue throughout the war, pursued relentlessly by Captain Guenther and his assistants, and will continue until that horror-organization is completely destroyed.

The 2nd Bn., passing through the 1st which then became the reserve, moved out with a company of tanks and one of the tank destroyers to reach a defended roadblock at SCHONBERG at 1513. They too received fire from the high ground, which lay to their south. Company F cleared the high ground while Company E continued forward to clear WILMSHAUSEN by 1529. It then pushed on through EHNSHAUSEN, REICHENBACH, and LAUTERN, where Company F rejoined the Battalion, and Company G cleared BEEDENKIRCHEN where it remained for the duration of that day.

The 3rd Bn. attacked in column of companies, passing through SCHWANHEIM at 0817 without opposition and clearing FEHLHEIM against moderate resistance. A two-company attack was launched against AUERBACH and sniper resistance there was reduced by 1208. The Battalion then continued into the high ground and organized there for the night.

The Germans again suffered heavy losses. The prisoners were often arrogant, snarling, cold, or supercilious. Some 351 of them were processed that day.

The Division Command Post was moved to the east side of the RHINE and set up in the Fissan Milk Products Factory in ZWINGENBERG.

Spectacular as the crossing of the RHINE was, it was rivaled by the fighting on the MAIN. The three regiments advanced abreast on March 28. More than four battalions succeeded in crossing on a railroad bridge which had been





*This is a view of the flaming town of Nieder-Wurzbach, Germany, captured by the 45th Division.*

captured intact from the Germans two kilometers southwest of ASCHAFFENBURG. While resistance on the west bank of the MAIN was scattered and disorganized, that on the east bank proved to be a different story. Here an organized defense was set up with artillery support and many nebelwerfers and mortar guns. Concrete pillboxes constructed years before had been elaborated and augmented with an intricate trench system. The Germans, supposed broken in the area by the armor, showed no signs of having given up.

By nightfall, in the hardest of fighting, the 157th and 179th Infantry Regiments had forced their way across and had established a firm bridgehead on the MAIN of about eight square kilometers in size.

Contact was made with elements of the 553rd Volksgrenadier Division in the south part of the 45th Division zone. It was the first contact with a unit of division scale and organization made east of the RHINE River.

Other divisions flowed across the RHINE in the wake of the 45th and 3rd Divisions as the Seventh Army broke out. One force assaulted MANNHEIM frontally, and the 45th Division moved swiftly down the MAIN River valley to come up against the fortress of ASCHAFFENBURG. The 45th was fighting in the heart of Nazi GERMANY now,

with NURNBERG where the Nazi party once held its congresses only 65 miles ahead in the Division sector, and MUNICH only 92 miles to the south.

### THE BATTLE FOR ASCHAFFENBURG

The dramatic story of the siege of ASCHAFFENBURG is well known to the world, for the bitter six-day assault in which the town was reduced to rubble was one of the harrowing highlights of the fighting in GERMANY.

Having come up to the MAIN River in a rapid advance of 57 kilometers east of the RHINE, the men of the Division ran head-on into defenses which the newspaper and newsreel correspondents promptly named "the Little SIEGFRIED LINE."

They met frenzied and hysterical resistance as they came closer to ASCHAFFENBURG. Even the big guns and the fighter-bombers did not make the Germans give up their efforts to contain the Division's bridgehead.

Coming into SULZBACH, the Division had its first experience in fighting German civilians unattached to any Volksturn unit. Some towns through which they had fought their way had been deserted by civilians. In others, taciturn and dead-faced women and old men stood by and glared with unfathomable bitterness, or simply looked on



blankly, while the great serpentine stream of American men and vehicles passed through deeper into GERMANY.

Steel and concrete pillboxes forming a perimeter defense about ASCHAFFENBURG offered resistance, but the stiffest opposition came from the Germans themselves, led by a stern fanatic who ruled with hobnailed military despotism and who forbade surrender long after the defenders fought in a lost and hopeless cause.

At the red-roofed hill town of ASCHAFFENBURG, the 45th Division ran up against a week-long battle which exacted heavy casualties.

The Division crossed the MAIN three regiments abreast, with four battalions making up the assault forces. Two kilometers south of ASCHAFFENBURG, the 157th and the 179th Infantry Regiments encountered savage fighting from the Germans in their well-prepared foxholes along the east bank of the river, as they struggled to set up their eight-kilometer bridgehead.

The 157th Infantry attacked northeast on March 28 along the route its patrols had reconnoitered the day before. The 2nd Bn. struck across the river in the face of fierce resistance from the enemy entrenched in foxholes and pillboxes, crossing on the railroad bridge, then turning north to attack ASCHAFFENBURG in column of companies with Company F leading, while the 1st Bn. moved up by motor and crossed at 1530, encountering sniper fire.

ASCHAFFENBURG was defended by as frenzied and fanatic a German force as ever heiled their fuehrer, determined not to accept defeat and ready to face death to stave off a German disaster. Command of this fortress was entrusted to one Major Von Lambert, as hard and merciless a Nazi officer as the Division had encountered.

The 179th Infantry advanced to the MAIN River by motor against light opposition. The 3rd Bn. and Company B crossed the river in the 157th Infantry's zone. The enemy returned to fight here, side by side with impassioned, resolute, grim-faced civilians, in contrast to the Germans in the towns and villages on preceding days on the march from the RHINE, where white flags and passive faces met the advance in areas that had not been evacuated of civilians.

The 180th Infantry came up to the MAIN after encountering several defended towns en route. The 2nd Bn., mounted on tanks and tank destroyers, probed forward, encountering small arms resistance at BRENSBACH. The 3rd Bn. continued on to the MAIN River, where some units received heavy rocket fire throughout the night.

On March 29 the attack was continued, the three regiments abreast. German resistance in the central and north portions of the Division soared to a peak of hysterical madness fanned into a fever pitch of hatred by a decade of



Nazi propaganda. Civilians fought without attachment to any military units in ASCHAFFENBURG and the neighboring town of SCHWEINHEIM, necessitating the search of every roof and cellar. German reinforcements poured into the once-cleared area steadily. Elements of the 36th German Infantry Division were identified. Boys of 16 and 17, thoroughly indoctrinated with the theory that it was glorious to seek death for the Fatherland, refused to surrender and had to be killed in their foxholes and entrenchments.

In the southern part of the Division front, German strongpoints around the towns of WALISTADT and EISENFELD were reduced after sharp fighting. Stiff resistance to the advance of the 180th Infantry was growing in the east. The day saw 432 prisoners captured in the Division zone.

Plans to maneuver two battalions of the 157th Infantry to enable them to attack ASCHAFFENBURG from the east were thwarted by intense resistance from civilians and troops alike in SCHWEINHEIM. The Regiment continued to slug it out all day, patiently inching its way from house to house, and had cleared out a good portion of the town by nightfall. Artillery and nebelwerfer fire were intense in the sector. A company of the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, in close support of the Regiment throughout the operation, did considerable effective firing. At 1130 a platoon fired 25 rounds into a church steeple in ASCHAFFENBURG which the Germans were using as an observation point.

The 3rd Bn. attacked, using hand grenades and bayonets as principle weapons, as each house and building had to be





*A wounded American and a German Prisoner of War are evacuated from the Schweinheim area in Germany. 120th Med. Bn.*

searched and the Germans routed out. Two medium tanks in support of this Battalion were lost in action against the enemy. By night a large swath had been cut across the hotly contested town of SCHWEINHEIM.

As the 179th Infantry completed its crossing of the river and attacked east, it met a blanket of small arms, machine gun, and flak wagon fire from well-organized defensive positions on which had it to employ hand grenades to blast the fanatic troops from their positions. The 180th Infantry moved up continuing its attack, with Company L being sent to guard XV Headquarters Command Post in BRENSHEIM.

Continued heavy pressure by the Division on March 30 for the purpose of enlarging the bridgehead caused a sharp reaction in the northern half of the Division zone. There the Germans launched five separate counterattacks ranging from company to battalion strength.

The first counterattack at SCHWEINHEIM at 0100 struck the 157th Infantry, but was almost immediately thrown back by the same methods of coping with infiltration which the Regiment learned in the hard fighting of the VOSGES Mountains during the preceding fall and winter. At 0320 an attack of greater strength hit the 157th Infantry front. Intense, bitter hand-to-hand fighting lasted an hour before the assault was repulsed. Again, at 1350, a force of 250 Germans battered at the line in an attempt to fracture the Division's positions. Exhausted, and with heavy losses suffered in the unsuccessful attempts to crack the line, the Germans withdrew in some disorder to the far end of the town of SCHWEINHEIM as the infantry pushed them back.

Thereafter resistance was found to be somewhat weakened in that zone, and fairly good progress was made except in ASCHAFFENBURG. There the 157th continued to inch its way forward, house by house and sometimes room by room.

Major Von Lambert had organized old men, women, and young girls to resist the Division's advance. They hurled grenades from roofs and second story buildings. The soldiers had to be routed from their foxholes by doughboys crawling through debris to blast them out.

Southeast of the town, troops of the 179th Infantry beat off two German counterattacks and took more than 80 prisoners in the operation. On the eastern flank of the Division, six towns were cleared by the 180th Infantry. Mopping up operations were accomplished against moderate resistance. Resistance all along the east bank of the river was stiff until armor moved in; then the resistance cracked.

Total prisoner count for the day was 465 and enemy dead and wounded were estimated at 435, making an estimated 900 German casualties. The bridgehead was now reported as 14 kilometers wide and six deep. Ferries, ducks, and two bridges continued to bring over elements of the Division to the east side, until all units were across on March 30. The treadway bridge erected enabled the supporting artillery to follow closely the attacking infantry.

Due to low visibility, Air Force support was unable to fly until 1800 on March 30. From that hour until dark, three missions of eight sorties each were flown for the Division. The 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion had a record-breaking day, firing 238 rounds of high explosive and 520 of white phosphorus shells. Most of this fire fell in ASCHAFFENBURG, creating an inferno in which doughboys fought in searing heat from burning buildings.

Air support liaison reported that a P-47 mission operated so close in support of front line troops that only .50 caliber ammunition could be used. Air support started several fires in ASCHAFFENBURG and in GAILBACH which was still occupied by the enemy. A second flight hit ASCHAFFENBURG at 1840 in the evening using rockets, napalm bombs, and strafing in a pinpoint operation directed by 45th Division radio liaison. Target in the town was the Gestapo building which was also being used as headquarters for the command in the town. Several direct hits were scored on the ancient castle housing this headquarters despite the heavy 20 mm flak which whipped past the diving planes.

On March 31 the Division troops split the defense of the town of SCHWEINHEIM, isolating two tight knots of German resistance, one in the northeast and one in the northwest ends of the town. Fanatical German troops continued to defend the SCHWEINHEIM-ASCHAFFENBURG area, making the cost of their ultimate defeat tremendous due to the stubborn refusal to surrender.

In the central and southern portions of the Division zone, the initial stiff resistance was overcome and the 179th and 180th Infantry Regiments were able to make good progress up to the EISWA River. In the late afternoon there was evidence that in the WINTERSBACH-HESSENTHAL area the Germans had become thoroughly disorganized and were attempting to escape to the east and southeast.

The Division received splendid close air support as 22 missions of 176 sorties were flown. More than 200,000 pounds of bombs, more than 33 rockets of 4.5 size, and in



AFFENBURG would fight to the last ruined building and the last pile of rubble. The 157th Infantry was left to isolate and reduce the garrison in a siege of the town. The 180th and 179th Infantry Regiments moved on to advance about 17 kilometers in an attack spearheaded by tanks and tank destroyers against disorganized resistance already showing the piecemeal but unmistakable disintegration of the German forces east of the RHINE and into the fortress of mountains girding CENTRAL EUROPE.

By the end of the day of April 1, as the 157th continued its task of annihilating the fanatical German garrison at ASCHAFFENBURG, the Division had taken 1376 prisoners.

An ultimatum to surrender having been refused, the doughboys proceeded methodically to dig out those who "didn't know how to quit." The threat to level the city was carried out as dive bombers roared over and artillery fell like machine gun fire. Still the Germans held on. "The 45th has fought in SICILY, SALERNO, ANZIO, and the RIVIERA," one doughboy pointed out, "but never, except in the hills near CASSINO, have they handed it to us like this."

A chart representing the resistance encountered in GERMANY, taking 100 percent as the figure for ASCHAFFENBURG, would by analogy show 25 percent for BAMBERG, 75 percent for NUREMBURG, and 10 per cent for MUNICH.

At one time 155 mm self-propelled guns were used within the city to demolish an engineer barracks in the garrison. The Long Toms fired into the buildings point-blank, showering bricks and mortar high into the air. Once, after a gun had fired four 155 mm shells directly into a house, snipers were still observed crouching among the ruins firing away at the Division's troops. Even the monster 240 mm guns were turned upon the portion of the city not yet entered by Division troops.

The Nazi party leader who directed the civilian participation in the fighting escaped from the town before its capitulation. One of his proclamations had read:

"Whoever remains in the city belongs to a battle group which will not know any selfishness, but will know only unlimited hatred for this cursed enemy of ours. They will know only complete sacrifice for the Fuehrer and the nation.

"Day and night we will work. We will commit all our power to do the enemy the greatest possible damage because we know that Germany will live if we are prepared to give our lives."

On April 3, ASCHAFFENBURG surrendered. A few days before, Major Von Lambert, who had been placed in charge of the garrison as the 45th Division arrived, had issued the following order:

"Soldiers, Men of the Wehrmacht, Comrades:

"The fortress of ASCHAFFENBURG will be defended to the last man. As long as the enemy gives us time we will prepare and employ our troops to our best advantage.

"This means—Fight! Erect dugouts! Make barriers! Get supplies! And win!"



*A bunch of the boys whooping it up in a mild sort of way on a captured organ "Somewhere in Germany," with the front just a few hundred yards away.*

"As of today, everyone is to give to his last. I order that no one shall rest more than three hours out of 24. I forbid any sitting around or loafing.

"Our belief is that it is our mission to give the cursed enemy the greatest resistance and to send as many as possible of them to the devil.

signed, Lambert, Major."

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, in warning the Germans that their only choice was immediate surrender or destruction of the REICH city by city, pointed out:

"There is a lesson with respect to this in ASCHAFFENBURG. There Nazi fanatics used the visible threat of two hangings to compel German soldiers and civilians to fight for a week. After a week of fighting, during which the city was reduced to rubble and many Germans lost their lives, the inevitable took place. The Nazi fanatics ran up a white flag and surrendered to our veteran 45th Division."

Some 2941 prisoners were taken out of ASCHAFFENBURG; 39 others were evacuated through the 45th Division Clearing Station; 202 were found in hospitals in ASCHAFFENBURG.

The defending forces included grenadier replacement battalions from 15 different units. After the surrender of the city, the 157th Infantry moved on out of the unutterable wreckage and confusion to occupy the town of HOSBACH.

One news dispatch summed up the operation as follows:

"This is the story of the amazing climax of the siege of ASCHAFFENBURG. Here is the story of what happened behind the scarred and shattered walls of the city known to the grim-humored infantrymen of the 45th as 'CASSINO-ON-THE MAIN.'

"Used as a replacement and convalescent center



by the Wehrmacht, ASCHAFFENBURG was a quiet town whose peaceful serenity was broken only occasionally by the screams of some tortured soul in the Gestapo headquarters. German troops, returned from hospitals awaiting shipment to their parent units, strolled through the quaint town and admired the countryside. At night, the steady drone of American planes overhead reminded the town that a war was being fought somewhere far off to the west beyond the glorious defenses of the SIEGFRIED LINE and the RHINE River.

"On March 15 the 45th Division penetrated the SIEGFRIED LINE. Three days later the veteran Thunderbird troops were through the Line. March 26 the Division crossed the RHINE River and sped across the fertile valley of the RHINE.

"The war came to ASCHAFFENBURG on March 27.

"Rumors of the Americans' advance preceded the troops with alarming frequency. Major Lambert, military commandant of the garrison, and the Kriesleiter conferred. When the 45th Division's tanks rolled across 30 miles of the RHINE Valley and headed for ASCHAFFENBURG, the two leaders knew that their hour had come.

"Here was their chance to show their love for the Fatherland. Here was their chance to place themselves at the right hand of Hitler.

"There were more than three thousand troops and many officers with rank as high as colonel among the replacement battalions at ASCHAFFENBURG. Major Von Lambert ordered all troops to report for duty immediately, all officers to assume active duty with the troops.

"These orders will be carried out immediately," he proclaimed.

"Then the Kriesleiter issued an order to the civilians. He designated Wednesday and Thursday (March 28, 29) as days on which civilians who wished to evacuate the town would leave. All others, he said, would be used in the armed defense of the town.

"The ASCHAFFENBURG defense area was dotted with concrete and steel pillboxes that had been used for training purposes. These casements were linked by a trench system, and the hills around the town made an excellent defense. Lambert manned the physical defenses and sat back to wait.

"The siege began. All day long planes swooped over the town as heavy demolitions and fragmentation bombs mushroomed below. Great artillery pieces pounded the town. Rubble and debris showered into the air. Houses crumbled and the factory's steel beams were twisted with concussion.

"For four days the town was contorted in a convulsion of explosions. Some of the troops, unable to take the continued pressure, attempted to

escape to our forces. On command of Lambert, they were machine gunned and killed. Civilians who had managed to save themselves by hiding in the cellars of the city tried to get out. Again Major Lambert ordered his machine guns to fire on German people. They were killed.

"In the garrison, officers who ranked the major tried to persuade him to surrender the garrison. One colonel who was later captured by the Thunderbird troops said he had pleaded with the Major, but had been told to go back to his post or to be shot.

"Prisoners reported that Lambert had brought in 50 SS Troops. These troops were ordered to shoot and kill anyone who would not fight to the last man.

"The bombing and the shelling continued. One lieutenant taken prisoner estimated that more than 1500 lay dead in the town. But the resistance, fired by the threat of death, went on. Thunderbird troops forced a wedge into the southern tip of the town. From room to room they fought their way into the town. It wasn't a case of clearing one room and having the house surrender. Each room had to be cleared in a separate operation.

"As the 45th Division Troops inched ahead, German snipers infiltrated through heaps of debris and harassed the doughboys from every vantage point.

"A Luftwaffe captain, almost isolated in a house, attempted to surrender his little group. SS men fought through to him, hauled him back to Lambert, and without trial, on arbitrary order of the commandant, he was hanged."

Another news dispatch observed:

"Seemingly endless streams of battered but still defiant prisoners emerged from the smoke of the razed fortress, their hands clasped over their heads.

"First break in the siege of the town came at 0700 hours this morning, when an American GI who had been captured during night action on Easter Sunday came through the enemy lines accompanied by a German captain. The officer bore a note from Major Lambert.

"The note offered to negotiate for a surrender of the garrison if the American troops would send an emissary to Lambert's headquarters to arrange the settlement.

"Colonel O'Brien, commanding the assaulting troops, refused to bargain and said that if Lambert did not immediately wave white flags from the headquarters as an indication of unconditional surrender, the heavy volume of fire would be resumed.

"A few minutes after the Wehrmacht captain re-entered ASCHAFFENBURG, white flags appeared at the battered castle which had been headquarters for the resistance in the town."

The green-clad German prisoners, more than a thousand of whom had been passing through the Division PW cage





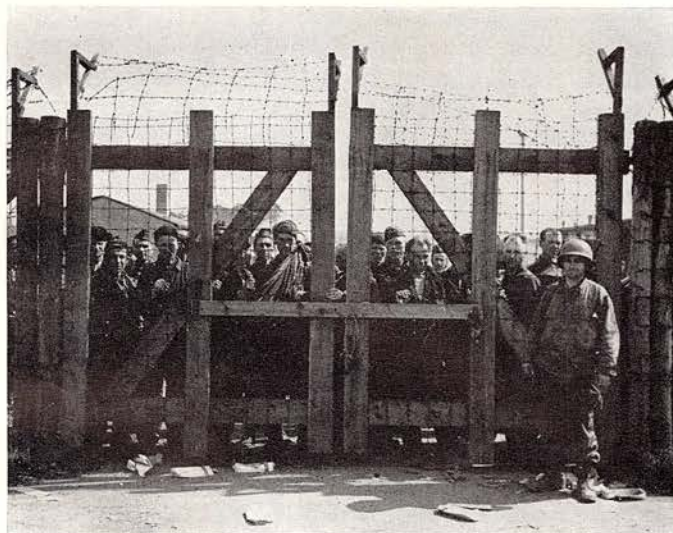
*American tanks fire into sniper-infested buildings in Aschaffenburg, Germany. 157th Infantry, 191 Tank Bn.*

each day, were shaken and torn by the incessant and murderous bombardment of the town which had been necessitated by the refusal to surrender. The final prisoner count was put at 3500, the number of dead at 1620 for the Germans.

### THE PURSUIT

March, with only two weeks of combat, had proved one of the most spectacular months the 45th Division experienced. During the second half of the month the Division travelled a straight-line distance of 181 kilometers of enemy territory that involved three major assault river crossings. The Thunderbirds had smashed through the defenses

*Many Russians, former prisoners of the Germans, must remain in liberated enclosures as victims of typhus.*



of the SIEGFRIED LINE and those of the MAIN River fortifications. They captured 8199 prisoners during the last two weeks of March, well more than 10,000 through the siege of ASCHAFFENBURG which ended three days later. They killed or wounded 33,180 of the enemy in March and captured 3258 square kilometers of German territory, much of it hotly and bitterly contested.

In early April the Division was once more on the march. From ASCHAFFENBURG the troops moved up to the northeast rapidly through CENTRAL EUROPE.

On April 3, even while the garrison at ASCHAFFENBURG was surrendering, the 179th was moving up after a number of brief fire fights to advance over wooded and rough terrain and over soft, muddy, springtime roads to gain a distance of some 23 kilometers and halt near Oberinn.

The 180th Infantry directed its attack against PFAFFENHAUSEN and FLORSBACH. The 3rd Battalion's advance on the latter town was countered with a strongly defended road block, and a German antitank gun put two of the supporting tanks out of commission. From PFAFFENHAUSEN the troops advanced on to OBERNDORF, where small arms fire was received from positions on HILL 440, which was cleared without great difficulty.

The enemy was devoid of reserves, and the German defense was threatened with collapse in the area as they resorted to the use of straggler-collecting agencies to round up remnants of defeated or disrupted units through which they hoped to form forces of sufficient strength to institute delaying actions. Scattered remnants of the 256th Infantry Division embodying Combat Teams Volkmann and Schilling with stragglers from the 6th SS Mountain Regiment made up the bulk of the Division's opposition. These





*One hundred American soldiers were liberated from German prisoner of war camps at Fischbach, Germany, when it was taken by the 180th Infantry.*

slowed but never halted the Division's forward movement as the pursuit gained momentum.

On April 4 the Division destroyed three enemy tanks in METTGERS, ten guns and six tanks in other sectors, while capturing 790 prisoners of war. MERNES was chosen as the Division Command Post, which moved up 35 kilometers from LAUFACH.

The three battalions of the 157th were in OBERNDORF, FLORSBACH, and BURJOS in reserve as the 179th drove over terrain, the advantages of which had not been utilized for defense by the enemy, to occupy the towns of ECKARTS, BAD BRUCKNAU, and ZUNTERSACH. A reconnaissance and advance command post party of the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, supporting the advance, encountered a company-sized group of Germans in the woods northwest of OBERINN. Although completely cut off, these fanatics chose to stage a fight to the last man and were accordingly annihilated.

The 180th Infantry, advancing in column of battalions supported by tanks, jumped off early to drive through OBERNDORF, ALTENGRONAU, and SCHWARZENWELS.

At MARJOSS the enemy attempted to stage a hit-and-run attack, but an expertly timed enveloping maneuver prevented their disengaging as they had intended. While the main column of infantry and armor continued toward the east, a small reinforced and armored drive to the north constituted a diversionary effort, resulting in several fire fights with gratifying results before the detachment was ordered to rejoin its units. The main column, after mopping up extensive sniping action on ridges to the north and south of JOSSA, had struck a snag near MOTTGERS, where a determined enemy force engaged in a determined delaying action.

Deploying, then seizing heights on three sides of the village after a fierce fire fight, the 1st Bn. was able to emplace its tanks where their fire could destroy three tanks whose fire was reinforcing infantry within the town. SCHWARZENFELS, objective for the day, was reached and occupied by 1800 despite the fighting encountered on the way.

April 5 found the German High Command trying desperately to establish some form of integrated defensive posi-



tion by rolling back the eastern flank of the 2nd Panzer Division to a line which ran from the vicinity of KERZELL, EIM, and HOHENZELL to MERNES.

The 45th Division, by knifing sharply to the east and northeast, succeeded not only in turning the south flank of the proposed position, but severed what little communication the enemy possessed by a swift thrust to the north. The 179th and 180th Infantry Regiments thus encountered only scattered and disorganized resistance, which had come to characterize the German action in this sector. The 179th drove through VOIKERS, SPEICHERZ, and KOTHEN and sent a smaller force to the east to secure the Regimental right flank, seize the town of WERBERG, and prevent lurking enemy detachments or snipers from jeopardizing the Regiment's main supply route.

The drive on SPEICHERZ resulted in a sharp fire fight with unorganized but grimly fanatical and snarling Nazis who occupied excellent positions in a woods south of the town. This pocket of resistance was cleared out, and forward movement continued almost without a perceptible break. At 1315 the 3rd Bn. was in BAD BRUCKENAU and immediately moved out to occupy towns which had been seized in the 1st Bn. sector.

The 180th Infantry drove forward with two battalions abreast at 0800. The 45th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop blasted and secured a road block, and the 2nd Bn. became engaged in a sharp fire fight with a stubborn enemy force near STERBFRTZ. By noon the town had been swept of the remnants of its defenders, and the drive continued forcefully through HEUBACH, UTTRICHSHAUSEN, DOLLBACH, and THALAU.

The 1st Bn. smashed the Germans on the ridges west of HETTENHAUSEN and destroyed two Mark IV tanks

southeast of that town without slackening the sheer momentum of its forward drive. The 3rd Bn. dispatched patrols to mop up by-passed groups of enemy personnel, as the unit, in reserve, closed in at DOLLBACH. The 157th Infantry also used small groups to reduce by-passed pockets of resistance which kept supply units on their guard, the 1st Bn. remaining at OBERNDORF for this purpose while the 2nd moved to HUTTEN and the 3rd to the vicinity of EICHENRIED.

Next day, April 6, the 179th and 180th Infantry Regiments drove on in headlong and ruthless pursuit of the enemy. The operation was not a rout of German resistance, for there was no organized opposition to rout. It was more a gigantic mopping-up operation against uniformed Germans who in some cases fought for no apparent practical purpose, but only for the glory of giving up their lives for the Fatherland. On all sides the prisoners muttered, "Alles verloren—alles kaput."

The Division Command Post moved into a Bavarian castle in GERSFELD at 1630.

The 179th Infantry's advance took it through the REH-HECKEN WALD, the HEEG WALD, the SCHLUP WALD, and the HALDER WALD. The terrain was rugged, picturesque tourist country as the Division approached the mountain stronghold which many believed would be the last center of resistance in the REICH.

Next day the Division called a halt in the advance to organize the position and close the gaps before proceeding. Some 507 prisoners were taken, together with quantities of materiel, including nine trucks of various sizes, six large guns, three cub planes, and 40 gliders. In UNTER ELSBACH, troops of the 179th Infantry disposed for defense watched an enemy column put to flight by friendly ele-

*An American soldier marches his prisoners down a street in Nurnberg to a PW Cage. 180th Infantry.*







*Soldiers watch a wounded man as he lies face down on a litter awaiting evacuation.*

ments until it came in range, then opened fire with infantry and tank destroyer weapons to disperse the line.

XV Corps once more changed the direction of the 45th Division's attack on April 8, its objectives to the front having been attained. For the first time in its history, the Division would now attack south, starting out in a southeasterly direction, with the 179th and 180th Infantry Regiments advancing toward KONIGSHOFEN as their ultimate objective. Regardless of the fact that both regiments had been committed in hard fighting since mid-March, the attack would be continued without interruption, due to the necessity for maintaining steady pressure on the Germans at this time to keep them off-balance and thwart any effort toward an organized defense.

The 179th Infantry drove southeast out of BASTHEIM with a two-pronged attack and moved through REUSTREU, RHEINFELDSHOF, WENKHEIM, THUNDORF, and ROTHHAUSEN, meeting little opposition. At STADT LAURINGEN a pocket of fiercely resisting elite guard SS men, paratroopers, and miscellaneous infantry was trapped. Its opposition was wiped out by tank destroyer and infantry weapons fire.

The 2nd Bn. moved on to clear the town of OBER LAURINGEN, and its final objective, WETZHAUSEN. The 3rd Bn. branched off to the east at HEUTTREV and cleared HOLLSTADT, WOLFERSHAUSEN, KL. EIBSTADT, GROSS BARDORF, LEINACH, and BIRNFELD, while the 1st Bn. mopped up opposition in the sector between THEINFELD and OBER LAURINGEN.

An attack to the southeast was launched at 0730 with the 2nd Bn. on the south and the 3rd on the north. The 2nd

Bn. drove through WILIMARS, MELLRICHSTADT and six other villages in its path of advance. The 191st Tank Battalion routed about 400 Germans from SAAL and then chased them through the western edges of WALTERSHAUSEN and KONIGSHOFEN. Casualties for the Germans in this area were extremely heavy. As no strong opposition developed in KONIGSHOFEN, the Battalion moved on to take GABOLSHAUSEN and UNT ESSFELD.

The 157th Infantry sent quartering parties to reconnoiter the SAAL area in preparation for a move. A lumber mill in the southeast portion of SAAL became the Division Command Post.

The Division's objectives as assigned by XV Corps were reached with speed next day, April 9. In BIRNFELD the 179th Infantry captured General Major Franz, Commanding Officer of the 256th Infantry Division, who at the time was making a last-stand defense with about 100 men, the survivors of his division. The division ordinarily numbers about 10,000.

Threatened with death, he surrendered with his chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel Kofiel, and division artillery commander, Lieutenant Colonel Bremer. The spectacle of high-ranking German officers being taken in hopeless, feeble stands, or even blundering into the Allied lines in search of someone to whom they could surrender was not an uncommon one on the crumbling Wehrmacht front in these twilight days in GERMANY, but it was less common in this sector of fanatical resistance. The doughboys of the 179th Infantry held an old score against Major General Franz, for it was he who commanded the 256th Division during the bitter fighting in ALSACE in the preceding





*The wreckage of Nurnberg bears witness to the fury and effectiveness of aerial bombardment and infantry assault on the key city of the Nazi party.*



*Infantrymen under sniper fire take cover behind a building in Nurnberg. The tank moves up to blast enemy positions.*

winter. A total of 1117 other prisoners passed through the Division cage during the day.

On April 10, in accordance with the larger pattern of XV CORPS strategy, the Division held its attack and made only minor adjustments in its lines. First and second echelon maintenance on vehicles was carried out, and equipment and materiel was repaired for the anticipated order for a new attack.

### BAMBERG

The 45th Division had been on the left flank of the Seventh Army during its drive eastward across the RHINE, its subsequent advance to the northwest, and its wheeling movement to the southeast and south. Despite the fact that this outside position gave it far greater distance to move than some units, it was able by incessant and untiring driving effort to keep pace with the advance of the Seventh Army line and in some instances to exceed the pace of other units.

Orders to resume the great swinging arc of the attack were received from XV Corps on April 11. The 179th and 180th Infantry Regiments were alerted. At 1600 and 1500 hours respectively, they continued their advance to the southeast with orders to proceed with all possible speed in order to take the enemy by surprise and seize intact any bridges remaining over the MAIN River in that area.

During the preceding 36-hour period air observation and tactical reconnaissance, planes reported that no demolitions had been effected by the enemy. Upon resumption of the attack, however, reports began to come in of a systematic demolition of bridges, initiated not only along the MAIN River, but at all major road centers on the west side of the river. Despite a well-planned program of demolition of bridges and culverts which the Germans were able to institute as a result of the Division's temporary suspension of attacks, the assault regiments made immediate advances of 18 to 40 kilometers.

There were no coordinated efforts at defense, but German opposition became much stiffer as the MAIN River was approached. Stubborn pockets held out as long as possible for the purpose of denying the Division positions which would overlook the river. Columns of the 179th Infantry skirted the dense BRAMBERGS WALD to the north and south, operating numerous contact patrols in the forest. The 2nd Bn. cleared scattered and disorganized enemy personnel from HOPHEIN, HELLINGEN, and JUNKERSDORF, delaying its advance until a pocket in the high ground northeast of JUNKERSDORF had been reduced. KONIGSBERG was entered at 1800. Fire from small arms and self-propelled guns created an obstacle to the advance into the town. KONIGSBERG was cleared by 1820, and the Battalion moved on through the town to high ground lying to the southeast. The 3rd Bn. moved to OSTHEIM.

The 180th Infantry attacked, two battalions abreast, at 1500 hours and drove 18 kilometers without meeting resistance. The 3rd Bn. moved swiftly to EBERN over the main ERMORSHAUSEN-EBERN road. Strong combat patrols immediately pushed on to GLEUSDORF and seized the one remaining bridge over the ITZ River, enabling other patrols to penetrate to RATTELSDORF. The defense positions of that town were found to be manned by about one hundred Germans.

The 2nd Bn., in the meanwhile, had been forced to follow a more circuitous route. As they approached MAUSCHENDORF and GERACH, enemy small arms, machine gun, and artillery fire harassed the troops. Quickly flanking these pockets, the Battalion left troops to reduce the centers of enemy activity and moved on BAUNACH, clearing the town after meeting machine gun and artillery fire. Bridges across the MAIN in the Regimental zone were found demolished.

On April 12 the Division continued to the east and southeast with a twofold objective. First, the men would secure



a strong bridgehead over that portion of the MAIN River flowing north from the city of BAMBERG, from which they would direct an attack upon the city itself. The second objective would be the closing of a regiment on a line along the west side of that branch of the river to support the planned attack on the city itself.

The bridgehead was secured during the day's operations, but the advance on the west side of the river was slowed by enemy activity. All component parts of the German 36th Division were identified in the sector, as well as four troops from a Hungarian Hussar Cavalry Group screening the German division's north flank. Reports indicated that the Germans would attempt a stand at BAMBERG, and stiff resistance was expected. Meanwhile, the Division took 473 prisoners and moved its command post first up to a castle at EYRICHSOFF and then into a beer hall in RATTELSDORF.

The 157th Infantry moved from SAAL and received the mission of continuing the attack on the left or north side of the Division zone east of the MAIN.

The 179th Infantry attacked with two battalions at day-break, encountering stubborn resistance throughout its sector of advance. The two main avenues of approach in the zone were canalized by densely wooded hills overlooking narrow flood plains. No pocket of resistance could be bypassed with impunity in this terrain.

In the 180th Infantry sector, the 3rd Bn. continued to clear resistance which had developed late in the preceding

day at RATTELSDORF. At the same time, the town of EBING was cleared, and patrols advancing up to the river observed enemy movement on the east side of the river and drew fire from the east bank.

Anticipating strong opposition to a frontal crossing operation, the Regiment quickly moved the Battalion north to a ford site south of NIEDERAU. Then, with a company of tanks in support, they advanced rapidly on the main road along the east bank of the river. Light opposition was reduced in UNT OBERNDORF and BREITEN GUSSBACH, where a potential enemy ambush laid along both sides of the road into HALLSTADT almost succeeded in trapping lead elements of the Regiment. The Germans prematurely showed their hand, however, and were eliminated by the alert lead elements. The 2nd Bn. received considerable small arms fire but continued to clear KEMMERN, finishing the task by 2330. The 1st Bn. moved to MEDLITZ, crossing the MAIN by utilizing the ford there, and attacked southwest through the 3rd Bn. at ZAPFENDORF.

The axis of advance then turned due south to clear LAUG, ZUCKSHUR, and GUNDELSHEIM against light opposition. The 2nd Bn., in addition to securing three crossing sites in the BAUNACH area, including a trestle bridge installed by the 120th Engineer Battalion, patrolled the RECKENDORF-LAUTER-BAUNACH triangle to secure the Regiment's west flank until the 179th Infantry could draw abreast. An enemy pocket was discovered in

*German prisoners of war captured in Nurnberg await evacuation from the city.*







*A. U. S. tank fires on snipers harassing the infantry in their progress through the city of Nurnberg.*

the vicinity of GODELHOF, and one company was sent to contain it.

The industrial center of BAMBERG, with its population swollen far beyond its normal 65,000 by thousands of displaced persons, forced laborers, and wounded soldiers of the Wehrmacht was the focal point of the operations. Road nets from all directions converged upon that city making it vital to the advance.

The city of BAMBERG is divided into two parts by the MAIN River. The larger section, to the east of the river, was the Division's immediate objective. The plan on April 13 was for the 180th Infantry to attack south for the town, while the 157th, reinforced by a battalion of the 179th,

moved to the southeast and east to protect the right flank.

Approximately 2000 German troops, urged by a commander who was willing to make BAMBERG another ASCHAFFENBURG, had sworn defense of the area to the death.

Well-planned rapid thrusts, which cut escape routes to the northwest and southeast, unnerved the defenders sufficiently to cause their pledged defense to dissipate into an occasional flurry of intense, fanatical resistance. By the close of day, all that part of the town east of the PEGNITZ River was reported cleared by the enemy. Approximately 200 infantry troops on the east shores of the insular portion of the city cut off by the MAIN and PEGNITZ



Rivers were placing heavy fire on Division troops, employing streets in the still-occupied portion of the town as fire lanes.

The discovery of a vast bomb and ammunition dump, large warehouses filled with food and clothing, and an estimated 1500 Goliaths loaded on flatcars in the marshalling yards gave one more indication of how important BAMBERG had been.

The Division Command Post opened in a group of buildings on the south side of the town of HALLSTADT at 1700. The 157th Infantry with the 3rd Bn. of the 179th attacked at 0800 with the special mission of blocking the northeastern outlets of the MOORE WALD, assigned to the 3rd Bn. of the 179th.

The 2nd Bn. moving southeast in a column of companies cleared MERKENDORF. Then Company E struck a pocket of one hundred Germans supported by four tanks in MEMMELSDORF. Company F quickly passed through E, deployed around the town, then drove in toward the center of the pocket, but not with sufficient rapidity to prevent the German tanks from escaping. By 1335 MEMMELSDORF had fallen and KREMMELDORF, SCHAMMELSDORF, and LITZENDORF were cleared in quick succession.

At 1330 the 3rd Bn. of the 179th Infantry attacked to secure the towns of PODELDORF, NAISA, and GRIESFELD and block all routes leading into and out of the MOOR WALD from the northeast to prevent any threat directed toward the south flank of the 180th Infantry. By 2000, the first two towns had been cleared but the attack was halted short of its final objective.

The 179th Infantry contacted only a few widely scattered pockets of resistance in an attack launched at 0700 to clear the area remaining in the zone north and west of the MAIN River. Upon the completion of that mission, the 1st Bn. crossed the MAIN River and assembled in the northeastern outskirts of BAMBERG, prepared to attack through the MOOR WALD in conjunction with the 3rd Bn. The 2nd Bn. occupied an area in the vicinity of DORFLEINS after mopping up light small arms resistance in STAFFELBACH.

The Division's attack in the 180th Infantry sector moved on BAMBERG in three separate phases, in any one of which German resistance might have caused serious delay. First step was the reduction of the perimeter defense of 88 mm guns and flak guns about the city in connection with an enveloping maneuver. The second phase was isolation of the town's garrison. The third was penetration and reduction of the internal resistance within the city.

The 3rd Bn. on the Regimental right to the west drove south through HALLSTADT and, three hours after jumping off, completed mopping-up operations in that town in which the Germans made a desperate but short-lived attempt at organized resistance. Resuming the attack at 1100, all three companies encountered heavy flak fire from enemy guns emplaced in the northwestern portion of BAMBERG. By about 1230 the Battalion had cut the northwest road leading from the town and proceeded to move toward the center of the city.

The 1st Bn. had secured the airport to the north of the

town after a brief fight and had continued toward its objective astride the road leading southeast out of BAMBERG, the enemy's one remaining route of escape. The enemy, gathering in the numerous barracks and warehouses in the line of advance, attempted feverishly but without success to hold back the attack. By 1235 the road had been cut and the town's garrison effectively isolated. Then in conjunction with the 3rd Bn., the 1st moved in upon the center of the town.

Sealing the fate of the town completely, the 2nd Bn. assembled in the barracks area northeast of BAMBERG, blocked all roads emanating from the city, and sent a strong patrol to contact the other units of the Division in the town. Initial opposition to the final assault on the city was light. Then, as the Division began to tighten its strangle hold, the enemy resisted first with withering fire, then with a steady increase of small arms opposition. As patrols of the units joined their forces, the town was cut in half and enemy communications were disrupted. By 1700 the Germans were incapable of further fighting.

Mopping-up operations cleared the enemy from that portion of the city east of the REGNITZ River while patrols, reconnoitering along the river bank, located a suitable crossing site in the northwest part of the city, over which an attack to clear the island portion of the city was projected for the next morning. Considerable sniper fire was received from the island. In view of the fact that the MOOR WALD had not been cleared and still contained an unestimated number of the enemy who were placing moderately heavy fire on Company A at the road blocks southeast of BAMBERG, a pincers movement was plotted in case an offensive threat should develop in that area.

In one day's operation against BAMBERG, the Division had advanced some five to twelve kilometers, had attacked and cleared one-half of that city, and had established strong defensive positions on the southeast and east. Lead elements were in position to reduce the remaining enemy defenses in the island portion of the city.

XV Corps ordered the Division to continue its advance and force a crossing of the REGNITZ River and capture that portion of the town of NURNBERG in the Corps zone to the south of the REGNITZ River.

## NURNBERG

The 157th and the 179th Infantry Regiments by-passed the town of BAMBERG to the northeast and east, leaving the 180th Infantry to reduce final resistance there. The 157th Infantry staged a two-battalion attack to secure a line of departure from which two armored spearheads, with infantry mounted on the tanks, drove deep into the zone ahead to establish a small but important bridgehead across the WIESENT River in the EBERMANNSTADT area. The 179th Infantry combed the dense, wild MOOR WALD for enemy troops and then motorized for an attack southeast to HIRSCHHEID and GEISFELD, drawing abreast of the 157th Infantry by the close of day.

Meanwhile, in BAMBERG, a platoon of Company K of the 180th Infantry crossed the river to the "island" by





*Shell fire from a tank lands directly on building containing Nazi snipers holding up Infantry advance through Nurnberg.*

the Division caused them to resort to an increasingly large number of air attacks against American columns. During the day 13 enemy sorties were reported in the 45th Division sector. This was the largest amount of air activity encountered inside Germany.

The swiftly moving columns in both assault regimental sectors developed the enemy situation by overtaking and destroying desperate German convoys attempting to move south. Neither air sorties nor ground resistance slowed the advance appreciably, for the Division moved up 20 kilometers in the west part of the sector, and 35 kilometers in the east, against opposition which varied from moderately strong to simply nonexistent.

The 157th Infantry advanced rapidly to destroy four of the 88 millimeter guns and a Mark V tank supporting a road block east of PRETZFELD. The advance was hindered by innumerable wrecked and twisted vehicles along the roads where the American artillery and air corps had intercepted fleeing enemy columns. By the close of day the 1st Bn. had cleared LAUF and had established a bridgehead over the REGNITZ River in that area.

The 3rd Bn. of the 179th Infantry led both day and night attacks against road blocks, scattering opposition wide before them, but running into stronger small arms, mortar,

and tank fire shortly after dawn as the attack progressed. A bridge across the WIESANT River between WEILERSBACH and KIRCHENRENBACH was secured in the early morning. The 180th Infantry in Division reserve moved to PRETZFELD in preparation for a new commitment.

NURNBERG, which Hitler called the most German of all cities, stood squarely before the Division sector on April 16. The Division Commander committed all three regiments in an attack on that part of the city south of the REGNITZ River and east of the LUDWIGS CANAL.

Therefore operations on April 16 were aimed at completing the envelopment from the east and south of that part of the city which lay in the Division zone. The stage was then set for the final assault on the city, with the 3rd Division moving in also across the REGNITZ River, and the 42nd Division from the west.

The deadly "schnell" mines which could blow a soldier higher than his head were encountered in NURNBERG, as were innumerable German 88's, the dual purpose guns which had been emplaced in a ring around the city primarily as an air defense and, having once served their purpose against the airmen during the bombing of NURNBERG'S industrial plants, were now depressed and diverted to a ground role. Two of these guns were found even in the





*A wounded soldier is carried through the streets of Nurnberg.*

Luitpold Arena, where once were held the Nazi party congresses which rocked the world.

In addition to being one of Germany's most beautiful ancient cities before the war, NURNBERG was credited with being the cradle of the Nazis' ugly and vicious racial laws and home of racial persecution. The infamous Julius Streicher was one-time gauleiter of NURNBERG. One "celebrity" whose name was well-known in AMERICA and whom the 45th Division caught up with in their strides toward NURNBERG was Mrs. Fritz Kuhn, wife of the notorious so-called German-American Bund leader. Mrs. Kuhn and her daughter Waldraut, living comfortably on Nazi party funds, were held for questioning.

The 45th Division was now ready to smash into NURNBERG. Initially two battalions moving up abreast carried the attack. When the designated line of departure for the attack extending from the cloverleaf crossing on the autobahn south of ROTHENBACH west to SCHWAIG had been reached, the third regiment moved through to fill the gap as one regiment attacked west, the other south and west. As lead elements reached the city's outskirts the enemy opened fire with its belt of 88 millimeter guns. Meanwhile German aircraft flew 20 sorties over the sector, with 15 bombing and strafing missions against the Division's advancing columns and forward elements. Three of the planes, engaged by the 106th AAA AW Battalion, crashed in flames.

The 1st Bn. of the 157th Infantry attacked at 0900 with two armored columns in support, moving to secure the line from the autobahn cloverleaf south of ROTHENBACH east

to LEINBURG. By 1500 the 2nd Bn., which had taken over road blocks in the vicinity of LAUF was relieved of that mission to attack south and west. Troops cleared ROTHENBACH, then the main body moved out onto the autobahn while screening forces maintained security in the dense protective forests on either side of the road which might have provided a bulwark for the defenders. Two batteries of 88's southeast of FISCHBACH placed heavy fire on advancing infantry until the positions were overrun and the guns were captured with their crews.

Light artillery and sniper fire harassed the column, but the attack continued to obtain the objective, the main highway intersection north of WENDELSTEIN. The 3rd Bn. was to attack south, then west, and to come up on the left flank of the 2nd Bn. Scattered contact was made in the woods east of Netzstall. The Bavarian forests, famed in story, song, and legend, might have been of great use to the enemy had they been able to make full use of the defensive advantages. No serious opposition was encountered until troops turned west of MOOSBACH.

Despite the fact that the Division's sector lay to the south of the REGNITZ River, it was necessary for elements of the Division to attack southwest on the north side of the river in order to secure the Division right flank on the north. Troops approaching the northeastern outskirts of NURNBERG drew intense 88 mm fire and brushed against an increasingly tenacious enemy. At 0730 the 2nd Bn. of the 179th Infantry attacked through the 1st and moved slowly in the face of accurate flak fire and strong small arms resistance to the northeastern part of NURNBERG north of the REGNITZ River.



The 180th Infantry was committed to the attack after its line of departure had been secured. It then advanced southeast toward FISCHBACH, sharing the autobahn with the 157th Infantry. Light opposition was encountered at the start, but did not delay the advance of the 2nd Bn. through FISCHBACH. Immediately thereafter, intense small arms fire and flak resistance considerably slowed down the forward movement of the troops. The barracks area southwest of the town, the final objective of this drive, was taken by 2110.

The 1st Bn. occupied FISCHBACH after the 2nd Battalion moved on toward the next objective. Because of heavy flak fire, only Company A was left within the town while the two remaining companies were placed in an assembly area to the northwest. The 3rd Bn. assembled south of ROTHENBACH, prepared to reinforce any sector which developed threateningly strong resistance.

The envelopment of NURNBERG from the south and east was completed on April 17 and the assault of the city proper was begun. The three regiments attacked abreast at noon.

Heavy resistance was encountered in the outskirts of the city from small arms, 88 mm dual purpose guns, 80 mm mortars, and 20 mm flak guns. The infantry received support from 12 battalions of artillery, plus eight close-support missions from the air corps. By the end of day, good progress had been made into the town and heavy losses had been inflicted on the enemy. The 4869 prisoners captured represented the largest number taken in a single day in the history of the Division.

Forty-five 88 mm dual purpose guns were smashed or captured, six nebelwerfers and one tank were destroyed. Four searchlights and 50 trucks and vehicles were also taken.

The enemy opposed the advance aggressively. Two counterattacks were launched against the 45th Division on April 17, and 19 air sorties were flown against the Division troops, in addition to an undetermined number by night.

The 180th Infantry also captured a Prisoner of War Camp containing 13,000 Allied prisoners, including 250 Americans and 450 British.

The 157th Infantry, turning on the Division left flank, made good progress against fire from 20 and 88 millimeter flak guns, plus small arms fire from houses and buildings in the city. By night a portion of the city in its zone had been cleared. The 179th Infantry moved up about 2000 yards against strong resistance and repulsed a strong enemy counterattack with automatic weapons at 1650. By dark, two companies had penetrated the outer defenses of the city and had a secure hold on the outskirts astride the railroad.

The 180th Infantry jumped off at 0700 against heavy machine gun, flak, and rifle fire, and encountered the same sort of resistance most of the day. Progress was slow due to heavy flak, small arms, and machine gun fire. After liberating the 13,000 prisoners of war found in the prison camp, the 2nd Bn. advanced under tank fire, then came un-



*An American tank gets stuck in one of the numerous bomb craters in wrecked Nurnberg.*

der sniper and automatic weapons fire as it reached its objective for the day.

April 18 found the Division engaged in a murderous duel with the enemy, frequently fighting from house to crumbling house and street to street. The enemy's antiaircraft guns were so emplaced that they could cover streets and open fields with their fire. There was no break in the whine of fire as flak burst in the area already taken, while the Division's big guns fired into the portion of the city not yet entered by the doughboys.

All three regiments advanced that day in house-to-house fighting against determined and fanatical Germans. There was a notable increase in small arms, machine gun, and 20 millimeter flak gun fire, as well as fire from antitank guns and grenades. The machine gun fire was intense throughout the day, as was the activity of snipers firing ceaselessly from the dusty ruins of the city.

There was a marked decrease in enemy artillery fire due to the heavy losses suffered on the preceding day. A German cub plane shot down was found to be mounted with six panzerfausts on its wings. It had been strafing the Division's columns and when captured was attacking Company B of the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion in an effort to destroy its weapons. Fighter bombers in support of the Division were also in the air, flying three missions of 36 sorties.

Perhaps the most spectacular event of that day was the capture of NURNBERG'S towering Luitpold Arena, scene of that Nazi festival of festivals, the annual party congress. Dominating the arena was the mighty marble and gold podium from which Adolf Hitler, Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, and Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels for 11 years told hysterically shouting crowds that tomorrow GER-MANY would rule the world.

Each autumn, while the crowds heiled their fuhrer in the glare of blazing torchlights, the official swastikas were dipped together with the original flag carried by the Nazis who took part in the abortive MUNICH putsch of 1923.





*Troops of the 3rd and 45th Divisions who took the city of Nurnberg pass in review during flag-raising ceremony in Adolf Hitler Platz.*

SS troopers and German soldiers were found huddled here beneath the concrete stands, the ardor of their fanaticism somewhat dampened by a night-long rain of American gunfire and artillery. Many a Nazi superman broke down and sobbed as 45th Division soldiers took over where Hitler had reviewed his goose-stepping troops, strength-through-joy and Hitler Youth gatherings, and the members of his Nazi Party.

On that fateful day in the 157th Infantry sector the 1st and 3rd Bns. jumped off to continue their attack abreast, slowly fighting their way through the most bitter resistance, clearing each building and each street in the slow advance with particularly heavy fighting. Just before dusk the enemy right flank was broken finally by the 1st Bn., which then moved up rapidly to the railroad tracks. The enemy left flank, however, held firm: fighting continued there until 1930 hours.

The 1st Bn. initiated its attack at 0715, and at 0830 Company B ran into machine gun fire. Slow progress was made, and at 1030 some progress was reported in close fighting. Just before dusk, Company A was able to advance to its objective after fighting all day, while on the Battalion right, Company C had met similar opposition and did not

attain its goal for the day until 1730. Guarding its gains and the bridges over the LUDWIGS CANAL, units of the Battalion were still heavily engaged at dark.

The 179th Infantry continued its attack on the morning of April 18 with two battalions abreast and another protecting the Division left flank. By the close of day elements of the 2nd Bn. had made some progress, while the 3rd Bn., fighting from house to house through the entire day, assembled in MOGELDORF and prepared to relieve the 2nd Bn. in the 157th Infantry sector.

At 0715 the 180th Infantry too resumed the attack with two battalions abreast. Initial stiff resistance by machine gun, sniper, 88 mm gun, and mortar fire slackened, then became stubborn again late in the day. The 1st Bn. inched forward after being stopped at its line of departure by machine gun fire, which was silenced by tank and artillery fire. Units encountered intense artillery and small arms fire, together with barrages from the enemy's 88 mm guns, intense machine gun fire, and sniper fire. By night the situation was well in hand on the Regimental front.

Typical of the fanaticism manifest by the defenders of NURNBERG was a message sent to Adolf Hitler on his birthday:



"192300 April 1945

"My Fuehrer!

"NURNBERG is surrounded from all sides. The enemy has fought his way into the inner city. He has heavy casualties. Up to now 24 tanks have been put out of commission. Of these 18 were knocked out by panzerfaust. All day long artillery and grenade fire falls into the burning city. Our casualties are also heavy. All anti-tank guns have been destroyed. There is an acute shortage of ammunition.

"The cooperation with the combat commander is excellent. All Volksgenossen greet each other with 'Heil Hitler!' The enemy takes special repressive measures against the people of RANCONIA. Our faith, our love, our life belongs to you, my Fuehrer. Our best wishes on your birthday.

"Your

"Karl Holz."

Public relations officers had planned to hoist the Stars and Stripes over Luitpold Stadium on Hitler's birthday, but the 45th Division infantrymen hadn't heard about the plan—they marched into the stadium with American flags a little early.

On April 19 the 45th Division continued its assault on NURNBERG with a well-connected line. The German plan of action obviously contemplated a final stand inside the inner walls of the medieval city with their moats and battlements. Accordingly the enemy resisted frantically all efforts to break into that bastion.

Resistance on the Division left flank was particularly desperate. There the Germans screened their withdrawal from FURTH and SCHWEINAU into the old inner city to fight a last-stand action in this ultimate redoubt even while the shadow of defeat was deepening over NURNBERG.

In the Division sector the enemy was withdrawing 1500 to 2000 troops inside the wall.

The 157th and 180th Infantry Regiments bore the brunt of the final assault as the sector narrowed and the 179th was withdrawn into Division reserve. In the 157th Infantry sector all three battalions attacked in early morning. Highly advantageous positions held by the Germans on the ridge north of the railroad yards were discovered to be extremely difficult to break because of concentrated machine gun, small arms, and anti-tank fire. However, a breakthrough in the left position of the sector was achieved in the late afternoon, and resistance there had been reduced to sniper fire by the end of day.

The 1st Bn., in the center of the Regimental sector, shifted its positions to permit the 2nd Bn. use of the northeast to southwest railroad as a line of departure. Company B, which had been in a blocking position, led the attack at 0700 by going through a tunnel. It emerged from the north end of the tunnel to be heavily engaged by German troops. Company C was unable to cross the railway line because of heavy enemy fire. Company B then moved west through the 2nd Bn. sector and turned to go northeast through the warehouse district of the city. Company A was then brought around by the same route, and the two companies fought their way up to the edge of the "old city," where they remained for the night.

At 1800 Company C broke contact with the railway embankment and used the same route as the other companies, but turned northwest out to the highway connecting FURTH with the main portion of NURNBERG.

The 2nd Bn. attacked at 0710 on that day and, after three hours of heavy house-to-house fighting, had progressed 100 yards. Company F then moved southeast along the LUDWIGS CANAL. Company G was brought up along the north side of the canal and blocked to the south until relieved by elements of the 3rd Bn. at a railway pass and

*At ceremonies during which the American flag was raised over the Nazi shrine city, Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., Maj. Gen. Wade H. Haislip, Maj. Gen. John W. O'Daniel, and Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick salute the colors as they inspect 45th Division troops.*

*Officers and men present arms at flag-raising ceremonies in the captured Nazi shrine city of Nurnberg.*







*Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick discusses conditions at the Dachau Camp with his staff and a member of the prison hospital staff.*

bridge. The two companies then turned north and followed SCHWENBACH STRASSE to the FURTH-NURNBERG Highway, then advanced along that highway to MENDEL STRASSE. Company F, extending from the junction of MENDEL STRASSE and the highway, and Company G blocked to the south, while Company E broke contact to the south and moved up over the same route to join them and establish outposts.

The 3rd Bn. attacked with three companies abreast, to find that the strong resistance which it had been facing at the close of the previous day had now slackened and dwindled until only sporadic machine gun and sniper fire was encountered. Two companies advanced rapidly to GALGANHOFF STRASSE while one mopped up. Company I relieved Company C on the railway embankment so that the latter could follow the rest of the 1st Bn.

After the 2nd Bn. of the 179th Infantry had completed clearing the enemy from the remainder of the Regimental sector, the 179th was pinched out of the line. While protecting the Division south flank, it had become involved in several fire fights with groups of Germans trying to escape from NURNBERG. In the 180th Infantry sector the 3rd Bn. was committed on the Regimental right, and at 0700 hours on April 19 a three-battalion attack moved forward to enter the "old wall" against scattered small arms and sniper fire, which increased when they reached the wall. Shortly afterward the American flag was raised in Adolf Hitler Platz in the heart of the "old city," and the Wehrmacht had been routed from one more great city. Even while the last elements of the 45th Division were still engaged in mopping up small arms and sniper fire in their sector, the fall of NURNBERG was announced, and con-

tact was established with the 3rd Division on the PEGNITZ River.

Complete victory of NURNBERG came on April 20. The German losses in this Bavarian stronghold were tremendous. On April 19, 991 prisoners were captured, bringing the Division's total for FRANCE and GERMANY well over the 50,000 mark. On April 20, 2637 prisoners were taken in the last day of the siege, bringing the total for the operation against NURNBERG alone to almost 10,000. An estimated 1500 Germans were killed or wounded.

Several trains containing wheat were taken, together with such other diverse items as jet-propelled airplane motors, machine guns, assorted ammunition, food, and miscellaneous items. Ninety heavy 88 millimeter anti-aircraft guns were taken or smashed on April 20 alone. Huge stores of valuable operational supplies were seized.

One of the biggest caches of meat and frozen food unearthed in the operation was discovered by infantrymen who went into a vast six-story building to rout out snipers. They discovered that the building covering a square city block was a frozen food concern, and all six floors were stacked to the ceilings with sides of beef, pork, barrels of butter, frozen vegetables, fruit juices, fowls, steaks, and ice cream. The packages were labeled in German, and a reporter told of seeing one doughboy staggering down a street with an armload of packages for an impromptu feast only to find that all contained frozen sliced cucumbers.

The enemy within the walled limits of the old city was determined to hold out to the end. On April 20, fourth and last day of the attack on NURNBERG, complete victory was achieved as the enemy broke into small isolated pockets, sometimes into groups of three or four, continuing to fight until overrun. Nevertheless, mopping-up operations in NURNBERG were complete in the Division sector by 2215, when 200 Germans who had taken refuge in a tunnel to continue the fight were liquidated.

Insofar as the 45th Division as a whole was concerned, the difficulties, hardships, and bitter fighting attendant on the capture of NURNBERG approximated with specific exceptions those encountered at ASCHAFFENBURG. The "old city" was an already-existing natural fortress, and the Germans utilized and reinforced its advantages to the fullest. Many of the prisoners taken had to be routed from basements, tunnels, and air raid shelters. From windows, wine cellars, and piles of debris in the desolate wreckage-strewn streets, the snipers continued to operate against the tired and dust-covered Americans, although after the gestapo and SS elite guard released their grasp upon the city, many gave themselves up without reluctance.

Soldiers told of fighting against children in NURNBERG, boys of 14 years old who sniped at Americans or hurled hand grenades. Men were amazed at the quantity and quality of the food and equipment stored in NURNBERG.

Next day XV Corps held its formal flag-raising ceremony in Adolf Hitler Plaza, while the weary men moved by motor and by march into assembly areas to spend the





*Top: Prisoner guards and SS troops surrender to 45th Division Infantrymen after a 30-minute battle for Dachau prison camp.*

*Above: An American flag, made by the prisoners, greeted Division troops when they arrived at the Dachau camp.*

*Top: Soldiers of the 45th Division order SS men to come forward after one of their number tried to escape from the Dachau Concentration camp after it was liberated by the Division. Men on the ground in the background feign death by falling as the guards fired a volley at the fleeing SS man.*

*Above: A corporal distributes his last pack of cigarettes to the eager reaches of prisoners within the stockade of the prison camp.*

remainder of that day in rest and maintenance of their vehicles and equipment.

The next day, April 22, saw the attack resumed, and this time it would stop only with the end of the war. The Reich was almost split in two, and American troops were now seven miles from the Czechoslovakian border. The DANUBE River lay ahead, and after that, MUNICH.

No clearer summary of the action of the 45th Division from mid-March and the breaching of the SIEGFRIED LINE through the fall of NURNBERG can be given than that in the commendation of the Division by Maj. Gen. Wade H. Haislip, Commanding General of XV Corps. General Haislip's commendation reads in part as follows:

1. During the period 15 March 1945 to 21 April 1945 and 45th Infantry Division made continual

advances and played an important part in the annihilation of the major part of two German Armies.

2. On the 15th of March you attacked and forced a crossing of the BLIES River against strong enemy resistance. Making steady gains you reached the outer defenses of the SIEGFRIED LINE, and on 20 March you breached these defenses, evicting the enemy position from entrenchments and pill-boxes protected by mines and tactical wire. On 19 March you cleared BLIESKASTEL and crossed the WURZBACH River, and on 20 March captured HOMBURG and NIEDER WURZBACH. You continued your rapid advance in pursuit of the enemy and on 24 March closed to the banks of the RHINE River.



3. On 26 March you forced a crossing of the RHINE, one of the world's most formidable military barriers, and established a firm bridgehead twelve (12) kilometers deep in the vicinity of RHEIN DURKHEIM, capturing the town of BIBLIS. The bridgehead was successfully expanded and on 27 March DENSHEIM was captured. Continuing the attack against light enemy resistance you crossed the MAIN River and on 29 March expanded the bridgehead and reached the city of ASCHAFFENBURG, where fanatical enemy resistance was encountered. You systematically reduced enemy opposition and finally cleared the city on 3 April. Pushing to the northeast you captured OBERSINN, SCHMAINAU, NEUGLOSHUTTEN, REUSSENDORF and FLADUGEN and then thrust rapidly to the southeast and captured KONIGSHOFEN and HOFHEIM. Without pause you crossed the MAIN River and cleared that position of BAMBERG in your zone on 14 April.

4. Continuing to the southeast you captured several towns and villages and on 16 April entered the outskirts of the famed city of NURNBERG. The enemy chose to defend this historically important city to the utmost and it was only your zone of a fiercely resisting enemy.

5. The admirable qualities of expert leadership and splendid fighting ability are reflected in the outstanding record of the 45th Infantry Division as a first-class fighting unit. I am proud of the 45th Infantry Division and I desire to express my admiration and sincere gratitude for a job well done.

/s/t WADE H. HAISLIP,  
Major General, U. S. Army,  
Commanding.

The fourth of five great operations by the 45th Division in April, 1945, was the crossing of the DANUBE River. Leading up to that action, the Division continued its advance on April 23 against light resistance in the west half of the Division zone, sporadically strong resistance augmented by artillery fire in the east half. The enemy had fought a skillful delaying action the preceding day as an airport of considerable extent was secured, together with 267 prisoners and a considerable amount of materiel. The 157th and 179th Infantry Regiments again attacked abreast and secured three separate bridgeheads across the ALTMUHL River before the close of day.

Losses inflicted on the enemy included 758 prisoners captured, 28 gun caissons, 75 trucks and vehicles, large stores of clothing in a warehouse at ELLINGEN, and radio equipment and codes in a castle, all captured. An estimated 50 vehicles were destroyed and 180 of the enemy killed or wounded.

The 3rd Bn. led the attack in the 157th Infantry zone supported by tanks and moving up in two columns, an infantry battalion following tanks in each column. The Germans hastily and efficiently set up road blocks and



*Airport north of Munich after shelling by our guns.*

blew bridges. By nightfall all troops had crossed the ALTMUHL River and established two bridgeheads in the high ground which they seized to the south of the river. The 1st Bn., moving up by leaps and bounds by motor, crossed the ALTMUHL in the vicinity of TROMMETSHEIM and took up positions on the high ground south of the river. The 3rd Bn. passed through, advancing on BUBENHEIM, which it occupied by nightfall.

The 179th Infantry encountered strong delaying actions with small arms, machine gun, and artillery support. The Germans also used more and deadlier mines in their effort to slow the attack.

A bridgehead on the ALTMUHL River was established at DIETFURT by the 1st Bn., which had met considerable opposition during its advance. After overcoming mined road blocks in the morning, it met stiff resistance from an estimated 100 of the enemy at ELLINGEN at 0800, then moved on to take WEISZENBURG after some 30 rounds of 75-MM fire fell in lead elements in addition to their fire from self-propelled guns.

An estimated 100 Germans also met the troops at DETTENHEIM, where about 40 rounds of 105-MM fire were received. The crossing of the ALTMUHL River at DIETFURT was unopposed. The 2nd Bn. fought road blocks and poor roads throughout the day. At ETTENSTADT it came under 105-MM fire at 1130. The 3rd Bn. engaged in mopping-up operations in SCHAMBACH. By nightfall the 2nd Bn. had taken GOHREN. The 180th Infantry remained in Division reserve and assembled in WEISENBURG.

On April 24, in accordance with operations instructions from XV Corps, the Division changed the direction of its attack from south to southeast. The 106th Mechanized Cavalry Group was attached for this operation. The next objective was to cross the DANUBE River and seize and hold crossings of the LECH River.

## THE DANUBE

Pursuant to its new orders, the Division continued the attack on April 23, with the 157th and 179th Infantry



to move abreast and the 106th Cavalry Group deployed to move forward of the advance and protect the Division's flank. Delay was experienced at the outset while bridges were completed over the ALTMUHL River.

From that point the enemy fought a well-planned delaying action, stubbornly defending road blocks and towns, supported by a limited amount of fire from artillery and anti-tank guns. Particularly strong resistance was encountered in LANGENALTHEIM and MONHEIM. In the latter town an enemy tank and artillery column was interrupted by a quick, sharp thrust which resulted in a six-hour battle.

April 25 found the enemy continuing to employ their normal delaying tactics—demolitions, minefields, defended road blocks, strongpoints on key terrain features, villages whose normal defensiveness was supplemented by well-organized elements of the 2nd SS Mountain Division and the 79th Volksgrenadier Division.

These defenses were adequately supported by artillery, and forward troops received more artillery fire than they had during the preceding period. The two regiments continued to attack abreast, and by midnight had battered and fought their way, on a wide front, up to the north bank of that historic river. Companies of the 120th Engineer Battalion made preparations for the crossing.

The enemy lost 764 prisoners on April 24 and 779 on April 25 during the Division's advance on the DANUBE. They lost 100 railway cars, four half tracks, a 170-MM howitzer, and 25 trucks and vehicles one day by captivity,

and a tank, 25 horse-drawn and motor vehicles by destruction. The next day they lost eight 105-MM guns, three anti-tank guns, three flak wagons, 60 horse-drawn and motor vehicles destroyed.

On April 26 the Division completed the process of closing on the north bank of the DANUBE preparatory to the crossing operation. Company A of the 260th Engineer Battalion was attached to the Division for the forced crossing, and the 1101st Engineer Group was in support. The supporting engineers had the mission of constructing a foot bridge, a heavy ponton bridge, an armored force steel treadway bridge, and a maneuver cable for Dukws. Work was commenced on all these projects that day. The foot-bridge had to be abandoned because of the swift, rushing waters and the current of seven to 12 miles per hour.

The 120th Engineer Battalion moved the assault boats to the river and operated them during the crossing once more. The Germans offered strong opposition to the operation, initially by coordinated fire from all types of weapons including nebelwerfers and 20-MM flak guns. Division Artillery countered with a heavy program of counter-battery fire. The guns which had been placing heavy fire upon the troops were silenced or were forced to reduce their rate of fire to prevent casualties in their own ranks.

The Germans had demolished their last bridge across the DANUBE in NEUBERG late the previous day. This apparently was done sooner than had been anticipated: several pockets of bewildered and confused Germans were isolated on the north bank of the river, and were mopped

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# 45<sup>th</sup> Division News

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## DSC Given Three Men Of 179<sup>th</sup>

Three more members of the 45th Division have been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, one of these posthumously, the AGO announced this week.

The posthumous award was given to Sgt. Peter C. Louison, Co. K, 179th Inf., for action January 3, 1945, near Wingen.

Louison saw one of his machine guns put out of action when the gunner was wounded and started toward the gun to man it himself. On the way, he was twice seriously wounded and knocked to the ground by the fierce enemy fire.

Nevertheless, he reached the gun, and fired it until it jammed. He was killed while attempting to get the gun in action again, but his surprise fire from a gun the Germans had believed out of action caused many casualties among the enemy.

Sgt. Delmer R. Chamberlain, Co. I, 179th Inf., was awarded the DSC for his actions October 6, 1944, near Grandvillers, where he manned a machine gun in the face of a counterattack.

His accurate fire killed 23 of the enemy and wounded many more. The enemy, in an attempt to eliminate the gun, fired on his position, and a fragment from a grenade hit him in the eye, almost blinding him.

Chamberlain stared at the gun, however, until the attack had been repulsed.

Sgt. William P. Hatfield, Co. H, 179th Inf., earned his DSC January 10 at Goetsbruck, France, where he had

## Dachau Gives Answer To Why We Fought

By Bill Barrett

Thunderbirds who last week still wondered why we fought the Germans and their beliefs got their answer at the Dachau prison camp where death claimed victims by the carload and murder was a wholesale sadistic business. Rifleman of Co. I, 157th Inf., were the first to see and smell the place. Dachau never would have been dealt with so thoroughly in the assault stages if these men hadn't walked by a railway siding crammed with boxcars on the way in.

It was late afternoon - about 4 p. m. - as the men made their way down the tracks. They knew that the camp ahead was guarded by SS troops and they expected a hard fight. And like all men going into an attack, he they rookies or vets, these men were afraid.

They picked up the clawing stink before they reached the first boxcar. They stopped and stared and the dead started back.

There were about a dozen bodies in the dirty boxcar, men and women alike. They had gone without food so long that their dead wrists were braconids tipped with claws. These were the victims of a deliberate starvation diet, and they weren't pretty.

The men looked, then shuffled on to the next car in silence. There were more dead eyes here staring out at the German houses not 200 yards from the tracks.

Someone bleated the stillness with a curse. And then with a roar the men started for the camp on the double.

## 45<sup>th</sup> Station On the Air, It's a Job

The 45th Division has been on the air many times during its better than four-year history, but now, for the first time, it is operating its own station - Radio Thunderbird.

When the city was captured, Maj. Leo V. Bishop heard reports that a radio studio was still intact, and contacted 1st Lt. M. Stuart Novins with a suggestion he might operate it.

Lieutenant Novins found the studios





up without much trouble after a brief engagement. By midnight the Division had eight battalions of infantry across the river and had secured a bridgehead three kilometers deep on a 20-millimeter front.

In the 157th Infantry sector, the crossing was accomplished in assault boats under heavy fire from snipers and from 20-MM flak guns. In addition thereto, the Regiment received one of the heaviest and most concentrated mortar bombardments that it had undergone in some time. Rockets and self-propelled guns kept continual fire upon the crossing troops.

MARXHEIM was taken, but the Division troops there were subjected to shelling with artillery and nebelwerfer fire. The latter set the village aflame. Artillery fire was received by virtually all units throughout the day. MEDERSHONFELD was taken, and advances were made toward BERTOLDHEIM and STAUDHEIM.

The 179th Infantry crossed the river and drove into BITTENBRUNN, NEUBERG, GNADENFELD, STEPBERG, and RIEDENSHEIM. UNTER HAUSEN and OBER HAUSEN were taken. While some artillery and small arms fire was received by the 179th, that unit did not run into the artillery and mortar opposition that dogged the footsteps of the 157th throughout the day.

The 180th Infantry attacked across the DANUBE at 1500 with two battalions abreast and another following a battalion of the 157th Infantry in their assault boats. All rifle companies were across at 2253 hours. Crossing of the 3rd Bn. was somewhat delayed by the swiftness of the current and by motor trouble. The 1st Bn. attacked toward ORTFLING and BURGHEIM. Company I captured the town of STRASS.

The crossing of the DANUBE was completed on April 27, and the Division expanded its bridgehead to the south. Contacts with the Germans during the day and the nature of the resistance encountered indicated that the opposition was disorganized, and no coordinated fires were received. The Germans appeared to be busy with attempts to salvage the remnants of their organized units at the expense of those small scattered individuals whose mission were to screen the retrograde movement. Known losses to the enemy included 3,908 prisoners and an airport, together with six or eight planes, two 170-MM guns, two tank cars filled with diesel fuel, a radar unit, and large amounts of ammunition and mines. Horse-drawn artillery pieces were destroyed.

The 157th Infantry continued across the DANUBE with the 1st and 2nd Bns. abreast. Troops of the 1st Bn. took GEMPFLING and made contact with the 232nd Infantry of the 42nd Division, also attacking toward MUNICH.

The 179th Infantry completed its crossing of the DANUBE and drove south in a column of battalions. Although little resistance was encountered, 1,200 prisoners were taken. The 2nd Bn. cleared snipers from NEUBERG.

The 180th Infantry continued toward the south with the 3rd Bn. on the left, the 3rd Bn. on the right. Small enemy forces armed with rifles, machine guns, bazookas, and panzerfausts along the road blocks sought to delay the

advance throughout the period, as did demolitions. One self-propelled gun fired into HOLLENBACH late that day. Approximately 30 rounds of mortar fire fell in BUCH.

During the night the 20th Armored Division passed through the 45th Division sector to clear the way toward MUNICH. All three regiments of the Division were motorized on April 28, riding on the organic tanks and tank destroyers of the Division—Long Toms and bulldozers, anything with wheels.

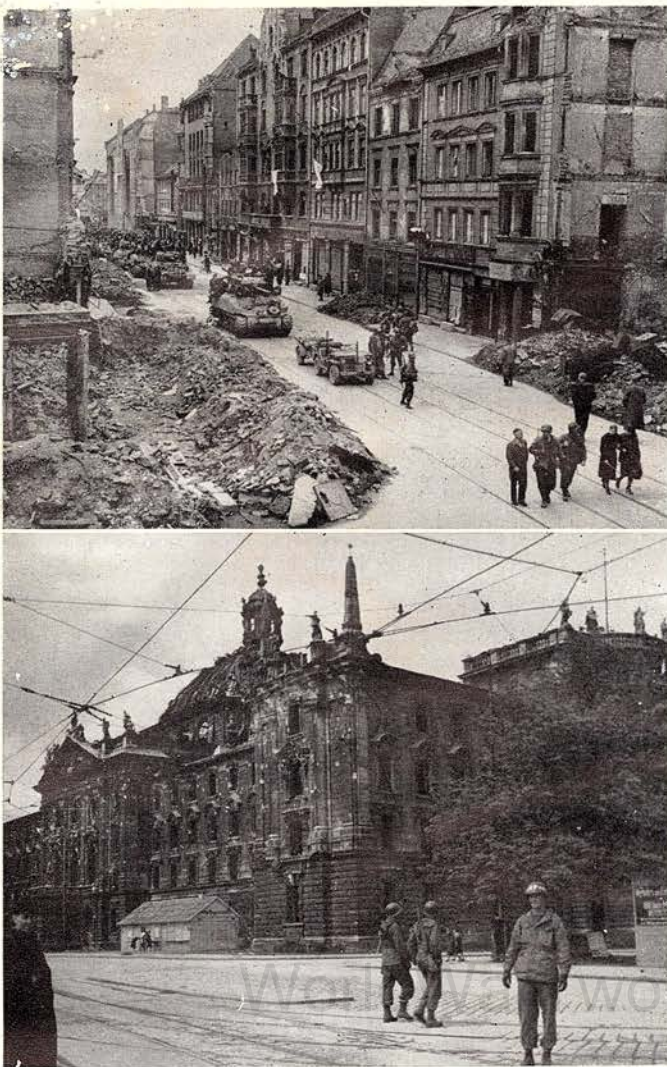
Columns in the south portion of the Division sector were considerably delayed by blown bridges and a poor road net. Advance of the middle columns was held back somewhat to allow friendly armored units to complete their clearance operations. In the north portion of the Division sector the strongest resistance of the day was met in the PFAFFENHOFEN-HETTENSHAUSEN area. Generally, resistance continued, occasionally vehement but disorganized and scattered.

The 157th Infantry, in two columns of infantry and tanks, came under heavy rocket fire from GROSS HAUSEN, where an enemy column was observed trying to make its escape to the south. Upon reducing both the resistance and the fleeing column, the Battalion moved up, meeting little opposition, and stopping for the night at SIGMERT-

*The Munich Beer Hall served as CP of 157th Infantry during the battle for the city.*







*Top: Tanks line up on the street in Munich in preparation for advance into the heart of the city.*

*Above: Pfc. Barker directs traffic in front of Palace of Justice, Munich, heavily damaged from Allied bombings.*

self-propelled gun fire was encountered, and several blown bridges afforded only minor delays. At 0700 the 1st Bn. mounted on organic vehicles and on the armor of the 106th Cavalry Group as transportation attacked to the south through PAUNZHAUSEN to the REICHAUTOBAHN there, and thence in long armored columns moving relentlessly toward MUNICH.

At 1440 the advance was halted abruptly when strong artillery fire, with air bursts from 88-MM guns predominating, struck from emplacements in the outskirts of the city. Anti-tank and small arms fire was received by troops attacking GERCHING. Company B fought its way into that town from the north, but was forced to withdraw as resistance mounted steadily, increasing as the forward elements penetrated the northern part of the town.

By attacking from the direction of DIETERSHEIM, Company C was able to strike the German force along its east flank of the north-south defensive positions. Dug-in infantry were routed in close fighting along the road as the Company advanced. By the close of day the unit had carried the attack into the center of the town and was

still meeting stiff resistance. The 2nd Bn. followed up at FURHOLZEN, and the 3rd Bn. assembled near HORENZHAUSEN, was placed on a three-hour alert status to operate under the command of Target Force in the assault on MUNICH.

Following the advance of the 20th Armored Division, the 180th Infantry attacked toward MUNICH at 0630 on April 29 with two battalions abreast, one in reserve. No opposition was met in early stages of the advance, only light opposition later in the day.

The 2nd Bn. on the Regimental left moved swiftly from GEROLSBACH at 0630, reaching FAHRENSHAUSEN by 0950 without reported opposition. During the early afternoon, when elements of the 20th Armored Division stopped to the immediate front by German fire at a railway underpass near SCHLEISSHEIM, the infantry dismounted from the tanks and proceeded to capture many prisoners and stamp out the resistance. The advance continued evenly, and by the end of day the SCHLEISSHEIMER Canal had been crossed due north of HOCHMUTTING. Scattered infantry pockets persisted in the wooded area through which Company F advanced to take up new positions.

The 3rd Bn. motorized, moved easily until forced to halt to avoid congestion with friendly armor. Resuming the attack, the Battalion overcame moderately strong resistance to seize a group of buildings on the southeast edge of the airport in its line of advance.

The last day of April, 1945, found the Division occupied in attacking and clearing that portion of the city of MUNICH bounded on the west by the road to DACHAU. The original limiting line on the east had been the ISAR River, but XV Corps Headquarters widened the Division sector, giving the 45th Division considerably more than half of that city to reduce and clear of the enemy.

The Division prepared to launch an all-out assault against expected fanatical resistance. MUNICH, however, was already a doomed city. Thrusting under and around the enemy's 88's, the 45th Division found only scattered pockets of resistance in the outlying districts of the city, none whatever in the wrecked and blasted central part.

Two battalions of SS troops fought with snarling fury, determination, and a high degree of coordination in the north central outskirts of the city until finally routed by the 180th Infantry and forced to surrender in mid-afternoon. This constituted the strongest fighting and fanaticism the Division encountered in this third largest German city, with its peacetime population of 828,325 residents.

MUNICH was a major German aircraft industry center. Many of its barracks, artillery workshops, breweries, and machine shops were in ruins. Also bombed out of existence were its royal arsenal, its rubber, paper, motor oil, and optic instrument concerns.

The civilian population remained tight-lipped, neither outwardly hostile nor indifferent, but non-committal, going about with drawn faces. The 45th Division headed straight for the heart of the old city, past the 15th century cathedral and the Braune House, which had been Hitler's own.



Bayarian capital, largest city yet entered by American troops, marked the end of fighting for the 45th Division.

The 157th Infantry took many prisoners but met only light opposition with no semblance of organization. The 1st Bn. moved up from DACHAU. A second concentration camp of 8,000 political prisoners at MOOSACH was seized. By the close of day the unit had crossed the ISAR River to secure the bridges.

The 2nd Bn. attacked in column of companies with Company F leading from OBER SCHLEISSHEIM. A German pocket was contacted at 1300 near FELDMOCHING and was mopped up by 1630. Company E fired on German guns, and Company F received small arms and 22-MM flak fire. By 2200 hours the companies were well in toward the city.

The 179th Infantry cleared GARCHING of stubborn defenders by 0730, then throughout the remainder of the day encountered only scattered pockets of enemy resistance and some anti-tank fire. The 2nd Bn. entered MUNICH at 1250 and encountered little difficulty in clearing its zone, then turned east to secure bridges across the ISAR River and consolidate its positions.

After overcoming the strong SS resistance in their area, the 180th Infantry completed its battle for the city against varied and spectacular resistance. At 0700 the 2nd Bn. jumped off and attacking on the Regimental left, ran straight into sniper and machine gun fire from buildings not yet cleared. Progress continued to be slow in the face of strong enemy fire which was neutralized, finally, by heavy concentrations of artillery and tank fire laid down upon the source, forcing the Germans to withdraw.

At 0938, Company E, in order to continue its advance, found it necessary to lay down a smoke screen to blackout enemy snipers. German fire had slackened by noon, and the Battalion made rapid progress in its final phase, encountering sniper fire but no major opposition. The 1st Bn. passed through elements of the 3rd Bn. at 0730, but met a road block which delayed its advance until 0830. Jumping off again, the Battalion was held up as friendly artillery fire from units other than those of the Division fell close to leading elements. A third time the attack was resumed across open ground, which the Germans promptly covered with intense 88-MM flak fire, 75-MM anti-tank fire, mortar and machine gun fire, inflicting many casualties.

The Battalion was forced to withdraw to its line of departure to reorganize. Then Companies A and B launched a well-coordinated attack on the SS barracks into which two battalions of the elite guard had retreated to take their final stand. Bazooka, machine gun, and sniper fire persisted. The last German was routed after last-ditch fighting at 1446.

By 2235 the Battalion closed on its final phase line and was mopping up the scattered snipers in its zone while the 3rd Bn., in reserve, committed Company I with the mission of clearing a pocket of enemy troops which threatened the flank and rear of the 1st Bn.



*Bicycles taken from Munich civilians after repeatedly warning residents to remain at home, troops were forced to demobilize them by seizing these bicycles and autos. Antitank Company, 157th Infantry.*

On May 1, after the last enemy resistance in the Division sector east of the ISAR River had been routed by the 179th Infantry, the 45th set about the task of garrisoning MUNICH and surrounding areas in compliance with orders from XV Corps. The Seventh Army, triumphant after their victory at MUNICH, plunged on toward INNSBRUCK and the BRENNER PASS, as did Gen. Mark Clark's victorious troops in Italy, just beyond the Alps scarcely 110 miles away and with but a mountain barrier between them.

General Eisenhower, in behalf of troops under his command, extended his congratulations in a tersely phrased order of the day:

**"To every member of the Allied Expeditionary Force:**

**"The whole AEF congratulates the 7th Army on the seizure of MUNICH, the cradle of the Nazi beast."**

The north central sector of MUNICH was assigned to the 157th Infantry, with orders to pay special attention to guarding the great historic monuments and the concentration camps in that zone while conducting periodic foot and motor patrols to quell riots, prevent uprisings, and maintain civil and military order. The 179th would garrison the eastern part of the city, establish road blocks and bridge guards, and maintain a motorized company for emergencies.

The southwest portion of the city was assigned to the 180th Infantry, while the 191st Tank Battalion and the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion would supplement road blocks, bridge guards, and target guards as needed.

On May 2, XV Corps instructed the Division to establish prisoner of war camps to accommodate prisoners taken by the 3rd Infantry, the 42nd Infantry, and the 20th Armored Division, as well as those of the 45th Division. In keeping with the assigned mission of occupying MUNICH, the Division was ordered to assume guard duty and re-



sponsibility on all targets of intelligence remaining under the control of these divisions. Although minor adjustments in various sectors were subsequently necessary, activities for the first ten days of May were directed chiefly toward completing the Division's garrisoning and occupation missions, tasks often as difficult as those of active fighting.

On May 3 the regimental sectors were shuffled, and the 157th Infantry and the 191st Tank Battalion were assigned to garrison MUNICH and to guard all targets therein, including Allied prisoner of war enclosures. The 179th Infantry, minus two battalions, attached to the 6th Army Group T Force in MUNICH, was ordered to move out of MUNICH to guard and administer the concentration camp at DACHAU. The establishment of prisoner of war camps was delegated to the 180th Infantry with the added responsibility of processing all prisoners, guarding them, and handling the innumerable and complex administrative problems rising out of the supervision of well more than 125,000 captured members of the Wehrmacht.

For the first two days of May, all military and civilian problems were routed through the Division Command Post, set up at Number 17 Printzstrasse, MUNICH. On May 3 a new office was established at Number 28 Ludwig Strasse under the title "Security Control MUNICH." It was headed by a field officer of the G-2 section. Thereafter the majority of security problems were handled at that Headquarters, although all operational control of Division and attached units remained at Division Headquarters.

The Commanding General of the 9th Hungarian Division surrendered his staff and 7,400 members of his command to the Commanding General of the 45th Division on May 3. This Division and its service units assembled at the airport under guard of the 180th Infantry Regiment, which also had prisoner of war cages at FURSTENFELDBRUCK, FELDKIRCHING, and BAD AIBLING under its control. On May 6 troops on guard at the last-named place were relieved by an anti-aircraft battalion.

During the first five days of May the Division was the implementing force through which edicts and proclamations of the military government in MUNICH were disseminated and enforced. The Seventh Army changed that condition on May 6 by placing the Division in army reserve in its sector—the MUNICH area—to assume command of the zone and insure the security of supply installations, public facilities, and the civilian population. Regimental responsibilities were shifted on May 8 by relieving the 179th Infantry in DACHAU, moving it to MUNICH to establish perimeter check points on all main roads for both military and civilian travel. The 180th Infantry, having been relieved of one of its three major

prisoner of war enclosures, took over DACHAU, while the 157th Infantry continued to garrison MUNICH.

The civilian population in the area was orderly and seemed to welcome the presence of troops as a guard against terrorism and wholesale looting. The first week of May brought sporadic riots in MUNICH and outlying villages. The speedy gathering of the streams of displaced persons pouring back through the Division sector was one factor in coping with disorder and riot. The thousands of displaced persons and liberated prisoners of war were gathered into camps where feeding, housing, medical care, and control were less difficult, causing an abrupt decline in occurrences of this nature. Disturbances by persons suddenly relieved after years of imprisonment and dire deprivation were more numerous than those by enemy nationals.

To facilitate civilian control, transportation and communication facilities were frozen, and circulation between towns was ended. Division road blocks maintained effectively proved a great factor in enforcing security regulations, and served the further purpose of impressing the public and the streams of people on the roads with the efficiency of the American control to which they must submit.

Civilian, sabotage, and subversion problems proved less acute than was anticipated. Nevertheless, the thousands of starving, diseased displaced persons suffering from anxiety and eager to make their way to their scattered homes in a score of European countries imposed tremendous problems and a heavy burden upon Regimental guard facilities. Riot squads were dispatched occasionally, but on the whole the seething mass of homeless humanity wandered aimlessly or with the vague intention of procuring means of getting back to their homes.

Some 4,460 prisoners were taken by the Division during the operation, bringing the total for FRANCE and GERMANY through V-E Day up to 72,464, and the number for the entire World War II commitment up to 124,173.

The 45th Division opened and operated Radio Station Thunderbird on May 8, the eve of V-E Day.

By the time V-E Day was announced, the Division had a program of informational and educational activities well worked out and ready to be put into operation.

On May 7 the unconditional surrender of all German land, sea, and air forces was announced in MUNICH in a message from Supreme Headquarters, effective at 0001 on May 9. While the announcement brought no change in the status of the 45th Division—already well launched on its occupation duties—the end of World War II brought rejoicing to the busy 45th Division, although occupation duties left no time for formal celebration.



# V-E DAY AND INACTIVATION

V-E Day, the 45th Division was hard at work, already engaged in handling the problems of peace and occupation, which were in many ways as perplexing as those of war.

The long combat trail which began with the landing on the beaches between GELA and SCOGLITTI in SICILY had come to an end. Few if any divisions had covered more actual "combat land" miles. Few had lost a comparable number of their men in fighting.

As an editorial in the OKLAHOMA CITY "Oklahoman" put it, "The last battle bulletins from the German scene mentioned the 45th Division among those present and fighting. The battle picture would not have been complete if this fighting outfit had not been in at the finish. Not since the first cap of the European invasion was popped have the men of the 45th missed very much of the important fighting. Barring the African campaign, that veteran division has been fighting ever since the American battle flags went up east of the ATLANTIC.

"In the NORTH CAROLINA Room of the White House of the Confederacy at RICHMOND is a placard which describes the Tarheel troops as 'first at BETHEL, farthest at GETTYSBURG, and last at APPOMATTOX.' That description with the proper reservations will apply to the boys of the 45th who had fought from the SICILIAN beaches to the mouth of BRENNER PASS by way of FRANCE and GERMANY. By right, a great number of historic battle names are engraved on the Division's banner. The civilian soldiers of OKLAHOMA who fashioned so much of this division in the trying years of the pre-war period have abundant reason to be proud of their handiwork."

Tributes to the armies on the Western Front poured in, filled with praise of the men who had gained the Allies

this great and valiant victory.

President Harry S. Truman said: "In recognition of the unconditional and abject surrender of the Nazi barbarians please accept the fervent congratulations and appreciation of myself and of the American people." The Secretary of War wrote, "In this first moment after one of the greatest military victories in all history, I find it most difficult to express to you in words the thankfulness which fills the hearts of millions of your countrymen for all that the victory means to them." The Secretary of the Navy wrote, "The United States Navy sends to you and your comrades its congratulations and admiration for the superb accomplishments of the American armies in achieving in conjunction with our allies the destruction of Nazi GERMANY."

From Admiral King came congratulations in behalf of all the men and officers of the United States Navy. Admiral Nimitz said, "The smashing victory of American and Allied arms over GERMANY ends the reign of brute force and terror in EUROPE. Millions of the world's people are beholden to you and the superb forces under your command for the restoration of their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

A message from the Queen of the NETHERLANDS stated, "Please accept my most sincere congratulations on the great and decisive victories which have caused the final downfall of a powerful and ruthless enemy. Together with me and my people, grateful thanks to you and all the armies under your command who, by their unflagging bravery and sacrifice, have brought about the triumph of our common cause and the liberation of the NETHERLANDS." The Prime Minister of CANADA said, "I send to





*Sign on Autobahn entering Munich.  
"THRU COURTESY OF 45th DIVISION THIS IS THIRD ARMY AREA"*

you and the forces under your command the heartfelt congratulations of the government and people of CANADA upon the final defeat of the military might of Nazi GERMANY to which the Allied Expeditionary Forces contributed so decisively."

King George VI of ENGLAND stated in part, "All the world now knows that, after fierce and continuous warfare, this force has accomplished its mission with a finality achieved by no other such expedition in history."

General Marshall issued the following commendatory message: "The American armies on the Western Front have given the nation and history a magnificent demonstration of power and efficiency, of initiative, determination, and gallantry. Each army has an outstanding record of achievements. Throughout this long campaign in countless

actions, the Corps and Divisions have displayed battle skill of the highest type and have carried the fighting forward with constantly increasing momentum until the enemy's power to resist has been destroyed. The leadership of the Army Groups, the Armies, and the Army Corps has demonstrated military competence of the highest order. The aggressive fighting and teamwork of the Divisions, the Regiments, and the Battalions have been outstanding, and down in the ranks, the company officers and non-commissioned officers and the private soldiers have given AMERICA a wonderful example of courage, fortitude, and complete devotion to duty.

"The staffs and the organizations which have provided the supplies and communications for the Armies and cared



for the wounded have performed their duties with admirable efficiency.

"You have successfully completed a military undertaking without parallel in history. Your contribution to this great epoch of AMERICA will exert a profound influence on the future of this country."

General Arnold, writing to General Patch of the Seventh Army, stated: "The USAAF joins me in congratulations to you and your command in the final victory over GERMANY. The exploits of the Seventh Army will live in history."

The 45th Division had some unique tributes paid by the citizens of EUROPE. The following letter from the mayor of STE. MAXIME where the Division went ashore on the beach from its amphibious craft is typical:

Sainte-Maxime-sur-Mer, le 17 Octobre 1944

Captain J. Blair,  
U. S. Claims Service,  
11, Bd de la Liberte,  
Marseille.

Dear Sir:

I beg to take advantage of the contacts and good relations which I had with you at the City-Hall, to ask you if possible to designate the exact point of disembarkation of the first soldier of your glorious army, on the southern coast of France.

Here we believe that it is at a point on the beach of la Nartelle, at about three kilometers from Sainte-Maxime.

We have the intention of building at this spot, in souvenir of all you great liberators, a commemorative monument.

You will find enclosed a small plan of our district which might help you to locate this point exactly.

Please agree, dear Captain, with my appreciations and very sincere salutations.

Maire de Sainte-Maxime,  
/t/ JEAN ALVANE.  
/s/ Jean Alvane.

*Unit parades were held every day as a part of the reconditioning of the units. This is the first taste of "Garrison life" since the Division left the States almost 30 months before.*



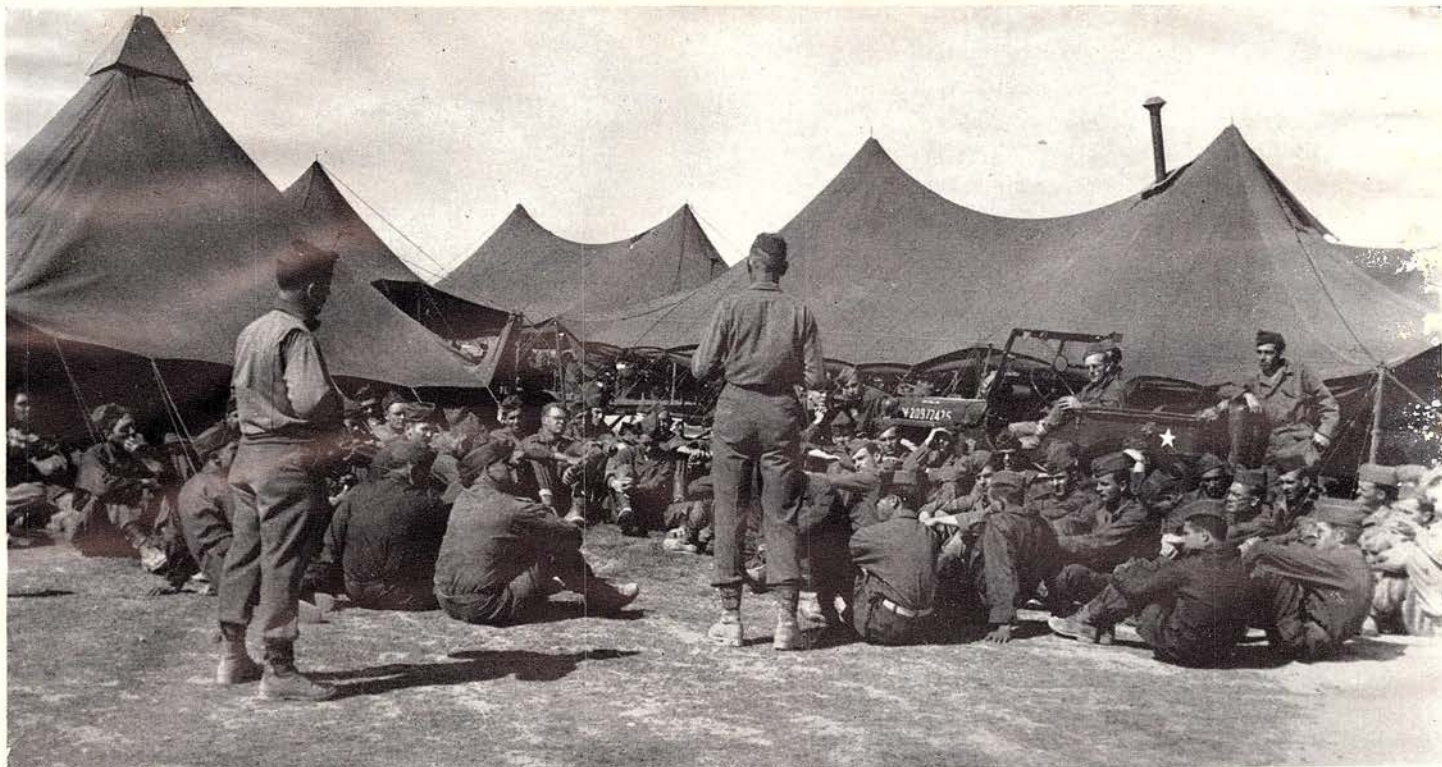
*For the first time, the Div. flag is raised at the command post, Furstenfeldbruck, Germany.*

Some of the highest tributes were by those who should know best—the enemy. Field Marshal Kesselring, that wily and polished Prussian officer who tried to push the 45th back into the sea at ANZIO, who sent his mountain troops and SS men to hold the Thunderbirds in the Italian mountains, and who took over on the Western Front after the elimination of Von Rundstedt, rated the 45th as one of the two best American divisions he encountered. The other was the 3rd Division which fought side by side with the 45th again and again during the campaigns from SICILY to NURNBERG.

One captured Nazi general after the battle of the BITCHE BULGE in January, 1945, declared that the Division met his offensive tactics with head-on attacks. The Germans







*Short lectures to small groups was a part of the training program at Camp St. Louis. Most of the time the troops were "just waiting" for the ship that would take them home.*

knew and feared the 45th whenever they encountered—near WISSEMBOURG where they burst through the SIEGFRIED LINE, at WINGEN and WILDENGUTH, in ASCHAFFENBURG and NURNBERG and MUNICH. Letters captured on the bodies of German officers and soldiers attested fully their fear and dread of the Division's efficiency, together with their horror of continued air attacks.

One letter dated March 17, 1944, says, "Life and work are no longer things to enjoy. We are callous and indifferent to everything. The hope that there will be an end to it is all that keeps us going. . . ." Another says, "It is indescribable. And they come every day. Sometimes twice a day. They bomb the whole country from

ULM to MUNICH, even the smallest of villages. We have more of the war than you have. . . ."

Prisoners taken by the 45th Division during its combat operations from July 10, 1943, to the fall of MUNICH April 30, 1945, were as follows: SICILY, 42,331; ITALY, 3,028; FRANCE, 16,350; and GERMANY, 68,004. The total mounted to 119,713. In May 5,127 were added to the list. The final count for the Division was 124,840.

Artillery and infantry worked as a single machine for the greatest efficiency, accuracy, and coordination in all their movement and their battles. Forward observers not only went out with the lead infantry troops, but often brought down fire upon themselves or their immediate surroundings to achieve the purpose of the attack.

*Pictures of the Oklahoma Prisoner of War Cage, Furstenfeldbruck, Germany. Built as a temporary camp for a few hundred prisoners, at one time held over 34,000.*





The normal attached units of the Division, the 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 191st Tank Battalion, were forward in the fighting line whenever they were needed—at APRILIA, moving up on ROME, on January 8 at that narrow VOSGES mountain pass when they stayed without protection and fired every round of ammunition they possessed for cannons and machine guns to screen the withdrawal of the infantrymen. The 106th AAA AW Battalion performed not only its normal functions, but time after time added to the weight of the Division's fire power with its automatic weapons.

There were famous places on the list of Thunderbird conquests up to and including MUNICH where the Division garrisoned one of the largest German cities and one of the two most important to the Nazi party. NURNBERG, EPINAL, ROME, PALERMO—many were well known to all the world. But longest remembered by the Thunderbirds will be the obscure places which were but dots upon the maps until the fighting there made them known to everyone. TUSA, SALERNO, PERSANO, OLIVETO, the CAL-

ORE and VOLTURNO RIVERS, NETTUNO, RAMBER-VILLERS, BITCHE, ASCHAFFENBURG—these are the names the 45th Division made famous and by which they will be long remembered. VENAFRO in ITALY, BOURG, where the French poured out their warmest welcome, DACHAU with its horrors will never be forgotten.

The Division continued its mission of occupation in the area around MUNICH until May 18 when Area Commands DACHAU, MUNCHEN, and FURSTENFELDBRUCK were set up conforming to the landkreis boundaries. Troops were assigned to each in force proportionate to their respective missions.

Commanded by the assistant to the Division commander, Area Command DACHAU controlled the Landkreis of DACHAU, with the 180th Infantry, 645th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and 72nd AAA Gun Battalion assigned as occupying troops. Area Command MUNCHEN, commanded by the Division Artillery commander, was formed to control the Landkreis of MUNCHEN with the 157th and 179th Infantry Regiments, the 191st Tank Battalion, the 45th

*Left: "Shep" Fields and his orchestra, one of many USO shows held at Camp St. Louis. Autographs money for the soldiers. Bottom: Theater built by 120th Engrs. at Camp St. Louis. Right: Four lovelies of the Radio City Rockettes, scheduled for a four day tour at Camp St. Louis.*





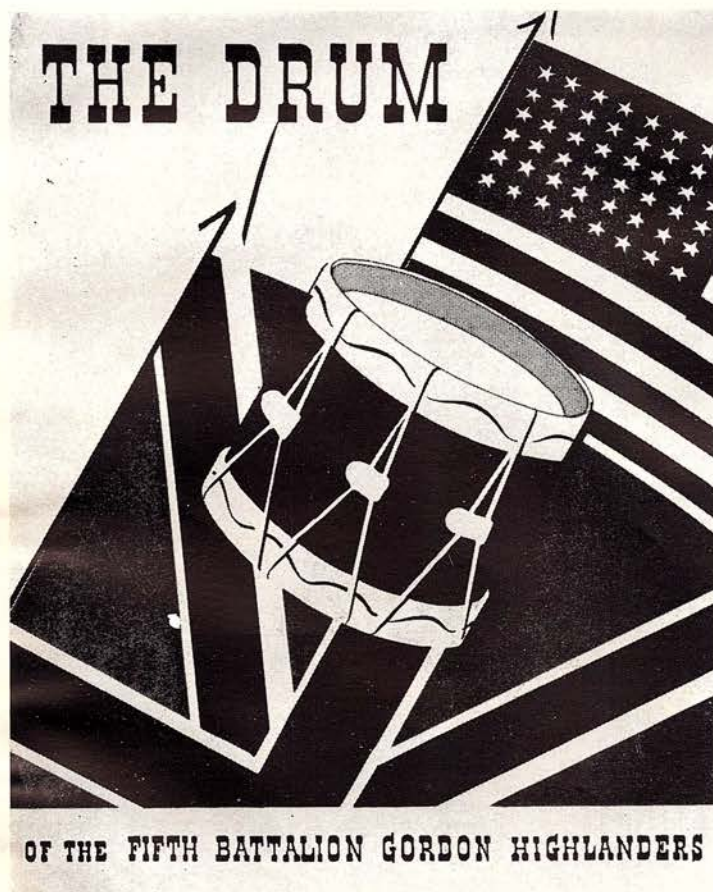


*Brig. J. R. Sinclair, D.S.C., Comanding Officer of the 153rd Brigade, returns the 5th Bn. Gordon Highlanders Drum to Willie Simm, a Highlander Drummer from Fraiserboro, Scotland.*



*Drummer Willie Simms, from Fraiserboro, Scotland takes his place in the ranks with the recaptured Drum.*

*The now famous 5th Bn. Gordon Highlanders Drum, which fell into German hands in May 1940, is returned to owners during colorful ceremony at Munich, Germany. Drummer Willie Simm, from Fraiserboro, Scotland, takes his place in the ranks with the recaptured drum and beats it for the first time since its return by troops of the 45th Division, who recovered it near Baumhenden.*



## PROGRAM

PLACE: Königsplatz, Munich

TIME: 1500 hours, 7 June 1945

TROOPS: Provisional Infantry Regiment of the 45th "Thunderbird" Division, 157th, 179th and 180th Infantry Regiments, Provisional Company of the 42nd "Rainbow" Division, Honor Guard of the 10th Armored "Tiger" Division, Tank Destroyers and Tanks.

### Entrance of:

Lt. Gen. Wade H. Haislip, Commanding General, Seventh Army,  
Maj. Gen. Wm. H. H. Morris, Jr., CG, VI Corps,  
Maj. Gen. Harry J. Collins, CG, 42nd Infantry Division,  
Maj. Gen. Robert T. Frederick, CG, 45th Infantry Division.

### Troops presented.

Lt. Gen. Wade H. Haislip introduces Lt. Col. C. F. Irvine, MC., Commanding Officer, 5th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders.

History of the Drum — Lt. Col. C. F. Irvine, MC.

Captain Thomas O'Rourke delivers the drum to Lt. Gen. Haislip.

Lt. Gen. Haislip hands drum over to Brigadier J. R. Sinclair, D.S.O., Commanding Officer, 153rd Brigade. Brigadier Sinclair hands drum to Corporal William Simm, drummer.

Drummer marches to a position in front of the Bagpipe Band.

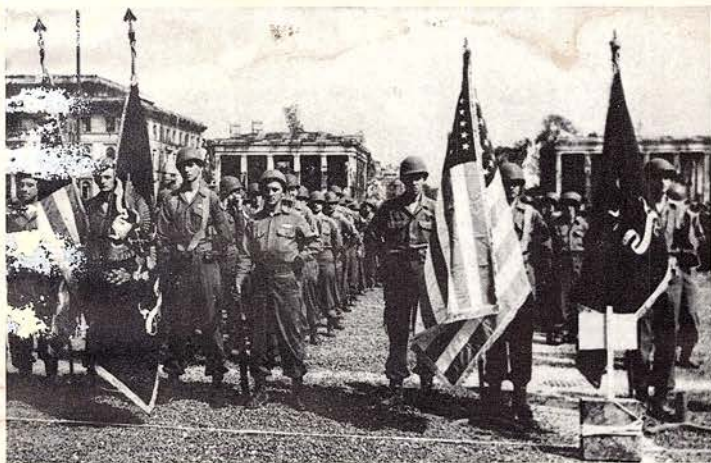
Troops "Parade Rest".

Bagpipe Band troops the line and returns to a position to right of Reviewing Stand.

45th Division Band — "God Save the King" and "Star Spangled Banner".

Pass in Review.





*Color guard of the Div. stands in front of chapel during military Mass in honor of the Division's dead. Koenig's Platz, Munich.*



*The Color Guard of the 45th Div. comes into position at the start of the Memorial Day ceremonies at Munich, Germany.*

may have had its indirect effects. No riots or major incidents broke out. On the other hand, the problems of administration were staggering, both in MUNICH and at DACHAU. After harmony between the area commands and military government was reached and policies were somewhat clarified, the problems of occupation could be handled with more dispatch. Displaced persons largely administered their own camps, with military personnel installed where needed to direct the administration.

The following excerpts from reports on occupation are revealing:

"To combat the food shortage which was becoming critical, a survey was made of all food warehouses available in the sector, and guards were posted. Allied food experts took over control of the warehouses, and in turn called in German food men (retailers, distributors, etc.) formerly active in MUNICH. The latter persons estimated the food needed by the population, cognizant of the fact

that MUNICH'S population was approximately 500,000 instead of a former 1,200,000, and, also, that thousands of prisoners and displaced persons were to be fed. An effort was made to collect displaced persons from routes leading into the city to prevent misappropriation of food being brought in by outside food interests. As much as possible, Wehrmacht warehouses supplied the rations for prisoners and displaced persons; civilian warehouses and farmers fed the populace. The overall food situation improved greatly during the latter part of the month with encouragement to work on farms afforded by the Allied Governmental degree reducing the per capita ration. Continued success of the food program depends now on the speed of demobilization of the Wehrmacht and redistribution of farm workers.

"There was no serious housing problem. Ample living quarters were available for all, but in many

*Entrance to Camp St. Louis, France, assembly area for preparation for move to U. S.*



*Line of soldiers at entrance to personnel section, Adjutant General's office, processing records for return to the states.*





HEADQUARTERS FIFTH ARMY  
Office of the Commanding General  
A.P.O. 464, U. S. ARMY

31 August 1945

Brigadier General H. J. D. Meyer  
45th Division Artillery  
A.P.O. 45, U. S. Army

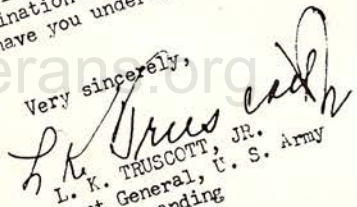
Dear General Meyer:

I am grateful to you for sending me a copy of the story of the 45th Division Artillery in Sicily, Italy, France, and Germany. The heroic work of the 45th at Anzio, north to Rome, and in southern France I shall never forget. It was indelibly stamped on my mind through seeing you and your men in action. The record reveals that you displayed the same courage and superior performance right through into Germany and on to Munich.

I am especially glad to have this copy of the written record, for it is a fascinating narrative indeed, so much so that it bears reading and re-reading. Congratulations on getting out such a thoroughly interesting history.

I congratulate you even more, you and all the officers and men of the 45th Division Artillery, for the great deeds which made this fascinating history possible, and I express also my appreciation to all of you for your spirit of cooperation and dogged determination during the time it was my privilege to have you under my command.

Very sincerely,

  
L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR.  
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army  
Commanding

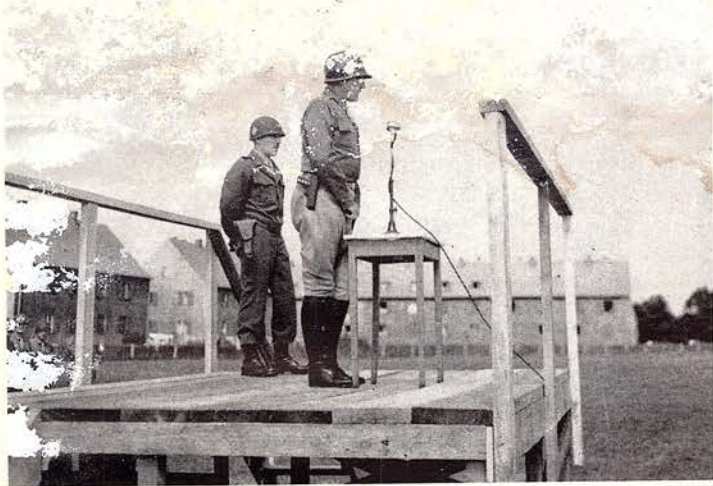
cases it was necessary for civilians to have guests in their houses because of the damage inflicted on the city. Concomitant with housing, the health problem was well controlled by designating garbage and refuse disposal points and segregating and dusting displaced persons. Thirty-one military hospitals existed in the MUNICH area at the beginning of the Division's occupation. Each hospital was reorganized under the supervision of the Division order of Battle Officer who, by conscientious and diligent work, eventually consolidated the patients of the 31 into 19 hospitals. Specialist clinics of all kinds were organized utilizing the best German medicines, equipment, and medical personnel. During the month of May, 6,455 patients (Military and civilian) were admitted to the hospitals; 5,267 were discharged.

"Displaced persons of all nationalities for whom no facilities existed in the MUNICH area were collected and are being collected into numerous

DP centers throughout the remainder of the Divisional area. Insofar as the administration of DP camps is concerned, that function is performed largely by the DP's themselves. Wherever that procedure is not satisfactory, military personnel have been installed as camp directors. The slowness with which the program for handling displaced persons was activated results in early difficulties in guarding the camps. Hungry people would not remain confined. The increased rations and rapid attention by troops have now virtually eliminated that problem."

Returning to the United States via Camp St. Louis in FRANCE, the 45th Division arrived in New York in early June and from there went to Camp Bowie, Texas, where they received a heroes' welcome. A fitting summary of the inactivation of the veteran troops is found in the farewell message of Brig. Gen. H. J. D. Meyer, commanding general, who served with the troops as Division Artillery commander. His message reads as follows:





*Gen. Patton addresses the officers and men of the Division in a farewell speech as the Division prepared to leave Europe for redeployment to the Pacific area. During a conversation afterwards, Gen Patton said, laughingly, "Well, they'll get things all messed up over there and have to send for me, too."*



*Aquatania arriving in NYC harbor with troops of the Div. Sept. 45.*



Camp Bowie      s,  
30 November 1945.

SUBJECT: Farewell Message.

TO: All Officers, Warrant Officers and Enlisted Men, 45th Infantry Division.

As of 2400 hours, 7 December 1945, the 45th Infantry Division will cease to be an active unit of the United States Army. It somehow seems right and appropriate that we should victoriously complete our great task upon the anniversary of the declaration of war which started us on our crusade. In official language the Division is being "inactivated." The word "inactivated" imparts a status of inertia; a word never used in conjunction with the 45th and therefore strange to you. Subsequent to its inactivation and until further orders, the Division will become dormant for the first time since 16 September 1940, when the spirited National Guardsmen of Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona answered the President's call to Federal Service. A few of those Guardsmen still remain to assist in lowering the curtain on the stage upon which the Division has so gloriously played its part. Assisting also in the final scene are the remnants of the thousands of splendid officers and men from every state in the Union who, subsequent to the induction of the Division, became members of it.

There are some things about the Division, however, which can never be inactivated. Many events have been engraved in the minds of men, and some of them have been recorded in the annals of our nation's history. Some of them I will mention.

First there was the landing in SICILY, where the men of the Division, hitherto without combat experience, drove rapidly inland despite heavy losses, and, in the words of a great general, "behaved as veterans from the first day." There were the rapid hammer-blows of the "leap-frogging" drive across SICILY. Then came the SALERNO beachhead, where, using the words of the commanding general of another great American division, "The 45th prevented the Germans from driving the Allied invaders into the sea." Then there was the drive from SALERNO to VENAFRO and the suffering attendant to a winter campaign in the cold fastnesses of the APPENINES. Then came ANZIO, where during February 1944, the Division ripped to shreds the massive drive which the Germans rolled down in their attempt to erase the beachhead. There followed the long months of holding and waiting and then the final surge out of the beachhead perimeter past ROME. Then came the historical drive through Southern FRANCE and the bitter fighting in the deep, dark woods of the VOSGES east of EPINAL. Then came ALSACE, the saving of the MODER River line, and the suffering and sacrifices in the mountains above REIPERTSWEILLER. Finally came ASCHAFFENBURG and the surge into Germany, during which the momentum of the Division never lagged until we raised Old Glory above the ruins of NURNBERG and MUNICH, the shrine cities of Nazidom. Other divisions were then given the task of carrying on, while we prepared for service across the world in the PACIFIC THEATRE.

Never let us forget our comrades who gave their lives to protect and insure for our country those blessings of Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness which they cannot now enjoy with us. Their crosses blaze the trail of the Division from COMISO Airport to MUNICH. Never let us forget our living comrades now hospitalized, whose courageous demeanor belies the fact that their wounded bodies are racked with pain. The 45th paid heavily for maintaining our American heritage; 21,899 battle casualties.

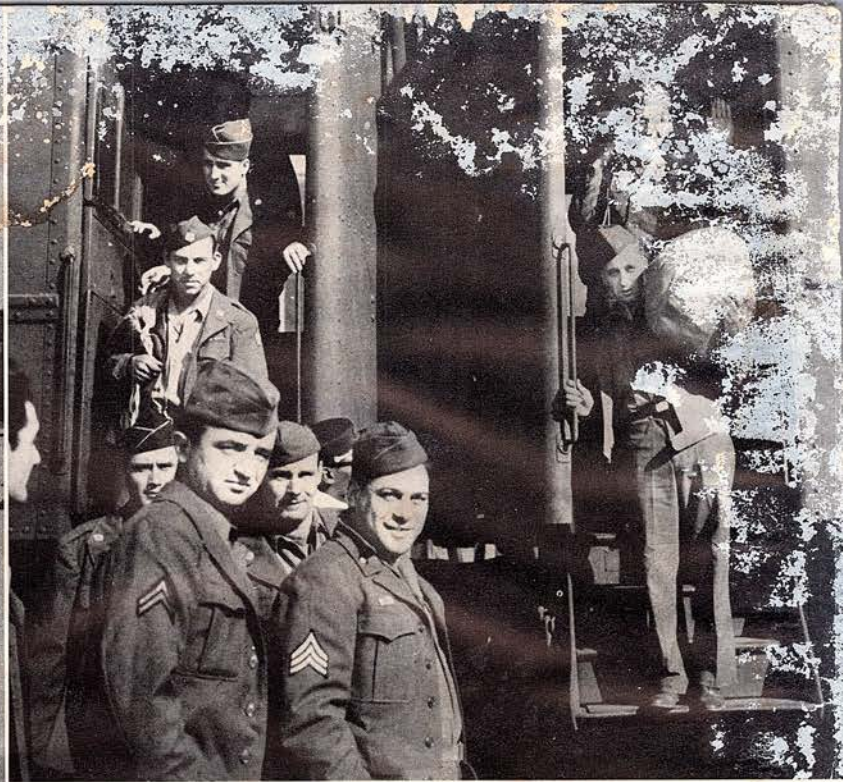
There is also the remarkable spirit of cooperation and brotherhood which has characterized the personnel of the Division from the date of its induction until these, its last days in Federal Service.

Yes, these are the things which we can never forget—the friendships, the joys, the sorrows, the suffering and the glorious accomplishments of 511 days of combat. Whatever destiny may hold in store for our great country and however long that country's military history may continue, readers in the future will search long before finding a chapter more brilliant than that written by the quill that was dipped in the blood of the Thunderbirds.

Being a Thunderbird has been a source of great pride to me. I shall remember my service with you as Artillery Commander and as your Commanding General, as one of the outstanding honors and pleasures of my life. Farewell to all of you, and may God bless you.







*Two pictures of the arrival at Camp Bowie, by train.*

*The official greeting at Camp Bowie. Col. Brown, Camp Commander, greets Brig. Gen. Meyer, Gen. Adams and Col. Wickam, C. of S.*





**RESTRICTED**  
HEADQUARTERS FOURTH ARMY  
Fort Sam Houston, Texas

GENERAL ORDERS )

NUMBER 20 )

5 December 1945

I. INACTIVATION OF 45TH INFANTRY DIVISION

1. Pursuant to authority contained in Ltr, Hq AGF, file 321(R) (8 Oct 45) GNGCT, subject: "Inactivation of Surplus Units," dated 8 October 1945, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 45th Infantry Division, Camp Bowie, Texas, is inactivated effective 7 December 1945.

2. Officers not eligible for or not desiring separation will be reassigned by this headquarters.

3. a. Enlisted personnel not eligible for separation will be reassigned by this headquarters.

b. No enlisted man will be reduced in grade as a direct result of this action.

4. Excess controlled and non-controlled items of equipment will be disposed of in accordance with the provisions of letter, Hq AGF, 400.703/306 (14 Sep 45) GNGDS, 14 September 1945, subject: "Disposition of Equipment."

5. a. Unit funds, fund properties, and unit records will be disposed of in accordance with the applicable provisions of WD RR 1-6.

b. Property records will be disposed of in accordance with AR 35-6700, 19 Sep 45.

6. Funds will be obligated to the extent necessary under the appropriate allotments published in Section III, Circular No. 178, WD, 1945.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL LUCAS:

HEADQUARTERS FOURTH ARMY  
OFFICIAL  
OFFICIAL: ☆  
COPY L. PRICE  
Colonel, AGD  
Adjutant General

L. B. KEISER  
Brig Gen, GSC  
Chief of Staff

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