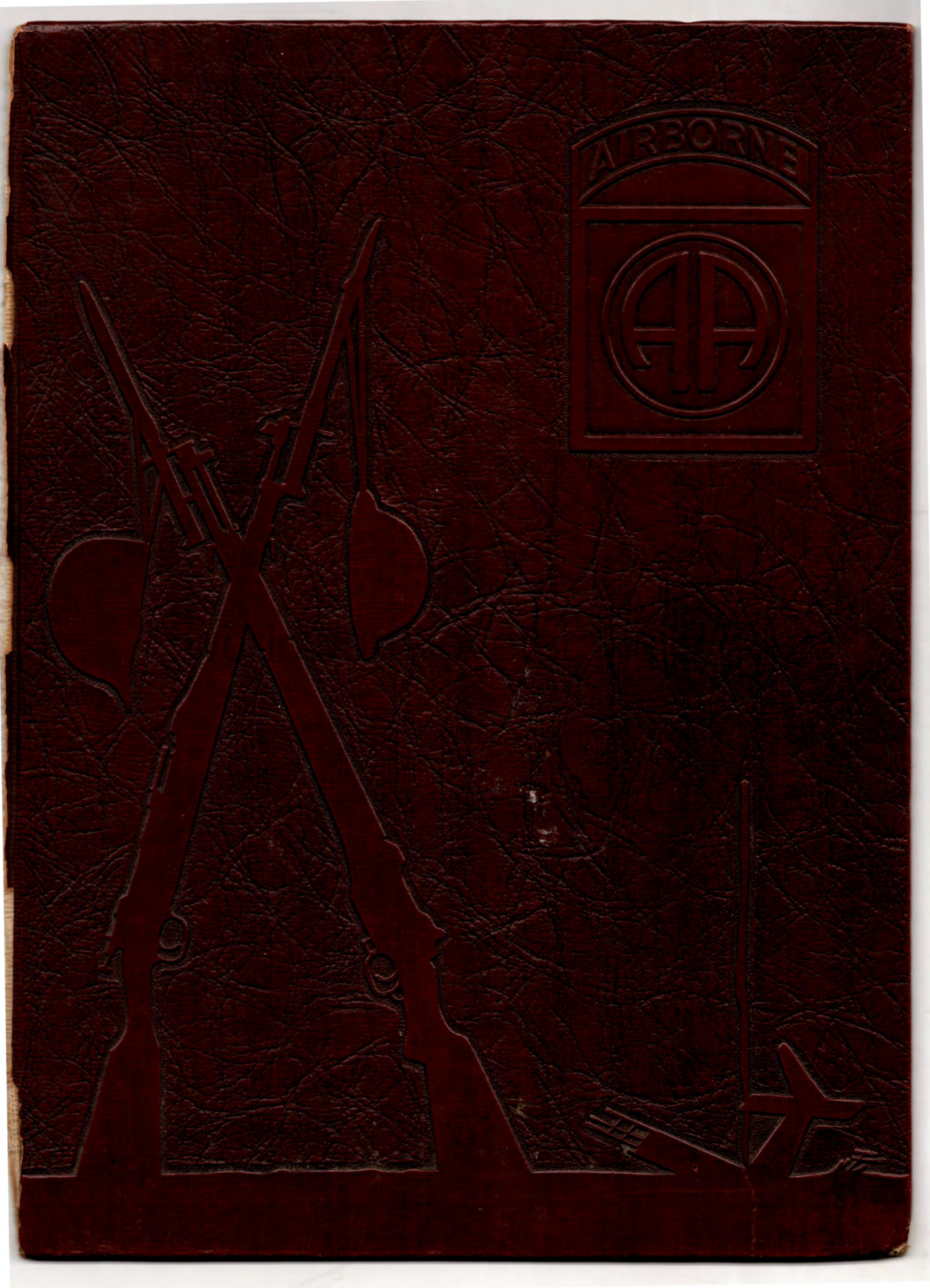
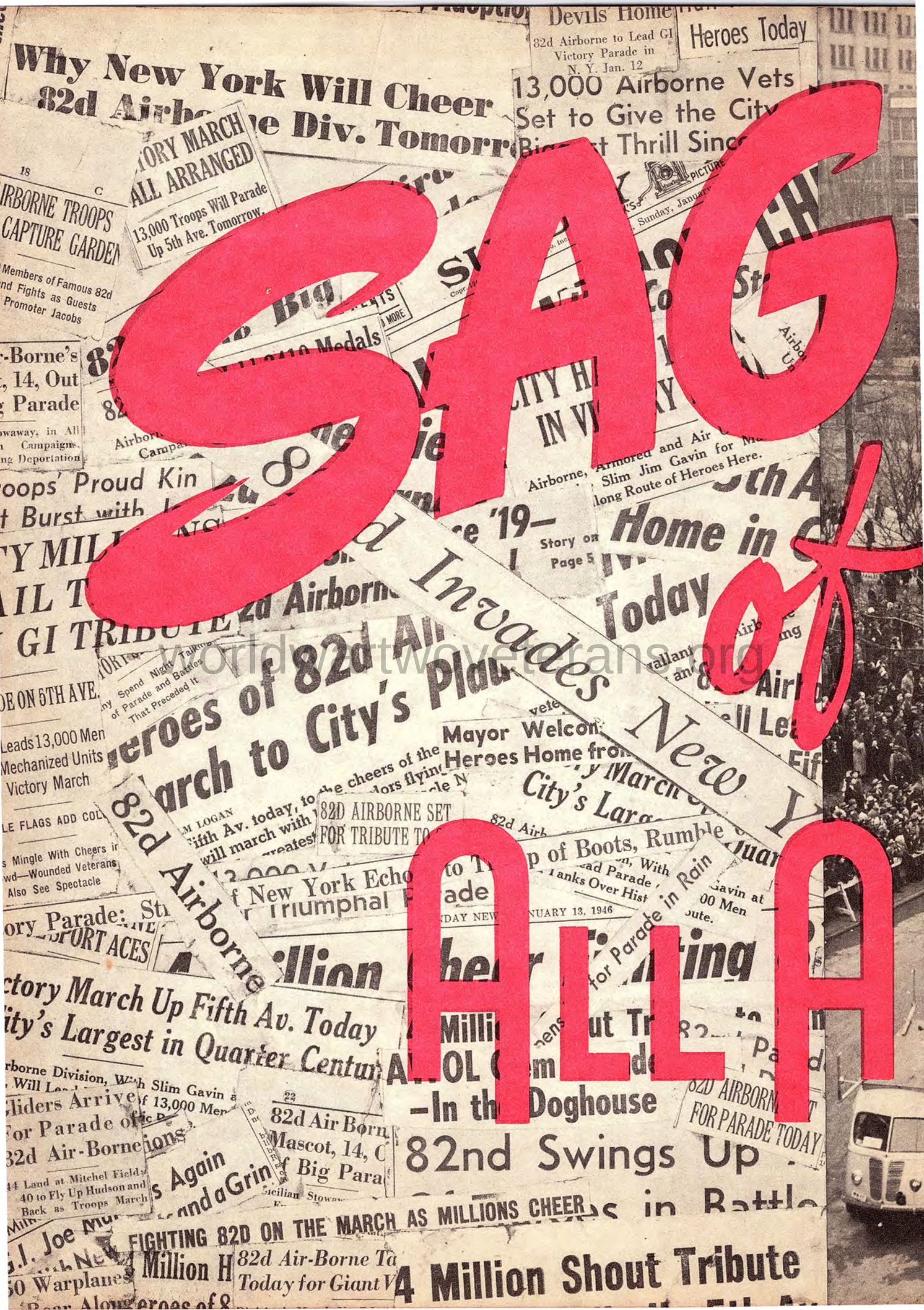

AIRBORNE


OUJDA
ELSIE
NICE
GELA
SCOGLITTI
AMGOT
WHOOPS FOR MUSSOLINI
TROOPS OFF LIMITS
SOS
NEW YORK BUST


BOVRIL
XXX
STMERE EGLISE
BLUE SWORD
WELCOME HOME
CRIME DON'T PAY
PHENIX OR BUST
WAR No 1

TO THE VALIANT MEN
OF THE EIGHTY-SECOND
AIRBORNE DIVISION
WHOSE DESTINY LAID
THEM TO REST IN THE
FIELDS OF
SICILY
ITALY
FRANCE
HOLLAND
BELGIUM
&
GERMANY




A
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MERICAN

To the members of the 82d Airborne Division. With everlasting admiration, affection and appreciation of life shared with them in the service of our country. May their incomparable courage, fidelity, soldierly conduct and fighting spirit ever keep for this Division a place second to none in our army.

Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway

MATTHEW B. RIDGWAY was born 3 March 1895. He graduated from the U. S. Military Academy in 1917. After varied assignments and study in the service schools, he went to the Philippines, where he served as Technical Advisor to the Governor General in 1932-33. He then attended C&GS School, and upon completion of the two-year course became AC/S, G-3, 6th Corps Area, AC/S Second Army, and Deputy C/S Second Army.

The year 1937 found Major Ridgway at the Army War College, after which he became AC/S, G-3, Fourth Army until 1939, when he accompanied General Marshall to Brazil. Hitler attacked Poland 1 September 1939 and Major Ridgway joined the war plans division WD General Staff. Here he worked and dreamed and planned until the 82d Infantry Division was reactivated. The 82d Infantry Division was reactivated on 25 March 1942 at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana under Brig. General Omar N. Bradley with Brigadier General Ridgway as assistant Division Commander. Major General Matthew B. Ridgway succeeded to the command on 26 June 1942. On the 15th of August its designation was changed to 82d Airborne Division, Major General Ridgway commanding.

Under the wise leadership and skillful handling of its new commander, the 82d soon developed into the most promising among the new units being quickly whipped into shape. On 15 August, rumor became reality and the 82d was designated as an airborne division. One half its strength was subtracted to form the 101st Airborne Division. Ground training in new techniques commenced at Camp Claiborne. About 1 October, the Division had a foretaste of the future by shifting to Fort Bragg in the largest airborne troop movement ever attempted by the Army. Advanced ground training in alternation with flight exercises by both troop transport and parachute and by troop transport and gliders was pushed rigorously.

In the short space of eight months Major General Ridgway changed the 82d from a brave dream into a deadly fighting machine. This amazing transformation was due entirely to the imagination and the initiative and the will power of a leader who was resolved that his command should become the premier airborne division of the Army, the first overseas and the first into battle. On 20 April 1942, the troopers left Ft. Bragg enroute for the combat zone.

What the 82d Airborne Division accomplished in those 32 glorious months of duty in the Mediterranean and European Theatres is a matter of history. Major General Ridgway left his hallmark on the "All Americans." This was the man whose foresight carried beyond the doubts of the supreme command in the dark days of 1943 to envision the decisive role that airborne elements would play when the real test would come with the invasion of Fortress Europe.

In July 1943, he launched his warriors into the skies of Tunisia and they came to earth in Sicily. The gales which almost postponed the mission played havoc with troop transport planes one night, and friendly AA guns shot down many of the planes another night. The destiny of the airborne hung in the balance for many weeks thereafter until General Ridgway's convictions prevailed. Then General Clark called for help at Salerno. Eight hours later General Ridgway delivered the 504th to the Fifth Army in Italy and the following night the 505. The Division assisted the Fifth Army from the trap that the Germans were about to spring.

The task of preparing the 82d for the Normandy invasion was stupendous. The genius of General Ridgway was apparent in every phase of preparation. As dawn was breaking in the Norman sky on D-Day, 6 June 1944, he stood calmly in a small orchard and listened to the first reports of troops in combat. The now effective strength of the Division at that moment was 800 men. At 1500 hours that afternoon, a count of elements in contact accounted for 1586 effectives. It was a situation that might undermine the spirit of a lesser man, but General Ridgway refused to think of discouragement. He and his division drove on without relief for over a month in some of the war's hardest fighting, to take every objective assigned.

On the 10th of August 1944 Major General Ridgway assembled his reorganized division for a review by General Eisenhower. He saw effected one of the miracles of modern war. Those proud troopers from Normandy's bloody fields had again demonstrated their quality and the genius of their leader. In less than one month the 82d was ready for the new mission. Speaking of Normandy General Eisenhower said "In spite of the skill and bravery of the Fourth Division, I doubt whether I would have ordered that attack without you fellows during the first critical hours and first critical days. Without you fellows it would have been a much more terrible decision for me to make, so I do owe you a tremendous debt of gratitude. I'm going to owe you more in the future." On that day, the Supreme Commander said that the sight of the 82d Airborne Division marching past was "giving me inspiration such as I had never before had in this war."

And in those words he unconsciously paid a greater tribute to the achievements of Major General Matthew B. Ridgway than any then realized. In August, the XVIII Corps (Airborne) was born and General Ridgway became its commander.

DECORATIONS—The Distinguished Service Cross, an Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster; Silver Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Purple Heart. His foreign decorations, in order of receipt, include Order of Southern Cross, Grade of Officer, (Brazil); Legion of Honor, Grade of Officer, (France); Croix de Guerre with palm (France); Commander of the Bath (England); Order of the Red Banner (Russia); Order of Counts Maurice and Lazarus, Grand Cordon (Italy); and the Belgian Commander of the Order of Leopold with palm and Croix de Guerre with palm.

To the troopers of the 82d Airborne Division, who with courage and determination in their hearts, carried the fight to the enemy from Africa to Berlin. It has been a great privilege to have served in your ranks.

Maj. Gen. James M. Gavin

JAMES M. GAVIN was born in New York, New York on 22 March 1907. He served as private, private first class and corporal in the 16th and 2d Coast Artillery Regiments, Regular Army, 24 April to 30 June 1925. He graduated from the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, with a Bachelor of Science degree and was commissioned a 2d Lt., Infantry on 13 June 1929.

In August 1941 he attended the Parachute School and upon graduation was assigned to the 503d Parachute Battalion. In December 1941 he was made Plans and Training Officer of the Provisional Parachute Group at Fort Benning, Ga. In September 1942 he attended the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. and upon graduation was assigned to the Airborne Command at Fort Bragg, N. C. as G-3.

He became Commanding Officer of the 505th Parachute Infantry in July 1942 and remained in that command when the regiment was assigned to the 82d Airborne Division in January 1943. The 82d Airborne Division went overseas in April and the 505th Parachute Combat Team under the command of Colonel Gavin spearheaded the assault of Sicily on the night of 9 July 1943. He commanded the regiment in the parachute landing on Salerno Bay the night of 14 Sept. 1943 and the following month was made Assistant Division Commander of the 82d Airborne Division while on duty in Naples, Italy.

In November 1943 he was placed on Temporary Duty with COSSAC, London, England as Airborne Advisor to the Supreme Commander, remaining on that duty until about 1 Feb. when he returned to duty with the division which had now arrived at Leicester, England.

In the Normandy invasion on the night of 5-6 June 1944 he commanded the parachute assault echelon of the 82d Airborne Division, consisting of the 505th, 507th, and 508th Infantries. Upon being relieved from the Normandy front, the division returned to England in July of 1944 and on 15 Aug. 1944 General Gavin assumed command of the division.

As Division Commander he commanded the division in the airborne operation in the vicinity of Nijmegen, Holland in the fall of 1944, the Battle of the Bulge the following winter, and the spring offensive of 1945, until the surrender of the German Army.

The division was assigned to duty in Berlin, Germany in July of 1945 where General Gavin served as American representative on the City Kommandantura until the division left that city in Oct. 1945.

The division returned to Fort Bragg, N. C., via New York, where it is now serving.

DECORATIONS—Distinguished Service Cross; Oak Leaf Cluster to Distinguished Service Cross; Distinguished Service Medal; Silver Star Medal; Oak Leaf Cluster to Silver Star Medal; Purple Heart Medal; Bronze Star Medal; British Distinguished Service Order; Dutch Order of Orange-Nassau, degree of Grand-Officer; Belgian Croix de Guerre, 1940 avec Palme; Belgian Commandant de L'Odre couronne avec Palme; French Croix de Guerre, L'Ordre de la Legion D'Honneur; French Croix de Guerre avec Palme; Russian Order of Alexander Nevsky; American Defense Ribbon; European Theatre of Operations Ribbon with six campaign stars and one invasion spearhead; European Theatre Army of Occupation Ribbon; Victory Medal; Presidential Unit Citation; Combat Infantryman Badge; Dutch Order of Willem (awarded to 82d Airborne Division); French Fourragere (awarded to 82d Airborne Division); Belgian Fourragere (awarded to 82d Airborne Division); Parachutists Wings with four combat-jump stars.

General Ridgway, of the XVIII Airborne Corps, confers with General Gavin, 82d Commander, at a critical moment during the battle of the Bulge. These two made military history by molding Airborne Warfare

EVOLUTION OF THE AIRBORNE PATCH

THE STORY of the 82nd is the story of Airborne. The 82nd shoulder patch, like the 82nd, dates back to World War I. It has Infantry beginnings as do all Airborne Divisions, and was called "All American" because the old 82nd had men from every state.

In August, 1942, the old 82nd Infantry Division Patch, worn by Sgt. York and Jonathan Wainwright in 1918 and Omar Bradley in 1942, had Airborne added when the "All American" became the first Airborne Division. Simultaneously, the 101st Airborne and its Screaming Eagle Patch was born out of the old 82nd, beginning a friendly rivalry that lasted until the end of the war when the Screaming Eagle again became part of the 82nd Airborne.

The history of the Airborne Shoulder loop, between the going and coming of the Eagle, has been the combat story of Airborne.

When Mathew Ridgway's 82nd Airborne carried the "All American" patch into Sicily, an Airborne tradition began. In Italy, the double A enhanced this tradition and in Normandy, joined by the 101st, 82nd men again led a D-Day invasion by hours.

Back in England, preparing for Holland, the 1st Allied Airborne Army was born. Glider pilots and C-47 crews, long tested in carrying their human cargo to the danger points behind the enemy lines, were awarded a new Airborne Troop Carrier Patch, and Mathew Ridgway, with his 82nd General Staff, formed the new 18th Airborne Corps. With James M. Gavin, Commanding the 82nd, Maxwell Taylor, the 101st and William Miley, the newly arrived 17th Airborne, Ridgway had his former 82nd Lieutenants well distributed when the Battle of the Bulge was in full swing. The 82nd stopped and turned Von Rundstedt on the Northern Flank; the Screaming Eagles became the heroes of Bastogne on the south, and the 17th Talons clawed away at the western perimeter. Troop Carriers brought resupply to the Battered Bastards of Bastogne, as they had to Patton's tanks on the mechanized march to Metz.

The next Airdrop was the Rhine Crossing. The 13th (Unicorn) Airborne had arrived, but only one Division was needed and the 17th won the nod. Their talons were sharpened for the drop at Wessel, Germany. The 13th prepared for an airdrop in the mountains near Stuttgart but that also was canceled. The rest of the action in Europe was fierce, but grounded. The 17th, 101st, 82nd, 13th, Troop Carrier and 18th Corps all had their part.

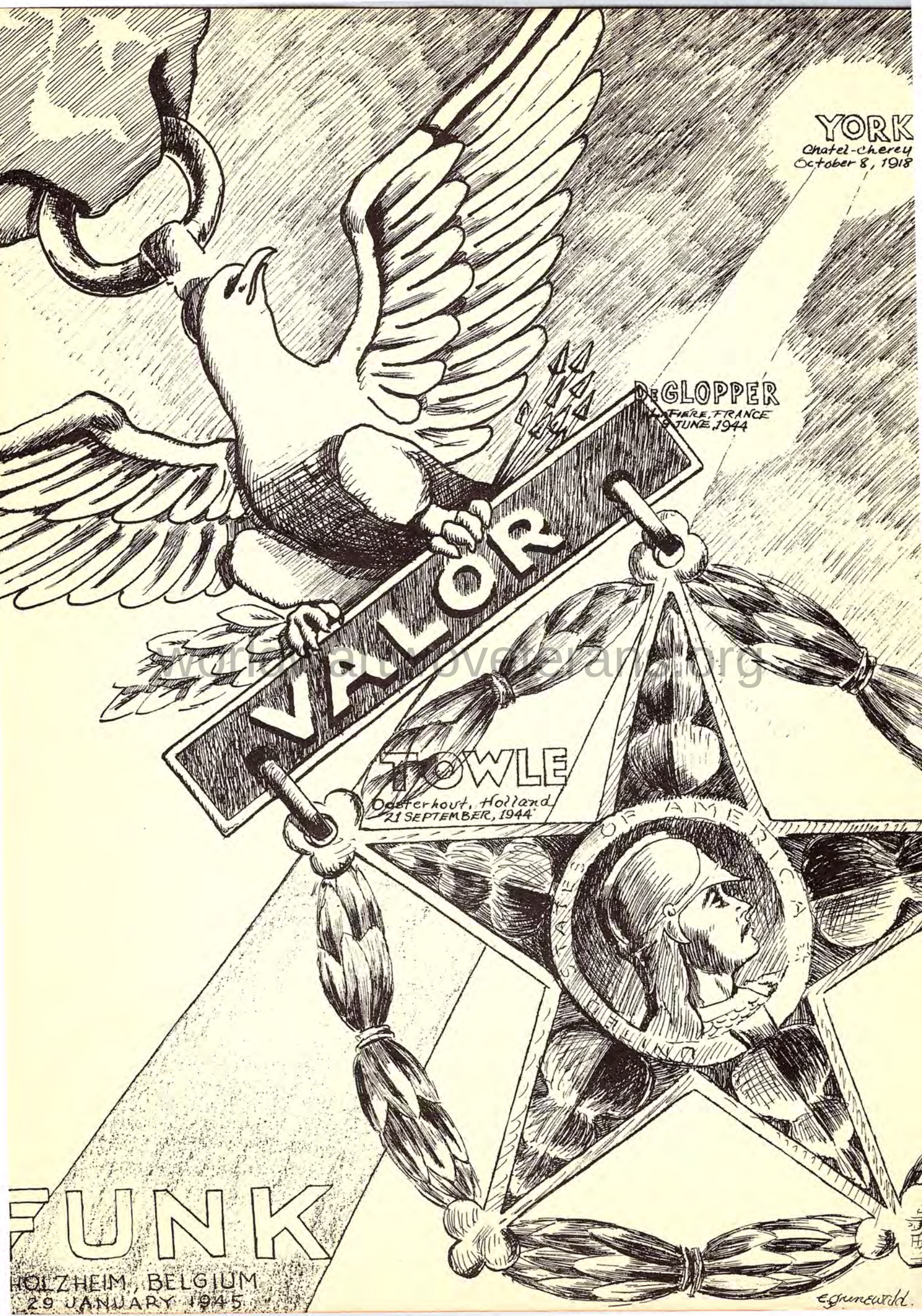
When V-E Day came, the 82nd was 50 miles across the Elbe in Ludwigslust, fighting the Germans with the English as they often had and meeting the Russians, first on the northern front. The 101st was in Hitler's winter redoubt near Austria. After V-E Day, the 17th Airborne was split beween its two older brothers as high pointers from all Airborne Units used the Talon as a redeployment vehicle. The 82nd, filled with new 17th men, headed for Berlin, where under the 1st Airborne Army they had the job of administering and policing the American Berlin District.

The 13th and the 18th Corps were on their way to the Pacific where an ex 82nd Artillery General, Joseph Swing, already was in combat on Luzon with the 11th Airborne. Before the 13th and XVIII Corps arrived, the Jap War was also over. The 11th landed first on Japan — 18th Corps and Allied Airborne Army broke up, as had the 17th. The 101st and 13th were absorbed by the 82nd, and the evolution of the Airborne shoulder patch in World War II was complete.

Throughout the war, smaller Airborne Units, not necessarily with a Division, were also writing combat history — the 503 on New Guinea — the 509 in Africa, Italy and southern France with the Airborne Task Force — the 2nd Parachute Brigade made up of the 507 and 508, which fought with the 82nd in Normandy — the 517th veterans of southern France and heroes of St. Vith — the 550 and 551st, Units which went from Panama to the Bulge via southern France, and the Italians veterans of the Special Service Forces.

All but the 503 fought with the 82nd, and that unit on the opposite side of the world was bolstered by A Company of the All American's 504 in October of 1942.

The sacrifice that these men have made and the achievement they have wrought in war are to be preserved in the Regular Army. Their patches and part of their combat traditions are herewith recounted in "Saga of the All American." It is the story of the 82nd, of the Airborne and of all the men and Units assigned or attached to the "All American" Division. Cited as a unit by the Belgian, Dutch and French governments the 82nd Airborne, most decorated Division in World War II stands as a symbol in the highest tradition of the United States Army.


YORK
Chatel-Chery
October 8, 1918
D. GLOPPER
LA FIÈRE, FRANCE
6 JUNE, 1944
VALOR
TOWLE
Oosterhout, Holland
21 SEPTEMBER, 1944
FUNK
HOLZHEIM, BELGIUM
29 JANUARY 1945
E. Grunewald

SGT. ALVIN YORK
1918

BEGINNING AN 82ND TRADITION

THE TRADITION of individual self reliance in the Paratroopers and glidermen of the 82nd Division had its beginning with Sgt. Alvin C. York.

Although the collective record of the 82nd Division is its most remarkable feat of consistent performance, the individual also has unique tradition. More than any other branch of the service, the Airborne trooper finds himself in a position where his ability to take care of himself is his salvation. Trained to meet every situation on his own as well as part of a team, the air soldier when dropped behind the lines and surrounded must fight his way out again and again against seemingly impossible odds. His is a dangerous existence of kill or be killed, and quite often both. He is traditionally aggressive. The precedent for his individual self reliance and his stomach for aggressiveness dates back to World War I when his Division, the same 82nd "All American" Division boasted the incomparable Tennessee elder, Sgt. Alvin C. York. In York, the most famous of all 82nd troopers, a tradition was born. Every 82nd soldier knows of this heritage—how civilian Alvin York, a turkey shooting Tennessee mountaineer, church elder and conscientious objector became Corporal York of "G" Company, 328th Infantry, 82nd Division, killing 20 Germans on October 8, 1918—how he further captured 132 prisoners, including a Major and three lieutenants, put 35 machine guns out of business thereby breaking up an entire German battalion which was about to counter attack against the Americans on Hill 223 in the Argonne Sector near Chatel-Chehery. York outfought the German machine gun battalion with nothing but his rifle and an automatic pistol. There were seven other Americans who witnessed the fight, but it was York's battle and only York's. But for him, not a man of them would have come out alive except as prisoners. His was the greatest individual feat of World War I and it has stood through two World Wars as a legend for the men in the 82nd Division to shoot at. How well they have met the challenge is herewith related in "Saga of the "All American."

1918

THE 82ND Infantry Division, 1918, father of the present 82nd Airborne, boasts a record of having been in the lines for longer consecutive period than any other American Division in World War I. The name of the old 82nd is perpetuated by its two famous sons, Sergeant Alvin York and General (then Major) Jonathan "Skinny" Wainwright. It is also perpetuated in the new 82nd Airborne Division, which wears the "All American" Patch and carries battle streamers with the magic names Lorraine, St. Mihiel, and Meuse Argonne—streamers now flying alongside Sicily, Naples-Fogia, Rome-Arno, Normandy, Holland, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe on the "All American" flag of the Eighty-two Airborne Division. In some intangible manner that few can clearly depict, the reputations of great fighting organizations imbue successive commanders with a sense of pride and responsibility to the past. Old history makes new history, and the achievements of the 82nd Infantry Division in the first World War must unwittingly have had some bearing on the leadership and command of the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II.

Beginning August 25, 1917, the 82nd Infantry Division was assembled at Camp Gordon, Georgia under the command of Major General Eben Smith. He was succeeded by Brigadier General James B. Erwin on 27 November, who in turn gave way to Brigadier General William P. Burnham on 26 December, 1917.

Training was completed by April, 1918, and the 82nd Infantry Division became the second National Army division to sail for Europe when it left New York on 25 April, 1918. It landed in Liverpool, England on 7 May, 1918 and moved via Southamption to Le Havre. It is interesting to recall that the 325th Infantry Regiment was reviewed by the King in London.

Intensive training was completed by mid-June, and the Division moved into the quiet Lagny sector of the Woevre front. Action was sporadic and light, and casualties were only slightly over 300. In July, Allied strategy was committed to the offensive and contemplated the reduction of certain salients which interfered with communications essential to further offensive operations. One of these was the St. Mihiel Salient.

On August 19, 1918, the 82nd Division relieved the 2nd Division in the Marbache Sector. On 12 September, as the right division of I Corps and the First Army, the 82nd conducted aggressive patrolling and raiding along its entire front with the mission of exerting pressure on the enemy's left flank. No important advances were registered, up to 13 September.

On that day, the 326th Infantry, west of the Moselle River, advanced north of Norhoy to protect the right of the adjacent 90th Division. From this position, the regiment moved forward on the 15th to the general line, Vandieres - Cote 327, to cover the advance of the 90th Division. Its mission accomplished, the regiment withdrew to high ground south of Vandieres. The St. Mihiel Offensive merged into Sector service on 17 September, and three days later the Division was relieved in the Marbache Sector by the French 69th Division. Casualties were in excess of 1,000.

On 25 September, 1918, as Army Reserve, First U. S. Army, the strength of the Division was 934 officers, 25,797 enlisted men and 5,646 animals.

Then came the great Meuse-Argonne Offensive, designed to sever the main artery of the German lateral supply lines, Carignan-Sedan-Mezieres, which would render German positions untenable in the region west and northwest of Sedan. Participation of the 82nd Division lasted from 29 September to 30 October, 1918. In the two-day attack against the east flank of the Argonne Forest, the Division suffered 1,782 casualties. Between 10 October and 19 October, the Division engaged in bitter fighting and pushed from the vicinity of Marcq across the Aire River to occupy St. Juvin and the area north of that town. Casualties during this period were exceedingly heavy and totalled 3,983. The results, however, contributed materially to the collapse of German arms during the weeks immediately following.

In the Meuse - Argonne Offensive, total casualties of the Division were 6,009. During this brief period of combat, members of the 82nd Division were awarded decorations as follows: 2 Congressional Medals of Honor, 3 Distinguished Service Medals and 75 Distinguished Service Crosses.

N PICTURES

OLD BILL

Color Plates by Prescott—

Left—The night the 504 was shot down over Sicily

Right—Life in a German Prisoner of War Camp

Stand up and Hook up!

An abbreviated version of "Stand Up and Hook Up" appeared in the Saturday Evening Post entitled 82nd Master of the Hot Spots.

By MARTHA GELLHORN

THERE ARE eighteen men in the plane, nine facing nine on the chromium bucket seats. The plane is that valuable drayhorse of war, the twin-engined C-47. Scores of other planes, still in formation, fly through the night and the wind, and in all of them sit the quiet men, heavy with equipment, rifle or tommy gun, ammunition, grenades, land mines, first-aid packets, rations and maps, perhaps a radio, a bazooka, or a light machine gun as well—one hundred pounds or more to carry to the ground. This is the long last waiting and their faces and their eyes are blank. What concerns each man now is entirely private and his empty face guards him, where he lives alone. The lucky ones sleep. After all there is nothing to do but wait, everything that can be known is known, the mind only uses itself looking backward or forward; it is good to sleep if you can.

No man was forced into these planes. Paratroopers are volunteers. There had been months of preparation for this ride, and there was a time, before a man earned and accepted his parachute wings, when he could reconsider and choose some other way to war. In the beginning, at jump school, they were driven through a course of training which was not only intended to harden them and teach them their new trade but was also meant to discourage them if possible. For weeks, from sunup till sundown, they ran until their lungs ached, did push-ups and sit-ups and twirled Indian clubs until their muscles knotted with pain, tumbled from platforms into sawdust pits until they were numb, stumbled and dragged on the ground behind opened chutes, blown by a wind machine, jumped from 35-foot towers and from 250-foot towers and learned to pack their chutes, with the chilling knowledge that they would use these same chutes on their first real jump. Finally, as one of them said, "preferring certain death to any more training," they were taken up in C-47's and twice a day they spilled themselves out; having overcome this daylight hazard, they tried it again at night.

After they got their wings, the training was no less rigorous, but at least there was some praise mixed with the punishment. Nothing that could be taught was left untaught; they were also told that one paratrooper was worth five of any other kind of man. Their confidence in themselves and their units and their division grew to be iron hard, and they were prepared to pay for this pride.

The time for payment had come. They had been briefed; each man knew what was

expected of him and knew the plan that directed them all. They also knew what can go wrong. They knew that a chute can fail to open, a "streamer" they call it. They knew a man can land and break his legs, his back, his neck for that matter. They knew a man can be shot as he floats to earth, or hang in a tree as a helpless target. They knew there is no guarantee that they will be dropped where they expect. They knew for certain that wherever they dropped the enemy will be all around them, waiting, and they can only hope that darkness and surprise will give them that edge of time they need. The moment for thinking and knowing is past; the red warning light has flashed and the jumpmaster gives the command that belongs to them alone: *Stand Up and Hook Up!*

Seventeen men rise and fasten their static lines to the main cable.

"Check your Equipment!"

"Sound off for equipment check!"

"Number ten okay! . . . Number nine okay! . . . The voices count off, above the motor and the noise of the wind.

"Are you ready?"

There is a full, roaring shout.

Then the final words: *"Let's go!"*

The officer disappears into the wide loud night; men shuffle fast down the length of the plane; hurry, hurry, the faster you get out the nearer you will be to your buddies when you land; the plane is empty. In seconds which cannot be measured in time, men have descended into battle.

On the night of July 9, 1943, paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division, forming a combat team, under the command of Colonel James M. Gavin, parachuted on to Sicily to spearhead the allied seaborne invasion of that island; it was the first operation of its kind in the annals of the American army. The II Corps Field Order, stating the object of this mission, sounds deceptively simple: "(1) Land during night D-1/D in area North and East of Gela, capture and secure high ground in that area. (2) Disrupt communications and movement of reserves during night. (3) Be attached to First Infantry Division effective H/1 hours on D-Day. (4) Assist First Infantry Division in capturing and securing landing field at Ponte Olivo."

226 C-47's left ten air fields near Kairouan Tunisia that night. The estimated flight time between Kairouan and their intended drop zone in Sicily was three hours and twenty minutes; Malta was a landmark en route. No one saw Malta. A gale wind was blowing; the low-flying planes were blown from their course in the dark; there was no interplane communication; navigation became highly confused; flak added to the disruption and finally the Combat Team some 3,000 strong, was dropped in dribbles over a sixty-five mile area, which was sixty miles more territory than anyone had planned to cover. Furthermore, men were dropped on stone ridges, in olive groves onto and around enemy pillboxes and barbed wire and into the ocean. The Italian radio was so baffled by this dispersal that it announced "five and perhaps ten American paratroop divisions have landed in Sicily."

There began a brief guerilla operation in which forces ranging from six to a few hundred paratroopers of all ranks attacked the enemy where

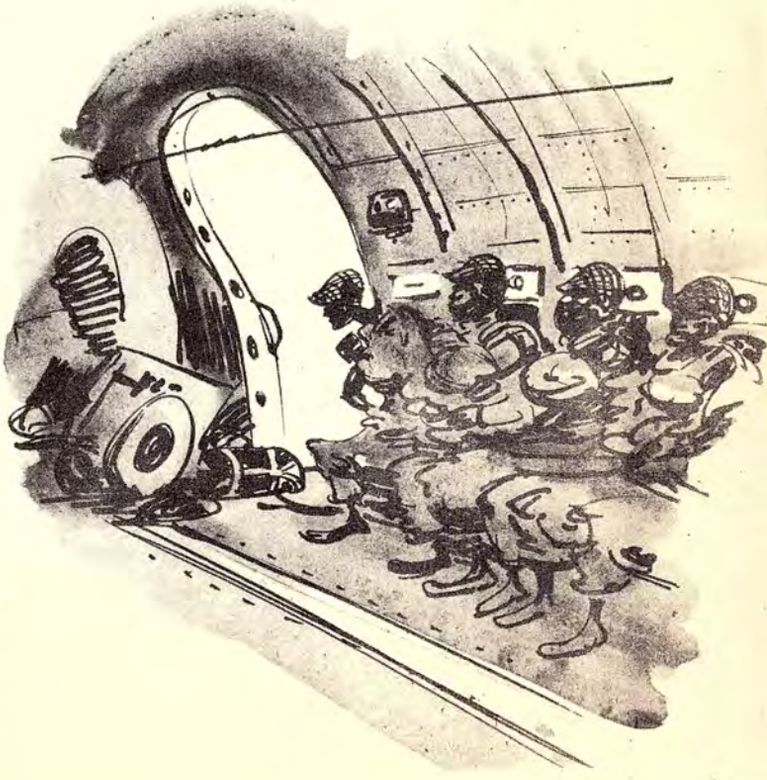
found as if this incredible dispersion had been the original plan.

Captain Edwin Sayre, a round faced black-haired Texas farmer, and Lt. Col. Arthur Gorham, a 28-year old West Pointer, landed fairly near the planned drop zone; they collected ninety-five other men between them. This force took a fortified position and a wired and mined system of pillboxes, fought off two tank attacks, occupied the high ground north and east of Gela and prevented German reinforcements from using the one road which there led to the American landing beach. Captain Sayre was seen leading his men, with a grenade in one hand, a grenade in his teeth, and his rifle in the other hand; later he seemed to find the old western style best, for he was using two pistols. Lt. Col. Gorham was killed the next day by a direct shell hit, while firing a bazooka at a tank.

At 11:30 a. m. of D-Day, scouts of the First Infantry Division made contact with this miniature task force, and Captain Sayre sent a message to the commanding general of the 82nd, Major General Ridgway, saying that the mission of the combat team was accomplished.The plans called for 3,000 men to do what 95 men, fighting like inspired lunatics, had done.

Meanwhile the combat team commander, Colonel Gavin, had dropped thirty miles from the drop zone, with a force of two officers and three enlisted men. Living on a diet of salt tablets and water, this group worked its way back to the Gela area; en route they found Biazza Ridge, a spur of ground that commanded the juncture of the two American beachheads. This vital terrain was held by a reinforced battalion of the Hermann Goering Division, with another in reserve, and supporting tanks and artillery. From this position, the Germans could split and flank the 1st and 45th Infantry Divisions, who were making the landing.

On July 11th, at ten in the morning, the battle for Biazza Ridge began, with 200 paratroopers supported by three light field guns, storming the hill. During the counterattacks which followed, German tanks rolled to within fifty yards of Colonel Gavin's command post (a shallow, hastily-dug foxhole); troopers were crushed by tanks with their bazookas still in their hands; one NCO and six men dragged a 75mm pack howitzer into the open and fired at point blank range on the nearest German tank. For a while that slowed up the German attack. By four-thirty in the afternoon 45 troopers had been killed and 120 wounded; the remaining handful planned to stay on that dusty hill, among the little olive trees, and fight until they died. Reinforcements of 125 men and a company of tanks arrived; the trooper cheered the tanks an attacked again. During the night they got artillery support and by midnight the ridge and the valley behind it were cleared. One paratrooper was clearly



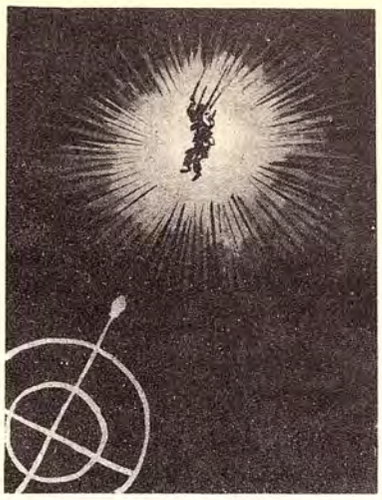
worth five of any other kind of man and that included the other man's artillery and tanks. The official report on Biazza Ridge says, laconically, "After burying the dead on the morning of the 12th, the force proceeded toward Gela."

On D+1, as planned, the 504th Combat Team was flown in to support the scattered 505th. Their arrival in Sicily was one of those disasters which happen in war and are generally passed over in sad and tactful silence. Flying in good weather and good formation, heading directly for their proper drop zones, they were suddenly fired on by one American machine gun. It was what is called friendly fire. This error started all the guns along the coast, also friendly, and the antiaircraft guns on U. S. naval vessels lying offshore. Twenty-three planes were lost, the formations were disrupted, the paratroopers, some already wounded, were dropped as God willed. The enemy could do nothing worse.

The division, having accomplished its assigned mission and several more besides, rounded itself up and marched and fought its way across Sicily; 150 miles in five days and five nights with a bag of 23,191 prisoners. The troopers say that up around Trapani, where their Sicilian campaign ended, the wine was copious and the girls pretty, and they lived in villas for a while and there was swimming and plenty to eat and when you look back on it, they say, good old Sicily, those were the days.

Between the end of the Sicilian campaign and the invasion of Italy, the staff of the 82nd Airborne Division had good reason to go collectively out of their minds. Six airborne missions were ordered by higher headquarters, thoroughly prepared and set up by the staff, and then cancelled. The troops, too, who were being shunted about Sicily and North Africa, had cause to wonder. Of all these missions, the most splendidly E. Phillips Oppenheim was the planned jump on Rome. It had been decided to parachute units of the 82nd on to airfields at Rome, at the moment of the signing of the Italian armistice and the beach landings at Salerno. Then someone highup must have begun to doubt, for Brigadier General Taylor of the 82nd, subsequently CG of the 101st Airborne Division and now commandant of West Point, was sent to Rome to see what really went on.

General Taylor and his companion Colonel Gardiner set out in an Italian corvette and landed at Gaeta, seventy-five miles from Rome. They descended the gangplank, between armed Italian guards, hatless, with rumpled hair and undone ties, acting the part of captured American pilots who had been worked over en route. They reached Rome that night in a sort of florist's van. They were taken to a well-curtained palazzo where the Italians, nervous but full of charm, had prepared a feast and suggested that a good meal, a hot bath and a night's sleep were in order. General Taylor insisted upon seeing General Badoglio at once. Their car was stopped by German sentries before they arrived, in the midst of an allied airraid, to find the General in a dressing gown and a state of grave gloom.



The Italians could guarantee no support for the American paratroopers, there was too much German army around, there wasn't any gas and practically no ammunition; the whole idea would be better abandoned. General Taylor then had to get this word back to headquarters in Africa. The coded messages got delayed and were not acknowledged. He knew the paratroopers were ready to go.

One signal had been prearranged; if General Taylor sent a radio message saying "Operation innocuous," it would mean "this is a deathtrap" and the planes would be halted. The C-47's, filled with paratroopers, were warming up on the airfields of Sicily when the message arrived; the seaborne units had already departed and had to be recalled by a circling plane.

Finally, at the urgent request of General Mark Clark, whose Salerno beachhead was in perilous bad shape, the 505th and the 504th Parachute Infantries dropped just behind the beaches at Salerno; the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment arrived by sea. Of two days, during which two battalions of the 504 fought behind the beaches, though cut off and with no communication amongst themselves, General Clark said this effort was "responsible for saving the beachhead."

The division took Naples which resulted in a great deal of fun for all. They already knew basic Italian, with that dazzling talent for languages that marks G.I.'s in this war; they grew to dread the ten-minute cognac which was currently being bottled in Naples; and there was the Battle of the Orange Garden when the divisional officers, celebrating a prop-blast party, established some sort of world's record for breaking glasses.

Though elements of the Division fought to the Volturno River and others fought their way up into the mountains near Cassino, the real Italian veterans are the 504th Regiment, who spent two months on the flat marshland at Anzio.

Even now, from the air, the Anzio beachhead looks like no other part of Europe; the shell holes almost touch each other, raw and round, full of water. The few remaining trees stand like clawed telegraph poles; there are no towns but only jagged burned out slabs of masonry. It was an old-fashioned war at Anzio, based on the fine example of Ypres and Passchandaele when men sat in wet trenches and foxholes and were pounded to death by artillery. It was not a paratrooper's war but they tried to reform it. Amongst other efforts at improvement, Private Ted Bachenheimer started his one-man intelligence service. Ted spoke German, having been born in Vienna, and at night he would crawl across the lines and attach himself to the end of a German chow line. He entered into amiable conversation, sometimes only for information and sometimes he would bring back prisoners for identification. The same system worked well on enemy foxholes. In this division, for such work, you do not get either promoted or decorated: it is regarded as only normal that a man should think up useful gestures to help the war along.

(Ted was tall and shy, with black curly hair and a sensitive mouth. He disliked war very much, as he disliked all cruelty: he wanted to see it won and then he would go home to his wife, Penny, whom he loved dearly, and he would become a producer of plays.. He was captured and killed the next year, aged twenty-one, in Holland, while behind the enemy lines checking on a telephone

line he had set up so that he could get his information simply by ringing across to the other side.)

In a division made up of amazing characters, one can go on endlessly enumerating them. There was a three man artillery team, the moving spirits behind a battery located near Cisterna, only one hundred yards behind our infantry outposts. These men lived in their flooded foxholes and gunpits for 37 days, and while they cut with shellfire the German resupply road, they received counter battery fire every ten minutes and, as a sort of bonus, special extra shellings of 150-200 rounds. Men were wounded and killed every day in those cold wet mudholes, but the morale was held firm by a kid of 20 called Sergeant McGee, whose life ambition was to go to college, and a middle aged man of 22 called Lieutenant Swope whose only known ambition was to keep the battery firing and stay alive if possible, and an old man of 29 called Captain Morehouse who wanted to study medicine when all this foolishness was over. They were all mild mannered, quiet types and they saw nothing remarkable about their 37-day vigil.

No one who was not there can quite imagine what the war in Italy was like; it was always an orphan sort of war, and as it went on and on, it began to bore and embarrass the world. If it wasn't the flat deadly statement of Anzio, it was fighting up more mountains, always higher, always farther, always colder, with the enemy, well entrenched, waiting as long as possible only to retire to the next range. And everywhere, there was the gnawing menace of mines. The division, wiser and fewer, set sail for England in November 1943, leaving the 504th at Anzio. Two months later, when the 504th left Anzio, a third of the regiment had become casualties on that filthy little strip of land. They were very glad to go.

During the winter of 1944, the division was stationed near Leicester, England. To hear the kids talk of Leicester you would think it was a combination of Venice, Paris and home. For after all, they are mainly kids and they had seen nothing to date except home and a lot of ruins. In Leicester, people spoke almost understandable English and were friendly, clean, and civilized. They gave the girls their glider wings and the parachute wings now decorated with two combat jump stars, and went jitterbugging at the Palais de Danse. They polished their boots until they shone, pressed their baggy pants, set their high peaked caps at the fashionable angle, and strolled the streets: for, in the language of the day, they are very sharp troops and they take the greatest pleasure in this. Some 12,000 of them, experienced soldiers and younger than you would believe, took over that corner of England and the English actually liked it.

There were a certain number of pub fights and a certain amount of resultants disciplinary action. The English accepted this all calmly. If you take very young men and teach them to hold their own lives lightly and to kill, and then ex-

pect them to go out and kill on your behalf, you cannot be indignant in case they raise some hell outside the combat zone.

They were having a wonderful time, but they did not think Leicester was journey's end. They had proved the extraordinary value of an airborne division and the war was a long way from won.

No one was surprised when the sand tables and the maps appeared again, and they were briefed on "Operation Neptune," the invasion of Normandy; and no one was surprised to learn that they would be the first men there.

(There was a moon, that night. The planes mounted and circled, with their wing lights close, and slowly the long sky train straightened out and headed for France. Those who were part of it said it was beautiful: in daylight, the sea, solid with ships, was beautiful too. That giant departure of men for the invasion of Normandy was a terrible and handsome sight.)

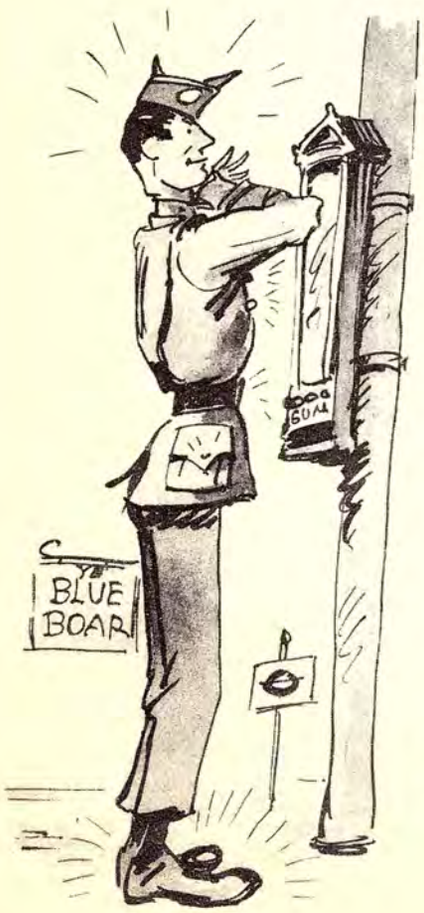
By 11 o'clock on the night of June 5th all 378 planes, carrying 6,396 paratroopers, had left the fields of England. This was Task Force A, led as before by James Gavin, now a brigadier general. When his men landed in the fields, orchards, marshes and rivers of the Cherbourg peninsula, the long last battle of the war began. As the planes approached the coast of France, fountains of flak spurted up against them. It takes fine and steady pilots to fly the slow vulnerable transports through that stuff. Some planes were hit and crashed in flames, but most of them made it. Bill Walton reports a fragmentary amazing conversation, in his plane, between men shuffling to the open door. "Please don't shove me, I'll go quickly" . . . "Okay, don't shove me either" . . .

Saint Mere Eglise was the first town in France to be liberated. It was taken at four thirty in the morning of June 6th by elements of Task Force A. The citizens of Saint Mere Eglise were astounded and delighted by this honor. True, some of the paratroopers who had landed right in their village were shot by the Germans while they hung suspended in the trees around the market place; and true, there was heavy firing in the fields outside their town. But they were free; the war evidently was almost over.

In the clear light of noon, the German counterattack hit Saint Mere Eglise. German artillery zeroed in and suddenly the quiet village became a shambles of broken trees and houses, dead cattle, dead people, and the young men who had laughed and accepted their handshakes and their kisses were different men now, silent and fast, doing what they had to do. The villagers hid in ditches in the fields and all around them was the violent woodpecker noise of machine guns, the sudden thud of mortars, and the fast sharp whine of 88's. There were grey German dead, and American boys, flat and empty as the dead are, with blood and dirt on those little flags that had looked so charming sewn to their sleeves. There were burned out German tanks and burned bodies and all the wild waste paper of war that seems to grow from every battlefield. Their town had been liberated and the paratroopers kept it free; everyone paid for that freedom.

During that day, the gliders landed, bringing with them besides much needed men, much needed medical supplies and anti-tank guns and howitzers. The gliders crashed into the hedgerows that lined the too small fields, into houses, barns, churches, and the Germans—who were again organized, after the initial surprise of the night —were ready for them. The medics found themselves landed in marshes where the water was from three to seven feet deep; under shellfire and small arms fire, they ferried their equipment out on life rafts and set up a tent hospital within 2 hours. In an airborne operation, the troops are necessarily surrounded, so the safest place to put a hospital is at the center of the fighting. The hospital was less than a mile from the front, and the front was circular.

There are some simple eye witness accounts of Normany, written by paratroopers of the 508th, a new regiment attached to the 82nd Airborne Division, which was introduced to war in Normandy. Here are two brief heartfelt samples.



Private M. G. Thomas reported: "June 6th was the biggest day of my life. It was D-Day for me and all of the Airborne. I was quite scared but not as much as I had thought I would be. Finally the time came. The jumpmaster said 'Let's go.' Well, everybody started to go when we were hit by ack ack. Half the stick got out easily but the ninth man was hit as he reached the door. We were all knocked down. We got up except for the wounded man who couldn't move. When the last man had left, the wounded trooper got to the door somehow and followed him out. . . . The night was beautiful. I didn't like to see our boys being shot in their chutes, while still in the air. . . . I stayed in a ditch for a while until some troopers came along. We continued to move until daylight when we were boxed in by enemy fire. The Germans spotted us and began firing on the ditch where I was hiding. One of the boys carried a prayer book. He asked us to say a prayer but I told him I didn't know a prayer. All I could say was: 'God, if you could ever do anything for me, please do it now as I need it.' . . . We started out of there and kept moving until we met up with our General. We joined others who were ordered to take a town. We took the town and held out there until the troops reached us from the beach. We had lost some men but the Germans lost three to our one. . . . I hope every general is as much of a man as General Gavin proved he was in combat when he led us in such a victory."

Corporal Jules Stollock writes of a friend: "He was only eighteen. The men in his company used to call Private Tony Vickery the 'Milk Bar Commando' — milk shakes being his strongest and favorite drink. As for women, he didn't have any. His mom, back in Georgia, was his only and best girl. . . . The jump was uneventful except for flak and a few ambitious Jerries on the ground. Out of the entire planeload, he came across one man, and together they started off in the direction of the Drop Zone. On the way they picked up eighteen more troopers and that night they chalked up three machine gun nests and about twenty-five or thirty Jerries. Daylight made it necessary for them to take cover and dig in but Tony stayed on the alert. His vigil was not wasted for not

more than six hundred yards away a skirmish line of German grenadiers broke out of a wooded area and advanced on the trooper's positions. He waited until the Jerries were about fifteen feet away before he squeezed the trigger of his Tommy Gun. The fight lasted about twenty-five minutes and when the smoke cleared away he lay in a heap at the bottom of the ditch. Four slugs from a machine gun pistol got him in the throat. It was a rotten way to die, but if you looked on the other side of the hedgerow you would have seen the bodies of at least thirty-three dead Germans and the kid got every one of them."

If these word pictures seem bald to you, and the language awkward, you must remember that the boys who wrote them probably had not had much time for schooling.

Thirty-three days after the division landed in Normandy, it took ship for its base in England. During those 33 days, without relief or replacements, they engaged five enemy divisions and were credited with destroying the fighting force of the 91st and 265th German infantry divisions. 11,770 men of the 82nd Airborne Division had come to Normandy, by parachute, glider, and landing craft: there were 5,429 men left to make the return trip.

In August, back in England, Major General Matthew Ridgway, who had commanded the 82nd ever since it became an airborne division in 1942, was promoted to the command of the first American Airborne Corps. Brigadier General Gavin was given the division, and the division is truly his. Nothing written about the 82nd would be complete without some account of this man, whom his soldiers always refer to as "Slim Jim" or "General Jim."

James Gavin began his army life at seventeen when he exaggerated his age and enlisted. From the ranks, he got to West Point, where he had always intended going in the first place. At thirty-seven he is the youngest Major General in the U. S. Army; he is also the outstanding student and innovator of airborne warfare.

To his men, he is one of them what they believe to be the best of them. They love him because he always jumps out of the lead plane first; because he is serene and cheerful in combat; because he drives them relentlessly and gets results of which they are fiercely proud; because he has dignity but no pomp, and any man can be sure of his consideration and his justice; and they also love the cocky way he wears his hat, the fact that he is tall and thin and has a charming Irish face, and the way he laughs. He has another quality soldiers admire very much: luck.

They have seen him for a long time now, and everywhere and they know him well. They talk about him a great deal, with a sort of possessive pride, and they enjoy repeating all the legends. The legends happen to be true which makes them better. They will tell you about a trooper on patrol before the lines in the snowy confusion of the Bulge: a tall dark figure loomed up and was challenged; the trooper was ready to be the first man shooting. He was answered in the calm well-known voice of the General, "Hello son, how's everything out here?" The chief of staff, Colonel Weinecke, said rather plaintively in Holland, "We have a wonderful system worked out; I stay home with the telephones and my general goes out and fights with the troops." It is a good sight to see this man with his soldiers; the way they salute him is like shaking hands.

And they also say of him that when he is giving any one

hell, and that person can barely hear what he is saying, then General Gavin is really angry.

General Gavin, chose a staff which perfectly suited him and his division. The average age of his famous four G's, Colonels Ireland, Norton, Marin and Winton, all formerly field officers in the regiments, is now 28. In this galaxy of brain, beauty and youth, the Chief of Staff, who is all of 41, has a tendency to regard himself as the Rock of Ages.

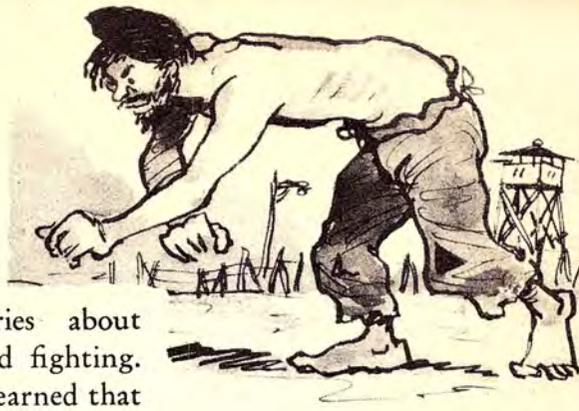
But a division is made by all the officers and men in it. The style and direction may be set from the top, but the performance depends on everyone's quality. In this division there is a sure understanding between the officers and men; perhaps due to the fact hailing that all men are definitely equal when suspended by parachute or in a flimsy glider over enemy territory, and also perhaps due to the fact that there is some common denominator of courage, endurance and straight madness which makes men want to be airborne troops in the first place.

After Normany all the high allied brass was definitely sold on airborne operations. The troops were wonderful, the leadership stupendous, and men falling out of the sky could do anything; whereupon it was decided to send the biggest airborne fleet yet, in daylight, to Holland to flank the Siegfried Line and get to the heart of Germany the quick way.

On September 17, 1944, armada of planes, flying at a fixed altitude; in formation passed for 3 hours over enemy held Holland, while the amazed citizens on the ground below waved and cheered and believed the whole thing was an act of God. The first regiment of the 82nd dropped south of Nijmegen at 1 p. m.; the last regiment dropped at 1:28 p. m. By eight thirty that night, the initial missions of all three regiments had been completed. This is not close to perfect, it is perfect; for by now you realize the hazards involved in an airborne operation.

Three days later, after fighting off 6 major counterattacks, the 82nd held Nijmegen securely and was ready to take the great bridges over the Waal. This was the road for the British Second Army to reach Arnhem, the key point of the whole invasion. The Waal is a very un-European river, being wide, swift and deep, and the road bridge across it is the longest span bridge in Europe and looks like an American job, the Eads bridge across the Mississippi, for example. The British Guards Armored Division arrived in Nijmegen and the battle was on. The men of the 505, to the delight and admiration of the British, fought over rooftops and blasted their way through houses, to take the near end of the Bridge. Meanwhile the 504, in rubber boats borrowed from the British, set out, in day light, with a weak smoke screen to protect them, to paddle across the Waal and assault a high bank on top of which were Germans.

One paratrooper, who made that trip, recalled how they walked across the sandy flat bank of the river to their boats, while



bullets kicked up the dirt around them. He was next to a new man who kept saying "What is that? Say are those bullets, for God's sake?" To which the veteran replied, "You'll find out soon enough, bud."

The end of this battle found paratroopers fighting in the huge steel girders of the bridge, trying to pick off Germans before they could blow themselves and the bridge sky-high. The British tanks were rolling across below them. It is a pity that the movie do not do these things right, for this battle was as sensational as it was photogenic.

As everyone knows, the British Second Army could not get to the superb 1st British Airborne Division at Arnhem in time, and the main object of the invasion failed; but the two American airborne divisions, committed in this action, succeeded entirely, and having succeeded they stayed in Holland to hold the land conquered. This was regarded by the troopers of the 82nd as fairly easy work, all things considered. "Easy" is only a word: in twenty-two days the division hospital handled 2,974 wounded and over 400 major surgical operations were performed.

But if the troopers were not engaged in fighting for their lives, they always found ways to amuse themselves.

A dinner party in a half shelled house less than a mile from the German lines, with a sheet for table cloth and marigolds in a broken bottle as ornament and an electrifying assortment of drink; it seemed a good idea to have a dinner party for a change and everyone shaved. Or dated the girls in Nijmegen which was shelled off and on all day and night; or amused themselves helping put out fires started by German artillery. Rode bicycles, played baseball, made interior improvements on their beat-up billets; read comic strip magazines or played cards. Tinkered with liberated cars and motor bikes, and were constantly happily occupied trying to find something to drink, something interesting to eat or a comfortable place to sit and tell each other stories about women and fighting. They had learned that war is long and life is short and the trick is to be as merry as possible.

They were being whittled down every day, and every day they killed more Germans, but the main drive of the war was elsewhere and they hated sitting in one place, with nothing much to show for it. And every day the little city of Nijmegen which they liked and the people of Nijmegen whom they liked and admired, were being pounded by enemy artillery, until the town grew uglier and uglier and the hospitals overflowed with wounded women and children.

When they finally left Holland after 9 weeks of this dismal war, they left behind a neat cemetery with more than 800 graves marked by white crosses; the school children of Nijmegen tend those graves. The division had done its part of the job; it was their sorrow that the main plan had failed and that the war could not be finished that winter.

The division was now based at Sissone, a drab stony village near Rheims. The cafes sold a depressing gaseous pink lemonade; the girls were few and never Betty Grable, the scenery was second rate and there was nothing else to do. However, it was pleasant to relax and get clean and sleep under a whole roof. The division expected, as it had earned, a decent period for rest and reorganization. But Von Rundstedt launched his attack

through the Ardennes and on December 17 the division was alerted. It took exactly 12 hours for a division of 12,000 men, complete with equipment, to be in trucks and on the way. The operation following, which has no name, could suitably be called Operation Rescue.

They drove through Bastogne to the Saint Vith area. The division's mission was to establish a corridor and extricate the remnants of four American divisions trapped in the St. Vith pocket. Since it is a natural state for paratroopers to have the enemy all around them and amongest them, the Battle of the Bulge was not a new problem. However, even they were impressed by the chaos that reigned. The fighting was harsh and wearing but the weather was in a class by itself. No one will ever forget that winter (it was only last winter, when you think of it) and the agony of that cold. For those who could move it was bad enough; they only got frozen feet and hands and faces; but for the wounded it was fatal. Men had to be found and taken to shelter at once; otherwise they died. The medics and aid men who had always been wonderful and trusted, now became man's last hope.

It was during the battle of the Bulge that Captain Pete Suer, battalion surgeon in the 505, lost both his legs. He did not recover from his wounds. Pete Suer had invented, as long ago as Sicily, a fantastic method of operating; he would stand on the bumper of his jeep, waving a Red Cross flag, and move out between the lines while both sides continued destroying each other to collect wounded.

Pete Suer was supposed to stay back at battalion aid post. No one knows much about Captain Suer because he was not a talkative man. if he did talk, it was always about the soldiers and some way to help them. In normal life he was a Jewish dentist who lived in Brooklyn; in this life he was the most admired, and decorated medic in his regiment. He had survived four combat jumps and all the long days of war, unarmed, and intent only on saving the lives of men who practically speaking could not be reached.

There are so many stories; how Captain Travelstead of the 325th Glider Infantry, decided to make confusion worse and see what would happen, so he changed the road-signs before his company outposts; a 100-vehicle German column rolled merrily into the trap and later a German officer, bearing Von Rundstedt's campaign orders, bowled along in a motorcycle sidecar and was captured. How Lt. Colonel John C. H. Lee of the 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion with three troopers waded waist deep in a freezing river to blow a bridge which the Germans were using at the time. How a battalion of the 504th attacked German armor of the 1st S. S. Panzer division at Cheneux, by jumping on the vehicles and killing the crews with rifle butts, grenades and knives. These were the Nazi elite, who had massacred the American soldiers at Malmedy; their division was named for Adolf Hitler, and on this day they lost an entire battalion. It was the first victory in the Battle of the Bulge; until then the Germans were doing the destroying. And there is the story of how the 505th counterattacked for three days and nights without overcoats or blankets and nothing to eat except cold rations. At night they could not light fires so they huddled together for warmth, and if they did not move their feet froze.

It was a long battle and a terrible one; after the German drive was stopped, it had to be forced back. By February, the 82nd Airborne Division was racing the 1st division for the Siegfried Line. They had saved the trapped American divisions in the Saint Vith pocket, they had held their long front; and now, with the 325th Glider Infantry spear-

heading, they counterattacked in three feet of snow and drove their way through the Siegfried Line. So at last they could go home.

They returned to Sissone, less some four thousand men. They thawed and rested and began writing those letters soldiers write: "Dear Mom: I am well. We been up in the snow about two months. It sure was cold . . ."

I saw one impressive award of decorations during the war. This was when the division was holding a twenty-five mile front along the Rhine opposite the Ruhr pocket. The award took place on a street in a town near Cologne. It was a short street with mediocre stucco houses lining it, and there were festoons of fallen telephone wire and broken bricks and smashed windows and a few shell holes. Looking at it you felt angry with boredom, wondering why you ever had to see places like this, why there were Germans to live in such stupid ugly houses, why anyone bothered to go on doing anything. The day was like that too, March I think, colorless and belonging to no season of the year.

In the street, at attention, stood six men: their faces were as grey as the street, dirty with beard, so tired that the skin looked hard. There was a smear of dried blood on one man's sleeves; he had probably lifted a wounded comrade. The general stood in front of them, grave and tired too, and a young officer read the citations in a droning voice while nobody listened. There was no one to watch, no music, no flags; just the empty street and the occasional sound of mortar fire from the river, and the men almost swaying with weariness as they stood. Then the general pinned the ribbon of the Silver Star on each man's chest, they shook hands, they saluted. The men's eyes were all far away, as if they did not see or recognize this street, and had other things to look at. They waited a moment, awkwardly, and then turned to go somewhere else, to their billets, anywhere that a man could sleep.

During the war, decorations did not seem to matter so much. They were always nice things to have but the people who counted knew, without needing any colored ribbons as proof. You could tell about men by the way they handled themselves and by all the things they did not say. But now that the war is over, everyone seems to set great store by decorations so for the record, let it be noted that the 82nd Division has not only covered itself with glory but has been given an enormous amount of silk and enameled metal in token thereof.

For gallantry in action, the entire division has been awarded the orange lanyard of the Netherlands Willems Orde, which is the Dutch V. C., and the red and green Belgian Fourragère. The boys look very handsome with these bright cords on both shoulders. There is also a French citation for gallantry in Normandy and all units of the division have at least one Presidential citation. Individually, there are forty-two British decorations, beginning with the coveted DSO; fifty-three French decorations; 14 Russian decorations, which look like crown jewels; 73 Dutch decorations, including the Order of Grand Officer of Orange Nassau, conferred on General Gavin, and never before given to a foreigner or to any person not of royal blood. There are two Congressional Medals of Honor, one Distinguished Service Medal, seventy-nine Distinguished Service Crosses, thirty-two Legion of Merit, 894 Silver Stars, and 2,478 Bronze Stars. No one has bothered to list the purple hearts; 12,604 men have been wounded while fighting with the 82nd Airborne Division in six campaigns.

Aside from one amphibious operation to the east bank of the river, the last spring of the war, was fairly jolly. There were men wounded every day and some killed but in comparison with everything that went before, this was vacation. The warriors of E company of the 325th Glider Infantry set

up their Headquarters in a Cologne candy factory where they lived in childhood's dream amongst bins of almonds, milk chocolate, brown sugar and neatly wrapped hard candies. Then someone located a storehouse where the Germans kept looted cheeses the size of spare tires. Needless to say wine was found too and later Portuguese sardines. Also, no one knows why, black silk top hats began to appear in quantity; Germans seem to own top hats the way other people own radios. And bicycles were discovered. It was no unusual sight, along the river front, to see a paratrooper patrolling on a bicycle wearing a top hat. And there was an outpost on a breakwater in the Rhine, which was manned by some charming glidermen, so one could make sporting trips out there with Lt. Buck Dawson in a kayak. Everyone agreed that if war was no worse than this, people would not mind taking a chance on it.

Also, to its amazement and without previous training, the division found itself guardian and protector of 30,000 hungry homeless Europeans, the slave laborers of Germany. They were further charged with maintaining order in an area of 750 square miles. One would not have expected them to handle this sort of job well, but they did. The displaced person camps were notable because they were run simply on a basis of common sense and humanity, and the tragic inmates started to come alive again, seeing that normal decency still remained in the world.

Then the division moved north to the Elbe, to join the English in the last battle of the war. One regiment ferried across the Elbe to attack, while the rest of the division was still in trains and trucks hurrying to get there. At the very end of the war, your heart and your nerves told you to put your feet down carefully, to walk with all due caution, and to keep your neck well in: for the bloody business was almost over, and having made it so far it would be really wasteful to die now. Everyone felt this, whether admitted or not. The men and the officers, hating each new death, carried on as they always had, with the same momentum and the same directed recklessness. They finished their war very fittingly. An entire German Army, 144,000 men, surrendered to General Gavin and the 82nd Airborne Division.

It was at Ludwigslust that the division met the Russians and launched itself on a beautiful vodka honeymoon. The troopers admired the enormous Russian tanks and the Russians were delighted by the brisk manner in which the troopers spilled out of planes. One gallant officer, wishing to prove to the Russians that American paratroopers were so good they did not even need parachutes, made a perfect jump from a second story window. The Russians evidently thought this was the best thing since Stalingrad.

In due course, the 82nd Airborne Division arrived in Berlin, where it was the occupying force. All traces of combat had been removed and they were the nattiest troops in the ETO. They turned out an honor guard company, decorated in white scarves, gloves,

bandoleers and bootlaces, which drilled like the Rockettes and dazzled visiting dignitaries. Berlin was fun. This was the end of the journey: the troopers meant to enjoy themselves. The fact that Berlin was a huge ruin did not affect them; they had seen plenty of ruins, German-made.

When the division comes home, as it soon will, there will be few of the old men left. There are only 12 men—still in the division who wear four combat jump stares on their parachute wings. Now that there is time to think and remember, the feeling of loneliness begins; so many dead, and so many who started straight and young and will not have whole bodies again. Any man who went through part of those 371 days of combat will never be the same; they may forget what changed them, but the change is there.

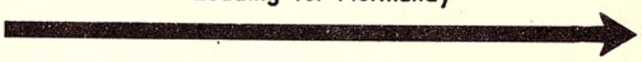
There is also something special and very good that remains. You feel it in this letter from a paratroop lieutenant to General Gavin: "For myself, as well as all those others in the Division who remember the roar of planes at night; the instant when the warning light flashes on; and the magnificence of night skies full of swaying chutes, I want to say this: 'We hope, with all our hearts, that there will always be an 82nd. If we can know that somewhere young men will dare the challenge to 'Stand Up and Hook Up.' and know the moment of pride and strength which is its reward, then a part of us will always be alive.'"

You see, they have that. And besides, mixed with everything else, because it could not be avoided or denied, there was much happiness. . . .

This is not a complete story for it leaves unhonored many men who deserve honor. The stories of all these men will be the permanent legacy of the division; what they did from Casablanca to Berlin makes the tradition that will stay with the 82nd as it becomes a permanent part of the peacetime army.

Now that it is all over, one wonders what caused men to perform as these did: there are probably as many motives as men. Pride in their division and loyalty to their comrades had a lot to do with it, but in a general way I think they fought for peace. They knew everything there was to know about war and they did not believe in it. There is no possible reward for them except to keep the peace they earned for us with their lives and the years of their youth.

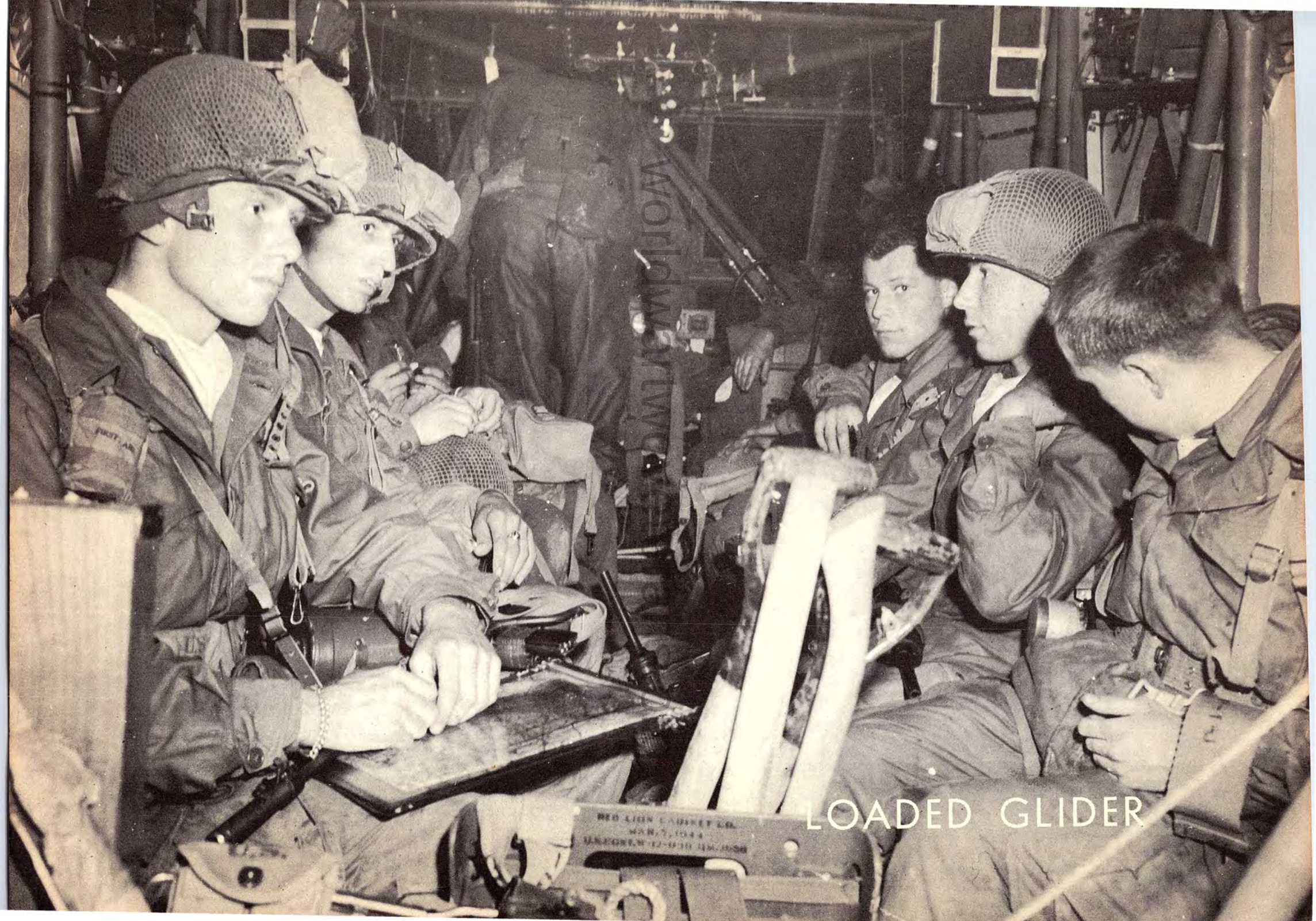
Loading for Normandy



16 AIRBORNE PICTURES

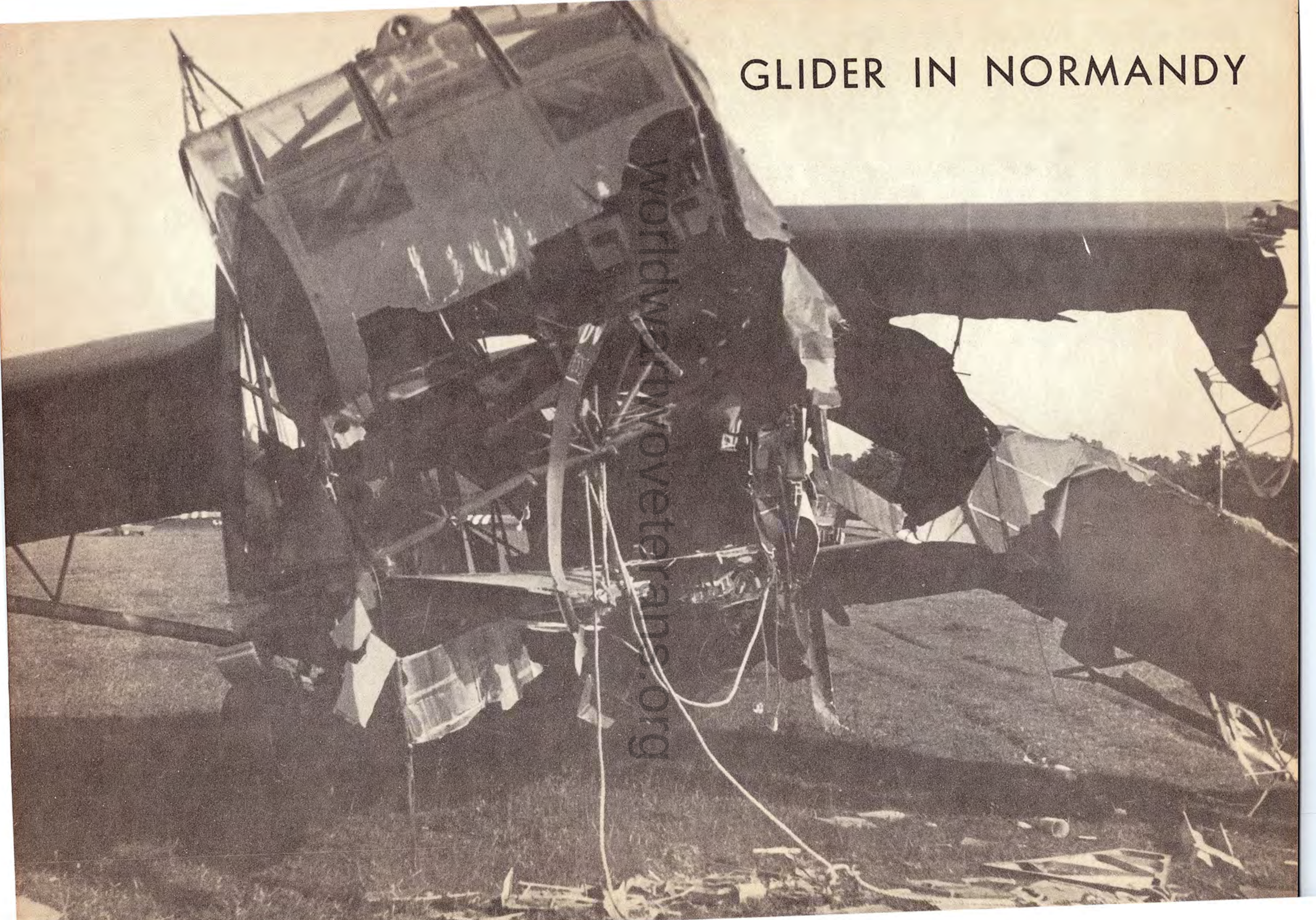
TENSE MOMENT

COMBAT AHEAD



LOADED GLIDER

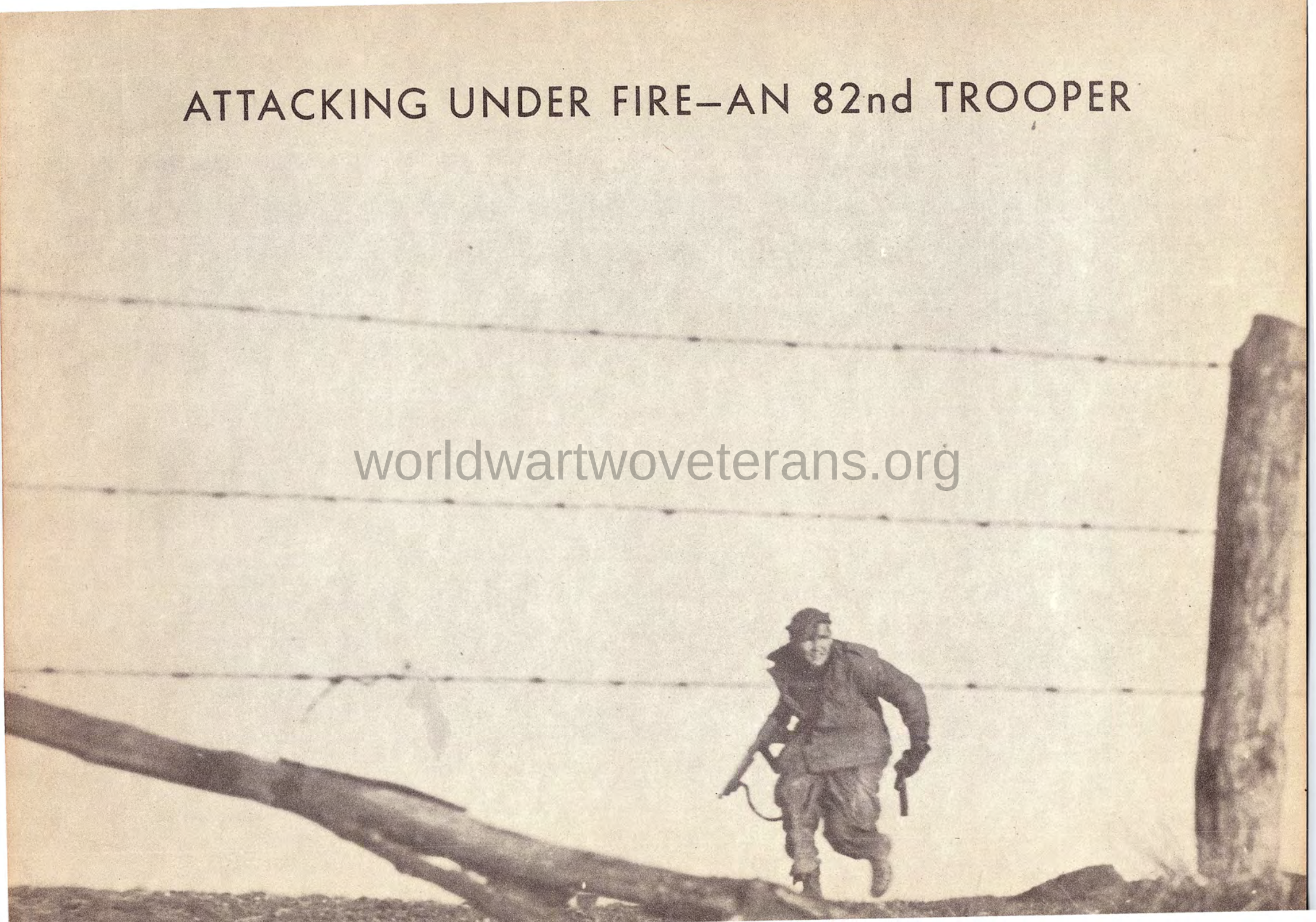
GLIDER IN NORMANDY



BURNING PLANE

BAZOOKA BAIT

ATTACKING UNDER FIRE—AN 82nd TROOPER



THE BULGE BUT NOT BASTOGNE

HOME IS WHERE YOU FIND IT

PREPARATION

OMAR N. BRADLEY

82nd DIVISION COMMANDING GENERAL, FEBRUARY-JUNE, 1942

"The splendid esprit of the 82nd Airborne Division from the time of its reactivation in 1942 up to the close of the war made it a command of which to be proud. Its combat record was second to none."

The Growth of a new Idea

By CHARLES W. MASON

Excerpts from the 82nd Under Ridgway

THE THOUGHT of an airborne division was called a fantastic dream in 1940. Only the mad Russian would waste men that way. But the Japs came along with a sneak play and turned Pearl Harbor into an inferno. So the 82nd Infantry Division was reactivated on 25 March 1942 at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, under the command of Major General Omar N. Bradley. The division commenced training under doctrines appropriate for a standard infantry division. Major General Matthew B. Ridgway succeeded to the command on 26 June 1942 and continued the good work of his predecessor.

The airborne idea was gaining more adherents every day. The 82nd, under the wise leadership and skillful handling of its commander soon developed into the most promising among the new units being quickly whipped into shape. On the 15th day of August, what so many thought was just a nasty rumor became stark reality. On that day the 82nd was designated as an Airborne Division and one half its strength was subtracted to form the 101st Airborne Division. Later the 82nd surrendered a full quota of key personnel to cadre the 98th Infantry Division.

The reorganized division consisted of the 325th and 326th Glider Infantry Regiments and the 319th and 320th Glider Field Artillery Battalions. These and normal service units were composed of personnel who had never dreamed of being airborne. The 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the 376th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion were added to the new division and the Engineer battalion was reconstituted with two companies of glider designation and one of parachutists. Special troop units were appropriately changed in strength and organization for airborne operation.

Ground training of the Division continued at Camp Claiborne until 1 October 1942, when the bulk of the unit was moved to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in the largest airborne troop movement ever attempted in a single operation. At the new station, thousands of new recruits were given basic training and integrated into the glider elements. Advanced ground training in alternation with flight exercises by both troop transport and parachute, and by troop transport and gliders was pushed vigorously.

The sturdy reliable C-47 was doing a wonderful job for the paratroopers. But productions lines had not gotten themselves into high gear to turn out bug-proof gliders fast enough. This made necessary a further change in the organization of the division if it were to be made ready for early overseas shipment. On 12 February 1943, the 326th Glider Infantry Regiment was with-

drawn from the Division and replaced by the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. To balance this change and permit organization of regimental combat teams, Company "B" of the 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion was converted from glider to parachute status. The 456th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion was added for the same reason.

The rapid and outstanding progress in training under the guidance of Major General Ridgway had brought the Division to a high standard of proficiency. Scheduled maneuvers were cancelled and secret preparations were made for the overseas movement of the Division. On 20 April 1943, with every insignia and mark of identification (even jump boots and suits) carefully obliberated or hidden, the Division commenced the movement from Fort Bragg to Camp Edwards, Massachusetts, to stage for overseas shipment.

The cocky troopers underwent a great ordeal during this period. They were obliged to pretend that they were just ordinary doughboys and be on good behavior and be ignorant of the number of their units. It was tough going but it only lasted seven days. The interlude at Camp Edwards ended 27 April.

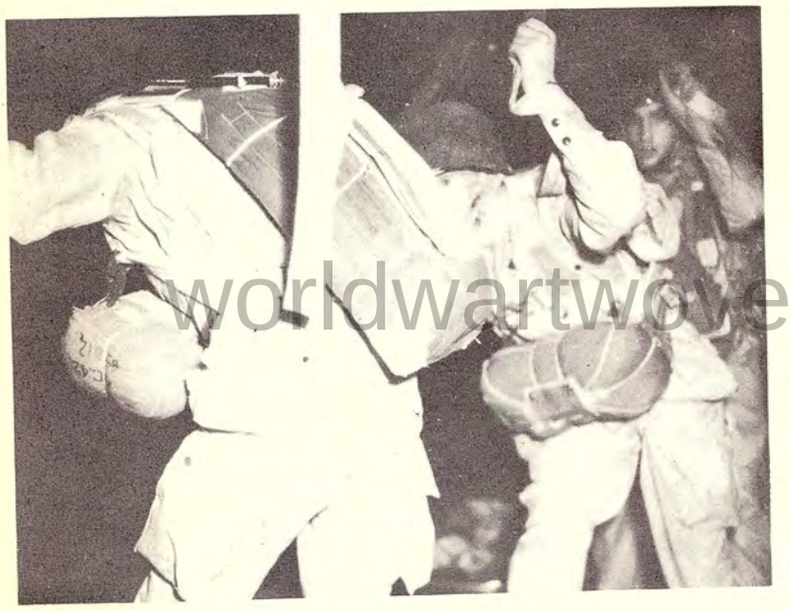
Troop moved into trains. Trains moved somewhere — many actually never knew where they went except that they passed the suburbs of New York City and went underground and emerged at one of the port installations. They had to carry their heavy barracks bags an ungodly distance to the pier. There, military officials in the know gazed at the first airborne troopers they had ever seen. There was interest in their eyes and perhaps a little awe and respect in their thoughts. Red Cross girls tucked chocolate bars into pockets and handed the men paper cups of hot coffee and as many doughnuts as they could conveniently carry.

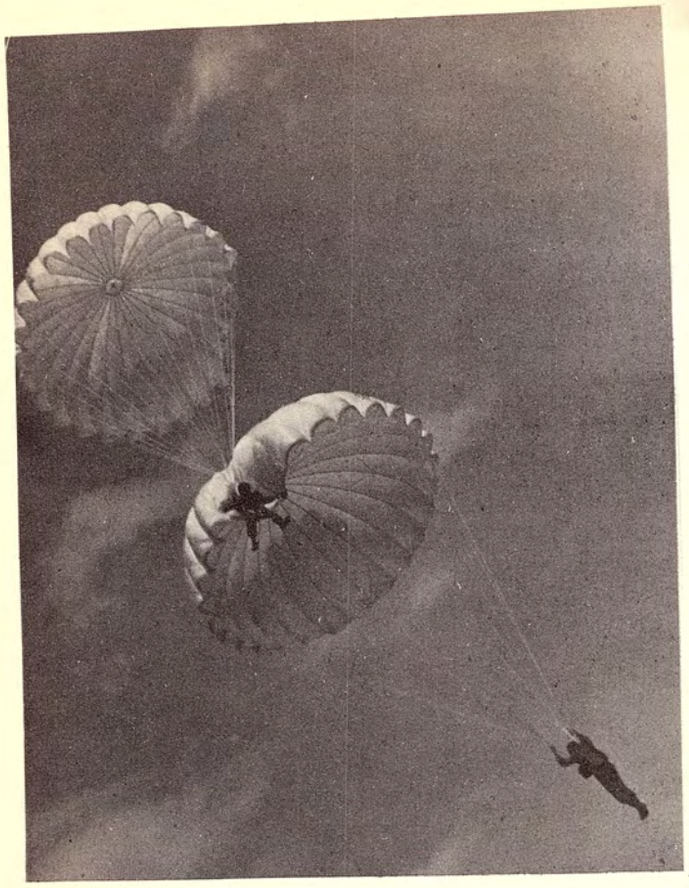
Then up the gangplanks and into the crowded troop section. Bags were stowed away and rumors were re-hashed with new variations. Some discovered they had to sleep on deck and take turns later in the bunks. Early on the morning of 29 April 1943, the transports moved out of the harbor. Division CP was on the U. S. Transport "George Washington." Men were absorbed with concern over meals and police of quarters, entertainment and study and worries about submarines. There were two meals a day, not particularly tasty, and you had to stand up to eat them. There were French lessons over the Public Address system and guessers opined that North Africa was their destination.

There occasional submarine alerts, innumerable boat drills and exercise in climbing the boarding nets. There were the interminable vistas of the ocean to ponder, and the intricate maneuvers of the convoys to watch. There were inexhaustible supplies of "cokes," cookies and candies in the PX for in-between snacks. All in all, there was plenty to occupy the troopers when "Charley Noble" wasn't smoking. And the days passed too quickly.

The 82nd generals try everything. Omar Bradley and Matthew Ridgway take the obstacles at Camp Clairborne, La.

JUMP SCHOOL





THE WIDE BLUE YONDER

A NIGHT ON A TROOP TRAIN

WITH THE PARATROOPERS

FORT BENNING TO ——?

HE'S PASSING HIS HOME TOWN

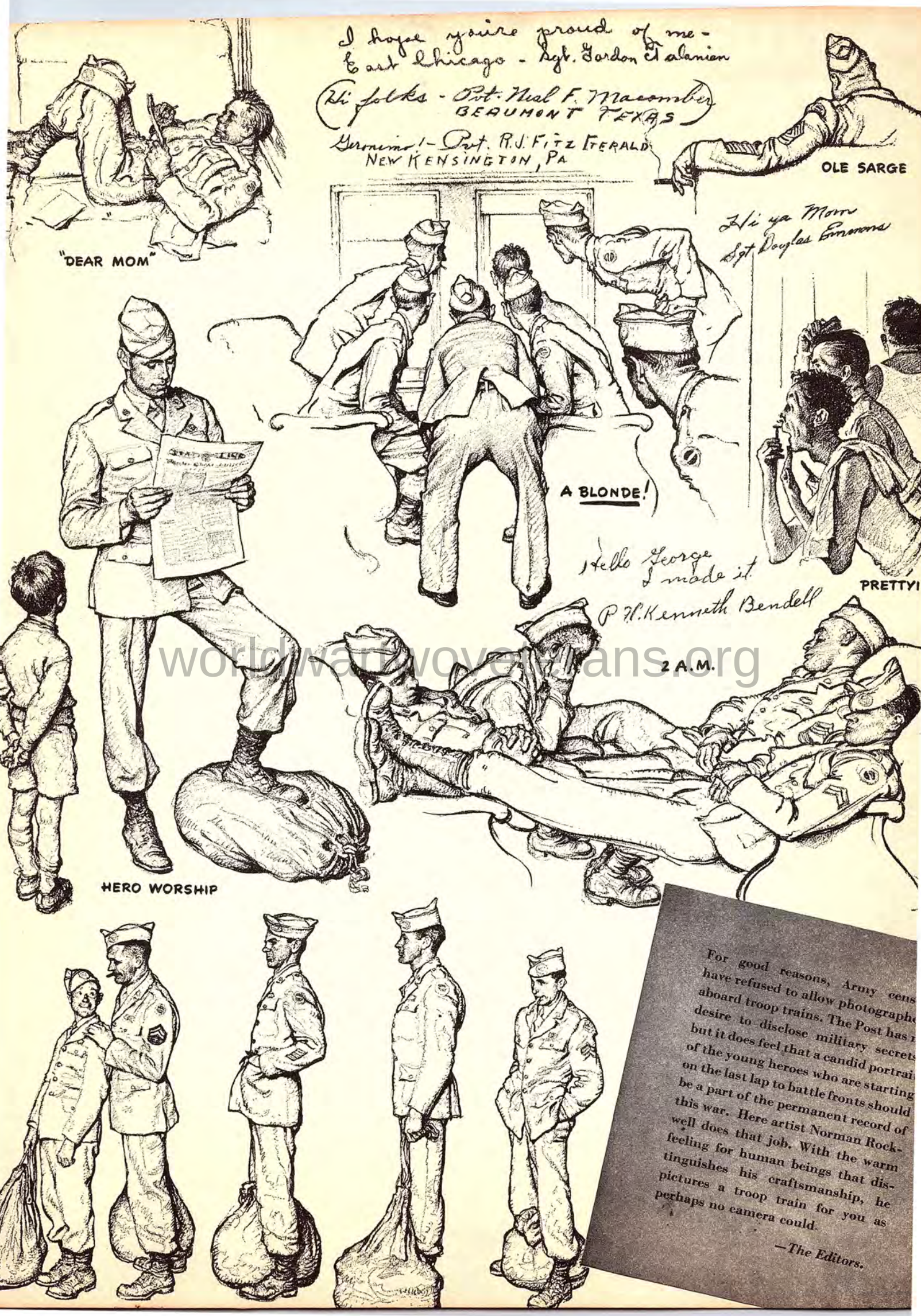
SKETCHED BY *Norman Rockwell*

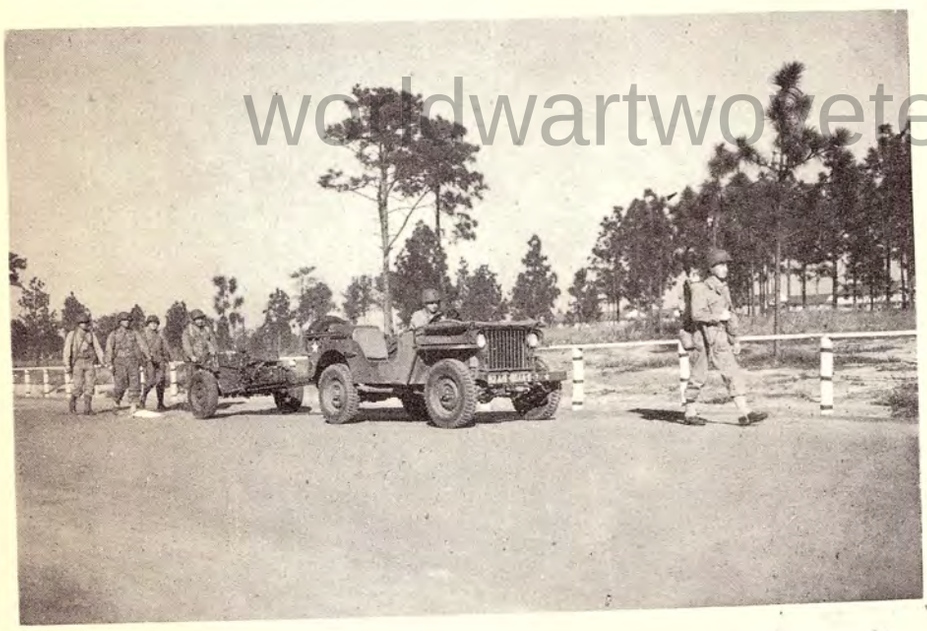
(By courteousy of The Saturday Evening Post)

DUFFEL BAGS PILED ON REAR SEA

TELLING ABOUT HIS FIRST JUMP

PENNY ANTE





"Training is continuous"

—RIDGWAY

82nd Generals
A Study in Commanders

Combat Div. Commanders—Airborne
Artillery General Swing took over the 11th Abn
Ridgway kept the 82nd through Normandy
Asst. Div. Commander Miley moved on to command 17th

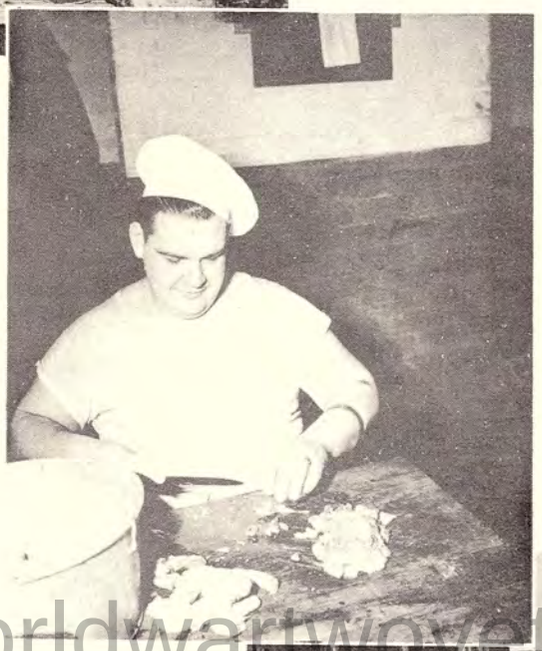
Chief of Staff and Artillery General Taylor left the 82nd after Italy to command the 101st Airborne throughout Western Europe.

Kierans receives his star. Col. Eaton, Brigadier Kierans and Maj. Gen. Ridgway. Eaton became Chief of Staff and a general in the 18th Abn. Corps and Ridgway became 18th Corps Commander. Kierans was shot down over Sicily in the tragic 504 incident. He was the first Airborne general officer to give his life on the field of battle.

Airborne Generals do what they ask their men to do (sometimes). Maxwell D. Taylor chops wood for exercise at Ft. Bragg.

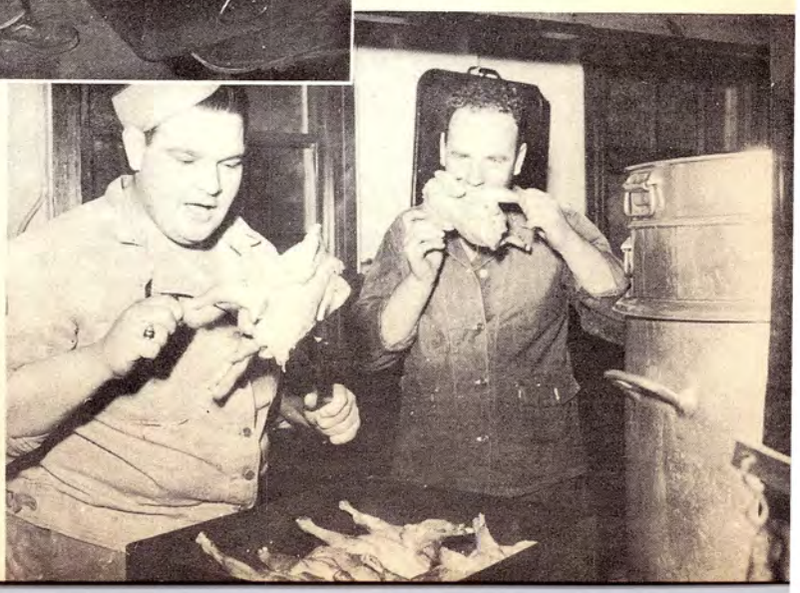
THE COOKS EAT, ANYWAY!

RATIONING?



MESS HALL?

DOES IT LOOK GOOD?



WELL!
WHO COOKED IT?

REVIEW by MARSHALL and EDEN

"The aggressive fighting of the 82nd Airborne Division throughout the war, from Sicily onward, was an inspiration to all fighting men. From my first review of the Division at Fort Bragg, I was convinced of its high quality, and not surprised by the desperate valor displayed by its men at critical moments on numerous battlefields."

C. G. MARSHALL
GEN., U. S. ARMY

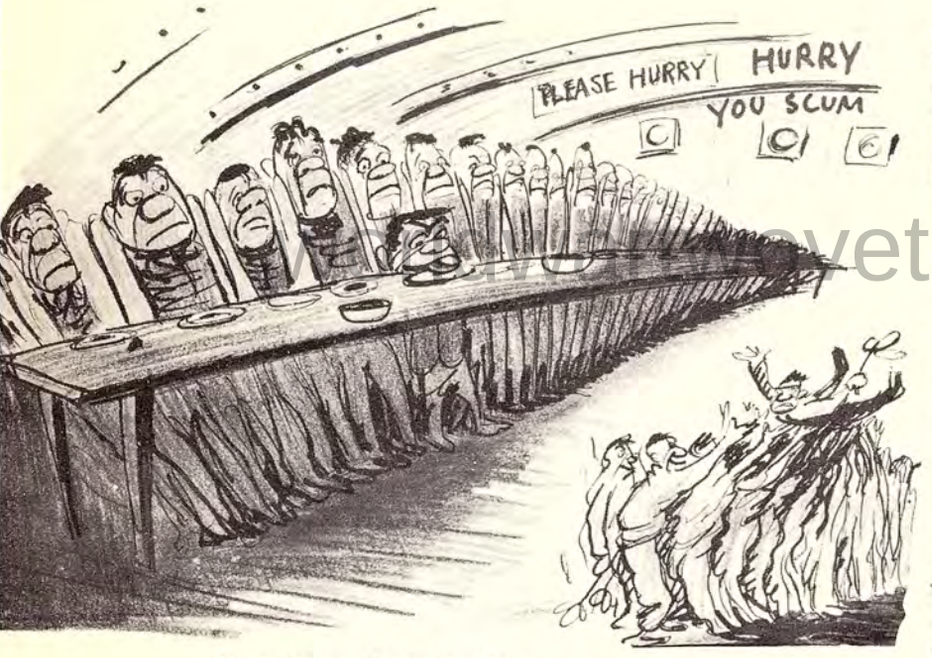
OUR LAST WOMEN IN 2½ YEARS

EXCEPT FOR AFRICA, SICILY, ITALY, IRELAND
ENGLAND, FRANCE, BELGIUM, HOLLAND, GERMANY

SO WE SAILED

We were shot for everything

Red Cross Girls with doughnuts were abundant.



Always room for one more.

Say don't look now but you remember what happened to C. Co.

Cabin Room

AFRICA

AFRICA

PROLOGUE TO COMBAT

AMID THE cresendo of falling anchor chains the convoy nestled to a stop in Casablanca harbor after twelve days on the high seas of the North Atlantic. The men of the 82nd "All American" Airborne Division with their sea legs and airborne backs lined the rails and packed the port-holes for their first look at a country which had seen the war, a war which they were to be a key figure in for two years. Between them and the shore, still half above water, was a blownup French cruiser, remaining as a relic of the fight which had flattened the water front and littered the port only a short time before.

It was so quiet and peaceful that the war seemed thousands of miles away, yet it was actually only two months and four flight hours from this very spot.

All eyes focused on the scene before them. It was early morning, and in the bright sunlight, the low white buildings (casa blancas), sloping upward into the hills from the water front stood out in glaring clearness against the rolling plains of rock and sand, and the backdrop of cloudless blue as far as the eye could see.

Casablanca, city of contrasts where, Kipling notwithstanding, East and West, do meet in a city of strange and exciting contrasts.

Casablanca, where, in November of 1942, American troops began their assault on Axis Africa, the first leg of the long road to Rome and Berlin. Where General Patton began his power packed push across the burning sands, driving the Fox's forces pell-mell into Monty's 8th Army jaws.

Casablanca, which President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill selected as the site of one of their many historic meetings.

Casablanca . . . splendid public buildings, flanked by blazing, palm-shaded gardens. Chalk-white abodes, domes and minarets and contrasting squalor in the native quarter.

The continental French, sitting in street cafes, sipping their wine and reading their papers. The biblical simplicity of the "Arabs," hawking bric-a-brac on the streets, as though greeting Cook's Tour passengers on a one-day stopover.

Streets and cafes crowded with soldiers and sailors of Free France, England and the United States, strange contrasts to the red - fezed Moroccan soldiers standing guard at wharfs and warehouses.

Walls proclaiming the arrival of new attractions for movie fans, and others emblazoned, "Vive DeGaulle!" "Vive France!"

Busy docks in harbors still dotted with hulks of ships sunk in the first fighting in Africa. Men and material pouring off incoming ships in an endless procession.

Streets crowded with all manners of military vehicles, incongruously passing among horse-drawn, engine-less autos, autos driven by charcoal burning engines, donkey carts, and the perennial bicycles.

The dark "Arab" men, turbaned and clad in flowing white tunics, or patched "coats of many colors," their feet bare or sandaled. Street vendors de luxe, clamoring, eager to sell their baskets, shawls, leather goods, postcards; haggling endlessly over a few francs. "Small business men" in their tiny shops on the dirty, dark, winding streets of the native quarter, offering to sell ill-looking, ill-smelling foods.

Veiled "Arab" women, swathed from head to foot in long, flowing robes, small, timorous, looking not in the least like the dark, oriental sirens of an *Esquire* drawing.

"Arab" children, dirty, ragged, jabbering urchins, begging for a chance to earn a few francs shining shoes; pleading for "bom boms."

This was the panorama that greeted the men of the 82nd as they strode down the gangplank at Casablanca on the afternoon of 10 May 1943. Troops marched past the docks and warehouses through the streets of the city to Camp Don B. Passage staging area, near the northeastern edge of town.

Thus the outfit arrived at its new secret camp site to be welcomed by the most unbelievable assortment of merchandise and merchants imaginable. Arabs of all sizes, ages, and degrees of cleanliness were there with their souvenirs. These wrap-around garments they wear concealed everything from a bicycle to a kitchen stove, and everything was for sale.

Oujda-Marnia

The Casablanca stay was only a few days. Soon the Division was on the move again, this time northeastward by plane, truck, and train to Oujda French Morroco. The Chutists bivouaced at Oujda and the Gliderman at Marnia near the Algerian border.

The train ride from Casablanca to Oujda in French Northeast Morocco, a ride of eight days, was one of the most unusual experiences men of the 82nd had ever experienced. The train was a specially furnished series of these well - ventilated boxes stuck on wheels and fastened together dubiously with everything from dog chains to hair pins. The cars had been

built for transporting valuable war material, and they were labeled accordingly, "Forty Men or Eight Horses." The horses didn't mind; so who were the "dog faces" to gripe.

The days were filled with sightseeing; poker and crap games; and relaxing to the rocking rhythm of the rails in all the luxury of an African horse car. One ex-King of the Hobos cried with joy at the chance to hit the rails again after two years of high brow travel. The bellies of the men were filled with "C" Rations and vino, the latter smuggled on at every stop from "merchants" of all ages who swarmed over the train, and to whom the "C" Rations were smuggled in payment. Like our stomachs, the air was also filled —filled with the definite reminder that Arabs were within a mile and as usual needed an education in the uses of water and an introduction to Leaver brothers.

But the men learned as they traveled, and by the time they reached Oujda knew a bit more about striking a bargain with an Arab. At one of our habitual stops on the journey, one of the men, an ex-pawn broker by trade, jumped off the train for a quicky "rest" period, and before he could get back he bought a leather wallet, a pair of shoes, a bottle of wine, and a wrist watch. The wallet was more holes than leather; the shoes must have come right off the Arabs feet; the wine was putrid; and the watch didn't run. By the time he left Africa he knew better, and wouldn't have paid over half a month's pay for the junk. "Thank Heavens we haven't been getting business from such a people in the States," said the pawnbroker as he hopped back on the 40 and 8'er with the Aa-Rab still running after the box car yelling he'd been duped.

Then came Oujda with its few good looking women; its downtown Recreation Centre, a few bars here and there which did a thriving business in benzoazurine, gasoline, and shaving lotion; the horse-drawn junk heaps which ten years before had been out of date autos and now were the cabs of the hoypaloy.

Oujda was worth seeing, if there was nothing else to do and if life had become so unbearable that one didn't care what happened to him. Occasionally someone slipped up here and there and was given a pass into town for a break from the training in the Dust Bowl.

The site of the camp was chosen with the care so typical of sites chosen for American training camps. On one side of the town there were the beautiful rolling plains, ankle-high grass which looked like a soft green carpet flowing gently over the hills and blending into the beauties of the colorful mountains on the left and the blue Mediterranean on the right.

So the camp was located on the other side of the town in the middle of the worst dust bowl on the continent of Africa. Every day at exactly five minutes to one the entire kitchen area of the camp was visited by a sand and wind "twister" just barely short of a tornado. Every day at exactly five minutes to one every man in camp had just been served his noon meal, and was sitting down in the sun to eat. For those who failed to take a good look at the food as it went into the mess kit there was that everlasting mystery of what in the devil they were eating besides the sand.

In addition to the scheduled jumps in tricky winds, there was the worst epidemic of dysentery ever imagined in a latrine orderly's nightmare, and jumps, scheduled or unscheduled, were made all through the day and night. Men on guard wore entrenching tools as "standard equipment."

Twelve miles northeast of Oujda just on the Moroccan side of the border was

the other main camp of the 82nd "All-American." Camp Marnia, with Brigadier General Keerens in charge was located like Oujda in a desolate, sterile, rocky, dusty, heat-seared valley, which seemed "Nowhere in North Africa" instead of the censors "Somewhere in North Africa" on the letterheads of these troops from a Division so recently from the States.

But enough of these social problems. Training had to go on. Overnight, bustling tent cities sprang up on what had been "Arab" goat pasture.

Oujda and Marnia brought the Division its first taste of extended field conditions. Troops lived in long straight rows of pup tents, interspaced with slit trenches. They slept on the ground or upon mattresses filled with straw. They squatted on the ground and ate from mess kits at the field kitchens. They bathed under an open-air shower at the water point or took sponge baths from their helmets. They shaved and washed in their helmets and learned the meaning of water discipline. They washed their clothing in wooden tubs or in halves of discarded oil drums. They gave each other haircuts. They worked through the heat of the African days on the rolling tree-less plain, and welcomed the cool of the evening.

The Oujda Review Area

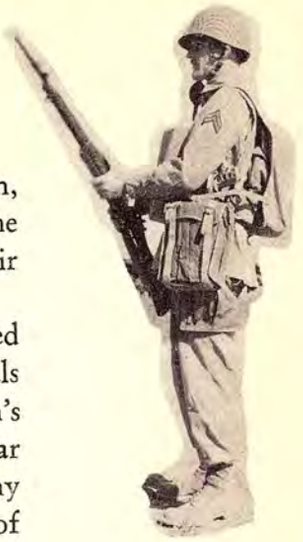
Despite the climatic conditions the camp at Oujda was to become the greatest parade ground the Division had graced to date. The first Airborne Division and the first to grace Africa or any foreign soil was to be the proud recipient of virtually every dignitary in Northwestern Africa. The proud 82nd paraded their airborne backs and polished boots before 15 allied generals in less than a month.

On May 18th the Division colors were dipped for General Mark Clark, Commanding General of the Fifth Army, and the following day the men filed by again, this time for General "Tohey" Spaatz, the colorful commander of our African air force.

On June 3rd the Division again stepped out for a review, this time for Generals Patton, Clark, and Bradley, the Division's 1st Commanding General in World War II; Major General Gruenther, 5th Army Chief of Staff, and an impressive row of French and Spanish dignitaries, including Lt. General Luis Orgaz, High Commissioner of Spanish Morocco.*

The Division had been reinforced with troops, Washington - coded "EGB," and truly presented a grand spectacle as its even columns of marching men paraded past the reviewing stand to the accompaniment of the Division bands. Hundreds of parachutists were silhouetted against blue skies and dropped downward, as the Division's attached air strength roared overhead. That afternoon General Patton addressed the officers of the Division on their role in battle, and in his typical colorful "blood 'n guts" style, gave us a blow by blow account on how to act in battle and convinced us on the spot that he possessed the kind of leadership that wins wars.

On June 16th the series of Reviews and visits by dignitaries of General grade were appropriately climaxed when the "Old Man" of them all, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces in Africa paid the Division a short visit. He addressed the officers on the importance of discipline and its relation to an efficient fighting force. They could feel his personality and complete



*Others were General D'Armee Auguist Noguess, Resident General in French Morocco; Francisio Delgado Serrano, Major General of Spanish Morocco; Brigadier General Alfredo Galera, Director of Native Affairs of Spanish Morocco; Lt. Gen. Julian Olivares, Liaison Officer of the Spanish High Commissioner with the resident General of French Morocco, Sr. Angel Silvela, ist Secy. of Embassy, Vice Counsel of Spain in Tangier; General au Bridage Georges Beucler, commanding the French-Oujda sub-Division; Bishop Henri Vielle, Vicar Apostolic of Rabat, and the Sultan of Morocco.

confidence in him engulfed the officers at once.

There was a guard of honor accompanied by the Division Band, but no review was held for General Eisenhower, as the Division was already busy making its preparations for its next move, and units of the 325th CT were having a grand scale glider problem, the largest that they had had to date. Covering eighty miles and lasting two days, the exercise was as comprehensive in covering the work the glider units were to do as any the parachute teams had accomplished.

All told, the "All American" was at Oujda for six weeks. Training was essential, but how, when, and where. The soldiers tried to train in the daytime. It was too hot, it was too hot and dirty to do anything. Then they began training at night — compass marches by small groups, organizing in the dark from simulated parachute drops and glider landings, moving across country at night and organizing positions, digging fox holes, laying wire, preparing mine fields by the light of the moon. All this worked out well but bayonet practice at 2 A. M. was a little too unique to bring enthusiasm.

In the darkness above, the formations of C-47's came and went as the troop carriers practiced navigation and night flying.

It was too hot to sleep in the daytime, and the troops became exhausted.

The various units had begun to accumulate mascots. One had a baby goat, one a monkey, and the 505th, still recovering from the shock of having to leave Max, the jumping dog, in the U. S. A., adopted a jackass, which they promptly tried to instruct in the art of jumping from a plane. The animal, however, did not have Max's good luck, and on its first jump, June 6, it broke its leg and had to be shot. Had the jump been a success the 505th states that jumping jackasses might have introduced a new mode of warfare.

Entertainment was nil.

Occasionally troops could be taken to Oujda in convoy. There they could visit the sidewalk cafes, sip their wine, eat pea soup, eggs and brown bread and watch the ever-curious picture of the French-Moroccan life about them.

American Red Cross and Chapel Nissen hutments were erected at the camp. The Red Cross operated a library and writing room, passed out donuts and lemonade, assisted in distribution of post exchange supplies, and presented outdoor motion pictures, welcome interludes in the isolated camp.

On June 18, two Arabs were accidently shot by members of the 325th while out on the rifle range at Marnia. It was unfortunate but even at this late date, the Arabs have been unable to comprehend the importance of not trespassing on Army training grounds. Sentries had been bothered much ever since the Division's arrival in Africa with uncautious Arabs wandering around in the middle of the night. Finally, Headquarters issued a sign and countersign system to be used by all guards. The first night the system proved effective, as one guard who had been warned about the possible presence on Italian Parachutists, fired twice, missed, then clubbed an unfortunate and unwise Arab on the back of the head.

The Division was now in the process of its next move. Closer to combat. On the morning of June 16 the advance elements departed by truck for the Tunisian area, more specifically, Kairouan. More elements followed on the 21st and 24th and 6th of July; the majority of troops

covering the approximately 1000 miles by air.

The next stop, the next foreign country, Tunisia, Kairouan, Tunisia by glider, plane, truck and train. Many crossed the barran Atlas Mountains in a five-hour flight over Algeria, but some less fortunate had another regretable experience with French trains. For them there was plenty of work. The Box Car Blues was playing again. At one point an entire trainload of equipment was transferred to another train; and as the supplies had to be guarded at all stops, there were 24-hour guard tours. But the trip itself was well worth the trouble it involved. The men saw signs all along the way which told stories in themselves of the fighting which had taken place there. It was a further introduction to the results of a fight won and lost, the end of the German Afrika Corps.

For the forty and eight cars which were again in use, the men traveled in a reasonable degree of style. One car even had lights, water, radio, stove, food, hammocks, shelter, and ten tons of supplies in addition to its three G. I. occupants. This was the oasis where a cup of coffee could be had any hour of the day or night —for ten francs. Cut-throats? No, just the ordinary "trooper" with ambition to get ahead.

When the trains finally arrived in Tunis one crew had increased by two; a couple of British parachutists who decided somewhere along the line during a stop and a drink that they couldn't leave their Yank buddies. They were swell fellows, and were given a royal send-off when their M. P. Guard of Honor arrived to escort them away. The day before had been the Fourth of July and no American ever celebrated it more enthusiastically than those two Limey jumpers. When the time came to depart they proudly pulled themselves up to their knees and marched off with an M. P. on each collar.

The trip whether by glider, plane, or train brought the G. I. frame of mind one step nearer its combat peak. For weeks bodies and tempers had been kicked around in the sweltering heat of the dirty, dusty desert. Now came long rides over the combat scared wreckage of the Tunisian battlefields. From the air it was even more impressive. A long trip aboard plane or glider, sights left by battle, and time to think and realize how close to realism the ride really was.

Kairouan was something of a lull before the storm. Training was continuous as usual but conditions were slightly better and the desert hardened 82nd began to temper the edge they had wetted so long for the jumps ahead. If green troops are always a problem, certainly these men would cut to a minimum any doubts about success. They were hard, confident, uncomfortable, mean and eager for a change, that would spell combat or any other and to "Africa, Lovely, Africa."

Kairouan, Tunisia is a holy city, the third ranking holy city in all Islam, according to Uncle Sam's "Guide to North Africa." Holy cities are "off limits," of course, not because they are holy, but because they art too filthy even for healthy soldiers to enter. Cleanliness does appear to be next to Moslem godliness. To this holy city came the Moslems to die, but apparently none had been informed of the ancient adage that "dirt never killed anybody."

The division bivouaced in a huge arc around the city. For some elements it was just more desert and dirt, but for many the training grind under the hot African sun was now spelled by an occasional more shady respite.

Wherever possible the troops were bivouaced in some kind of shade. Olive groves surrounded by high cactus hedges were numerous. Officers and men pitched their tents on the sandy soil in the welcome shade of the olive trees. Outside the cactus walls, the training areas were hot and dry per S. O. P. African style, but in the camp areas, the olive trees offered some measure of succor from the scorching sun. A faithful Mediterranean breeze made the camps around Kairouan much more habitable than anything the treeless fields and stodgy air had offered at Oujda and Marnia.

Troops passed their free time lolling in the shade, reading, playing cards or ball, talking or eating green olives and almonds. Convoys went almost daily over the rough, winding roads to Sousse or Enfidaville, where officers and men—oblivious of the cares of war for an afternoon —swam in the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Bob Hope with Frances Langford and troupe came in for a great show, and regular band concerts, outdoor movies, and refreshments from Red Cross workers offered welcome diversion on the long evenings before one stretched out to sleep beneath the glistening stars and golden moon of the quiet African nights.

For the first time dispersal and camouflage were strictly enforced replacing the well-lined tents and huts of garrison. Within 250 short miles—lay the enemy in Sicily, nervously waiting for the invasion which certainly would soon come. The troops began to sense the nearness of battle. Lying beneath the stars at night they could hear the steady drone of the R. A. F. Wellingtons on their regular bombing missions. Relics of the recently-fought battle of Tunisia were plentiful, and enemy helmets, hand grenades, ammunition, jerry cans, and shell fragments could be found everywhere.

Situation tents were set up almost immediately in the 30-miles arc of "All American" unit camps around Kairouan (K-Ration) and daily conferences were held to discuss the division role in the pending attack on the iron muscled underbelly of Festung Fortress Europa.

Parts of Tunis like Kairouan were "off limits" to Allied soldiers, but unlike Kairouan it had a great deal to interest a paratrooper wetted for combat yet to begin. The challenge of the Casbah in the conniving heads of the trouble loving troopers was not to be denied. The celebrated Casbah, or native quarter of Tunis

was strictly, quite definitely and positively "off limits" and out of bounds to all Americans and British troops including in capital letters the 82nd Airborne Division, heroes of the "Bama" frying pan, Phenix City, Cotton Ed Smith, and Fayetteville. The challenge for the "All American" troopers was double. The M. P. patrol was terrific, and the Casbah was definitely the most interesting section of town. Many of the men found that the Casbah was loaded with plenty of the things they wanted; souvenirs, etc., and a few other things they didn't want but brought back at no extra charge. The Medics started working in shifts.

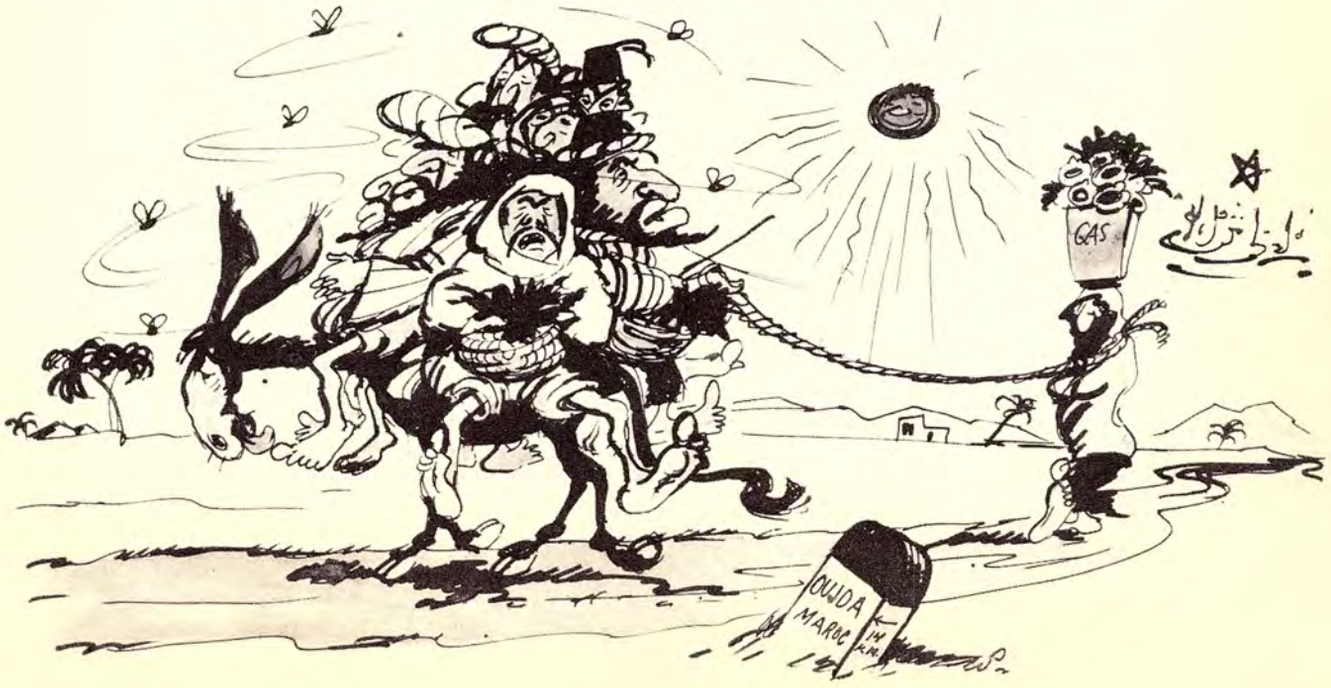
The M. P.'s it seemed, had also been instructed in the danger of lifting a veil; and with the ever present possibility of the G. I. mattress cover walking past actually covering a Sheik's indescretion and not a G. I., there was little they could do. And in addition to the "pig in a poke" possibility there was also that poke in the puss angle. So the troopers came and went; the Casbah did a thriving business; and the M. P.'s "done their duty."

Training was as usual "continuous" with both day and night exercises. A special schedule called for a "Siesta" from 1330 to 1530 during the hottest part of the day. Troops got up at 0430 and started work at 0600. They got madder and meaner. The Krauts could expect anything.

On the Fourth of July the mechanism of final battle preparation swung into full gear with General Ridgway and his Staff flying to Algiers where they joined the Command Staff of the First Armored Corps (reinforced) to complete plans for the invasion of Sicily under Lt. General George S. Patton, commander of the highly secret Seventh Army.

Every man in the division was filled with speculation on the wheres and whats of the immediate future, but the flys, sand, and sun had done their job in their own insufferable way. With the body hardened and the mind still filled with the disagreeable training area, anticipation for the future and combat could not have been keener. Morale was at a peak. The men wanted to tackle anything.

Such were the conditions when the troopers of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment nucleous of the 82nd Combat Team which was to make the initial air-



borne landings on Sicily, assembled to celebrate their activation anniversary.

Occasionally a more sensitive nostril could pick up the fragrance of cooking barbecue and fast disappearing beer above the other more powerful odors—for the men were celebrating and hoisting a few short ones, synonyms to these students of the sword and apostles of the brew. Their mouths were filled with beer and barbecue but their brains were filled with an Esprit de Corps seldom seen in any group.

All at once the noise of the occasion stopped. In the midst of the mingled odors of barbecue, beer, and Arabs, Col. James M. Gavin, the regimental C. O. since activation, clambered upon a beer keg to have one of his "talks with his boys." The officers were dismissed as he settled down to reminiscing with his men. They knew they were hotter than a two-dollar pistol, and he confirmed their thoughts.

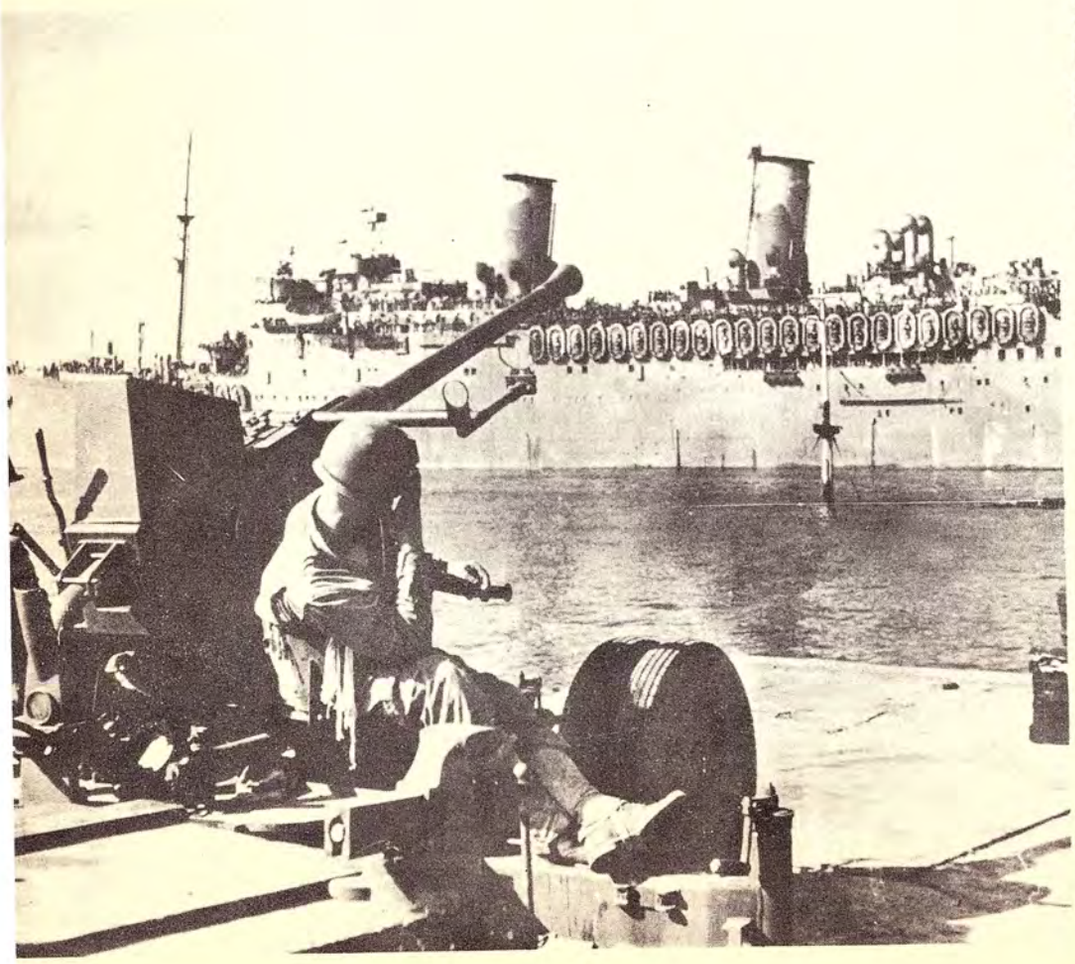
He talked about several of the incidents in the past year, the Cotton Fish Camp and Town Pump "Campaigns" which had caused trouble on the outside but unity in the Regiment, and many other training camp incidents. While Colonel "Jim" was talking, the men were doing more than quietly drinking what they knew might be their last beer for a long time—or—just their last beer; every mother's son of them was thinking. Thinking back over the past year since they had been in the outfit, some of them as far back as that July, 1942 when the regiment was born amid the heat, dust, and mud of the Benning Frying Pan, the Benning in stifling heat not unlike that on this African evening birthday. All through that quiet, easy-going speech of his the men listened, laughed and thought. And on the faces of the Colonel and the men there was that look of complete confidence each felt in the other which spoke for itself. They would follow him through hell if he ordered it, and would have the Colors flying over Satan's C. P. hours ahead of schedule.

Friday night, July 9, the 505th Parachute Combat Team, plus the Third Battalion of the 504th Parachute Combat Team, dropped from the skies over Sicily and 82nd Airborne Division Headquarters announced to the division:

"At this moment, troops of this division are in combat against the enemy. Last night, at 2030, the CT 505th dropped successfully on the Island of Sicily (husky) and opened the door for a powerful seaborne Allied army, now storming the beaches. The remainder of this division will follow as fast as air transport will permit."

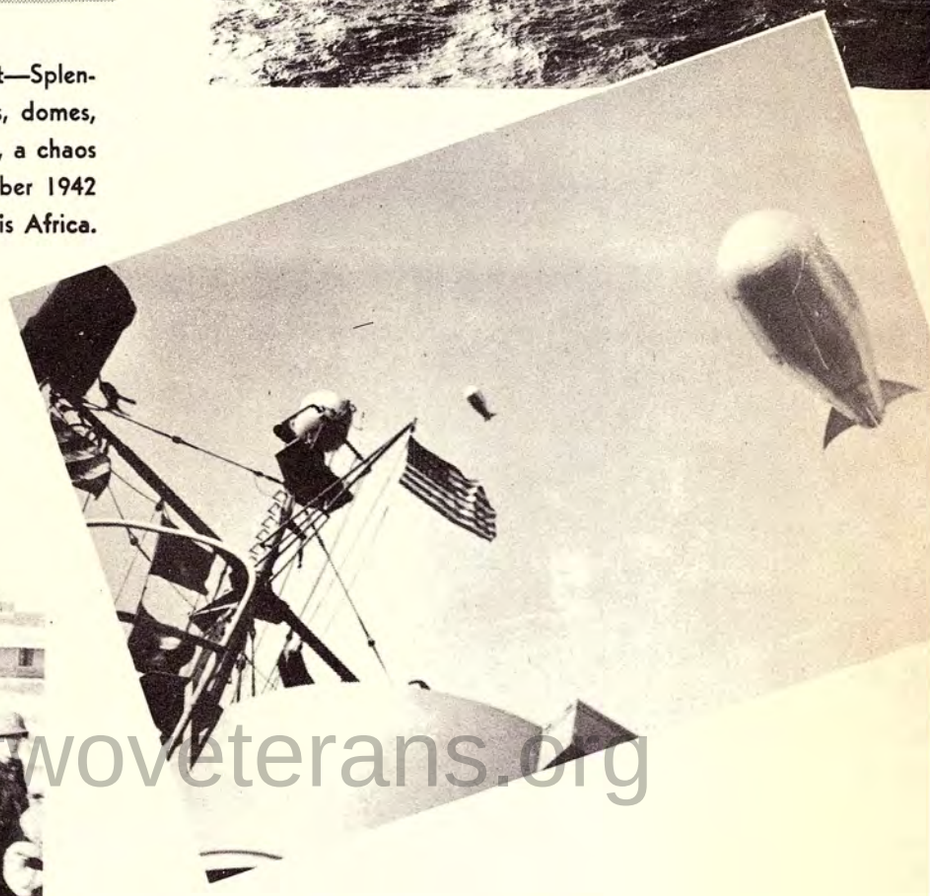
And so began the 82nd's battle tests for an unparalleled combat future. The end of a pre-combat training year which had pushed from the Bayous of Louisiana to the dust bowls of the Sahara.

CASA

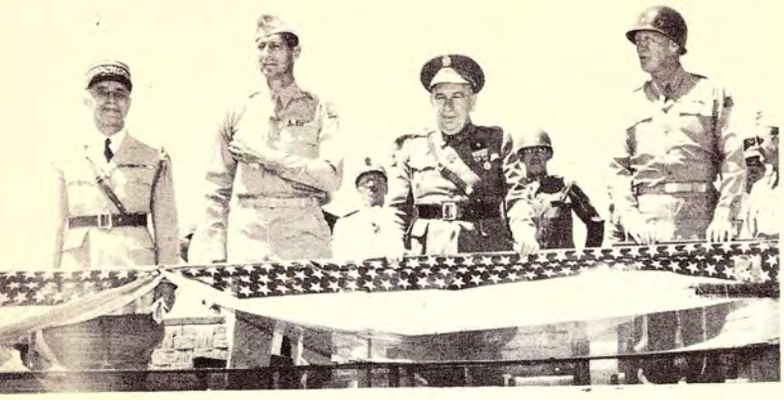


BLANCA

City of contrasts where East meets West—Splendid public buildings, palm shaded gardens, domes, minarets, and squalor in the native quarter, a chaos of sight, sound and smell. Here in November 1942 American troops began their assault on Axis Africa.



The strange inhabitants of the arid Moslem world.



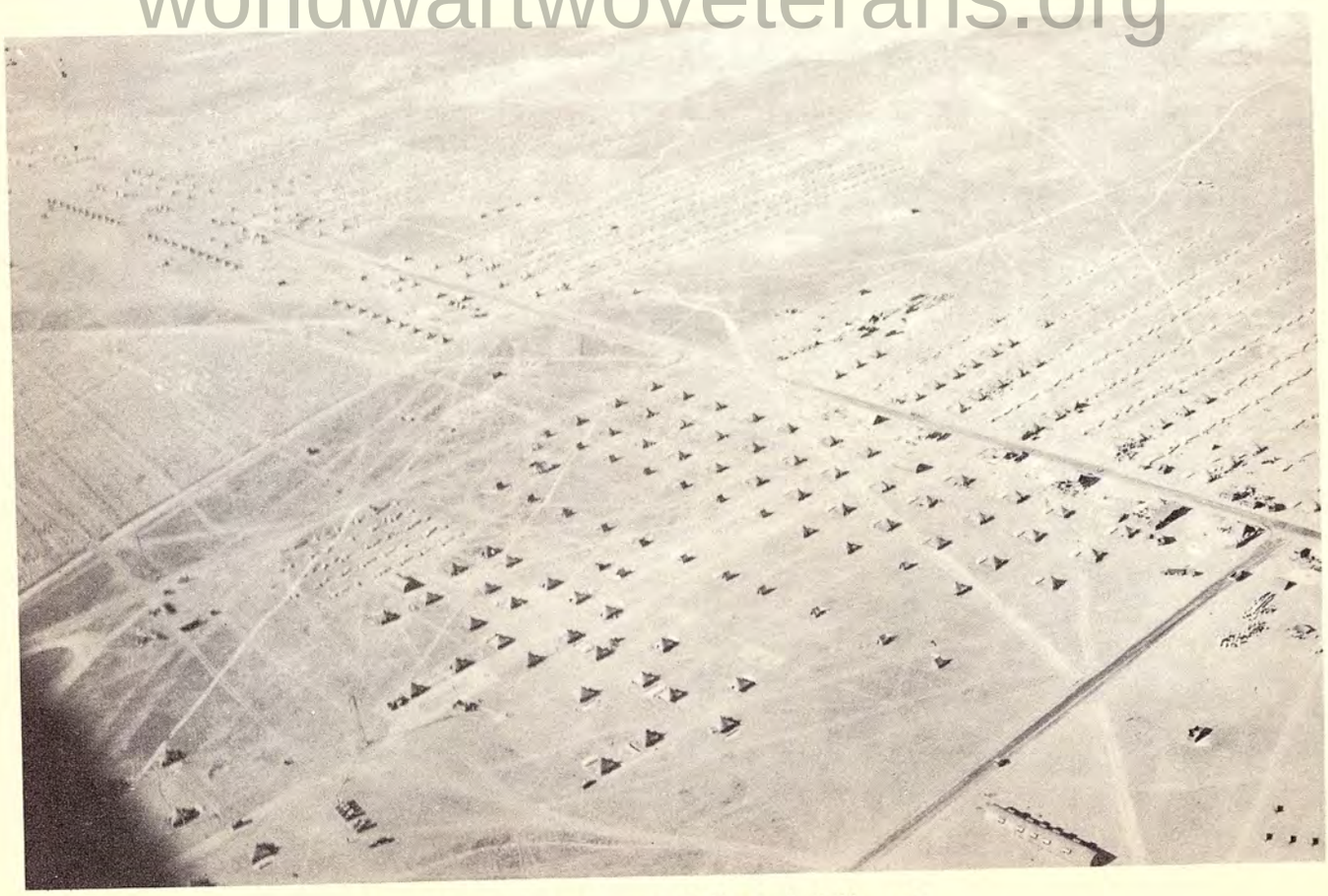
OUJDA PARADE GROUND

THE EIGHTY-SECOND PASSES IN REVIEW

The 82nd Airborne Division, exponents of a new idea, airborne warfare, displayed their trade before fifteen Generals in Oujda, French Morocco. Honored guests and observers included: the Sultan of Morocco; American Generals Eisenhower, Spaatz, Clark, Patton, and Bradley; the high Commissioner of Spanish Morocco and many other French, Spanish and American dignitaries.

OUJDA–KAIROUAN

Transportation by African Streamliner
Casablanca to Oujda.



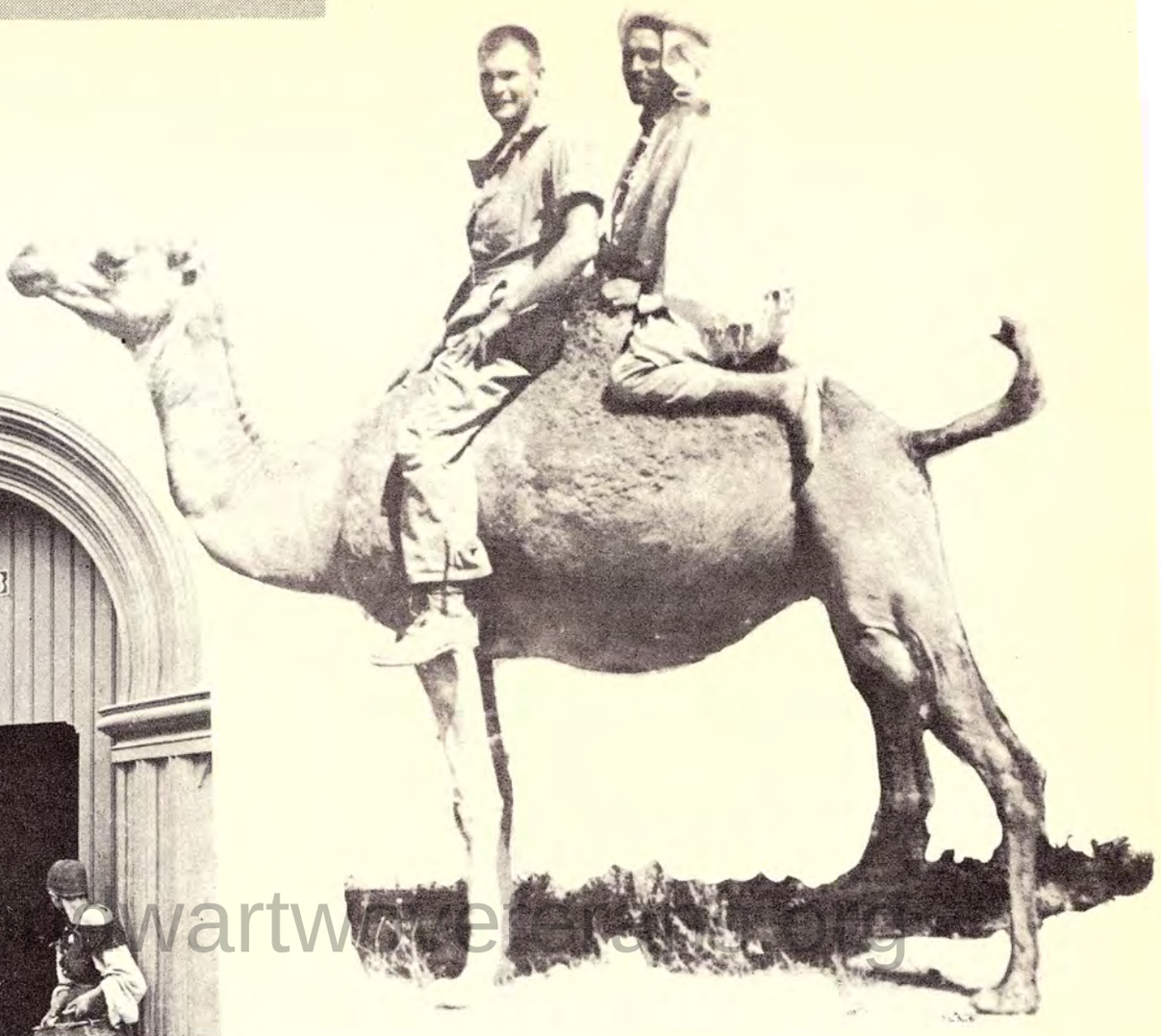
From the air the camp at Oujda looked like ants
on a sandbar. It was hot, dirty, dry, and desolate.

Bob Hope and Frances Langford entertained in the desert town of Kairouan.

Desert beggars besieged our men wherever the train stopped. (right) Oujda street merchants.

OUJDA–KAIROUAN

Number 48 (nuff said)



Hassan Ben Bost with Abdullah on Mohammed.

Arab snake charmers in Oujda startled young.

Africa was mighty, mighty hot. Shade was but an evil interlude between baths of searing sun.

INVASION TRAINING

IKE EISENHOWER—The big boss was one of many Generals who came to Oujda to see for himself what manner of men were there.

Coupled with the heat, these physical gyrations were slightly rough on the constitution.

← Pushups in the sun to make the 82nd America's toughest fighting division.

→ Landing shock — physically and mentally the troopers were biting nails and ready for anything.

INVASION TRAINING

Gen. Mark Clarke watches his new airborne charges train for combat. Troop Carrier planes trained with us for our 4 airborne invasions to come.

A parapack is loaded. This equipment bundle will drop with the troopers if all goes right.

The ultimate in Parachute Training – a mass jump with invasion combat load.

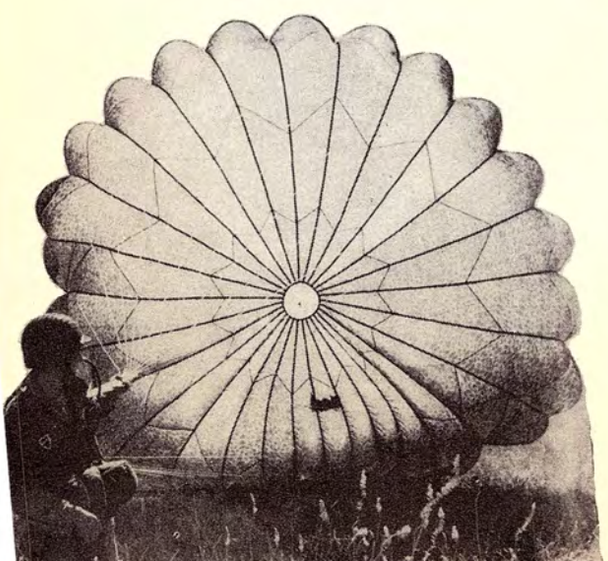
A rugged topkick with the equipment he has after dropping his chute.

Bailing out over Oujda.

Right: Loading up for a practice jump.

INVASION TRAINING

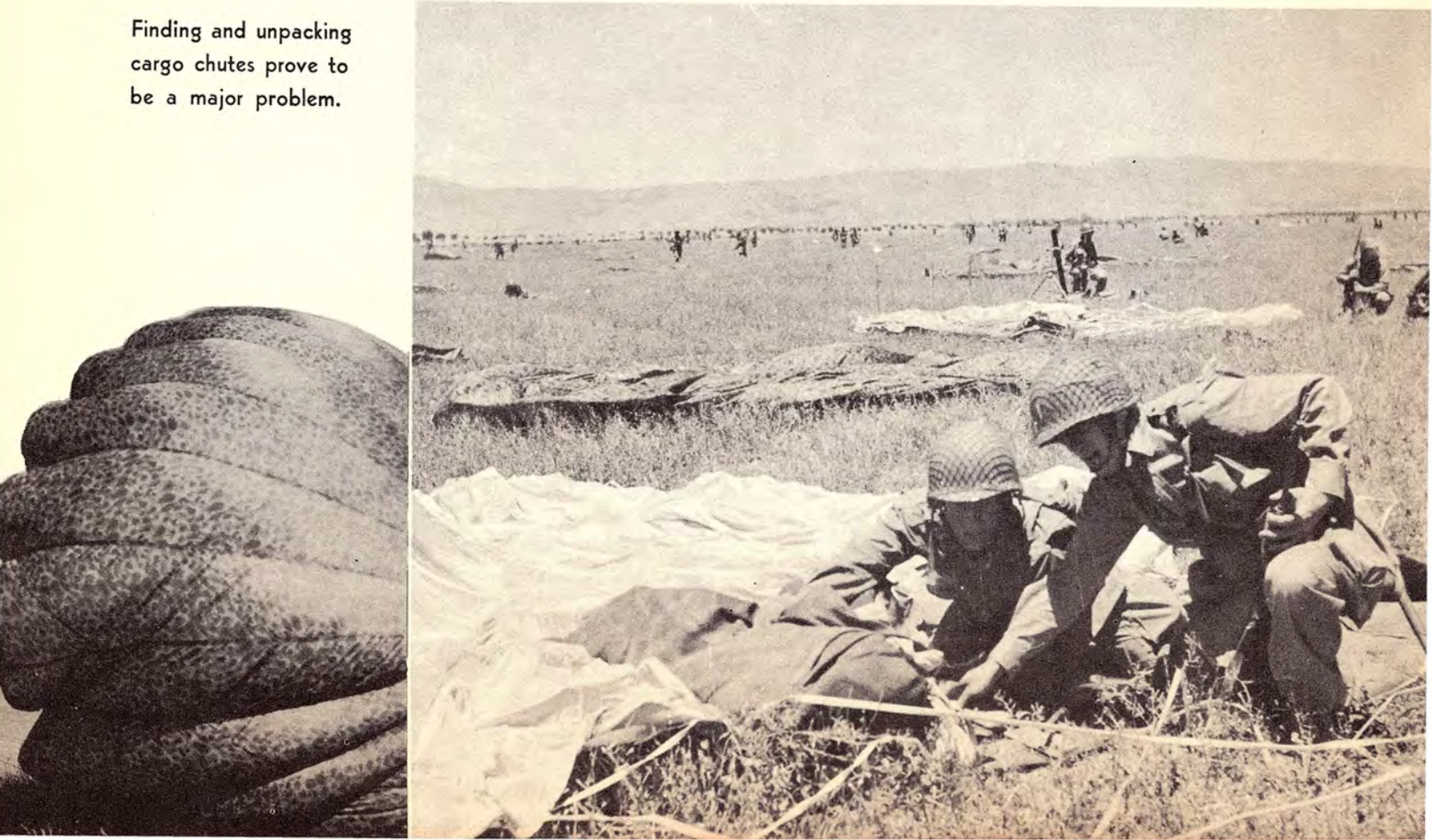
82nd troops were trained to a T in all the mechanics of this new set of tactics known as airborne warfare.



Land, Set Up, and Ready to Fire.

Every practice has
a few minor jump injuries.

Finding and unpacking
cargo chutes prove to
be a major problem.



SICILY

"Not the beginning of the end
But the end of the beginning."

—WINSTON CHURCHILL.

HOW THE 82ND SAVED SICILY

"THE ALLIED airborne operation in Sicily was decisive despite widely scattered drops which must be expected in a night landing. It is my opinion that if it had not been for the allied airborne forces (82nd) blocking the Herman Goering Armored Division from reaching the beachhead, that Division would have driven the initial seaborne forces back into the sea. I attribute the entire success of the Allied Sicilian Operation to the delaying of German Reserves (by the 82nd Airborne Division) until sufficient forces had been landed by sea to resist the counterattacks by our defending forces (the strength of which had been held in mobile reserve)."

KURT STUDENT
General der Flieger Troops

The above opinion was rendered at the Nuremburg trials by General Kurt Student foremost authority in the German army on Airborne Operations. Student commanded the German Airborne Operation on Crete and was Chief of Staff of all German Paratroops from 1943 until his capture by Allied forces after the German collapse.

Biazzo Ridge

SICILIAN D-DAY, H-4

SMASHING The UNDERBELLY OF HITLER'S "FESTUNG EUROPA" WITH THE FIRST LARGE-SCALE AIRBORNE INVASION IN U. S. MILITARY HISTORY

"THE AFRICAN sun, like a bloody curious eye, hung on the rim of the world as hundreds of airplane engines coughed into life, spewing miniature dust storms across the flat wastes of a desert airfield."

"Thin aluminum skins of C-47's vibrated like drawn snare drums and as paratroopers heaved themselves up into the planes and sought their predesignated seats, they wrinkled their noses at the smell of gasoline and lacquer that flooded the planes' interiors."

The 82nd Airborne Division was on its way to the first large scale Airborne operation in history, the first for any American Division, and the first night landing on record.

Sicily was more than just another airborne invasion. Here, the technique of a new mode of warfare was combat tested for the first time.

All the Airborne theory, planning and training conducted by the allied War Counsels had its first large scale test in Sicily. Even the Russians, who first tried mass parachute jumps, and the Germans, who tested the principle on Crete and in the lowlands, had never dared such a large scale attack. The 82nd Airborne was to be the first allied unit to touch Europe in the invasion of what Winston Churchill called the soft underbelly of Hitler's festung (fortress) Europa. "Not the beginning of the end, but the end of the beginning," he called it, and for the Airborne and allied strategists, Sicily was even more. It was the proving ground for the Airborne landings in Normandy, Holland, Southern France and across the Rhine. If the original ideas of Airborne warfare worked in Sicily, so would they in later campaigns.

Poor fighters manned these.

The plan for the invasion of Sicily provided for landings to be made on the southeastern extremity of the island, with British and Canadian forces on the east coast and American forces on the south coast. The assaulting paratroopers, consisting of the 505th combat team and 3rd Bn 504 and commanded by Col. James M. Gavin, were to land during the night D-1/D in the areas north and east of Gela. The mission in brief was to capture and secure high ground in that area and to disrupt communications and movements of enemy reserves during the night.

D-1, the day of the first lift, was, as usual for that time of year in North Africa, hot and clear. The men of the combat team stationed near Kairouan, Tunisia, lounged in their bivouac area, made last preparations of arms and equipment, ate supper at 1600 hours, and went to the ten airdromes from which they were to take off. The planes carrying the troopers to their combat baptism cleared the fields at 11:15 P. M., July 9th. The route was by way of Malta, thence

directly to the Sicilian Coast, east of Gela, and the drop zones.

Most of the men, upon landing, found themselves alone or near only one other or a few of their comrades. Those who were not already pinned down by fire immediately set out to find others—thus the fighting was begun and continued by groups of all sizes and compositions, and against a variety of objectives. Such action can be described only in its individual instances, as it occurred.

One of the most colorful victories was accomplished by 1st Lieutenant F. E. Thomas, Company "I," 504th, without bloodshed. While with several men under his command, being served a meal by friendly civilians, he was surprised and covered by the weapons of a small German force which had three disabled tanks in the vicinity, including one Mark VI. Lieutenant Thomas resorted to reason with his captor, pointing out the inevitability of Allied victory and the futility of his captor's efforts. It turned out that among the Germans there was one severely wounded man for whom the leader desired the excellent medical aid which he knew the Americans could afford. Consequently, an understanding was reached. The Americans were released and given custody of the wounded man, promising to secure him immediate medical treatment. The Germans put their tanks out of commission, abandoned them, and departed in the opposite direction.

A vastly different sort of action involving a 1st Battalion group is narrated by Jack Thompson, Chicago Tribune correspondent, who jumped with the First Lift:

"One group of the 1st Battalion, including Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Gorham, landed four miles south of Niscemi, about 2 1/2 miles from the scheduled DZ. They were just east of a very sturdy, thick-walled farmhouse which had been converted into a military fort held by 60 men with 4 heavy machine guns and 6 lights. It was well wired in with trench defenses. Colonel Gorham

The visitors pass thru Vittorio.

ordered an assault on the house, and it was organized and led by Captain Edwin Sayre and 22 men. Their first attack was launched at 2 o'clock in the morning. They were held up then, but attacked again just before dawn, with rifles, grenades, one 60mm mortar and a bazooka. They forced the Italians back out of the trenches and into the house and attacked the house with grenades. Sayre led the assault, carrying one hand grenade in his teeth and another in his left hand, with his carbine in his right hand. It was after they had taken the farmhouse that he discovered that the man who was covering him was armed only with a trench knife and not a tommy gun as he had thought. A rifle grenade fired at about ten feet blew open the door, but the door swung shut again. Sayre walked up, threw open the door, and pitched a hand grenade inside. They found a total of 15 dead and took 45 prisoners, some of whom were Germans. Four paratroops were wounded, one of whom later died. The house soon came under fire from an 88, and Col. Gorham withdrew his men back to another hill."

This group later made contact with the 1st Division, and joined the 2nd Bn. 16th Inf., with which they fought two days until relieved. In resisting an enemy attack while with the 16th Inf., paratroopers succeeded with their rocket-launchers in stopping several tanks. It was in such an act at this time that Lt. Col. Arthur Gorham,

C. O., 1st Bn., was killed. This episode is also related by Mr. Thompson:

"The position where Gorham's men were at that time acting as assault troops with the 16th Inf., with whom they had made contact, came under heavy attack by Mark VI and Mark IV tanks and enemy artillery, as well as extremely heavy machine gun fire. Col. Gorham was killed by a shell from a Mark VI while firing a bazooka at the tanks on the nearby road. Captain Comstock, Medical Officer, ran to his aid and was wounded by the next shell burst. Lt. Dean McCandless, who was nearby, ran up to help the wounded doctor and called for Corporal Thomas Higgins to get a jeep and evacuate him. Higgins ran a quarter of a mile through a concentration of machine gun fire until he found a jeep. The driver was reluctant to go into this fire, so Higgins was joined by a paratroop cook, Private Bernard Williams. The two of them drove the jeep under fire back to the hill and with the aid of Lt. McCandless evacuated Captain Comstock and the body of Col. Gorham."

The 2nd Battalion serial landed south of Ragusa, 25 miles from its drop zone, and was attacked before reaching the ground. Nevertheless, a large part of the Serial was assembled under its CO, Major Alexander, by noon of the 10th. Even during that morning, it was engaged in attacking enemy positions near S. Croce-Camerina, where it took 45 prisoners. Thence, it advanced on the town itself, occupied it after a short but hard fight, and captured 144 more prisoners and a great deal of equipment.

Just before the fated jump.

Two and one-half miles southeast of Niscemi, a group of men from the 3rd battalion, 504th, under Lieutenant Willis J. Ferrill, Company "I," ambushed a force of 350 Germans from the Hermann Goering Division, who were retreating up the road.

The paratroopers, who by the end of the afternoon of D-Day numbered 110, had taken up a defensive position on a hill. They had already shot up a German patrol, and one small group had demolished an Italian patrol, killing 14. Eleven of these Italians were killed by two privates, Shelby R. Hord and Thomas E. Lane. On the following day, after Ferrill's force had begun to increase, it was in position on a hill at noon when an enemy column was observed coming up the road from the south. With the Germans were several American prisoners. Lieutenant Ferrill withheld fire until the Germans were almost opposite his position. Then, at noon, the Germans suddenly halted for a ten-minute break. The Americans waited until the Germans started to get up and put on their packs, and then fired on them with devastating effect. The battle lasted all afternoon. It was joined by two enemy tanks which shelled the Americans from the far-off hills. Late in the afternoon, a German lieutenant came up the hill with a white flag to arrange a surrender, but when he saw the Americans were parachutists he refused to surrender and went down the hill again. Then the battle was resumed and lasted until dusk, when the Germans withdrew, leaving 50 dead. The cost to the Americans was 5 killed and 15 wounded. The hill from which the Americans fought was identified on the map as Castle Nocera.

Of the 3rd Battalion Serial, 505th, 45 men under 1st Lieutenant F. Willis, Battery C, 456th P'chute F. A. Bn., joined forward elements of the 180th Infantry, and served

with them as assault troops; 60 others, with 3 guns of the 456th were the first troops to enter Vittoria. It was on this occasion that 1st Lieutenant William J. Harris, 3rd Battalion Hdqrs. Company, taken prisoner by the Italians, persuaded the garrison commander of the futility of resistance and induced him to surrender himself and his command of 80 men on the spot. Vittoria became the first large Axis town in Europe to surrender to the 82nd.

A group of about 40 men from 505 Headquarters Serial, including men from two platoons of Engineers, was under the command of 1st Lieutenant H. H. Swingler, Headquarters Commandant. This group occupied, early in the morning of the 10th, an area of high ground commanding the road not leading inland from the 45th Division beaches, and is credited with greatly facilitating the landing of that Division. They destroyed one armored vehicle as it approached the beach, cut off advance elements seeking to retire before the 45th's attack, reduced several pillboxes, and themselves captured 5 officers and 96 men. This same group joined Colonel Gavin on the 11th in time to participate in the action at Biazzo Ridge.

180 men from the 3rd Battalion, under Major Krause, were the backbone of the force which fought the Hermann Goering Division at Biazzo Ridge.

Biazzo Ridge is a prominence about 12 miles west of Vittoria on the Gela Highway. Colonel Gavin, approaching it the morning of the 11th from the direction of Vittoria with the 3rd Battalion force mentioned above, was warned of the presence of Germans. He succeeded in compelling them to retire from the ridge and in occupying the crest of it, but, after an attempt to continue his advance, decided to organize the high ground and to be prepared to defend it against counterattack. During the day, three 75mm pack howitzers, two 57mm anti-tank guns from the 45th Division, and a few rocket launchers were assembled.

A 504 transport near Gela.

The expected enemy counterattack with tanks — Mark IV's and Mark VI's — was made shortly after noon, and surged within 50 yards of the detachment's CP. One tank was knocked out by a 75mm pack howitzer fired at point blank range. Overhead fire was rendered by 155mm guns of the 45th Division and Navy 5 inchers. A last-ditch defense finally forced the enemy to withdraw for a reorganization.

In the meantime, reinforcements from the Headquarter's Serial arrived, including 11 General Sherman tanks, making possible an American attack that afternoon which completely routed the Germans and gave the detachment undisputed possession of the Ridge.

American losses in this action were 43 killed and 100 wounded. At least 50 enemy dead were left on the field, and 50 prisoners taken. Two German armored cars and one tank were knocked out, twelve 6-inch mortars, and many machine guns, small arms and vehicles taken. A machine gun crew of the 456th Field Artillery was credited with destruction of three Messerschmidts which attacked the position.

After burying the dead the morning of the 12th, the force proceeded toward Gela to join the rest of the 82nd, which was reassembling under Division Control, for the second and final phase of the Sicilian campaign.

On the night of D plus 1 the 504th Regimental Combat Team (minus the 3rd Battalion), led by Colonel R. H. Tucker, loaded

SICILY

in planes and took off from the dusty airstrips around Kairouan, Tunisia.

The air was considerably quieter than two days before, when a near gale had made more than an unusual number of men ill; the night was lighted by a quarter moon; and the drop zone was behind the 1st Division line. The highest hope for a safe crossing seemed justified; and then it occurred—one of the war's greatest tragedies.

"Nearing the Sicilian coast, the formation of C-47's were fired upon by a naval vessel. Immediately, as though upon a prearranged signal, other vessels fired. Planes dropped out of formation and crashed into the sea. Others, like clumsy whales, wheeled and attempted to get beyond the flak which rose in fountains of fire, lighting the stricken faces of men as they stared through the windows.

More planes dived into the sea and those that escaped broke formation and raced like a covey of quail for what they thought was the protection of the beach. But they were wrong. Over the beach they were hit again — this time by American ground units, who, having seen the naval barrage, believed the planes to be German. More planes fell, and from some of them men jumped and escaped alive; the less fortunate were riddled by flak before reaching the ground.

Fired upon by our own Navy and shore troops, the 504th Parachute Infantry was scattered like chaff in the wind over the length and breadth of Sicily Island. Col. Tucker's plane, after twice flying the length of the Sicilian coast and with over 2,000 flak holes through the fuselage, reached the DZ near Gela; however, few others were as fortunate and by morning only 400 of the regiment's 1,600 men (excluding the 3rd Battalion) had reached the regimental area.

Other plane loads of 504 men dropped in isolated groups on all parts of the island, and although unable to join the regiment, carried out demolitions, cut lines of communication, established inland road-blocks, ambushed German and Italian motorized columns, and caused confusion over such extensive areas behind the enemy lines that initial German radio reports estimated the number of American parachutists dropped to be over ten times the number actually participating!"

The Division Commander, Major General Matthew Ridgeway, with members of the division staff, landed on the beaches D-Day and joined in the fighting almost immediately.

Phase No. II

150 Miles and 15,475 Prisoners in 6 days.

By the afternoon of July 18, assembly and reorganization were completed, and the 82nd was ordered to advance by the next morning from the Realmonte Line.

Actually, some of the elements of the 504 combat teams were at Realmonte by noon of the 18th, before the formal order was issued. The entire combat team, moving by

marching and truck shuttle, assembled there during the day and secured, before dark, the Canne crossings and the high ground to the west. Before 2,100 of the 19th they had reached, and were stopped by, the Corps phase line halfway between Ribera and Sciacca. Every phase of the advance, and of subsequent advances as well, was led in person by General Ridgway, who kept himself in personal touch with the reconnaissance elements, the point, and the advance guard command. More than once, men of the front lines were confronted with the commanding stature of the "All American's" General.

Substantially, all the circumstances of the advance on the 19th — the promptness and rapidity of it, the token resistance and voluntary surrender of isolated enemy garrisons — were repeated on the 20th, with a few minor variations. The advance during the day was 15-20 miles; the number of prisoners taken approximately 1,000; and 82nd casualties, two. Slight resistance and fast movements symbolized the entire advance across the Bellice River, through Tumminello, Montevago, and Sciacca. At Trapani, however, a strong defensive position was encountered. Here, the Italians put up a fierce barrage which was continued for two to three hours. The division artillery returned their fire, and one element advanced on the gun positions, forcing them to surrender before dark — the first contact had been made at 1600 hrs. In spite of this intense artillery duel, the only Airborne casualty of the afternoon was a bazooka operator who sustained a burn from his own weapon.

A treaty of surrender was dictated by General Ridgway to Italian Admiral Manfredi at Trapani, which netted a total of over 5,000 prisoners.

In each of the two phases of its participation in the Sicilian campaign, the Division had served effectively. In the first, it was prevented from achieving its specifically assigned mission; but at the cost of many casualties it successfully engaged, harassed, delayed or destroyed elements of the Hermann Goering, 15th Panzer, 4th Livorno, 54th Napoli, and 206th Coastal Divisions. Major General J. M. Swing, Airborne Advisor to General Eisenhower, declared that the work of the Airborne troops advanced the progress of the beach assault by two days. German General Kurt Student, leader of the Nazi jump on Crete, was even more complimentary, saying that the work of the 82nd saved the beachhead from being thrown back into the seas. In Sicily, as in succeeding jumps, there seemed to be no sure fire counter measures for Airborne landings.

The opposition during the second phase was considerably lighter. The division suffered only 23 casualties. But, during the 6 days of the second phase, it advanced 150 miles through enemy territory, principally on foot, and took prisoner or occupied ter-

SICILY

Mussolini's defenses were good.

ritory in which it later rounded up prisoners totalling 15,475 officers and men.

The 82nd captured a total of 23,191 prisoners during the entire Sicilian campaign, but this number does not include several thousand turned over to other units for processing in the early stages of the campaign, before the Division had assembled as a tactical unit.

It is probably because of the wide dispersion of the units in the Sicilian drop (some with the British, some with the Canadians, and others with the U. S. 1st and 45th Divisions), that the general public looks upon the Sicilian operation as a badly dispersed and ineffective effort, yet it was this dispersion which facilitated the task of the somewhat green 45th Division in its 1st combat engagement by taking pillboxes all along the coast in front of the 45th Beach assault.

In the words of General Gavin, who commanded the 505th Combat Team in Sicily as a Colonel, the added confusion of an airborne operation must be overcome by the initiative and self-reliance of the Airborne soldier: "Little things going wrong can cause a great deal of confusion in combat, and a certain amount must be accepted as normal, but if 'little things' go wrong in an airborne operation, you really have confusion.

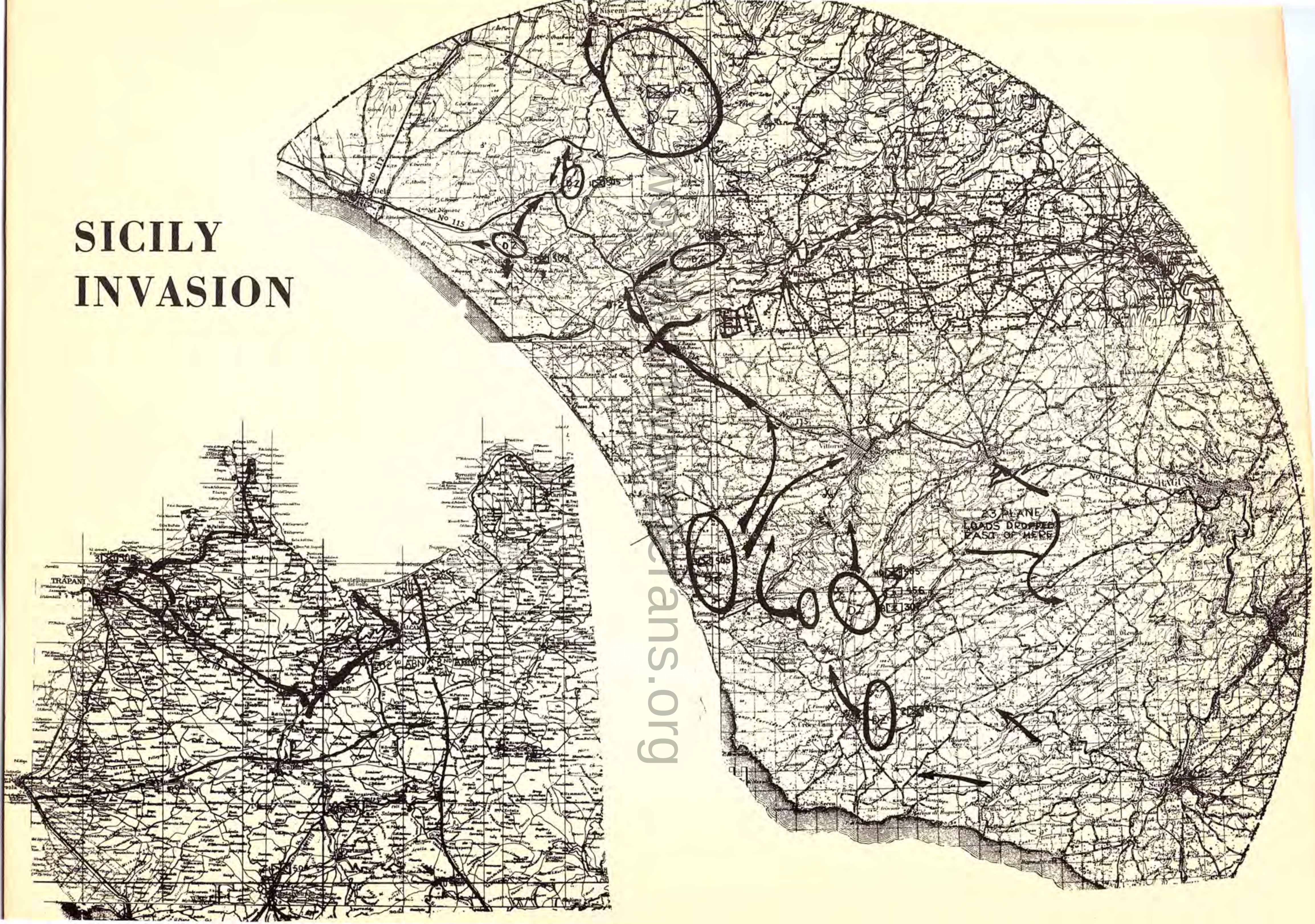
"The pay-off then is in the individual troopers and the small unit commanders. If they have learned their missions and those of other units working with them, and if they have the initiative and moral and physical courage to do something about it, everything will turn out all right.

"The Sicilian operation is a splendid example of this. In the last analysis, the accomplishment of the missions is a tribute to the courage and skill of the pilots and crews of the 52nd Troop Carrier Wing, who flew them in, and the fighting heart, individual skill, courage and initiative of the American Paratroopers. Here, in Sicily, they proved the hard way that vertical envelopment at night is feasible and almost impossible to stop, and that the American trooper has the mental and physical courage to try anything, asking and expecting no odds. For, as the dispersal was widespread, so also were the surprise and confusion of the enemy. Everywhere, the Germans and Italians saw small groups of troopers coming out of the night. The panic of not knowing how many were coming, or from where, had its demoralizing psychological effect. In addition, their accomplishments in ground fighting were an immeasurable contribution to the successful Sicilian campaign."

As Jack Thompson, noted War Correspondent who jumped with the 82nd in Sicily put it, "they (the men of the 82nd) displayed better fighting qualities and more sheer toughness than any (troops) I have ever seen." So ended the 82nd Airborne's first campaign on the long road to Berlin. Sicily was in Allied hands. Messina fell August 16th, and the 82nd returned to North Africa to prepare for Italy.

The advance was fast.

SICILY INVASION



HAND TO HAND

DEFENDER

BAYONET ATTACK

FRANCESCA

GUIDO

Briefing in the N. African Desert.

Goodbye and good luck Col. Gavin and General Kierans who was shot down 2 days later with the 504.

Ground Air-Team — Col. Gavin and the Air Corps Flight Commander

Last Minute Instructions.

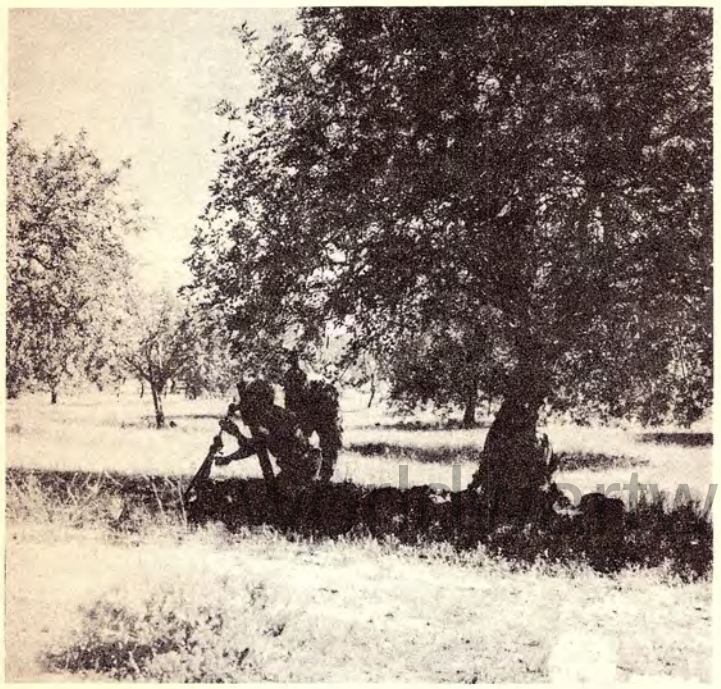
Sweatin' it out—

GOOD-BY AFRICA

LOADING UP FOR *Combat*

ATTACK

SICILY A STORY OF DUSTY ROADS, RIDGES,
STONE WALLS, WINE, PILLBOXES,
OLIVE TREES, MULE CARTS,
FRUIT SEASONS, AND
HARD FIGHTING



A mortar squad sets up in an olive grove.

Out of the midnight sky came the Paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne: the first night combat jump in U. S. Airborne history.

Enemy just ahead.

By dawn all troops were attacking.

The dusty road to Victory.

Enemy pillboxes were numerous and varied in construction.

Stubborn Sicilian natives carried ammunition.

A communications section sights the enemy.

Paratroopers pose on their first captured German tank.

George Patton and Theodore Roosevelt—two Great American Soldiers who died in Europe, look over our gains in Sicily.

Captured German truck turned out to be V-8 Ford.

Native transport was used.

War Correspondents Rammond Clapper, Ernie Pyle, and Beaver Thompson.

Antitank gun captured in the first stages of the Axis route in Sicily.

Friendly civilians helped when they could.

150 MILES IN 6 DAYS

Giant pillboxes slowed us up.

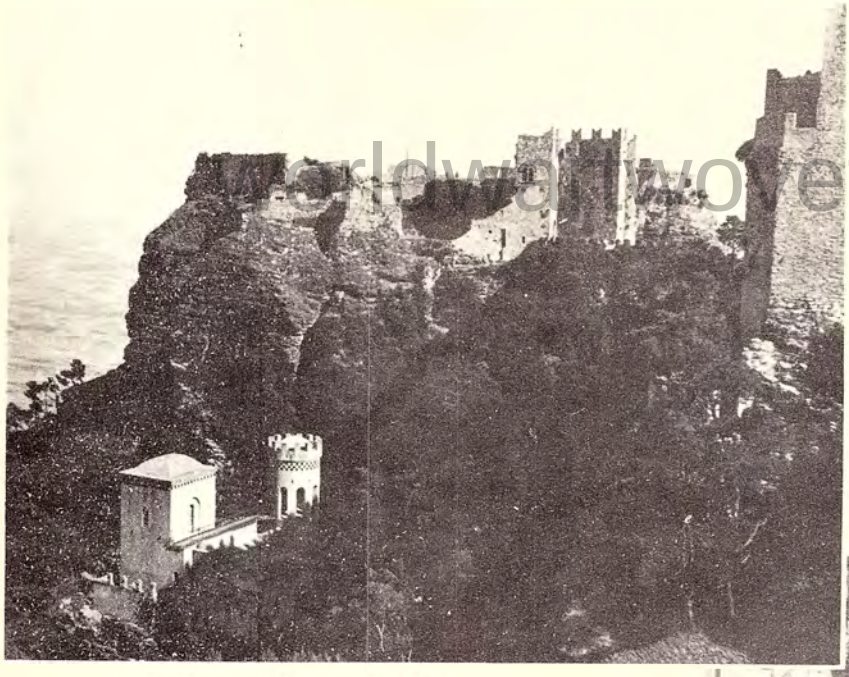
Siesta time in Sicily.

Above—Coming into Sciacca on the west coast of Sicily. Above right—Col. Gavin and War Correspondent Jack Thompson who jumped with us in Sicily. Right—Trucks shuttled the marching men wherever available. Below—General Ridgway and General Taylor discuss the advance. Below right—By every conceivable means of transportation the advance continued.

San Margarita — Gela, Vittorio, Comiso, Licata, Palma, Agrigento, Ribera, Castelvetrano, Trapani; Sicilian towns fell to the 82nd by the score.

Pots and pans on a kitchen wall in Trapani.

Railroad yards at Erice-Napola
burning after American attack.



Ancient castle on Mt. Erice
was built before Christ.

Contrasted with the ancient ruins
at Agrigento and Erice were
modern ruins at the Trapani
naval base.

The prisoners were mostly Italian. The Fascist Legions were surprisingly docile under the 82nd onslaught. After bitter fighting in the initial stages of the campaign, Il Duce's little men surrendered in droves. 23,000 gave up to the 82nd in Sicily.

AMERICAN CEMETERY, SICILY

ITALY

The second combat mission of the 82nd Abn. was begun at Salerno and ended at Anzio.

ITALY

NAPLES • FOGGIA • ROME • ARNO

WITH THE remnants of the Axis' Sicilian force pushed across the Strait of Messina into the foot of the Italian boot, the 82nd Airborne Division took part in an amazing series of plans and counterplans for following up the Allied victory with a quick thrust onto the Italian mainland.

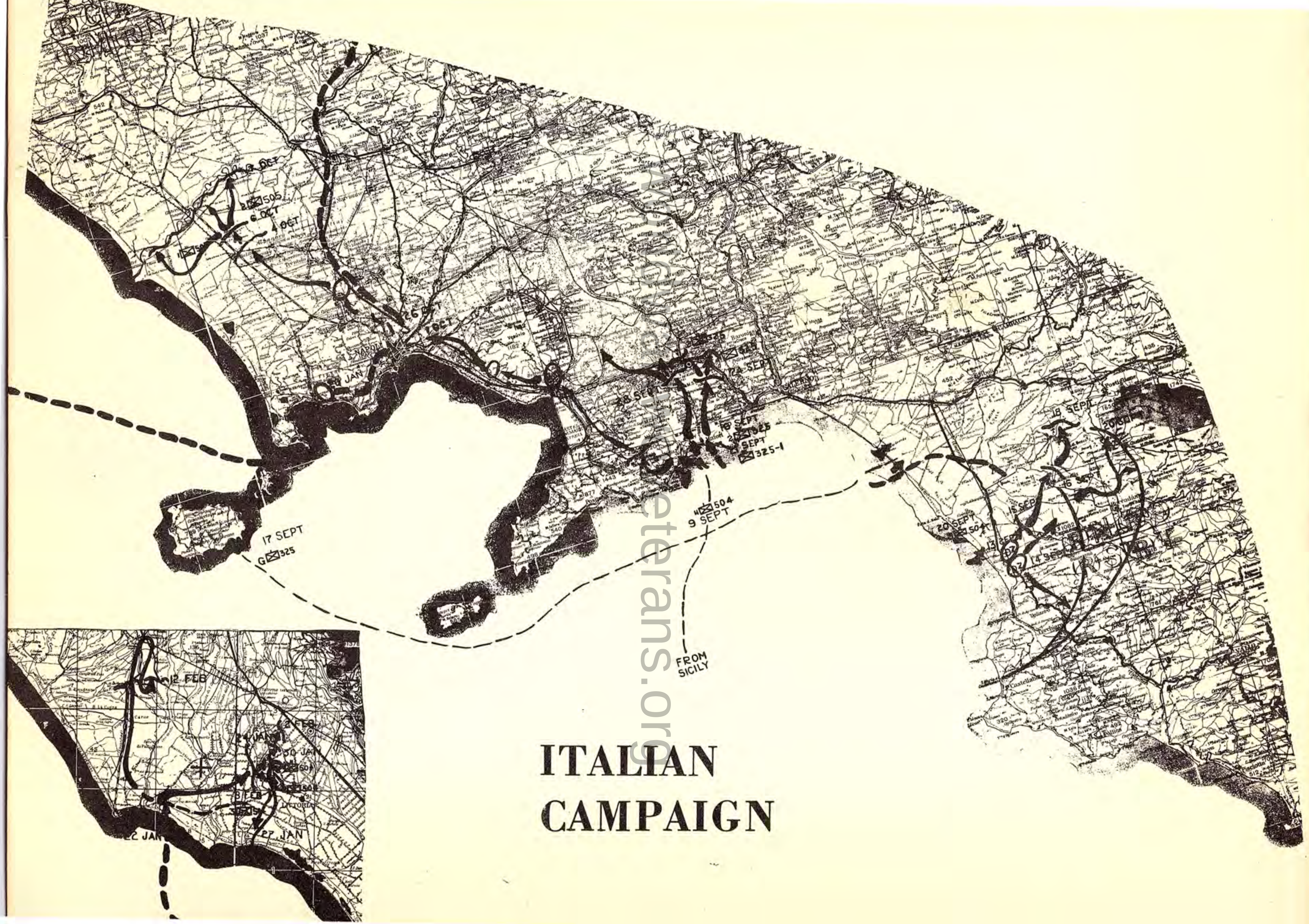
While the major portion of the division remained in Sicily, a planning staff was sent to Fifth Army Headquarters to coordinate arrangements for the first assault on Europe proper.

There were six different plans for an airborne mission in Italy. One plan called for a combat team to drop a force into the Volturno River sector with the remainder of the division in floating reserve, but that plan was discarded when the 82nd was given four days' notice to prepare to drop on Rome. The behind-the-scenes work done by the 82nd Airborne Division Artillery Commander, Major General (then Brigadier General) Maxwell D. Taylor, on his reconnaissance trip into German-held Europe, Italy and Rome, ranks with General Mark Clark's pioneering sneak into Africa as one of the most thrilling G-2 coups d'Etat in history. As Clark paved the way for D-Day in Africa, so Taylor paved the way in Italy. Not only did General Taylor save the lives of many of the men in the 82nd Division when he cancelled the premature Rome landing, but his conferences with Marshal Badoglio were instrumental in the Italian capitulation and armistice plans. The men of the 82nd were actually loading into the planes when word came from Taylor in German-held Rome that the mission must be cancelled. Taylor's conference with Marshal Badoglio had convinced him that the Italian government was in no position to give the assistance necessary for such a daring Airborne operation.

On the afternoon of September 13, 1943, Major General Ridgway left the CP by air to confer with Lt. General Mark W. Clark, commanding the Fifth Army, but was intercepted by radio when a courier from General Clarke's Headquarters arrived with a personal message calling for Airborne landings behind Allied lines on the Salerno beachhead. The Allied hold on the beach was precarious, and reinforcements were needed at once. The General called for troopers in the most urgent language.

That night, the 82nd's 504th Regiment Combat Team dropped on the beachhead. The next day, the 505th R. C. T. also dropped on the beachhead, and the 2nd Bn., 509th Parachute Infantry, then attached to the 82nd, dropped in the Avellino sector, disrupting defenses, reinforcements and resupply. The precarious beachhead was saved, but let us see how it was done by taking a look at the reports from the Regimental combat teams involved. David Whittier reports the following action by the 504th Combat Team:

"It was not until the men were seated in the planes that the mission was disclosed. In probably the briefest briefing of any comparable operation of the war, men of the 504 Combat Team were informed that the Fifth Army beachhead in Italy was in grave danger of being breached; that the 504 was to jump behind friendly lines in the vicinity of the threatened breakthrough in order to stem the German advance. A pathfinder group was going in ahead with special equipment to guide the planes into the DZ, the center of which the Fifth Army was to



ITALIAN CAMPAIGN

ITALY

indicate with a large flaming "T." That was all; no one knew specifically what was to be required of him—nothing more than the fact that the Fifth Army was endangered and that the 82nd was needed badly. Each man felt an inward surge of pride in his importance. Morale climbed.

As the planes sped down the air strip and lifted into the night sky, these men felt that they had a big assignment ahead of them; the rescuing of the Fifth Army. Though some may have had misgivings about what the morrow would bring, they were confident in their strength and happy to be on the way.

Shortly after midnight, the planes passed over the clearly marked DZ and unloaded their human cargoes. With the exception of eight planes which failed to navigate properly to the DZ, but whose planeloads were subsequently accounted for, there was little difficulty or confusion experienced in completing the operation. Assembly was made in the designated areas with a minimum loss of time, and a later check revealed that only 75 men had suffered injuries as a result of the jump. This mission is still regarded as history's greatest example of the mobility of airborne troops—in exactly eight hours from the time the Division had been notified of its mission the 504 Combat Team was briefed, loaded in the planes and dropped over their assigned DZ. Landing at night, the 504 were in the front line, raring to go, by morning of the 14th.

The following night, Colonel Gavin led his 505 Combat Team into Italy and over the same drop zone. His account of the action follows: "On the night of the 14th, the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, with Company B of the 307th Airborne Engineers attached, landed by parachute on Paestum drop zone and was in place at daylight on the right of the 504th, holding the beachhead to the coast at Agropoli. Troops of the 505th were the first to contact the British Eighth Army in its advance northward.

I remember the feeling of apprehension found in every parachute combat flight, but there were so many details to take care of at the last moment in the Salerno operation, that I think it took our minds off the possibilities of another drop like that of Sicily. Take-off went off on schedule, which always gives you the feeling that things are starting well. It was a beautiful night, too, and shortly after we cleared the northeast corner of Sicily the Italian mainland came clearly into view off to the east. I went in in the lead ship of the 505th Regimental Combat Team. Not long before we reached the drop zone, we crossed a peninsula jutting out into the Tyrrhenin Sea. In the plane, the red warning light came on to tell us that we were approximately four minutes out from what we hoped, this time, was the correct drop zone.

We seemed to be flying over the peninsula forever, when a white beach and river mouth appeared. The scene now looked exactly as the photos of the correct drop area, and about that instant the green light flashed on. There was no burning "T" down there on the ground as planned. But the area appeared in every way to be the right one, so out we went.

The first chutes had barely opened when the great "T" did light up directly under us. To the Germans who occupied the hill at positions from which they could look down upon it, the operation must have appeared bizarre and incredible. (Ed. Note: Each leg of the "T" was ½ mile long and together with Very lights the spectacle of the fire lighting up the falling "chutes" was a spectacle which thrilled every soldier, allied or axis, within miles of the Sele drop zone.) The units began at once to reorganize, and they assembled without loss or interference, although far too many pyrotechnic signals may have been used. The combat team was in the front lines by daylight.

The accurate way in which this landing went off on schedule increased immeasurably the confidence of the troopers in their own commanders and staffs and in the troop carrier command.

The airborne troops had a decisive influence on the final outcome of the Salerno operation as a whole. At a moment when the scales of defeat and victory were in balance, the weight of the airborne reserves tipped them to the side of victory. By airborne action, reserves over two hundred miles from the scene of combat, separated by unfriendly seas and land, were committed to decisive action within twelve hours of receipt of orders. The implications of this were plain. The airborne troops had a mobility and striking power that no high commander could overlook in the future. Correct and timely commitment and exploitation of such forces could turn the tide of battle."

In contrast to the smooth sailing on the Salerno drop were the 509 landing around Avellino.

Avellino is a small mountain town about 20 miles from the Salerno beaches which controlled important road junctions between the beachhead and German forces retreating before the British 8th Army to the south.

There were no suitable drop zones near Avellino, but the 509 troopers set out with confidence as they left Licata, early on the night of the 14th. These were the same Veteran Paratroopers (2nd Bn. 509th Parachute Inf.) who had jumped in North Africa after a 1,500-mile flight from England in 1942. The mountainous terrain was such that Avellino was obscured by ground haze and looked like any other small mountain town from the high altitude at which the mission had to be flown. Very few planes found the actual drop zone and the Bn. was spread out over more than one hundred square miles. They blew bridges, mined roads, cut telegraph lines and ambushed German patrols and messengers. The battalion Commander was dropped in a German tank park where he engaged in a fire fight, only to be wounded and taken prisoner. This tragedy was typical of the entire operation.

Despite the wide dispersion (510 of 640 men that dropped eventually wandered back to Allied lines some remaining three weeks behind enemy lines), the effect on the Germans of the Avellino drop was considerable. Jittery about further airborne action, the German command kept more troops deployed for preventive and corrective action against Parachute drops than there were Airborne troops available for commitment by the entire allied command. German troops, so deployed, were not available for use at the critical and decisive action on the Salerno beachhead.

Concurrently with the landings of the 504, 505 and 509 Combat Teams, the 325 Glider Infantry, reinforced with the much traveled Third Battalion, 504 Parachute Infantry, was sailing to Salerno by boat. To the Glidermen of the 325, who had grown cynical as mission after mission was cancelled, this was at last a

ITALY

chance to prove their fighting value alongside the parachute elements of the Division. At 8 o'clock the night of September 13th, they sailed from the Harbor at Licata, landing near Salerno late the night of the 15th, from where the 3rd Battalion, 504, joined its Regiment at Albenna, and the 325 moved into operations on the Sorrentine Peninsula. "On the morning of the 16th, the 504th marched four miles to occupy the town of Albanella where, at noon, Colonel Tucker issued to the battalion commanders the order to seize and hold the high ground surmounting Altavilla.

The days following were, in the words of General Mark W. Clarke, commander of the Fifth Army, 'responsible for saving the Salerno beachhead.' Men of the 1st and 2nd Battalions advanced across the flat valley floor, were subjected to intense enemy artillery and small arms fire; contact between the battalions and the CP group were lost, but all units pressed relentlessly forward and in spite of overwhelming enemy superiority in numbers, took the reassigned objectives. The enemy counterattacked stubbornly, and on the night of the 17th it became evident that help had to be secured if the 504, now completely cut off from friendly forces, was to hold these key positions so necessary for the security of the beachhead.

General Dawley, commander of the Sixth Corps, was contacted by radio, and suggested that the regiment withdraw and attempt to establish a line nearer to the beach. It was then that Colonel Tucker uttered the statement that epitomized the saga of Altavilla — "Retreat, Hell! — Send me my other battalion!" The 3rd Battalion was then sent to rejoin the regiment. They moved into position on Hill 344; the 1st and 2nd Battalions repulsed strong enemy counterattacks; contact between the units was made, and the Salerno beachhead was saved. The next day the 504 was relieved by elements of the 36th Division.

The area in the region of Altavilla for several years had been a firing range for a German artillery school; consequently there was no problem of range, deflection, or prepared concentrations that the enemy had not solved long before the advent of the Americans. Needless to say, hostile artillery and mortar fire were extremely accurate and capable of pinpointing with lethal concentrations such vital features as wells, trails, and draws. During the three days that the 82nd occupied the several hills behind Altavilla, approximately 30 paratroopers died, 150 were wounded, and one man was missing in action.

The majority of these casualties were caused by the enemy's artillery fire. Enemy casualties were, judging from the number of dead left on the field of battle and from information divulged by prisoners, several times those of the troopers. Four separate and distinct attacks by the enemy, launched from the north, east and west of 504 positions, were driven back with heavy casualties resulting for the Germans.

Capture of Altavilla and Albanella allowed the Fifth Army to move northward toward Salerno and Naples.

F Company of the 325th moved out by sea and occupied the island of Ischia, off the Bay of Naples.

The 82nd pushed northward by boat and landed in the tiny town of Maiori, clutching precariously to the base of abrupt mountain cliffs lest it fall into the sea. Fighting with Colonel Darby's famed Rangers and supporting British heavy guns, the 325 R. C. T. and 3rd Bn. 504th pushed the Jerries from the commanding mountain tops at Mt. San Argela and Chiunzi Pass, where H Company, 504 and the 319th Glider F. A. Bn. had been holding out with the Rangers since the first stages of the Salerno Campaign. The remainder of the 504 Regimental Combat Team joined the elements fighting at Maiori, after a short rest, and took up positions at Chiunzi Pass on the 25th of September. Terrain

No matter where you went in different countries, there was always an individual who had a car and rode everywhere while everybody else walked. If you asked for a lift he would look at you in a horror stricken manner as if you had insulted him.

in this sector was precipitous and hilly, with plenty of concealment provided by underbrush and trees. All evidence of the enemy was confined to the valley, which stretched like a vast carpet below — the Valley of Naples. Even in the Valley there was little, aside from an occasional truck movement or a gun flash, to be seen of the Germans. Positions were occasionally shelled, particularly that portion of the road that wound around the mountain and came out in full view of the German guns located at the base of Mount Vesuvius, some ten miles to the front. This outlet was known as Chiunzi Pass— but because of trigger - happy German artillerymen, was promptly renamed "88" Pass by 82nd men. By September 26, the "All American" stood poised on the high ground overlooking the Naples plain, gateway to the first large European city to fall to the Allies.

On September 29, the 505th was attached to the British 23rd Armored brigade and moved toward Naples. The next day, 82nd 505 men and Division Reconnaissance elements led ground elements into Naples, the first major city to capitulate in Axis Europe. The 504th, with the British Tenth Corps, skirted the base of Mt. Vesuvius, by passing Naples. On October 1, the Allies marched victoriously into Naples. In the vanguard marched the 82nd Airborne Division, the first ground troops to enter the city. They were met with wild enthusiasm by the demonstrative Italians, and only light rear-guard German opposition.

To the conquerors went the spoils, and the 82nd was given the mission of policing Naples — a pleasant assignment after Sicily and Salerno, for in October and November, 1943, it was no longer "See Naples and die," for the first major European city in Allied hands was emerging from the valley of the shadow of death. To troops who had spent long months of monastic life in North Africa, and long nights and days of fighting, Neapolitan life — however paled by war — had its charms. They also enjoyed brief holiday excursions to Vesuvius, Pompeii, and the famed Isle of Capri.

The "All American" helped to nurse the city back to life; saw its power and water services resumed; watched its shops open again; aided in patrolling and preventing food and water riots; "Sweated out" German air raids, booby traps and mines. One explosion rocked the Post Office across the street from a C. P., killing many civilians and soldiers. Another hit the 307th Engineer building.

During the division's stay in Naples, the 505th again was attached to the British and given a ground-infantry mission of pushing northward to the Volturno River. The 505th swept northward from

ITALY

October 3 to October 9 with British Armor, cleared the Germans from the flats and canals near the Volturno, moved up to the river and held its southern bank. Patrols of the Regiment were the first troops to cross the river.

The 82nd Division, less the 504th, the 376th Field Artillery Bn., and elements of the 307th A/B Engineers, left Naples in November for a new station in northern Ireland.

The elements of the division composing the 504th combat team were kept in Italy with the Fifth Army temporarily, at the request of Lt. General Clark.

On October 29th before the rest of the 82nd had left Italy, the 504 launched its epic attack through the mountains of Central Italy that was to carry them 22 miles ahead of the Fifth Army on their left, the Eighth Army on their right. Driving north toward Gallo, in a battle that proved for the most part to be one of physical stamina interspersed with sharp patrol engagements, the 504 crossed the Volturno, entered the rail and road center of Isernia, cleared Colli, Macchia, Fornelli, Cerro and Rochetta, and 15 men from H and I Companies doggedly fought their way through mine fields to reach the summit of Hill 1017 — the Fifth Army objective and key point of the entire sector.

All supplies in this advance were of necessity carried by men and mules, since jeepable roads were non-existent.

On this mission, almost without exception, combat was restricted to small local engagements between patrols over a broad front. The terrain was such that no distinct front line, either enemy or friendly, could be designated. German patrols operated behind our "lines," and the same thing was true of 82nd patrols to an even greater extent. It is in this type of warfare that the 504 proved itself to be the unequivocal master of the enemy; there were few encounters, even when the Germans had the advantage of numerical superiority, that the enemy didn't come out second best. Trained to fight in small independent groups, in the technique of scouting and stealth, and for stamina and perseverance, the paratroopers proved the value of their specialized preparation for combat.

Next, the "All American" of the 504

The U. S. Merchant Marine

received orders to move forward for an assault on Mt. Sammucro and the adjacent hills beyond Venafro — positions that dominated the gateway to the German stronghold of Cassino.

On the rainy cold evening of December 10, 1943, the regimental CP was established at Venafro. Companies G and I of the 3rd Battalion moved immediately forward to relieve elements of the 3rd Ranger Battalion, who were in position on Hill 950. While advancing to relieve the Rangers, I Company became subjected to enemy small arms fire and, in the midst of a German counterattack, managed to take up their assigned positions. The next twelve hours found the Germans counterattacking seven times in force, and although I Company had suffered 46 casualties by noon of the following day, they still held the position.

The following morning, the 2nd Battalion completed the difficult climb up Mt. Sammucro (1205) to take up positions formerly occupied by the 143rd Infantry. The remainder of the 3rd Battalion joined G and I Companies and continued to repel repeated enemy counterattacks. 307th Airborne Engineers laid a mine field in the draw between Hills 1205 and 950. Enemy artillery increased in intensity to a degree unprecedented in the Italian campaign — it became quite evident that the Germans were determined to regain these heights at all costs.

The 1st Battalion, supposedly in reserve, was used for litter-bearing details, and to carry food, water, and ammunition up the rocky, heavily-shelled trails to the troops clinging stubbornly to positions on the heights.

By December 20th, the 504th CT was holding Hills 1205, 950, 954, 710, and 687, with patrols operating on Hills 877 and 610. The fighting of this operation consisted of the assaulting of one hill after another. It was an uphill fight all the way, characterized by rock and tree bare, 45-degree slopes, and unusually stubborn resistance by the enemy. Supply and evacuation of the wounded was a matter of back-breaking work. The medic's task, at best a difficult one, was increased tenfold on the high, craggy, windswept, and shelterless hill tops. Medical supplies were short when they were needed most, and there was no quick way of obtaining more. Casualties had to be carried on stretchers down to the road — a painful six-hour journey. Mule trains were able to carry supplies to a certain point, after which it became necessary, because of the increased angle of ascent, for all supplies and ammunition to be transported up the summits by carrying parties of men. This work was carried out over heavily-shelled trails, with supplies always reaching the units engaged just in time.

During the 19 days that the 504 was in action near Venafro, they suffered a total of 54 dead, 226 wounded, and 2 men missing in action. These figures are exclusive of the 376 FA Battalion and Company C, 307 Engineers, each of whom suffered dead and wounded. Most of the casualties were the result of enemy artillery fire, which was, as has been mentioned, intense.

However high the number of these casualties may seem, compared to those of the enemy they must be considered light. Information revealed by prisoners (51 were taken) indicated German dead and wounded to be at least five times greater than those suffered by the 504. On December 27, the regiment was relieved of duty in the Venafro sector and was moved to new bivouac areas in the vicinity of Pignatoro where a belated Christmas and quiet New Year's was spent. On January 4th, the troopers were ordered to their old stamping grounds, Pozouli, a suburb of Naples. Operation Shingles and Anzio were on the way. Shingles called for dropping the 504 Regimental Combat team, in a vertical envelopment of the enemy, astride the main north highway 8 miles inland from Anzio on the night of the Anzio invasion. The mission was to prevent German reinforcements from moving into the Anzio — Netuno area. The 504 combat team was to be reinforced by 50 gliders carrying reconnais-

La Questura

ITALY

sance jeeps and anti-tank guns.

Colonel Tucker, directed to conduct active reconnaissance upon landing, planned to push strong motor patrols north, beyond Field Marshal Kesselring's command post, and on into Rome.

If the capabilities of the 504th in this situation can be gauged by its performance in combat throughout Italy, it would almost certainly have entered Rome. But this is pure speculation, for at the last moment the operation was called off, and the combat team was landed from the sea and not the air. Airborne participation in the Anzio operation is just a fine problem for the Monday morning quarterbacks, though I think that airborne troops could have been used gainfully and perhaps even decisively in their chief role.

Dawn of the 22nd found the 504 standing off shore from the beach, from which they were to debark on the Anzio beachhead. Through the loud speaker of a neighboring boat, Colonel Tucker was ordered to land the Combat Team on Red Beach. Immediately, the 13 LCI's that contained the members of the regiment commenced to move toward the shore. There was no confusion; everything was proceeding with the regularity and order of clockwork. The lead boats were grinding into the sand. Already the ramps had slammed down into the water, and men were splashing their way toward the shore. It was perfect. The operation couldn't have gone more smoothly. The only thing that was lacking to make this a perfect movie operation was the enemy.

At that precise moment, the tense stillness was shattered by a whining roar that left no doubt in anyone's mind as to its source. Straight out of the sun the enemy planes came — their machine guns blasting. For a few brief seconds the world became one great kaleidoscope of raging sound, then the planes were gone, and in the water where they had passed over lay several boiling circles where bombs had struck. One LCI, its nose disgorging men, settled in the shallow water. Its after-section was a mass of twisted metal and oily black smoke. Men could be seen hanging from the bits of twisted steel. That had been LCI number 20—G Company's craft.

The landing craft continued to come, unload their personnel, and back out into the water, while the German dive bombers returned again and again. The paratroopers ran down the ramps and jumped into the surf. Some went in to their knees, some to their waists, and some went in over their heads and swam for the shore. And all the while the German planes continued to roar in from the sun to bomb and strafe. The shipborne anti-aircraft units sent up a terrific barrage, but nobody in the 504 was watching for hits—they were too busy getting ashore and seeking cover.

Two days later, the regiment was ordered to the right flank of the beachhead, where they took up positions along the Mussolini Canal.

Near bridge number Five, Lt. Col. W. R. Williams, commanding the 1st Battalion, ordered B Company to attack the Germans in that vicinity. After an unsuccessful attempt to take the bridge, a platoon of A Company was committed, along with a platoon of tanks. Four hours later, with the aid of tanks and 57mm guns manned by the 376, the enemy was pushed across the canal, and bridge number Five was secured.

In the vicinity of bridge number Two, Lt. Col. L. G. Freeman, commanding the 3rd Battalion, committed I Company to clear the sector. The company was ambushed, however, and forced to take up defensive positions. At dawn of the 24th, I Company, now reinforced by a platoon of tanks and naval gunfire from the sea, counterattacked frontally while G and H Companies brought the enemy under cross fire from the flanks. Two hours later, the enemy, after suffering 69 killed, 25 wounded, 33 taken prisoner, two half-tracks knocked out and one captured, was driven back to the other side of the canal. 504 casualties were two men killed, three wounded, and none missing.

Following days found the regiment pa-

trolling actively and consolidating its line along the Mussolini Canal. It was then decided to attack the town of Borgo Piave, an important road center that came to be known as the "spider," because of the five main roads that joined in the city.

At 1330 on January 25, all three battalions moved out in the attack. The 1st Battalion attacked Sessano, the 3rd Battalion Borgo Sabatino, and the 2nd Battalion made the main drive for Borgo Piave. The 3rd Battalion attained its objective and pushed strong combat patrols to the North and East, supported by naval gunfire. The 1st Battalion encountered stiff opposition and heavy enemy artillery fire. Nevertheless, a small group of C Company men did reach the objective—Sessano. The 2nd Battalion, supported by a rolling barrage, reached Borgo Piave and D Company and pushed 200 yards east of the town. However, the enemy counterattacked with an armored force of about five tanks and eight flak wagons and isolated D Company from the remainder of the battalion. Upon order from the Third Division, the 2nd Battalion withdrew to the Mussolini Canal, leaving behind a strong combat outpost and several tank-hunting teams. D Company, after suffering heavy losses, subsequently infiltrated through the enemy's encirclement and regained their own lines.

As a result of these operations, the regiment had gained outpost positions on the other side of the canal but, generally speaking, had not advanced any appreciable distance — the MLR still remaining along the Mussolini Canal.

After several days of holding and attacking along a front extending from bridge number Five south to the sea, the 504 was relieved in this sector by the 179th Infantry. The 3rd Battalion was attached to the First Armored Division and sent to the Northern (British) flank of the beachhead, while the remainder of the Combat Team was sent north of bridge number Five to participate in an attack scheduled to take place in the Third Division sector.

The 3rd Battalion, after several days in reserve with the First Armored Division, was committed with the British First (Guards) Division in the Carreceto sector. German artillery fire in this area was unusually intense, and it was here that the enemy launched his main drive to push the beachhead into the sea. After one of the heaviest artillery barrages ever experienced by 504 men, the Germans began their attack in the early hours of February 5, 1944. On successive days, British units were cut off from the 3rd Battalion, which was forced to withdraw to the famous "factory" in Mussolini's wonder-town of Aprilia. Enemy railroad guns and dive bombers then concentrated their efforts on the 3rd Battalion garrison. The paratroopers suffered severe casualties, and by the time enemy infantry moved in, the companies had been

Chow Line

reduced in strength to between 20 and 30 men.

Fierce hand-to-hand fighting ensued, in which the paratroopers, by sheer determination and courage, were able to repel repeated German onslaughts. Rather than remain in the exposed positions in which they now found themselves, they withdrew to a railroad underpass several hundred yards behind the "factory" and established defensive positions. H Company was ordered to attack and attempt the rescue of a British general who had been captured. After bloody fighting, they recaptured the general, only to find themselves cut off from friendly forces. I Company was then ordered to attack and make contact with H Company. The 16 men remaining in the company carried out this mission successfully, and a semblance of order was restored to this sector—the backbone of the German attack had been broken. It was for this outstanding performance in the period 8-12 February, that the 3rd Battalion was given one of the first Presidential Citations in the European Theater of Operations.

The remainder of the Combat Team, meanwhile, had been engaged in heavy fighting in the Third Division sector. On January 30, the 1st and 2nd Battalions jumped off in an attack that was to take

ITALY

them to the Cisterna River. The 1st Battalion led the way and encountered only light resistance as they passed through the German outpost line. Soon after, however, as they neared their first bridge objective over the Mussolini Canal, they were engaged by strong enemy forces. The reserve company was committed and the enemy driven back across the stream, first blowing the bridge behind him and thus saving the paratroopers the trouble.

While the 1st Battalion was consolidating its gains, the 2nd Battalion advanced along the left flank of the 1st Battalion and, under similar circumstances, were engaged by the enemy in the vicinity of a bridge farther upstream. Here again, the enemy was forced to retreat across the canal, after blowing the bridge behind them. The 2nd Battalion continued the attack to the north on the heels of the retreating Germans, who proceeded to blow another bridge — this time it was the bridge crossing the Cisterna River. The loss of this bridge denied the paratroopers any further support from friendly tanks, a factor which caused the 2nd Battalion to halt its advance and dig in on the far side of the river.

Much enemy material in the form of halftracks, 75mm howitzers, small arms, and vehicles was either captured or destroyed in this attack. Eighty prisoners were taken with very heavy casualties inflicted upon the enemy. 504 losses were comparatively light.

For the remainder of their eight-week stay on the Anzio beachhead, 504 men found themselves confronted with a defensive situation, rather than offensive for which they had been trained. With the exception of the first week of fighting on the beachhead, no appreciable advance was made by our forces. It was strictly trench-type warfare, characteristic of the First World War. For the first time, 504 men were digging dugouts and living in them for weeks at a time; barbed wire entanglements and mine fields in unusual depth covered all areas where the enemy might conceivably tread; alternate positions were prepared for any eventuality, and there were times when such an eventuality did not seem too remote. All in all, this was not the type of combat for which the paratroopers were psychologically suited. In fact, it was absolutely contrary to the way that they had always been taught to fight, and so it was with something more than the usual enthusiasm that the men of the 504 received the order to embark from Anzio, on March 23, for the trip to Naples.

As the LST's loaded with paratroopers, got under way, the Germans were dropping shells into the harbor, as though in some final frantic gesture to keep the 504 from leaving; like a murderer's last stab at his executioner. This had been a costly campaign for the 504—but ten times as costly for the enemy. During the eight-week period, 120 paratroopers were killed, 410 wounded, and 60 missing in action. Many lessons had been learned at Anzio, and many men had been lost. It was a good place to bid farewell. On April 10, the 504 landed in England to join the rest of the 82nd, now hard at work preparing for a 4th big D-Day, this time in Normandy.

General Mark Clark, Commander of American forces in Italy, at the time the 82nd served there, expressed his evaluation of the 82nd Airborne Division in the following statement released from his headquarters as Supreme Commander of the United States Occupation Forces in Austria: "I recognized the potentialities of a top-flight division when the 82nd Airborne joined my command for intensive battle training in North Africa during the early summer of 1943. In September of that year elements of the Division parachuted on the plains of Salerno and contributed materially to securing our initial beachhead on the continent of Europe. When, at Anzio during the Spring of 1944, it became necessary to utilize elements of the 82nd Airborne to take their place in the line on a ground role, they demonstrated their versatility by their record of superior performance in cooperation with veteran ground divisions. Well done, 82nd Airborne."

The Great Story of Gen. Taylor, and Italy's Surrender

ONE OF the most thrilling G-2 Coup d' Etats in World War II was performed by 82nd Artillery General Maxwell D. Taylor. The 82nd was to jump near Rome the night of the beach landings in Italy. Italian authorities had guaranteed support in the daring operation but Taylor and General Ridgway were suspicious of the Italians ability to provide adequate assistance. It was finally decided that linguist General Taylor should go to Rome and contact Marshal Badoglio personally. On Sept. 7 General Taylor and Col. Tuder Gardiner left Palermo for Axis Italy. They were met off Ustica Island by an Italian corvette which took them to the Seaport of Gaeta. Roughing themselves up so as to appear prisoners, the two Americans were shouldered past unsuspecting guards by their Italian accomplices and into a waiting car. After a hazadous ride through hostile territory, road blocks, German sentrys, and innumerable other obstacles, Taylor reached Rome and Badoglio. At the American's insistence the aged Marshal was roused out of bed for a late conference. Taylor's worst fears for lack of adequate Italian support were confirmed. After a series of frantic radio code messages, the 82nd was halted at the Sicilian airports even as the paratroopers were loaded into the planes ready to take off for a mission which would have spelled disaster and annihilation. But the safety of the 82nd while important was not Taylor's only concern in Rome. Although unauthorized by Supreme Allied Headquarters to concern himself with diploma-

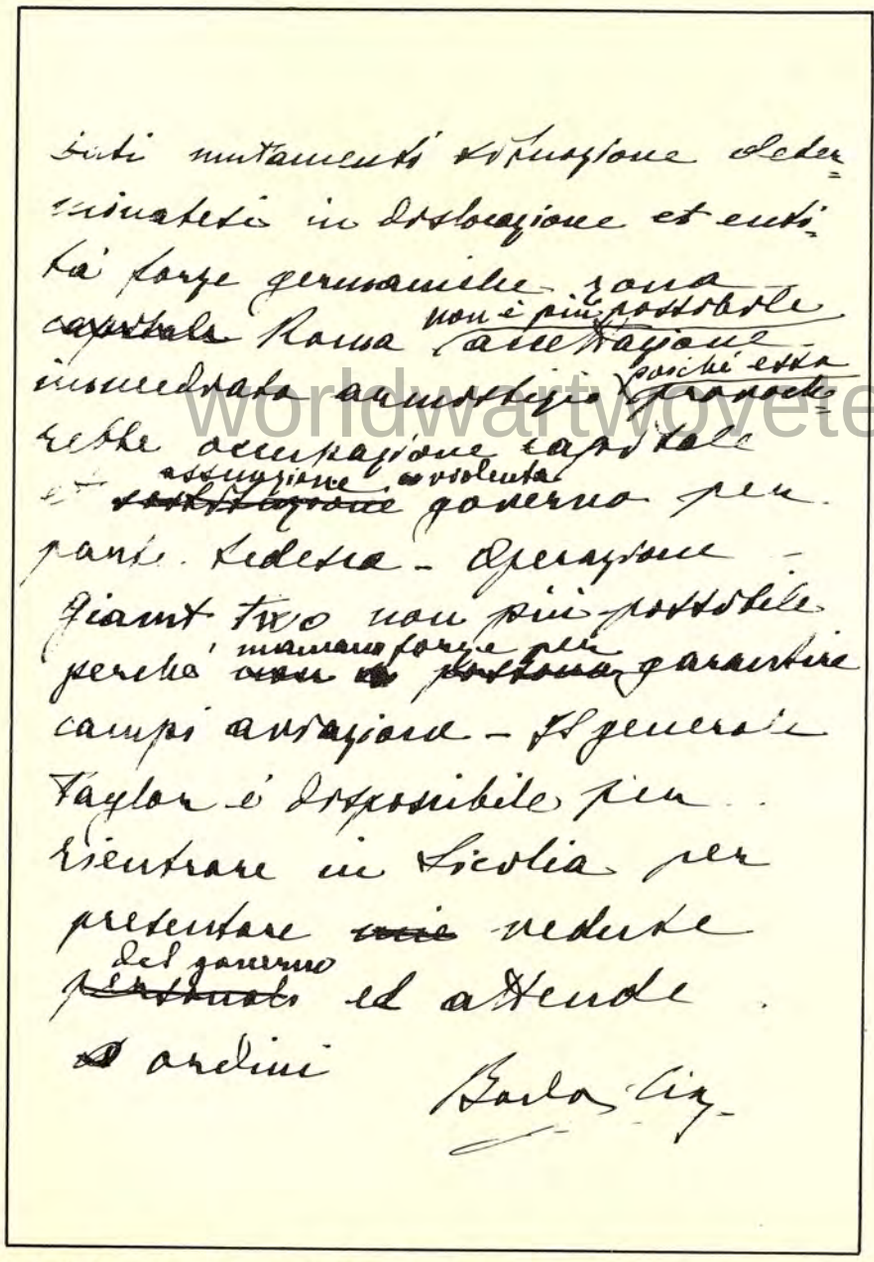
TRANSLATION

of Badoglio's message on opposite page

Given changes in situation determined in dislocation and existing German forces in the Roman zone. It is no longer possible to immediately accept an armistice because it would provoke occupation of the Capital and a violent assumption of the Government on the part of the Germans. Operation Giant Two is no longer possible because we lack forces to guarantee airports. General Taylor is disposed to reenter Sicily to present the views of the Government and attend to orders.

BADOGLIO.

tic matters, Taylor found himself, a mere Division Artillery Commander, embroiled in the Italian surrender plans. Timed to coincide with the beach landings at Salerno, the Italian armistice was of great military as well as diplomatic importance. Now Badoglio pleaded that an armistice would bring terrible German reprisals against the Italian Capital and pleaded for a postponement. The future of the Italian campaign was at stake and Taylor acted as quickly and decisively as possible with his limited powers. He insisted Badoglio immediately draft a message to General Eisenhower for wireless transmission. Wireless conditions were extremely bad. September 8th had been the proposed day of the armistice and Badoglio's and Taylor's messages arrived in the nick of time on the 8th. The Airborne mission for that night was canceled at 1630.



Badoglio's longhand message delivered to the Allies by 82nd Artillery General Maxwell D. Taylor after his historic meeting with the aged Marshal in Rome.

Sitting through an American bombing Taylor and Gardiner waited instructions in hostile Rome.

Finally orders came to return, with them went General Rossi, Deputy Chief of the Italian General staff who was to plead the Italian case before General Eisenhower. The trip to the airfield provided one of the biggest thrills of the trip. The little Italian truck was halted to allow the passage of a detachment of marching troops. The 2 uniformed American officers tried to melt into the shadow of their seat as the chilling sight of a column of German soldiers passed within arms reach of the car.

When the troops had passed, the little truck plowed on dodging American fortress bomb craters and climbed aboard a 3 motored Savoy-Marchetti for the trip back to Africa.

Taylor, Gardiner and their Italian friends arrived in Algeria to find General Eisenhower had announced the Italian surrender to the world as planned 1/2 hr. before. To everybody's surprise Badoglio confirmed the announcement 1 hr. later in a broadcast to the Italian people. Little did the men of the Eighty-second realize at the time how closely they had been entwined in the meshes of pending disaster. Had Taylor been captured or killed before he arrived in Rome, the entire course of the war might have been unavoidably altered.

ITALY—the jump

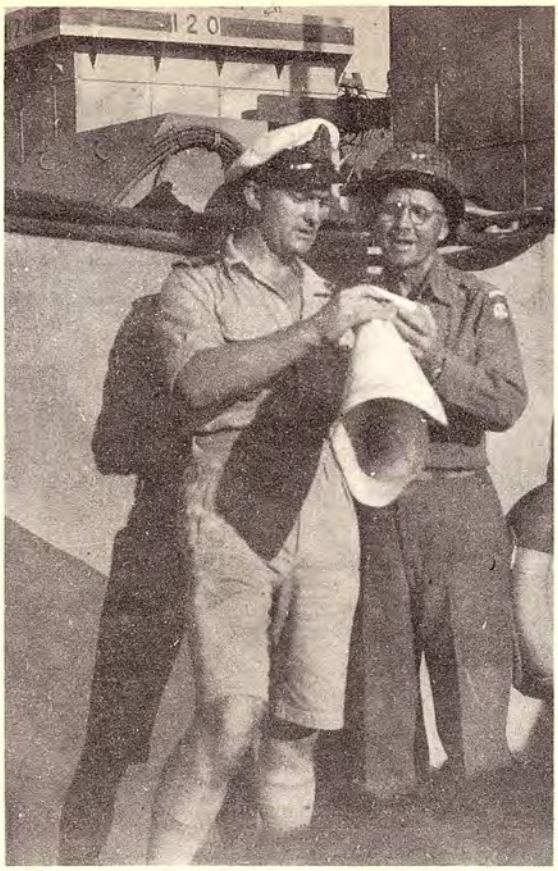
After numerous dry runs and canceled missions, the troopers were skeptical until they actually climbed aboard for Salerno.

As the last rays of daylight dimmed into dusk the 82nd 504 Rgt. was winging its way toward Salerno.

The skys over the beachhead were filled with parachutes as the much needed reinforcements came out of the sky to save Salerno.

ITALY—
Salerno

On the mountain ridge in the background an intense artillery duel was in progress.



The late Col. Harry Lewis brought his 325 R. C. T. in by boat.

Manpower is always cheap in a war and equipment is vital.

Enemy artillery was terrible at Altavilla — our own gunners kept their barrels hot returning fire.

Mortar men played a big role in support and defense.

ITALY– Salerno

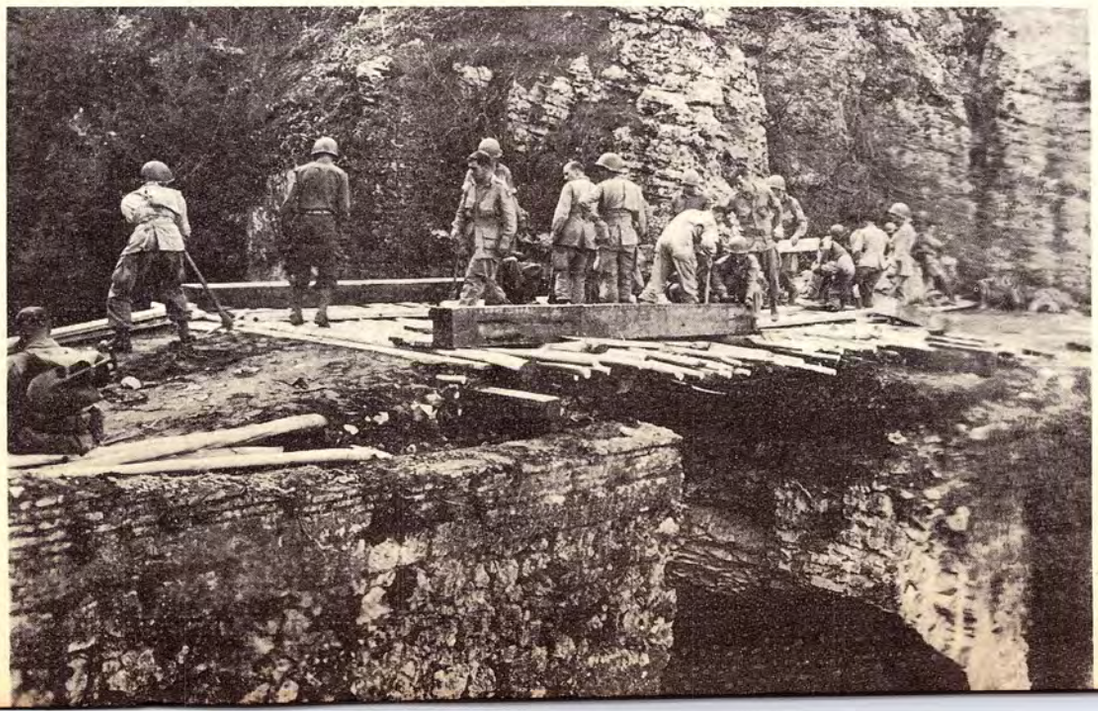
The ruins of the Ancient Roman Empire were viewed with pleasure by Allied Armies as they conquered modern Italy.

Picturesque towns rested in the hills along the Mediterranean coast of Western Italy.

A wary trooper cleans the enemy out of farm houses in Italy.

The smaller towns all looked alike in Italian Advance.

Peasants in Italy lived in their kitchens. Here many a spaghetti dinner was traded to a hungry trooper for a K. Ration.



The 82nd 307 Airborne Engineers repave a Nazi-blown bridge with scrap wood so that trucks and tanks can get at the enemy.

LIBERATION OF

NAPLES

The Eighty-second Liberates Europe's First Major City.

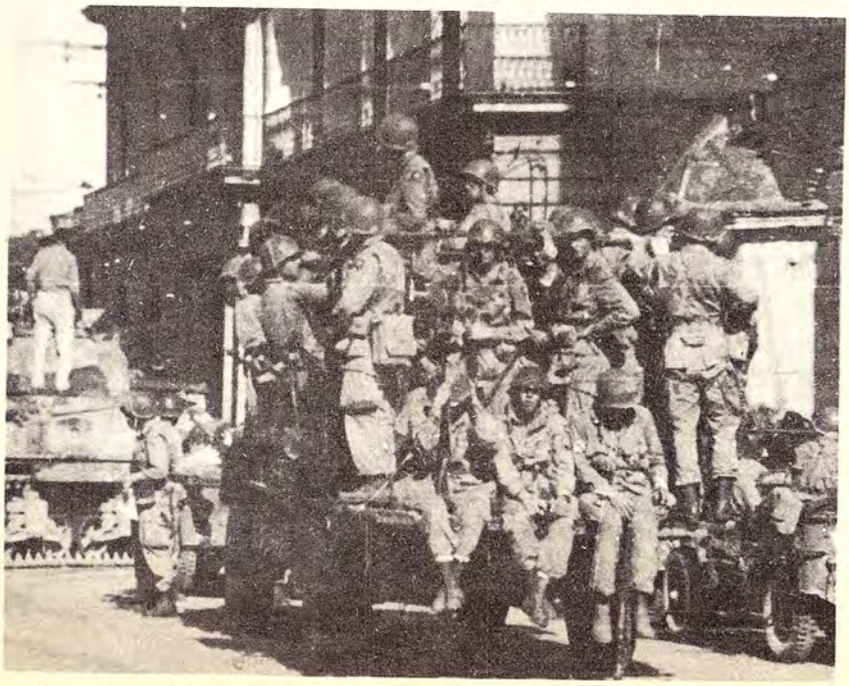
British Armor reaches the city limits and rolls into Naples.

82nd's General Ridgway and 5th Army's General Clark enter Naples with forward elements of the Eighty-second 1st troops into the city.

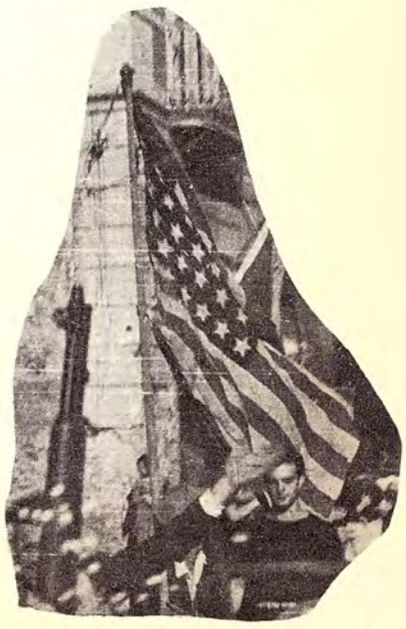
Liberators pass Liberateur—The 82nd in Garabaldi Square passes the old gent himself—Italy's most famous soldier.

Street Conference — British Tankers and American Paratroopers in Naples.

Matt Ridgway in Naples.



Troops pour in for what would prove to be a very pleasant occupation.



This 1st flag into Naples would also be first to fly over Free France — Ste. Eglise June 6, '44

NAPLES
Italy

General Ridgway explains the set-up in Naples to Field Marshal Alexander and General Mark Clark.

82nd troopers as well as Italian civilians were killed and wounded in the tragic explosion of a German time bomb in the Naples post office.

Five in one Rations and other supplies were unloaded from cargo ships in the harbor.

A crowd gathers outside the Naples post office following the explosion.

Clean up after the Naples post office disaster.

The Telephone Building and many others were bombed by Allied and Axis.

German Dive Bombers appeared often scattering debris in the wake of their bomb load.

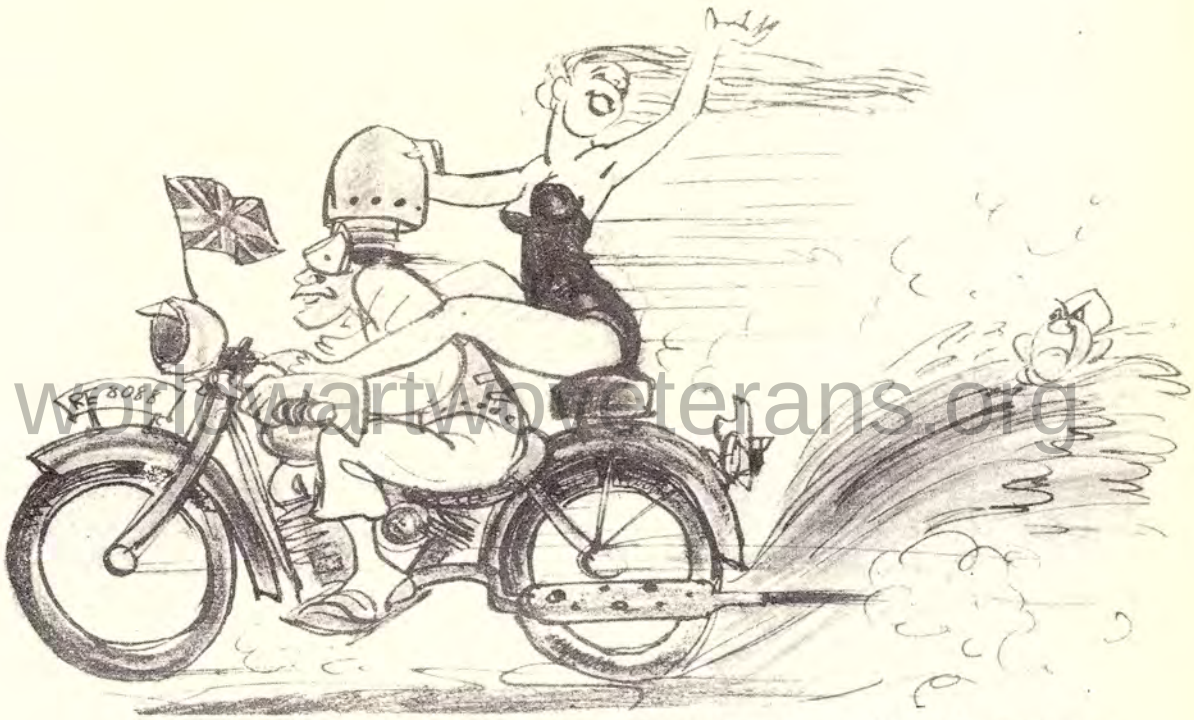
Scuttled Italian Ships clogged the harbor.

Vesuvius spewed smoke behind the harbor in Napoli.

Olive skinned Signorinas were delightful escorts after veiled Arabs.

Vino party in a liberated cafe.

Time out to propblast a new general.



Prescott's cartoons of life in Naples appear in the Italian narrative

The beautiful island at Ishia in Naples Bay.

Fraternizing with friendly Neopolitans.

ANZIO

"American parachutists—devils in baggy pants—are less than 100 meters from my outpost line. I can't sleep at night; they pop up from nowhere and we never know when or how they will strike next. Seems like the black-hearted devils are everywhere . . ."

—found in the diary of a German officer who opposed the 504 on the Anzio beachhead.

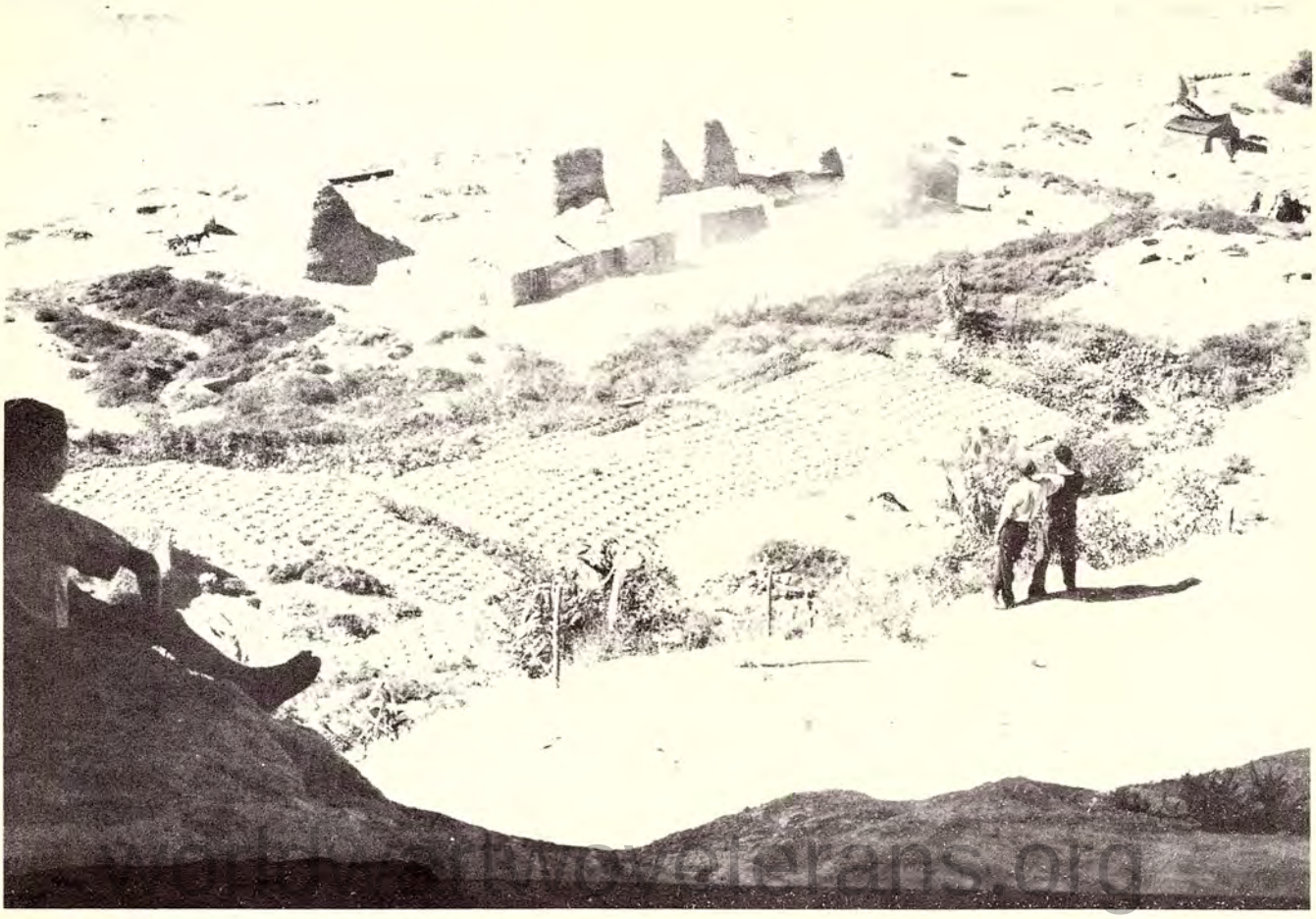
Minefields are swept by the Engineers
as Ducks land on the Beachhead at Anzio.

Sleeping German.

Troopers of the 504 wring out their wet clothes after wading ashore.

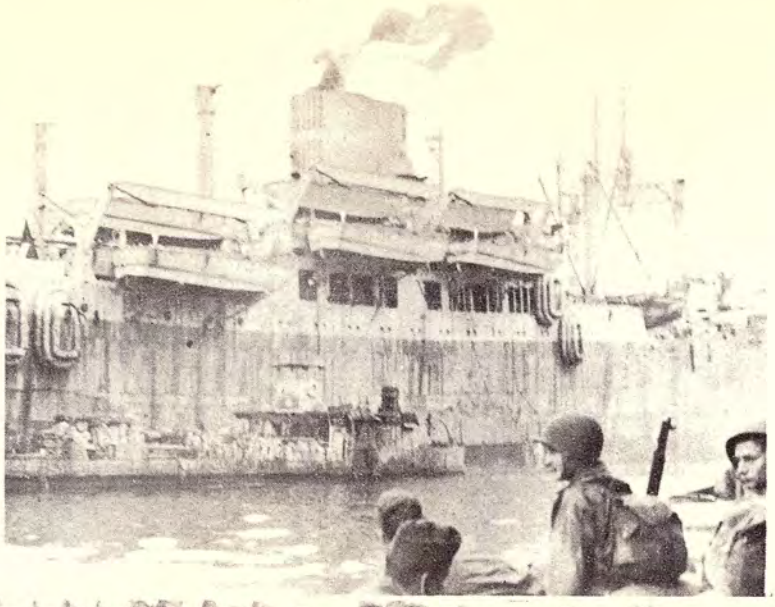
Footborne 82nd troopers pass riddled German cars near San Pietro.

ANZIO, Italy



Before the battle started the Italian coastline was peaceful and primitive.

Mules were used wherever possible to carry ammunition and supplies over the mountain terrain.



Good-by Italy

All Aboard for Ireland

IRELAND AND ENGLAND

CASTLE DAWSON . . . Cookstown . . . Leicester . . . Quorn . . . Nottingham . . . Ashwell . . . Market Harboro; and the Pass to Belfast . . . London . . . or Scotland. An Oasis between battlefields, where troopers rested from Sicily and Italy, trained for Normandy and Holland. A country, like home, where people spoke the same language and liked the same pleasures. A country as proud as our own, steeped in the enchantment of tradition—a land which, like our own, had not been overrun by Nazi hoards. Yet, here too were lessons to be learned—lessons of diplomacy and fraternity and learning to respect each other's customs—the favorite Pub, center of social life in the community group; bitters or beer; lorrie or truck; limey and yank; "any gum, chum?"; fish and chips, several months away from the strains and stresses of combat—a second home to come back to after Normandy—dances, with girls for everybody; Penny Shilling, Bob, Quid, Pound, "Thrupney bit" and "Haypenny"—the expensive seats are in the Balcony, and the Orchestra is cheaper—tiny railroad freight cars to facilitate economical loading and unloading on short hauls, and always, "Won't ya have a spot o' tea, nite?", the friendly offer extended by every English household to the boastful, bragging, but good natured Yank, who liked and was liked despite himself.

All this was England. Here too, the 82nd, rejoined by the 101st, trained for the two biggest Airborne Invasions in history—the all important D-Day, minus landings during the night of June 5-6th in Normandy, and the spectacular Nijmegen, Arnhem, Eindoven jump in Holland, the 1st large scale daylight Airborne operation in history. British Paratroopers figured too, the 6th Division in Normandy and the 1st in Holland at Arnhem. The Red Berret, symbolic of the British Paratroopers, even as the polished jump boots are to us, was seen more and more by our troopers. Through their

boxing matches and other contests an International Allied Airborne, Esprit de Corps was built up.

In August, 1944, the Division lost its Commanding General. Through every day of combat from Sicily, Italy and Normandy, Major General Matthew Bunker Ridgway had led the 82nd "All American" Airborne first into Airborne combat and never an inch lost in three grinding, grueling Airborne campaigns. That was the "All American" Division's record under Ridgway, and now he was being promoted to a Corps Commander, 18th Airborne, the first American Airborne Corps, under Lt. General Brereton's new 1st Allied Airborne Army. Another precedent was going by the boards. British, American, Polish and French Units, with Airborne veterans from virtually all the European United Nations, made up an individual Army under duo Anglo American Command.

Lt. General F. E. M. Browning commanded the British Parachute Corps and was soon to command the action in Holland; youthful Brigadier James M. Gavin became commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Ridgway and his staff had left the 82nd, but we would see them again as we fought under their corps in the final three campaigns in Europe.

"Meet you at the clock tower," was the watchword when troopers from the little camps spread out around Leicester would climb aboard a double deck bus to join a girl friend or a buddy after hours. The troopers looked good with their Purple Hearts, combat badges, campaign stars and shiny jump boots. Many a girl rode her bicycle several miles into town for the dances at the Palais de Dance, Textile Hall or Grand Hotel. Leicester days were happy days for the 82nd, and the English. We marched side by side with them in their "Salute to the Soldier Week" parade. They invited us to their concerts at de Montfort hall. Their A. T. S. girls played in our Musical Comedy "Together We Sing," which played to full houses in London as well as Leicester.

It was in England, too, that the 507 joined us for the all important Normandy campaign, and the 508 began its long association with the Division, which lasted through Normandy, Holland, France and the Bulge.

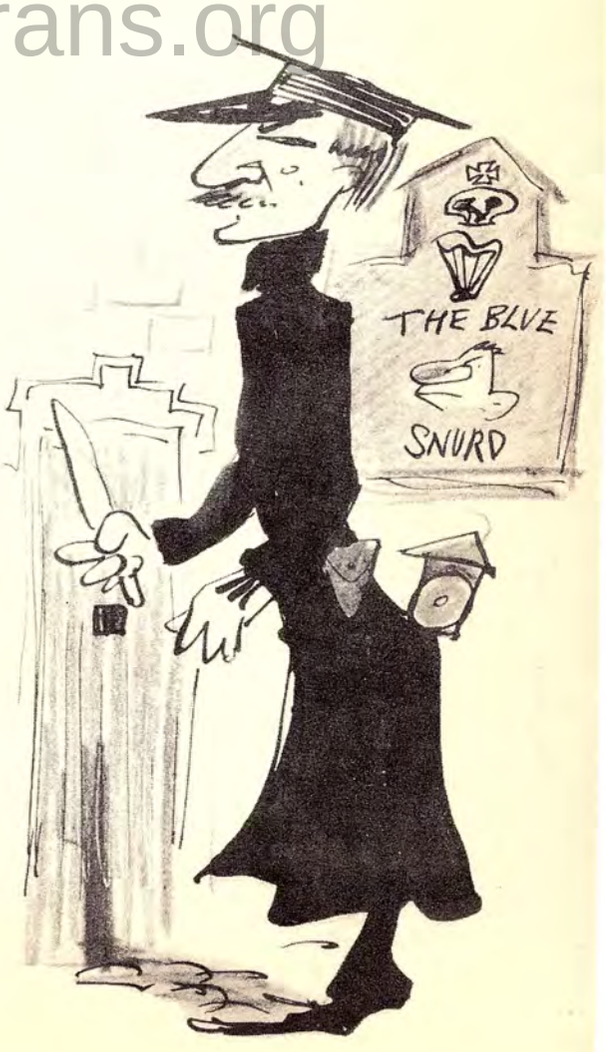
In Leicester, General Eisenhower thanked us for all we had done and tactfully predicted that he would probably be thanking us again for more. Here also lived and died the ill-fated Belgian jump. We were to jump behind the Germans, cutting off their retreat by seizing and holding all bridges and crossings on the Escaut River, but a constant downpour in England gave us the wettest dry run in history as the rapid German withdrawal and allied advance outran four successive plans.

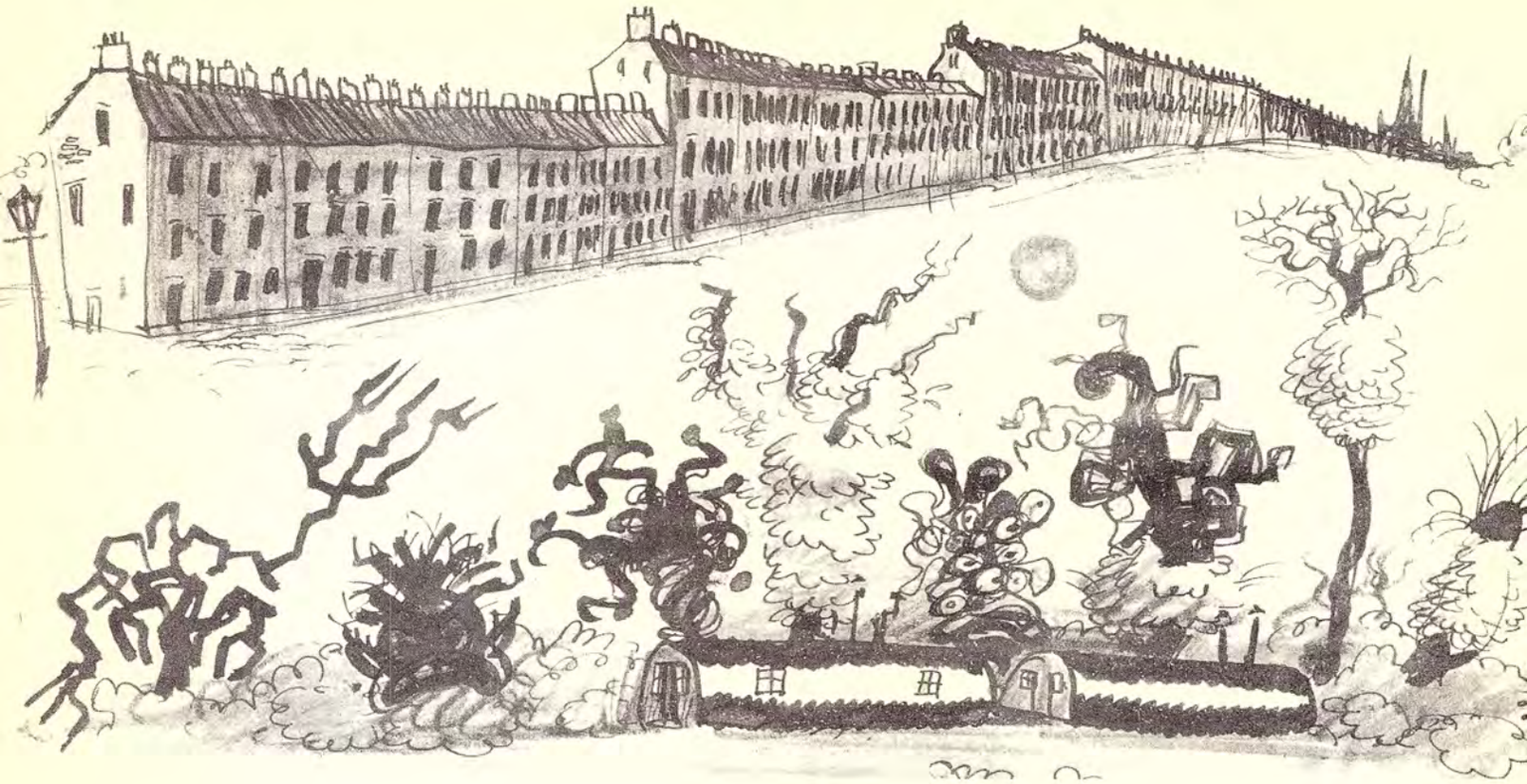
In England, the Glidermen first received their pay increase and Wings, symbolic of equality with the Paratroopers they fought beside. A Jump School trained replacements, and veterans practiced jumps for the D-Days to come. Training was intense, but the rolling hills and green fields of England were as pleasant as the African desert had been repulsive, and evenings were cool and society gay. England wasn't home, but it was the nearest thing to it in a long time, and the men liked it. Many married English girls, and very few of us didn't reluctantly leave some close British friends when the Holland invasion took us away from Leicester for the last time.

Some of us got back on pass or returned via Southampton on our way home. Others came to school at Oxford and Cambridge under the I&E Program.

London, during blackout, and again with the lights on after V-E Day—Westminster Abbey—Grosvenor Square—Willow Run—those quaint taxi cabs—Limehouse—and Picadilly Circus; all places and memories we'll never forget. The bicycles and Bobbie—street walkers—servicemen—from every country and walk of life—a conglomerate of uniforms, every size, shape, creed or color—all gathered on one little island and mingling in its great international city. That is England—our home for 9 interesting months.

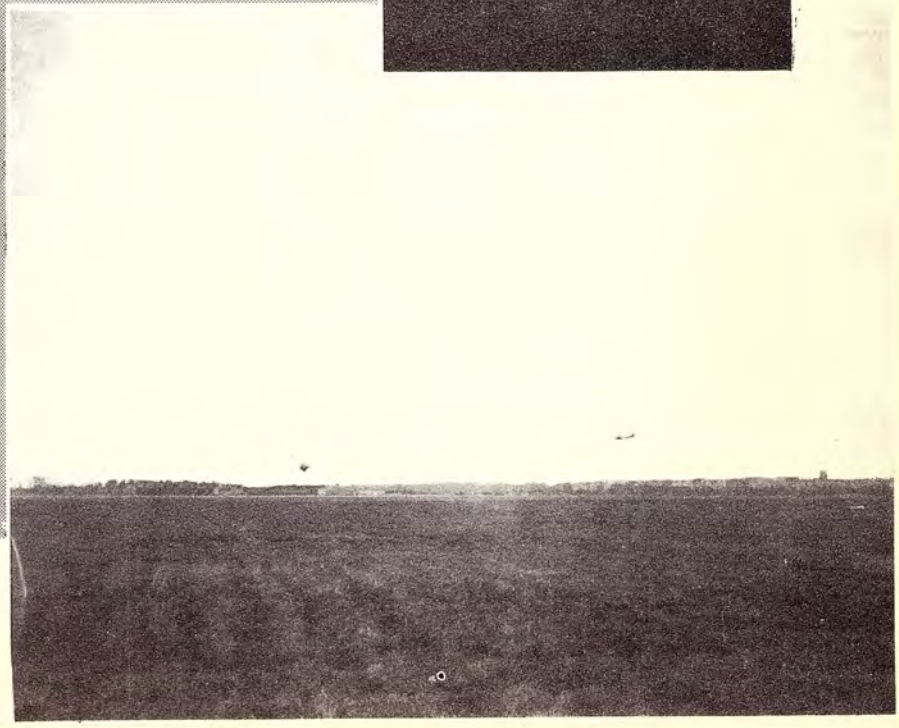
That Cold winter in IRELAND depicted by Linzee Prescott





TRAINING GROUND

FOR TWO INVASIONS



England

Silver Star Ceremony in Ireland.

The 82nd lands in England from Ireland.

Parachute Artillerymen train for Normandy.

Gen. Ridgway tries out the new clubmobile.

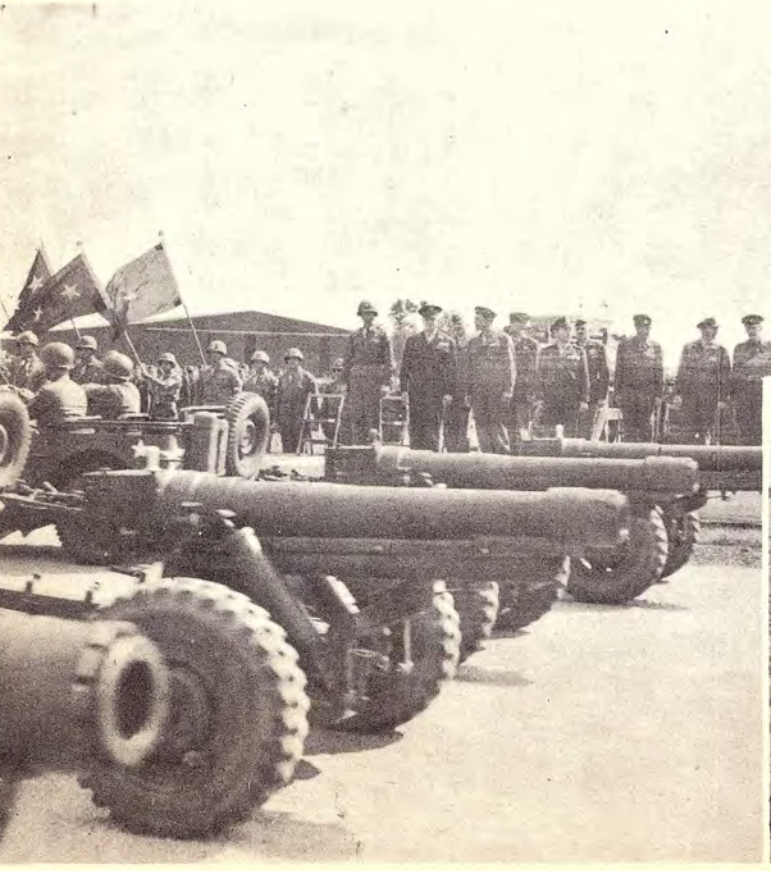
Leicester R. R. Station home from Normandy.

EISENHOWER REVIEWS . . . THE OLDEST AMERICAN ELEMENTS OF THE NEW ALLIED AIRBORNE ARMY.

Eisenhower, Ridgway and Brereton, Commanding General of the new Allied Airborne Army. Said Ike: "I've owed you (82nd) a lot in the past, and I imagine I'll owe you more in the future."

82nd lines up as the 52nd Wing flys overhead.

Generals Gavin, Eisenhower, Ridgway and Brereton watch the 82nd Airborne Division pass in review August, 1944.



Division Artillery and Recons pass in review with weapons especially adapted to Airborne Warfare.

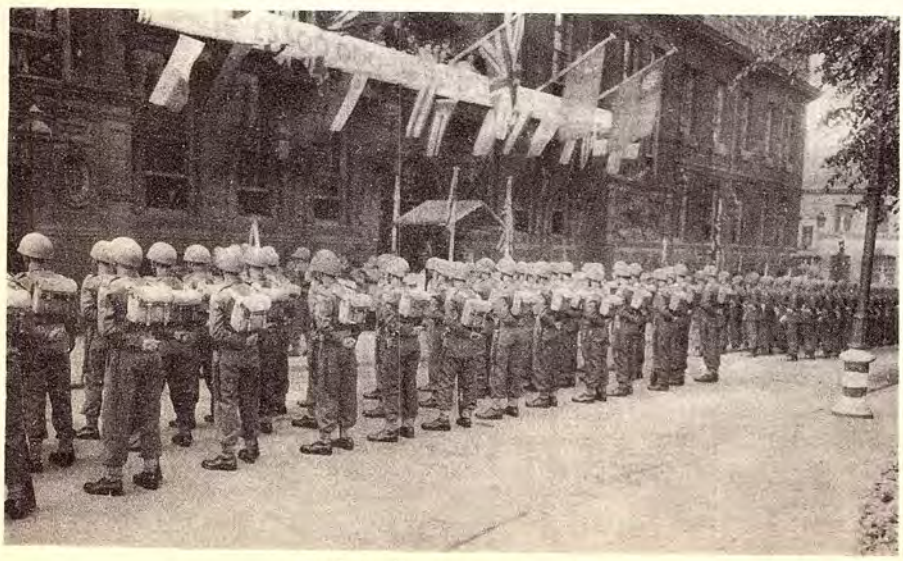
SALUTE THE SOLDIER WEEK

leicester, england

The 82nd parades in the Midlands.

ATS girls (British Wacs) swing up the Avenue with clock-like precision.

The "AA" band gives a concert that is well received.



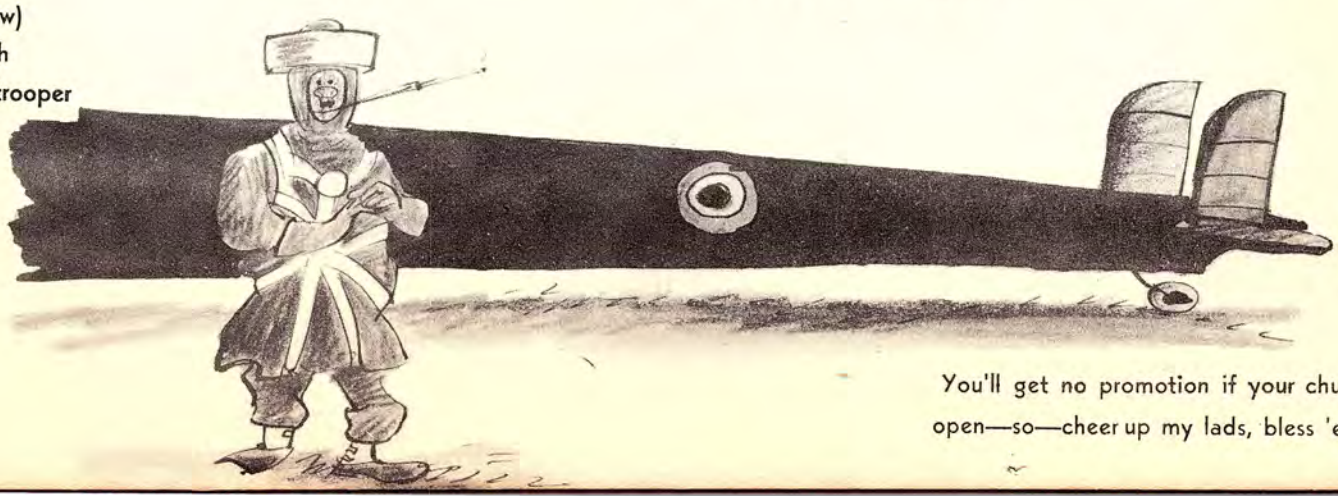
Red devils at parade rest.

The ATS drum and bugle corps passes in review.

Tommies in "the bloody infantry."

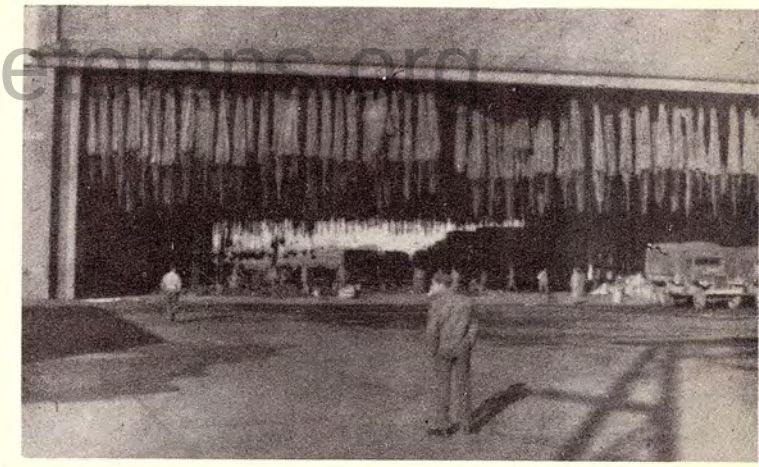
The "All-American" Soldier.

(Below)
British
Paratrooper

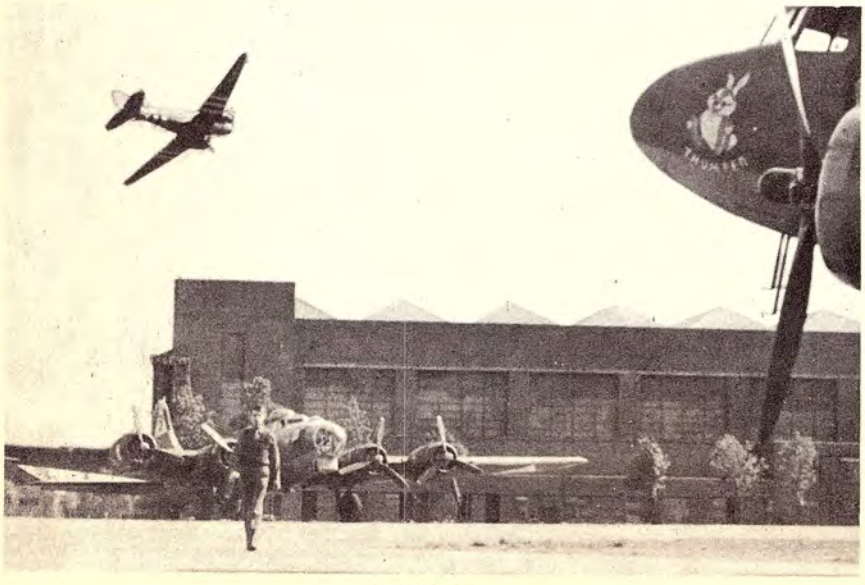


You'll get no promotion if your chute doesn't open—so—cheer up my lads, bless 'em all!

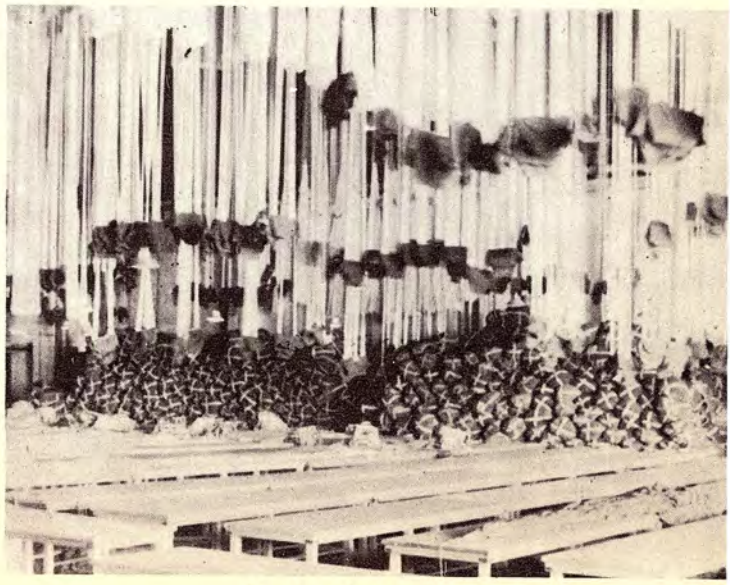
Ashwell Jump School.



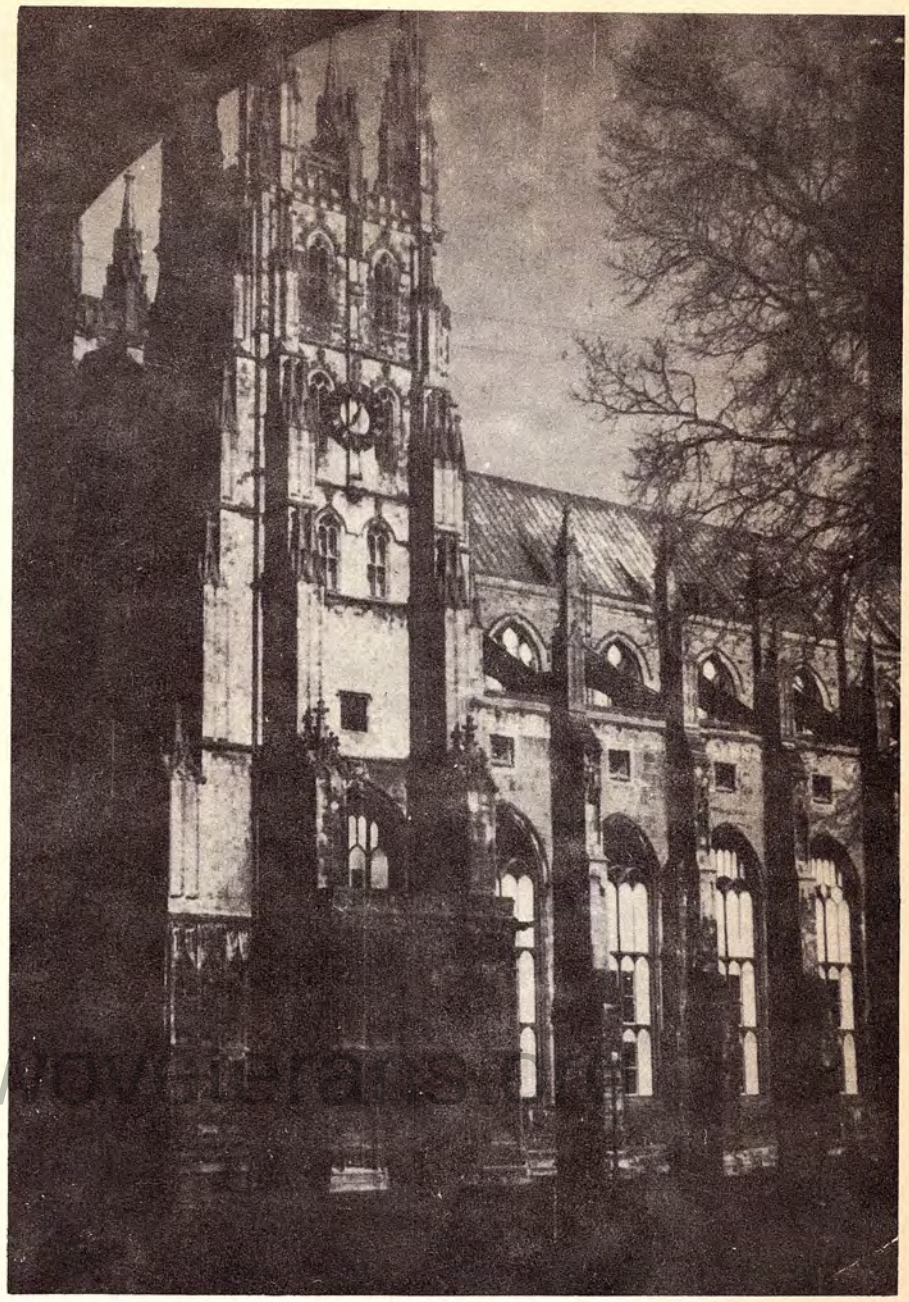
Hanging chutes after a Cottesmore jump.



"A" Shed.



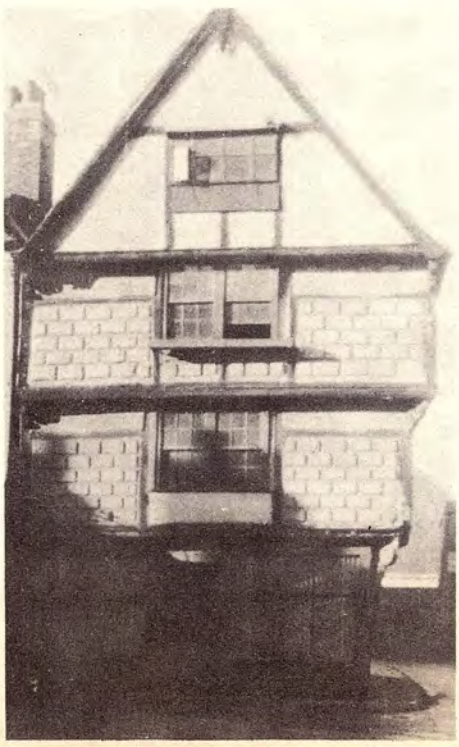
Drying chutes.

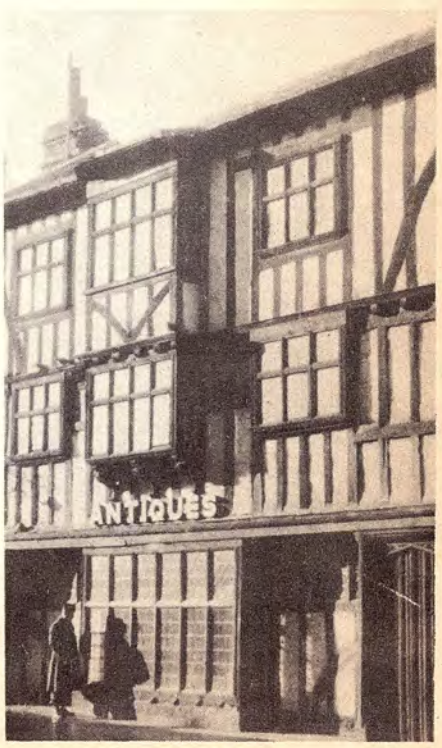


Canterbury

The Cathedral.

French Settler's Homes.





Medieval Structures.

SOCIAL LIFE REVOLVED AROUND THE PUB

The other attraction was beer.

Carl Sigman's "Together We Sing" was an Anglo-American review featuring troopers and ATS girls.

Airborne Troop-Carrier Team . . . the Puz brothers respectively members of 82nd and 9th T.C.C. meet at a party given in England (above).

The Lord and Lady Mayor of Leicester played host to the 82nd at numerous social functions (right).

A great general waves goodbye to his division — Ridgway leaves the 82nd for a new command and his third star.
The newly formed XVIII A/B Corps.

England
SOCIAL LIFE

JITTERBUGGING COMES TO ENGLAND

The 82nd Divarty Band swings out for either.

LAMBETH OR LINDY

Most of the English girls were in service, too.

Somewhere in England

Tennis Cuties.

Spring in the Midlands.

The 'ounds.

Bucolic Scene.

English Trooper.

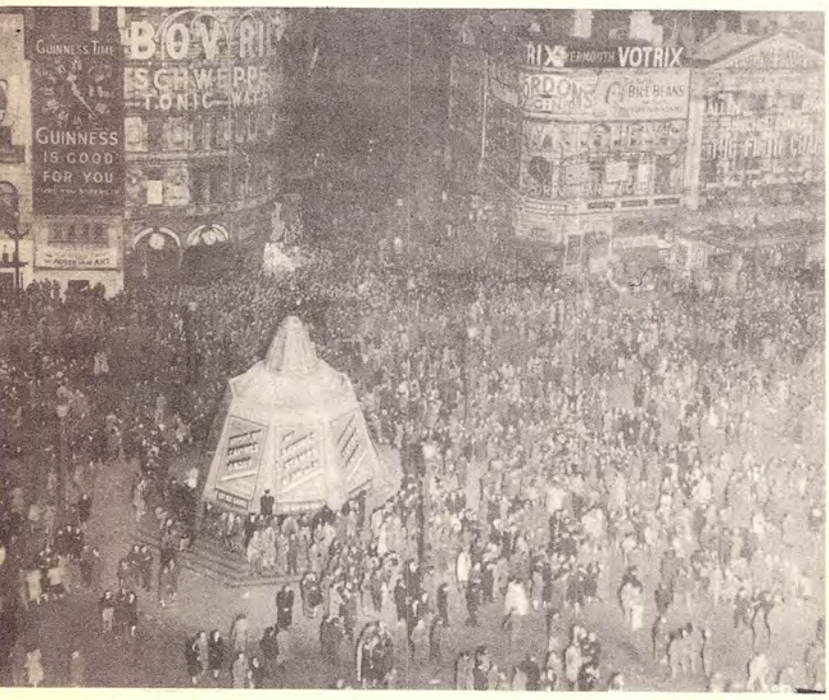
Stamford.

Free and Easy.

Diving for Butts at Ashwell.

Air raids had decreased but "Buzz Bombs" were an ever-present menace. Above right, Big Ben points defiantly at the sky after the last bomb has landed.

LONDON

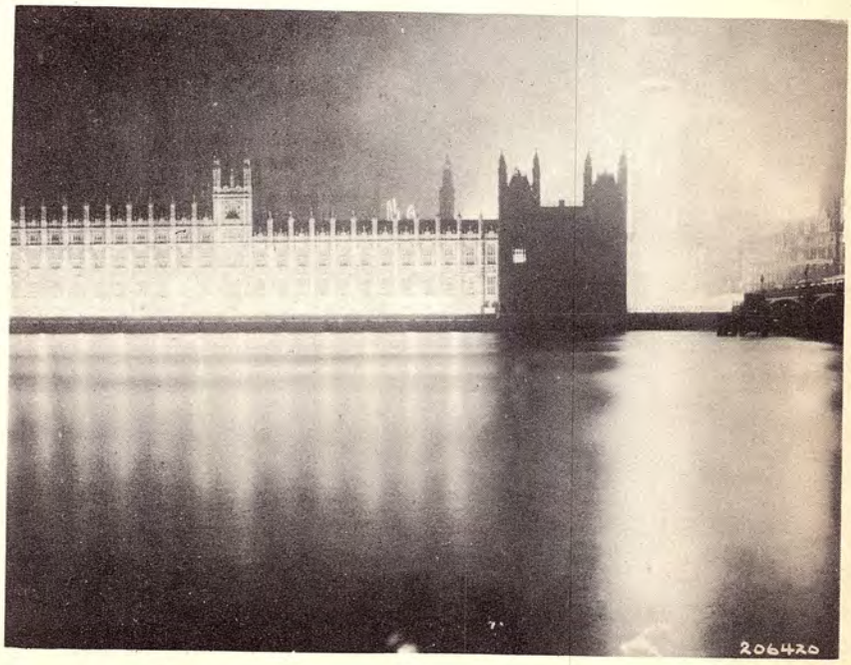


Picadilly is filled with throngs on V-E night and Big Ben is lighted after a long sleep. The British symbol of invincibility.

On our way to "The Tower."

Passing "Rainbow Corner" with Picadilly circus in the background.

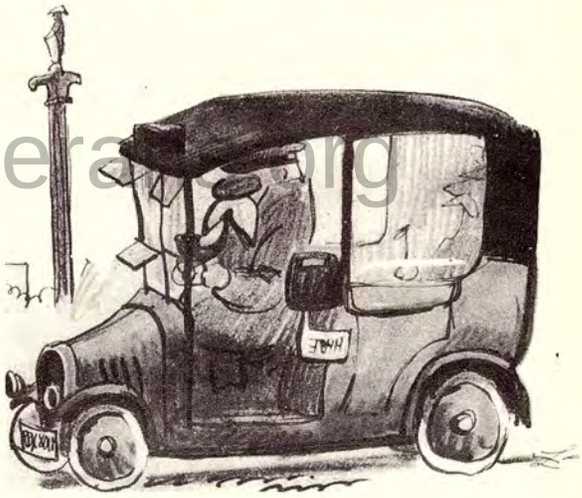
TOUR



Left, a breather in the shadow of Big Ben and above, Parliament ablaze on V-E night, the first time since September 1, 1939.

London Scenes

by Prescott



London and Big Ben

UK LEAVE...

London Bridge.

London Fog.

Edinborough Castle.

"Mons Meg," Edinborough Castle.

Princess St., Edinborough.

Wild and Sweet the Piper Plays.

Edinborough Chimney Pots.

bonnie Scotland

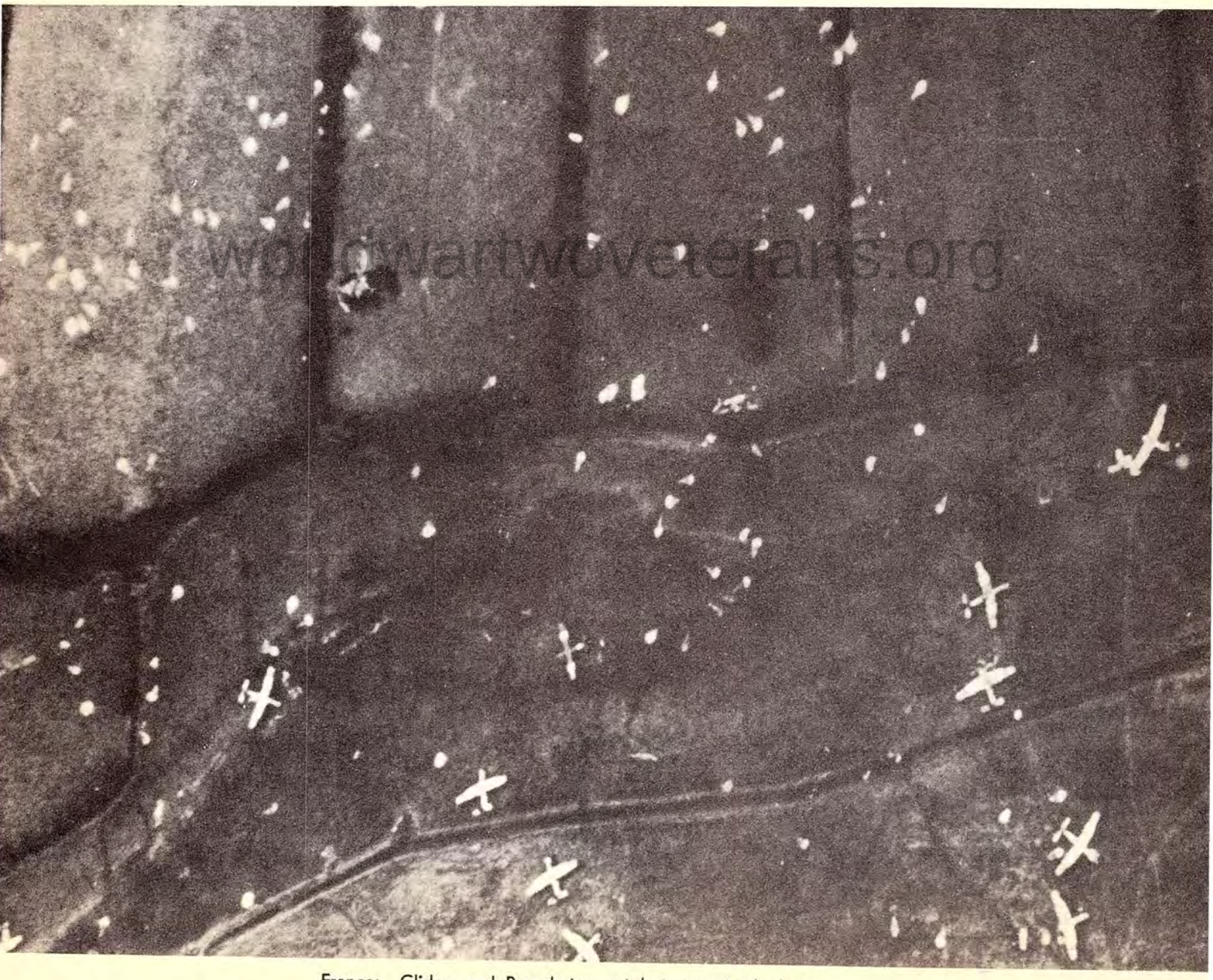
Blimey, mate, you blow it this way.

Steaming up Loch Lomond.

Furlough in Scotland.

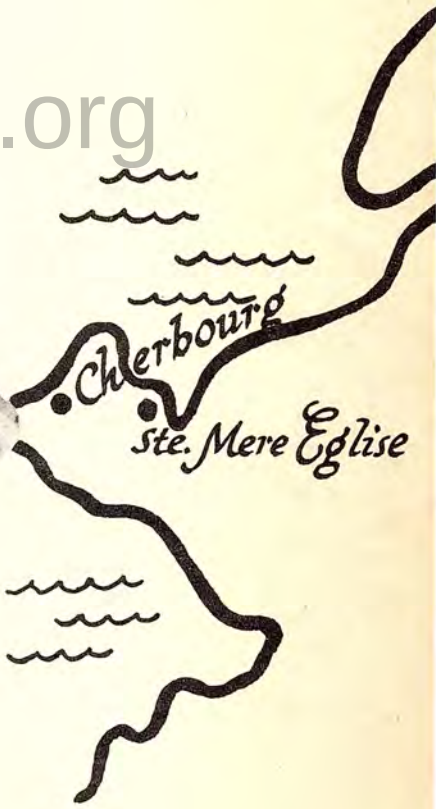
JUNE 6, 1944

Norm



France: Gliders and Parachutes rest between the hedgerows.

andy



Normandy

Loaded with paratroopers, a C-47 transport sails into the sky, bound for France.

33 days of action without relief, without replacements. Every mission accomplished. No ground gained ever relinquished.

By CAPT. CHARLES W. MASON

MORE THAN 10,000 members of the 82nd Airborne Division landed in Normandy by parachute and glider to initiate the invasion of Western Europe with the greatest airborne assault in history. Three regiments of parachutists, plus three glider anti-tank batteries and Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company were on the ground before 0430 on D-Day, led by Major General Ridgway and Brigadier General Gavin. By dawn, the key town of Ste. Mere Eglise was in their hands and vital bridges over the Merderet River near La Fiere, Chef du Pont and Grainville, were converted into bottlenecks from which the Germans, with overwhelming strength and firepower, tried unsuccessfully to push our troops. Division elements west of the Merderet immobilized enemy strength four times their own.

Two Artillery Battalions and other Division troops landed by glider at dusk of D-Day, followed by the Glider Regiment at dawn of D+1. By the 9th, Division forces east of the river had blasted the enemy out of the Merderet bridgeheads. These were consolidated by 12 June and the 90th Infantry Division passed through. The 82nd Airborne Division swung sharply south, to throw a surprise force across the Douve at Beuzeville la Bastille during the night of 12-13 June, and contacted the 101st Airborne Division at Baupte. Etienville was captured by assault. Parts of the 82nd were skillfully and quickly regrouped. They swept into position to pass through the 90th Division and lashed

westward at 0800 on 14 June, to spread confusion and consternation among German forces in the area. The enemy was driven out of 100 square miles of territory between the Meredet and Douve Rivers in less than 48 hours. June 16th found the 82nd in control of St. Sauveur le Vicomte across the Douve. The bridgehead was pushed 3000 yards to the west and the 9th Division was able to pass through on the 17th, reach the coast on the 18th, and position itself for the drive to Cherbourg.

In full stride, the 82nd then pivoted suddenly to the south, crossed the Douve a third time at Les Moitiers en Bauptois and fanned out from Bois de Limors to Pretot and Baupte to consolidate a bridgehead of sufficient depth and breadth to accommodate the weight of the VIII Corps with its artillery and the 79th and 90th Infantry Divisions. While these latter units were preparing for the drive toward La Haye du Puits, the Airborne bulwarked the center of the salient, then struck with all its fury toward Hill 95 and Ridge 131 on the 3rd of July. A score of vital objectives were taken by Airborne troops in rapid succession against the full power of tenacious German resistance and held despite vicious counterattack. And while the adjacent Divisions fought slowly to their own goals, 82nd Airborne Division patrols thrust into La Haye du Puits days before the town was taken by Corps units designated to invest that strongpoint.

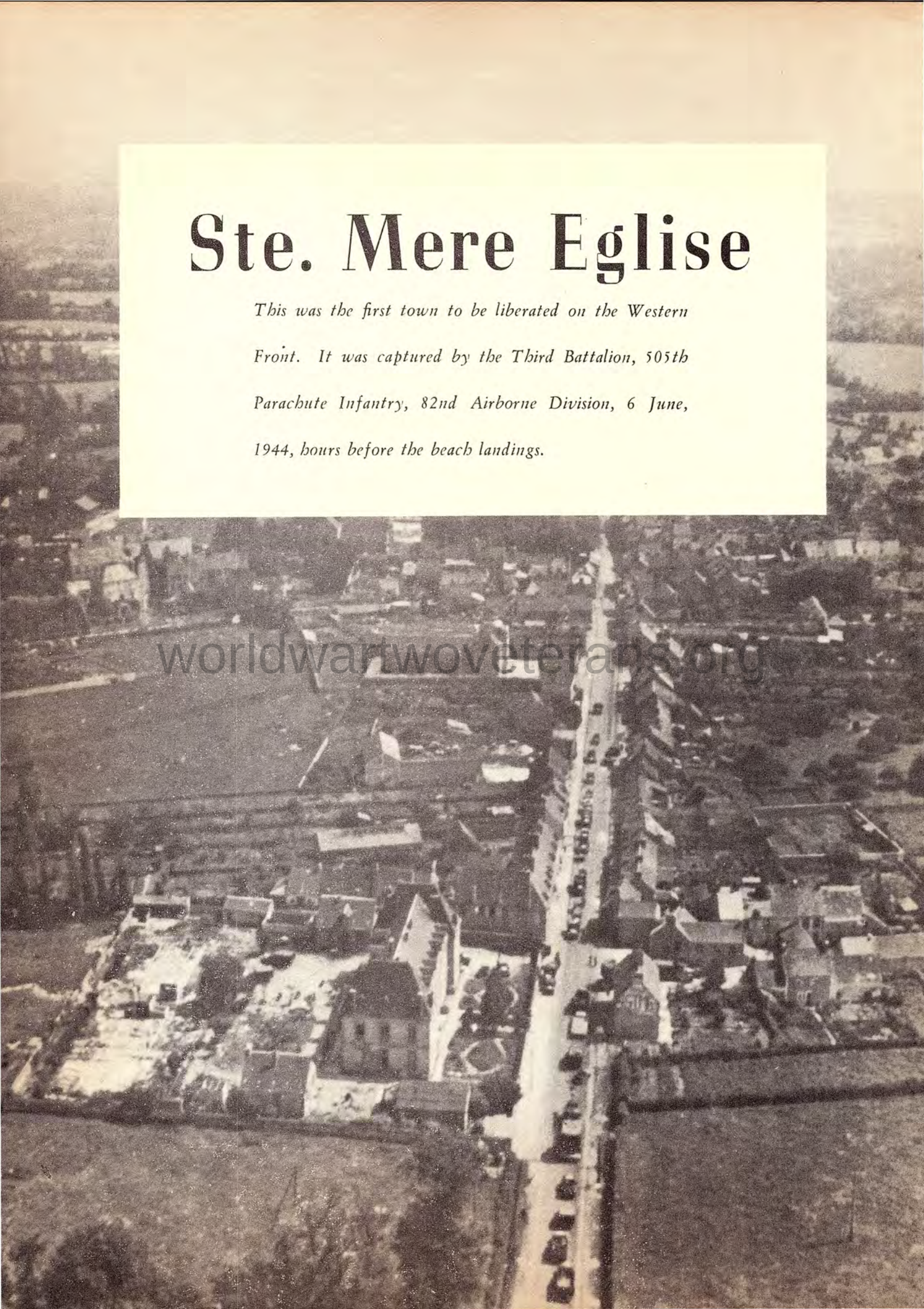
After 35 days of bitter, costly but decisive battle, four proud regiments of the 82nd Airborne Division were withdrawn from the front lines to lick grievous wounds in recuperation for the next mission. Their Rolls of Honor were lustrous with deeds of valor, skill and high achievements. More than half their officers and men were dead, missing or evacuated. Those who remained must have inherited the strength and spirit of absent comrades to accomplish each succeeding assignment with increased impetuosity and grimmer determination. From the hour of the initial assault, they had moved ever forward, asking no better place to die, than a post on the line of the deepest penetration.

The magnificent achievements of 7 Allied Armies in France cannot dwarf the accomplishment of this one Airborne Division which denied three German Divisions access to the beachheads during the first 37 hours of the invasion and then broke the backbone of German resistance on the Cotentin Peninsula to insure the speedy investment of Cherbourg.

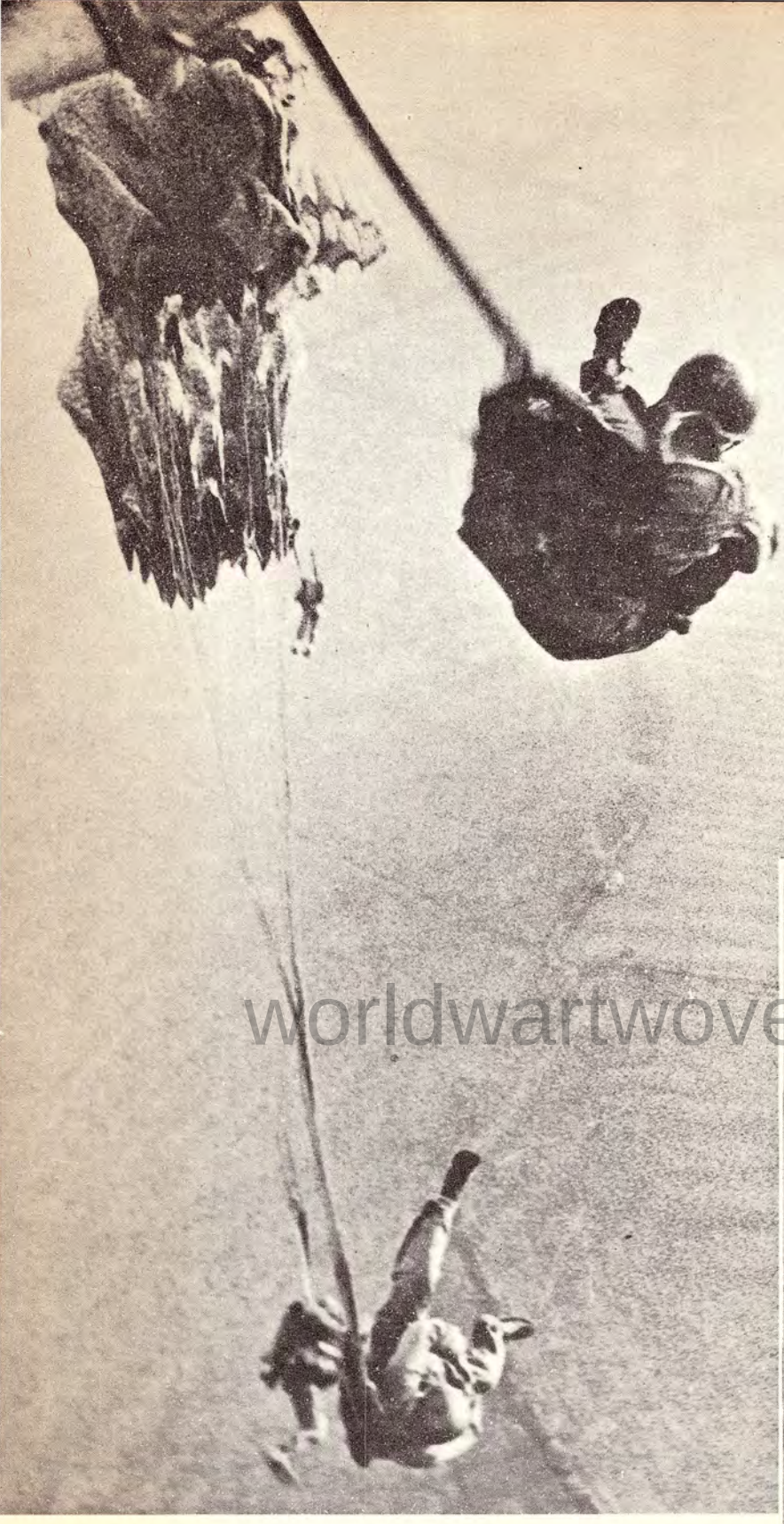
The 325 Glider Infantry loads their carriers at an English airfield, June 6.

Ste. Mere Eglise

This was the first town to be liberated on the Western Front. It was captured by the Third Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division, 6 June, 1944, hours before the beach landings.




NORMANDY
INVASION
VALOGNES
MONTEBOURG
CARENTAN
LA HAYE-DU-PUITS



The paratroops jumped into the semi-darkness of the Norman night shortly after 1 A. M. becoming the first troops to land on Hitler's Western Fortress.

Normandy

NORMANDY BY PARACHUTE

It was a grave-faced group that boarded the planes the night before D-Day. Gone was the habitual wise cracking and blonde talk. In its place was a sense of responsibility, and a tense anticipation. After countless months of training, learning how to get the other fellow first, our men were ready.

The plane ride lasted nearly two hours—two hours of physical as well as mental discomfort, for the cumbersome equipment, the Flak, the Chute opening and where and what you'll land in and on, can occupy even the calmest individual's mind in such circumstances. The wind was high, and the plane bounced about plenty, but no one got sick. Finally, the crew chief yelled that we were 20 minutes out from the drop zone. "O. K., guys, let's stand up and hook up," came the quiet voice of the jumpmaster. Everybody shuffled into line. Now was the time when all Paratroopers get the old "Butterflies"—the time spent between hooking up and waiting for the jump order. We must have checked our straps and equipment a hundred times. Then, suddenly, the jumpmaster's command: "Let's go!"

The nervousness had lifted, just as it always does when the crucial moment comes. We all pushed towards the door—come what may. We were ready and wanted to get it over with. Out I went. Then with a jolting jerk that temporarily leaves you breathless, the old silkworm has blossomed again. Looking toward the ground, I am suddenly very clear headed and alert. Tracer bullets are coming up all around us. It seems almost as if you are walking down a fiery stairway. Coming to your senses, you see the ground right below you and get ready to land. With a dull thud, you hit the ground. Then, in a nervous jumble that seems like years, your thumby hands, clumsy with tension, unfasten your straps, and you are free—for action.

First, we must reorganize. At night, this is a real problem. Picking up men here and there from the widely scattered parachutes, you assemble as many as possible and then, when the flare goes up, you proceed to the Battalion assembly area.

Dawn on D-Day came clear, cold and tense. Our group was now assembled and pushing toward Ste. Mere Eglise. We arrived in the town, but for our particular group resistance was passive, with the exception, of course, of the ever-present snipers. Our Battalion had been given the mission of defending the northern sector of the town. (Through Ste. Mere Eglise runs the main road of the Cherbourg Peninsula. It was imperative that the 505th Parachute Regt. hold this road at any and all cost. It was along this road that the Wiley Jerry would try to send his reinforcements. They must be stopped, until the beach landings were completed.)

Arriving at our company defensive sector, one platoon was dispatched to the town of Neauville Au Plain, 2 miles further north, to act as an outpost line. Everything was quiet, and we wondered where Jerry was.

For once, nobody needed to prod us to dig in. About noon, we could hear firing to the north and knew our outpost was tangling with the Germans. Then, the shells began to scream their missiles of misery about us. Dirt really flew as we dug faster and deeper into our hedgerow. Small arms fire also began to open, and we knew the Nazi had arrived. Who can explain the terror that strikes one's heart when those shells begin to shatter all around? Small arms and machine guns we can all take, but the deafening roar and the flying shell fragments never lose their terror for even the bravest Airborne Soldier.

Sometime that afternoon, a breathless runner legged it in from the outpost and told us the platoon was holding off an entire Battalion, and would it be all right to withdraw. Receiving permission, the messenger took off to tell the Platoon leader it was O. K. About an hour later, the platoon returned. Gone were many faces that had become so much a part of our life the last two years. We didn't have to question those that were left. One look at their grimy, shocked countenances told more than words can ever tell.

Night fell, and with it the enemy artillery barrage increased in intensity. Under the cover of darkness, the Germans had moved up to within 100 yards of us. Shells and bullets rained about us like hail on a tin roof back in Iowa, only we had no tin roof. We held our ground. Suddenly, the roar of the old "sweat-boxes" was heard, and as we looked skyward we could see C-47's, towing and releasing gliders. No paratrooper was ever so glad to see gliders before. They were our enemies back in the states, but we were sure glad to see our buddies now. We could use some glider artillery, too. Many of the gliders failed to land near us, but a sufficient number came in to relieve the pressure and alleviate the gravity of our position considerably. All night long, the Kraut artillery broke around us.

At dawn, the German attacked again. We held our fire until some were only 50 yards away, then layed down such a heavy curtain of fire that any further advance was impossible. When their attack had bogged down, we launched our counter blow, laying down a withering fire as we left our foxholes, driving them ¾ of a mile. A temporary lull came in the battle, and Heinies started streaming out under a white flag to give themselves up.

In German, they told us our fire was too accurate—there were too many casualties, and they were forced to surrender.

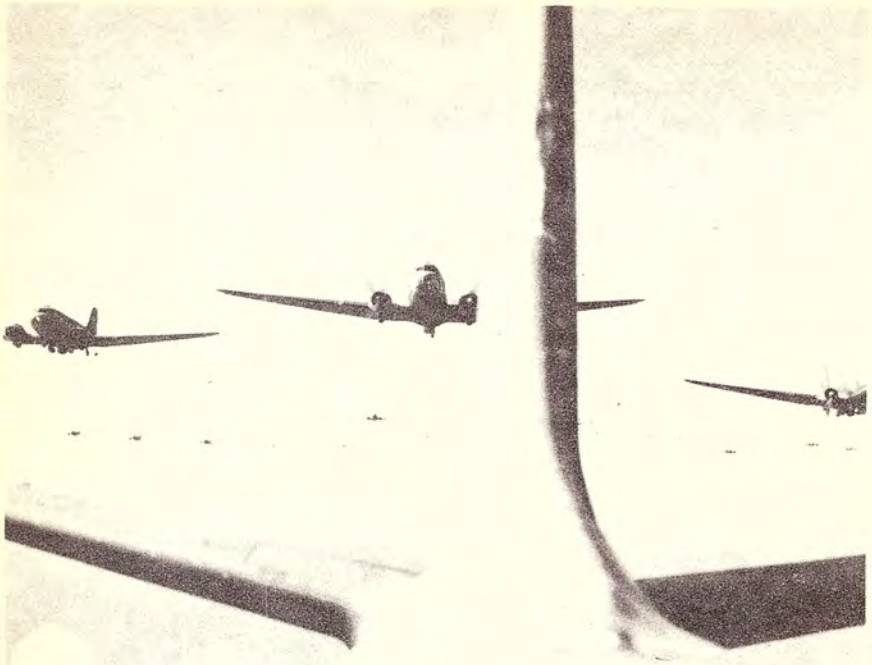
That afternoon, the first elements of Seaborne Infantry came up through our position. Our unshaven men, hollow eyed from lack of shut-eye, cheered the footloggers and tankers with all the enthusiasm they could muster, and then relaxed for the first time in nearly 48 hours.

With idle time on our hands, at last we got a chance to look around and take stock in the situation. Dead Jerries lay strewn over the ground, their faces a series of grotesque masks. Smashed mauser rifles and Mark VI tanks were wrecked too. We did pay a price, also—not a high one by proportion, but it's tough to see your Buddies killed, no matter how few.

Shaking my head, I returned to my fox hole, sat by my radio and wondered if it was all worth it or not — whether we were fighting for Benny and Frank, or if there was something greater pushing us all. Then, a message came over the radio. It was from General Gavin—"Slim Jim" we call him. I scribbled the message down on the pad, and after I'd "Rogered" I took time to read it. It was brief all right. "Slim Jim" just said, "A good job, damn well done." That answered my question.

Joe Stanger

THE PARACHUTE INVASION OF Normandy



The flight was through moonlight and thick clouds, the climax of which was the jump into the flak-fountains over the drop zone.

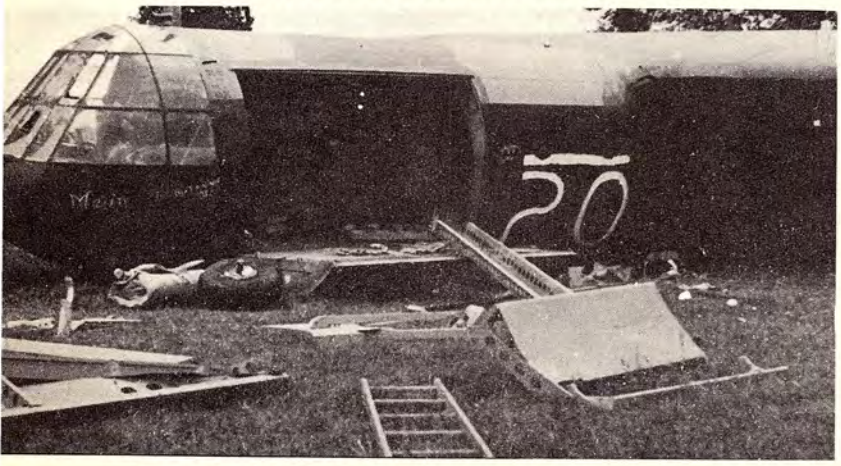
"It's best not to speak to paratroopers about saluting. They always ask where you got your jump boots."

THE GLIDER INVASION OF

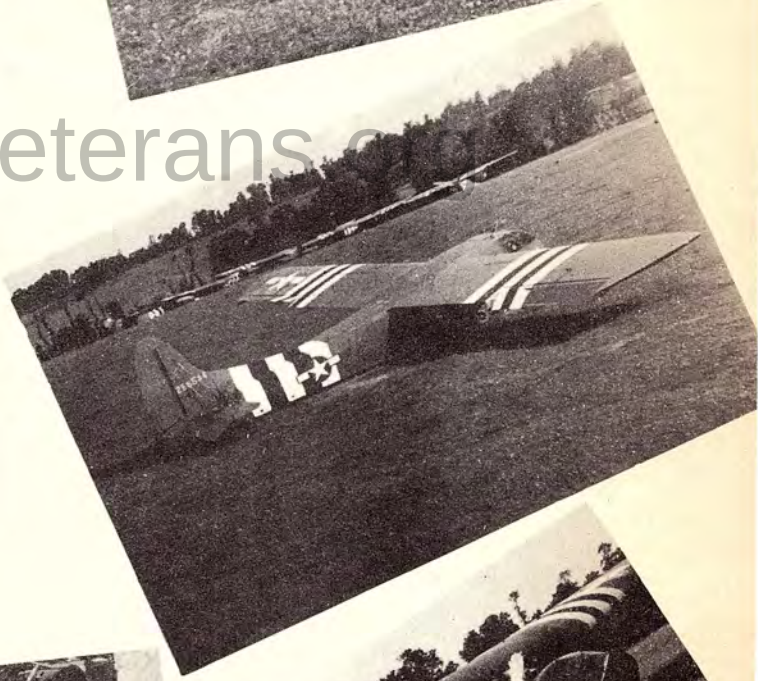
Normandy

was a battle of hedge rows, 88's, river crossings, flooded fields and Glider crashes. Here the 1st night glider invasion in history was staged. here 82nd glidermen suffered 11% casualties on the landings alone.

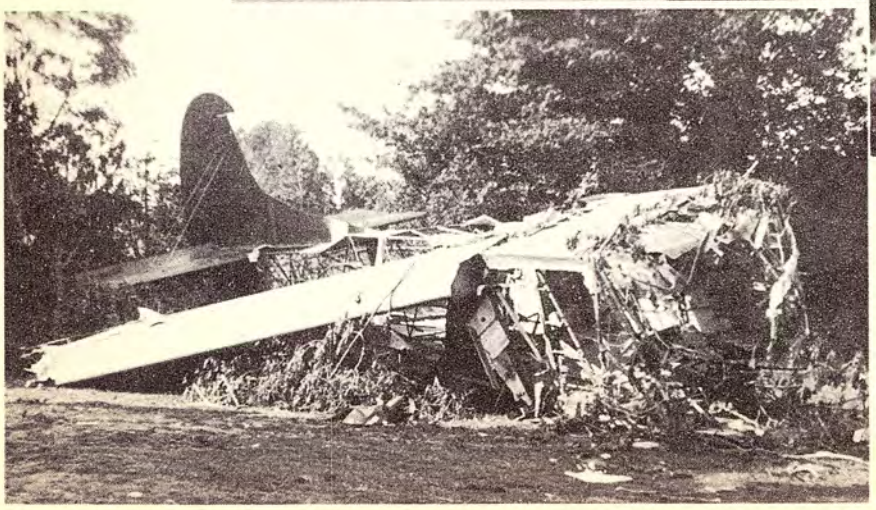
Fields were small — hedgerows, houses, jagged poles and antiaircraft were formidable obstacles.



Large English Horsas crashed in even greater numbers than our American gliders.



Some gliders landed perfectly but many more did not.



And the gliders came by dawn, to reinforce the fatigued paratroopers. Not a few of them, however, crashed on landing, like the one at left, or were riddled in the air.

Normandy

D-DAY BY GLIDER

FROM TODAY's battlefield a new hero has emerged to share in the glory and limelight bestowed upon elite elements of the nation's fighting forces. His job has the toughness and misery of the infantry. Landing casualties are higher than among parachutists and "esprit de corps" surpasses even the colorful marines. He is the fighting glider-man — an infantryman who gets in more tough spots in less time by sailing over enemy defenses in a paper mache "flakhack."

Battle-toughened veterans of the "All-American" 82nd Airborne Division's glider units served as guinea pigs in helping to perfect and prove glider-borne infantry. Their ranks have been thinned by the savage fighting at the Salerno beachhead in Italy, the airborne invasion of Normandy, the "battle for bridges" in Holland, the "battle of the bulge" in Belgium and the cracking of the Siegfried Line in Germany. The toughest glider landing of all was Normandy. Here the 1st night glider landings in this or any war were made. Here eleven percent of all gliderman were casualties on the landings alone.

In the invasion of Normandy, pathfinders jumped with the paratroopers to check the area and guide the two planes over the landing zone. They found the previously selected areas heavily minded with poles, trees and other obstacles dotting the few open fields. Gliders were already winging their way over the Channel when word was received of the change in landing zones and Providence must have been watching over the men as the gliders swooped down to crash land in garden-size fields surrounded by the maize of hedgerows. The over-loaded "flakhacks" smashed into one another, ripped through hedgerows and spread men, equipment and debris in unbelievable confusion. One glider out of four set-down without appreciable damage. Surprisingly enough, a very high percentage of the men crawled out of the wreckage to salvage vital equipment and set out on their prearranged assignments.

While crossing the Channel the nose of a glider came unlatched leaving a yawning gap between the pilot's control section and the cargo compartment. The pilot and co-pilot swung periously in mid-air in the nose section. All efforts to re-hook the nose failed, but the glidermen were able to anchor the nose section while the pilot struggled to keep the frail craft in the air. The plane and glider returned to an airfield in England. Within a short time they were again headed toward Normandy. Six days later the sergeant who had been glider commander, led his small group of glidermen back to the unit. His glider had been cut loose nearly 70 miles from the landing zone deep in enemy territory. The sergeant and his men had slipped through enemy lines, contacted the British forces near Caen, France. During the 33 days of almost continuous attacking, the glidermen spearheaded many of the pushes which drove across the Douve and Merderet Rivers, and cut the Cherbourg Peninsula bottling-up German forces around Cherbourg, then swung inland parallel to the coast to take the high ground overlooking La Haye du Puits. The glidermen fought throughout the campaign without reinforcements. One company came out of the fighting with only six men.

At one point the fiery little commander of the 325 Glider Infantry and his wire crew moved down a lane aggressively. Sniper fire zipped all around and artillery shells began dropping in dangerously close. The Colonel had his phone connected and called a battalion commander asking for coordinates of the battalion's new command post. These were given and the position located on the map. The Colonel snorted, "Move forward 600 yards and bring your battalion along." The jeep driver had turned down the wrong lane and taken the Colonel several hundred yards out in front of the lines. The Colonel waited right there for the unit to advance.

Command posts are always close to the front lines in typical airborne fashion. During combat the officers lead their men instead of directing action from a relatively safe rear area. In one of the 325 battalions, two commanding officers have been killed in action, two others seriously wounded and evacuated to the United States and two more including the present commander, have been wounded five times. A total of 13 Purple hearts or oak leaf clusters have been earned by the commanders of this one battalion alone.

By Ray West.

HIGH FLIGHT

by

JOHN MAGEE

Flight Officer R. C. A. F.

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And have danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air . . .

Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace,
Where never lark, or even eagle flew—
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

NORMANDY

A story of Hedgerows, 88's, Glider crashes, and flooded fields—46% were casualties in 33 days of furious fighting.

During these 33 days the Veteran 82nd Airborne Division liberated the first town on the Western front (Ste. Mere Eglise, 4 hrs. before the beach forces landed on D-Day, June 6, 1944), and engaged 5 different enemy divisions including the 91st, 243rd, 77th, 265th and 353rd virtually destroying the 91st, and 265th as effective fighting units. The Division destroyed 62 German tanks and knocked out 44 antitank and artillery guns.

The initial crossing of the flooded Douve and Merderet Rivers was made by the "All Americans" early in the Normandy campaign.

Hard hitting paratroops buckling on their parachutes prior to boarding transports that dropped them in Hitler's France.

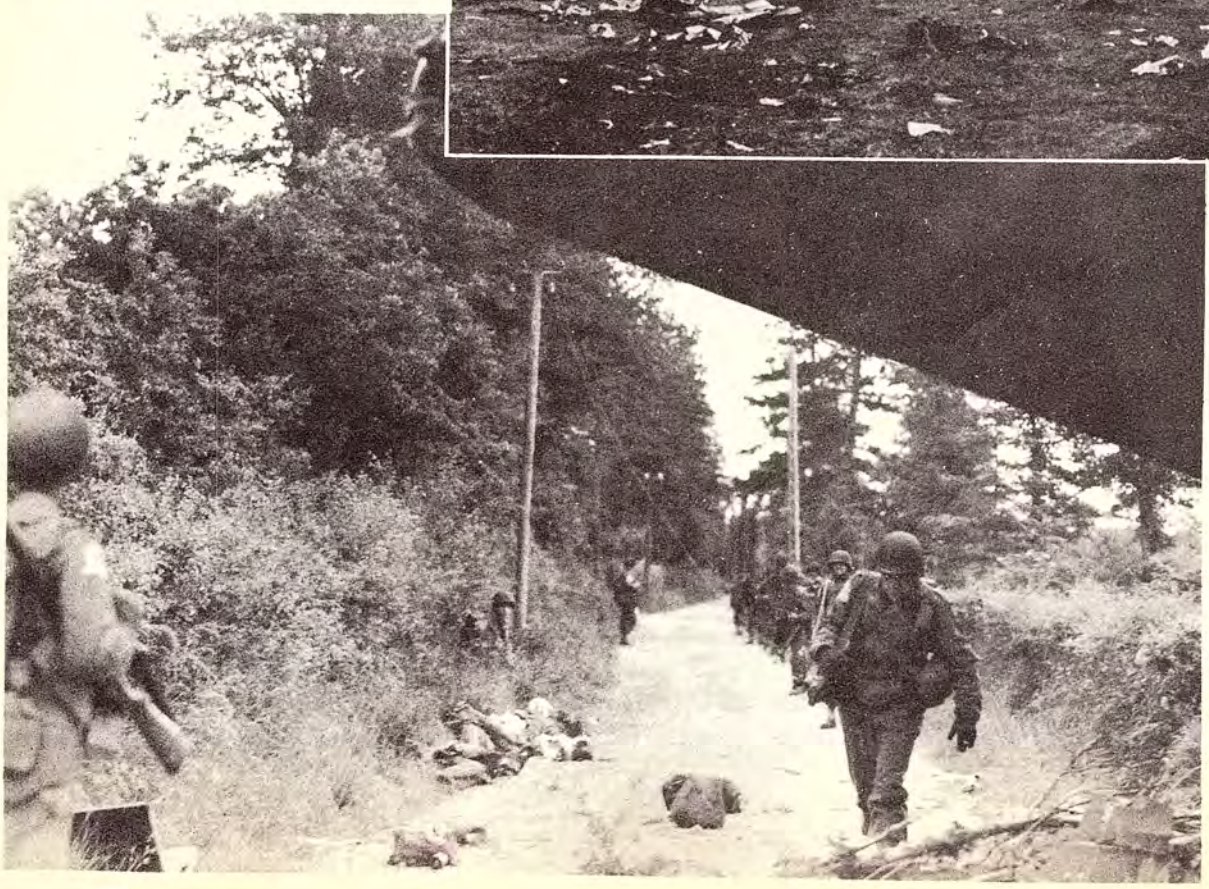
A major part of the pain on any mission was caused by the bulky paratroop equipment on the ride. Here two boys struggle into their tight harness.

D STAGE

D DAY

Normandy

A crashed glider (above)
A crashed transport (right)
and marching men (below)



The artillery sounds off, the infantry advances, often obtaining needed information from the natives, and (below) the little Norman town of Ste. Mere Eglise is entered.

Normandy

Glider men advance.

Interrogating natives.

Peaceful scene before invasion.

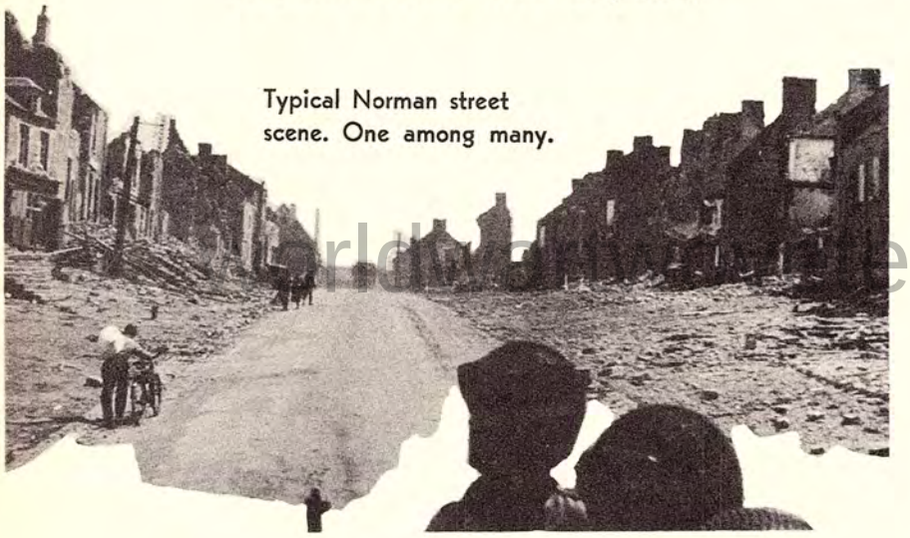
French women tend 82nd grave.

Fraternizing in France.

Lt. Gen. Bradley decorates Brig. Gen. Gavin, Lt. Col. Krause and Lt. Col. Vandevoort.

The pause that refreshes after dusty march.

Blasted church.



Typical Norman street scene. One among many.

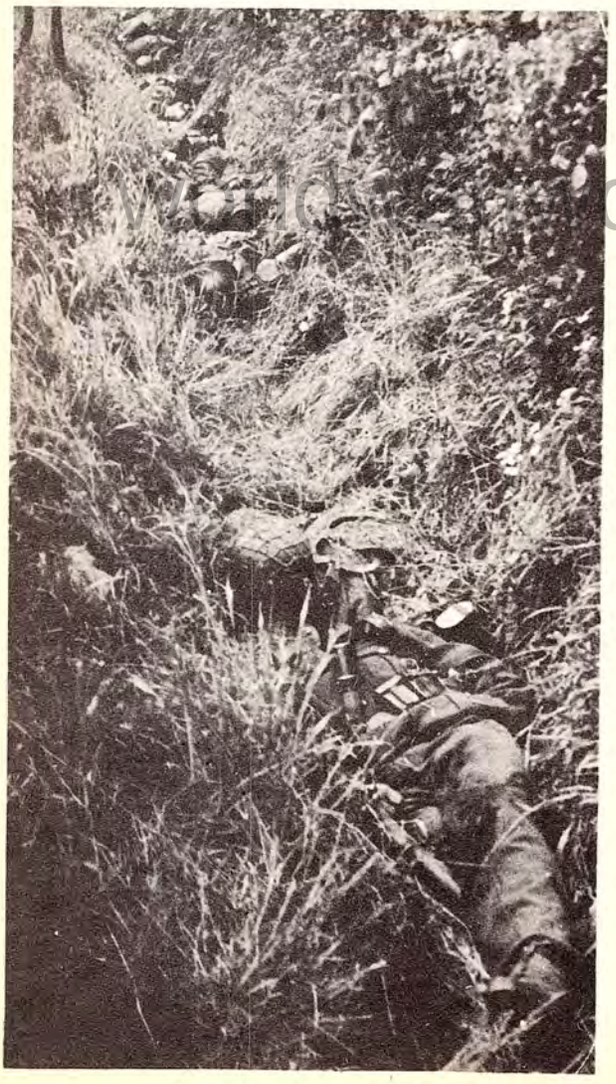
Carrying on despite wounds.

Paratroops display war trophy.

Nazi teller mine goes off.

Normandy

Eager for revenge, paratroops move past dead comrades looking for snipers.



Dead Krauts in a Ditch

The German was Never a Weak Enemy

Excerpts from the fanatical German parachutist's creed

You are the chosen ones of the German Army. You will seek combat and train yourself to endure any manner of test. To you the battle shall be the fulfilment.

Cultivate true comradeship, for by the aid of your comrades you will conquer or die.

Beware of talking. Be not corruptible. Men act while women chatter. Chatter may bring you to the grave.

Be calm and prudent, strong and resolute. Valour and the enthusiasm of an offensive spirit will cause you to prevail in the attack.

The most precious thing in the presence of the foe is ammunition. He who shoots uselessly, merely to comfort himself, is a man of straw. He is a weakling who merits not the title of parachutist.

Never surrender. To you death or victory must be a point of honour.

You can triumph only if our weapons are good. See to it that you submit yourself to this law—first my weapons and then myself.

You must grasp the full purport of every enterprise, so that if your leader be killed you can yourself fulfill it.

Against an open foe fight with chivalry, but to a guerrilla extend no quarter.

Keep your eyes wide open. Tune yourself to the topmost pitch. Be as nimble as a greyhound, as tough as leather, as hard as Krupp steel, and so you shall be the German Warrior incarnate.

Tanks reach the 82nd!

Sherman tanks roll in to help after breaking through from the beach.

An antitank gun guards a key road block beside a German tank.

Our wounded and solid ranks of prisoners formed never-ending lines to the rear. The 82nd medics performed miracles under impossible circumstances, proving their efficiency under intense fire.

Normandy

Above: Tanks helped us after the initial battles.

Right: Slain Germans sleep.

The beachhead was well secured and going strong when the 82nd went back to England.

Normandy

1944

It is for those who died we sing
The swan-song of the great:
It is for those who wounded lay—
For those who kept the date;
It is for every one who went
To test the rules of fate:

We give them what is due each man
Who crossed that awful shore;
Who dared the flame of circum-
stance—
Defied the battle's roar:
We hail who loved their lives no less
But loved their country more!

•

WILLIAM L. EMBRY

•