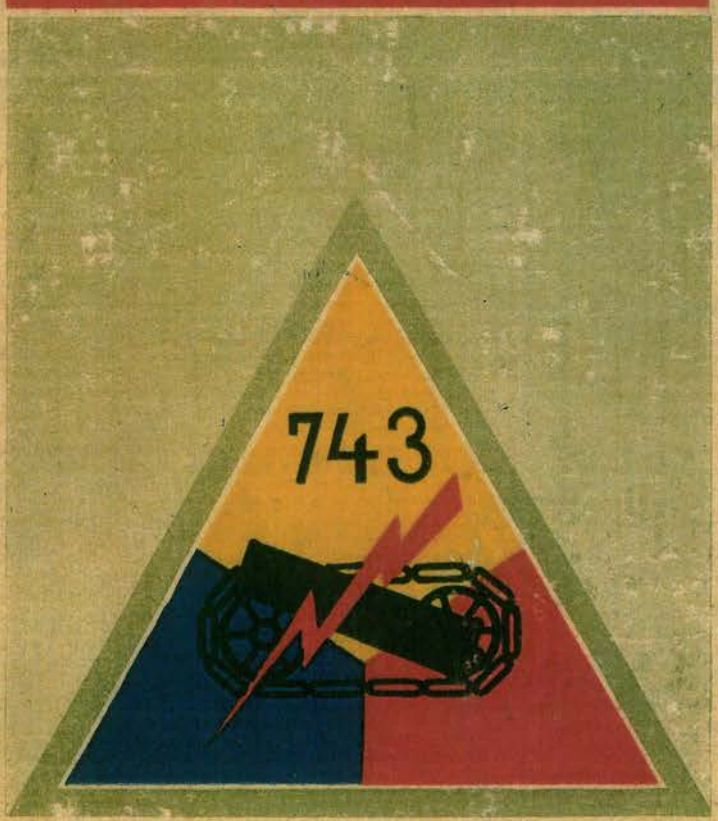
# MOVE OUT
# VERIFY




## THE COMBAT STORY OF THE 743RD TANK BATTALION

# MOVE OUT, VERIFY


## THE COMBAT STORY OF
## *The* 743RD TANK BATTALION

A Battalion truck was driven hundreds of miles through Germany to locate and haul a linotype machine so that type could be set for this book. This is just one of the sometimes fantastic difficulties overcome during the manufacture of these pages in the bomb-devastated city of Frankfurt-on-Main in July 1945. That the book did get printed at all is astonishing to its author. 1st Lt. John D. Hess, aided by German-speaking Tech. Sergeant Frank Gartner, looked after the considerable details of publication. The 21 chapter illustrations are by Pfc. Norman E. Hamilton. The writing is by Pfc. Wayne Robinson, who here wishes to acknowledge the great help given by so many, from tank commanders to cooks to personnel clerks, in getting the facts for this combat story.

*To*

*Lieutenant Colonel John S. Upham, Jr.,*

*who forged the spirit of*

*a great tank battalion....*

*the Officers and Men of the 743*

*sincerely dedicate this book*

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# A LETTER TO THE TANKERS

Kloster Kreuzberg, Germany
10 July 1945

Tankers of the 743:

You have accomplished your mission in Europe. You have accomplished it only as great soldiers could. Never, from the day you hit the Normandy Invasion Beach until this day, have I had any doubts as to your courage or your willingness to sacrifice your lives for those of your comrades.

"We Keep The Faith." Yes, you have kept the faith of those who died in Flanders Field in '17 and '18, of those who died in the water and on the sands of Omaha Beach, of those who died beside the hedgerows of Normandy, of those who fell in the orchards and farmlands of France, Belgium and Holland, of those who threw their soft bodies against the steel and cement obstacles of the Siegfried line, of those who pushed to the Roer, froze in the bitter winter campaign of the Ardennes, and of those whose bodies were strewn from the Roer River to the Rhine and from the Rhine to the Elbe River. You have kept the faith your loved ones had in you, your country had in you, Colonel Upham had in you, and I had in you.

Never has a man had the opportunity of working with and associating with a finer group of officers and men than you of the 743rd. You have met and defeated the best the Germans had. Now, many of you will meet and defeat the best the Japanese have. My prayers go with you.

WILLIAM D. DUNCAN
Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry
743rd Tank Battalion,
Commanding.

# PART ONE

# INVASION

# I . . . . . BATTLE FOR A BEACHHEAD

i.

THERE it was — the Beach.

Omaha Beach. 6th of June, 1944. France. 6 in the morning. Sunrise. Chill, wet wind. In the Channel, heavy weather. Angry waves churned and tossed by a day-old gale . . .

From the night's assembly area where the invasion craft had gathered, then from a Line of Departure in the Bay of the Seine, the assault force of the 743rd Tank Battalion moved toward combat. At this moment, the General Sherman tanks were out of their element, immobilized within the steel sides of the Navy's LCTs. Two companies of tanks were especially waterproofed, equipped with top secret canvas sheathing and propeller drives which would allow them to "swim in" to the beach under their own power when the box-nosed ramps of the Landing-Craft-Tank were dropped in deep water offshore. But the high-running waves defeated this planned tactical surprise. The 32-ton swimming tanks could navigate only in reasonably calm water. It was now up to the LCTs to go

in all the way. Bucking and tossing, loaded to capacity, each with four medium tanks and their crews, the amphibious vanguard approached shore.

Before they banged closed their hatches, tankmen on the invasion boats squinted their eyes against icy spray and tried to make out detail on the hazy horizon ahead of the plunging craft. From behind and over their heads came the boom and wail of big shells hurtling shoreward from the batteries of the Navy's battlewagons. On the green bluffs of the Normandy coast it was possible to make out the orange flashes of the exploding bursts.

The German coastal guns were answering. The first enemy salvos ripped into the surf at short range just off the beach as German gunners attempted to beat off an advance wave of combat engineers whose job was to tackle the underwater obstacles, the barbed wire, the anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. Now the enemy range lifted out to meet the attack armada. Sudden geysers of white water began to flash up close beside the advancing LCTs.

It was H-minus-30, one-half hour before 6:30 o'clock, D-Day morning. All night the tank-loaded LCTs had wallowed in the gale-tossed Channel, shipping water, riding the heaving surface like big black cheese boxes — waiting.

The waiting was over. Advance planning was over. Training, special maneuvers were over. This was it. This was combat. *Verify* — the 743rd Tank Battalion's Army code name — was going in. Its General Sherman tanks, its halftracks, its trucks, were to be the first on a hell-fire strip of sand the world ever after would call Omaha Beach.

ii.

THAT was the beginning of the long and terrible fight that went on to weeks and then to months and ended for the 743rd Tank Battalion only when the war ended, May 7th, 1945.

That was the beginning, but there was much — so very much — that went into the forging of the Battalion before it went into action at the opening gun and remained in action until the final cease fire order. Even the cockiest members — and this was an outfit as cocky as they come — would admit that the 743 did not just spring into fighting trim overnight. Behind the beginning was a war department order creating another tank battalion in the days when America rushed to prepare for a war. Before the shock of combat came the training, first in the cool mountains of the state of Washington, then on the torrid sands of California and Arizona desert wastes, and finally on the damp midlands and foggy coasts of England.

And behind the training was a man . . . Long before the Battalion came to England and long before it came into the war, the 743 regarded itself a crack outfit, second to no other tank battalion. It was built into a separate organization to be apart from the great land armadas of armor — the armored divisions that America was bringing into being. It was specially trained for its work. Its fierce pride in itself was in direct proportion to the long hours and the tedious matters put in and overcome on the training fields. It was untested, but it was ready for any test. The reason the men thought the

outfit was a good one, the reason it *was* a good one — was bound up in one man: Lieutenant Colonel John S. Upham, Jr., the Battalion Commander.

As an officer out of West Point in the Regular Army could be expected to do, Colonel Upham put military starch and correctness into the 743. This was but a surface quality, obtainable with any group of men given a few months time. Colonel Upham did much more. He gave the officers and men under his command, through his own example, a drive and a purpose and a will to do anything, no matter what the problem, no matter how tough it looked. He inspired and then guided the spirit that was directed toward one aim: battle. In the tanks, especially in a separate tank battalion, there is no side-stepping battle. The Colonel knew it. He saw to it that his men knew it, expected it, prepared for it, so that when the time came the Battalion was ready to go any place against any odds. Yes, a cocky outfit — the kind that was needed when the cards went down and it was called to get ashore on D-Day, June 6th, 1944.

It is one of the things to be expected in wartime: Colonel Upham was wounded in the very early hours of fighting on Omaha Beach. Beyond those first crucial hours, he was never to lead his Battalion in combat, in the battles he had so well prepared for. He went back (none of his men saw him go) as one of the thousands of casualties on that bloody June day. He never returned to the 743, but there was no man who served in the Battalion, whether he had or had not known Colonel Upham, who did not feel the great spirit, the drive of duty, the esprit de corps which first became evident in those distant days or training. It was a spirit that survived his leaving, that was so deeply impressed it lasted through the many months of combat.

And that was the Battalion's own tribute to the man behind the beginning.

iii.

THE period of training for war lacks the vermilion details and the more lurid sensations of combat days, but it is an integral part of the character as well as the history of wartime *Verify*.

The start of the 743 was as a light tank battalion at Fort Lewis, Washington, on the 16th of April, 1942. It began as a "detachment", and its nucleus was nine officers and 108 enlisted men who were transferred from another light tank battalion, the 757th, at Canyon Crest Heights in California.

Records show that the first day of training started April 20th. The cadre prepared itself for the flow of recruits that began to arrive. These came early in May — a typical cross-section of America's draft army with every walk of life, every background represented. New to uniform, they came from Fort Snelling, Minnesota; Fort Des Moines, Iowa; Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and Camp Robertson, Arkansas.

In poured the enlisted men, but the "detachment" from the 757th had not received any new officers. Neither were there any orders activating a new tank battalion. At last on May 16th, the 743rd Tank Battalion became an official part of the Army as the necessary papers came through from headquarters of the Armored Force. The

Battalion was activated with Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) John S. Upham, Jr., as commander.

Just before the cadre had left California for Fort Lewis, everybody was inoculated with Yellow Fever injections. In June and July, the Battalion began sending these men to the hospital a strange canary color. It was diagnosed as Yellow Jaundice. Many were quite ill, including the Battalion commander, but no deaths resulted.

There was basic training of 13 weeks, completed at Fort Lewis on the 15th of August, 1942. Men and officers were placed in positions within the unit where they seemed best suited. Then school days began. Most classes were at Fort Lewis; others were at Fort Knox, Kentucky, the Armored Training Center. Eleven officers, 151 enlisted men were sent to Armored Force schools.

Meanwhile wheeled vehicles and the high-turreted, thin-armored "Mae West" tanks were received. The first two-day maneuver was held in August with these vehicles.

The 743rd Tank Battalion changed from light tanks to medium tanks officially on the 19th of August, when information to this effect was sent down from Armored Force. It was considered good news.

It was an ordinary cycle of Army life, somewhat drab, somewhat monotonous, ever routine with occasional highspots out of the ordinary. Such a highspot was the September afternoon the tanks paraded at Fort Lewis in review for the President of the United States. (Two years later the President was to award this same unit the Presidential Unit Citation for the D-Day invasion). When a big Canadian war bond drive was staged in Vancouver, the 743rd sent tanks and halftracks to take part in the 10,000-soldier parade. When the University of Washington's football team tangled with St. Mary's Pre-Flight eleven on a November Saturday in Seattle, the roar of a 743rd medium tank thrilled the crowd at half-time.

These were breaks from the routine. At the end of November, the Battalion had completed six months of training. Six months was considered the time required to train a unit for combat. The rumors got going strong. Men began to pick their places on the boat — and rumor had that boat going to every point on the globe.

In mid-January the move finally came — but it wasn't by boat. It was by railroad — the Battalion's first rail move. From the considerable rain experienced at Fort Lewis, the men found themselves shipped to a region which modestly could be described as very dry, at Camp Young, California — a part of the Army's Desert Training Center. The move was completed January 19th, 1943.

Army life as it is lived in tents was learned at Camp Young. There were some in the Battalion so naive as to think that the desert in winter would be a warm place. It *was* in the high hot noon of daytime. But not at night in January. The functional wooden barracks known at Fort Lewis seemed hospitable abodes indeed in contrast to the pyramidal tents which were either blistering hot, or freezing cold, or blowing down, or leaking, or falling into a sodden heap whenever sudden rainstorms came up before their ropes could be loosened.

On the California desert sands, the Battalion carried out maneuvers in February with new tanks and equipment. It was then that the thousand and one difficulties which are certain to crop up during actual combat were first ironed out. Men and equipment were put to their first stiff tests in desert operations. Men and machines became sand-eaters. The maneuver lasted three weeks.

Again the Battalion moved, this time to Arizona. By mid-March at Camp Young, the Battalion men had hardened themselves into a tough and ready gang of desert troopers. They now proved it by driving their tanks and wheeled vehicles in a forced march cross-desert all the way to the new Arizona station, Camp Laguna. The move started March 15th and ended March 17th. The desert was dared to do its worst. It did. From California to Arizona tanks were strung along the way, some out of gas, some with mechanical failures, some stopped by soft ground in the worst terrain yet experienced.

"Camp Laguna," one of the officers said of it, "proved to be the most barren camp seen to date. Few will forget in their lifetime the heat, dust, scorpions and snakes of this God-forsaken sector of land."

This "God-forsaken sector of land" was a good 30 miles north of the nearest town of any size, Yuma. The Battalion purchased a motion picture projector. It opened its own Post Exchange store and stocked it with plenty of beer. The movies, the store, the beer and the cool of evenings were the only relief from scorching days in which the maintenance mechanics had to keep their tools in buckets of water — or else the tools would soon be too hot under the sun to pick up.

On an early April Sunday, Lieutenant General Jacob L. Devers, commander and chief of the Armored Force, stopped at Camp Laguna to speak to a meeting of officers and non-commissioned officers. General Devers had just returned from Africa. Everybody listened with considerable interest. For everybody thought that was where the next move of the 743rd Tank Battalion would take it — to fight Germany and Italy on the Dark Continent.

But the war in Africa was going well toward the end of summer in 1943. Rommel, the Desert Fox, had been driven off the stretch of land in Africa which Hitler and Mussolini had considered theirs. In Tunisia, the last remnants of the Nazi Afrika Corps were being written off. In Arizona, the 743rd Tank Battalion went on more maneuvers.

On November 2, 1943, the Battalion learned it had not been forgotten and was not to be left on the desert the rest of its natural life. For three months it had gone through the interminable business of checking property, clothing and equipment, with one showdown inspection after another sandwiched in between intensive gunnery training. Then the orders came. The outfit was going overseas. It was to move at once to the port of embarkation at New York. No one was too sorry to get on the train and depart for the staging area at Camp Shanks, New York, leaving the scorpions and the sand to the hot sun and the cold stars.

The staging area was reached on the 8th of November, 1943. Captains Robert C. Speers and Lloyd J. Adkins and two enlisted men had already gone ahead to England

as an advance party. So, instead of Africa, the Battalion made a rough voyage of it on the overcrowded HMS Aquatania, amid extensive sea-sickness, to turn up in the fog and damp of the British Isles just in time to sit down and eat a Thanksgiving Dinner. The transport was boarded in New York at 11 o'clock in the night of the 16th of November. The Battalion disembarked on the 24th at Mourack, Scotland, and entrained for Camp Chiseldon, Wiltshire, in England. Much speculation was made during the train ride as to just what type of housing the Battalion would get, if any. The advance party had arranged a pleasant surprise. With the help of the Third Tank Group they had secured barracks at an old British Army cavalry post. Best of all was the Thanksgiving turkey dinner, hot and waiting.

In December, the Battalion was once again reorganized under a new Army "Table of Organization" which changed it into an outfit with three medium tank companies and one light tank company. Able, Baker and Charlie were the medium tank companies, and Dog Company received light tanks. This light tank company was made up of officers and men from other companies in the Battalion and from the 10th Tank Company from Iceland.

During their time in England, it was seldom that the Battalion was all in one place at one time. The companies were separated for special training.

Able Company left Chiseldon on December 3rd for special assault training. The first losses in personnel killed came during this time when one man died after being hit with shell fragments in a range accident and eleven were drowned when the crafts carrying their tanks overturned in the high surf off the coast of the English Channel.

Meanwhile Baker and Charlie Companies received training in the amphibious Valentine British tanks and Dog Company test-fired its guns in still another part of England.

On January 16th, 1944, Charlie and Baker Companies with sections from Headquarters and Service Companies, left Chiseldon for Great Yarmouth to participate in special training with the floatable "DD" tanks. This training with a floating Sherman tank was highly secret. It lasted through May. In this time there was training at Gosport in the English Channel and the final phase of "dry runs" at Torcross. Another officer and two more enlisted men lost their lives in the cold channel waters at Torcross.

At the end of the year's first month, Dog Company, the mortar and assault gun platoons, and Able Company went to South Wales for three weeks of range firing. This was found to be the best range the Battalion had used to that time. Tank gunners sharpened up their marksmanship. They knew they were going to need it. Another soldier was killed in the realistic training in South Wales.

There were other moves about England to this firing range and that one, to this stretch of coast and that one, and by March the officers and men of several of the companies were almost strangers. The Battalion never seemed able to get together.

There was a gathering tension as the Big Day grew closer. Everyone could feel it, and when Able Company pulled out with attachments from Headquarters and Service

Companies on March 2nd for Camp D-12 on the coast to take part in maneuver "Fox", the men knew that the final dress rehearsals for the show were being held.

But it seemed the Big Day would never arrive. After maneuver "Fox", back came Able Company, and then Baker and Charlie Companies returned from gunnery problems, so that on March 7th, the Battalion was assembled in one area again at Barton Stacy.

On the 19th of May, the tension, which had ebbed, now began to tighten again. The companies were divided once more. Dog Company with elements of Headquarters and Service Company proceeded to Southbourne. (Able Company had gone to Camp D-14 and Baker and Charlie Companies trained at Torcross, on the coast, in April and May.)

No one knew during the final assault maneuvers whether, as they started out on one, this was to be the real thing. For everything was set. The medium companies and the wheeled vehicles to take part in the assault were completely waterproofed and combat loaded. All equipment had been checked and re-checked many times over. Everything was ready to go.

The period of waiting dragged on and on. Time seemed to have slowed to a halt, for all men were restricted to the area — just waiting for orders.

The alert came to load up the tanks on the LCTs. It was June 2nd. Baker and Charlie Companies moved from Torcross to Portland Harbor and Able Company moved from D-14 to load at Portland, only a short distance.

Was this only another exercise? Or this time the real thing? No one knew. But all had the feeling this was it, that this was the time the Battalion had trained and re-trained for. By June 3rd everything was loaded into the Navy's LCTs. From the number of ships in port the men could see that this was going to be a tremendous operation.

A full day went slowly by . . . On June 4th, word was received that the operation was postponed temporarily due to weather conditions — which were miserable. On June 5th, the weather seemed no better and another delay was expected by the men. Even when the LCT lifted anchor and got under weigh, the men thought: "This can't be the day . . . ."

But it was. No dry run this time. This was the beginning, the hours before D-Day's H-hour which was set for 6:30 in the morning of June 6th.

The LCTs moved out with the tanks of *Verify* toward France across the Channel. The last doubt that this might be just another maneuver was dispelled when the men looked through the bleak, cold wetness of June 5th and saw ships strung out for miles. Fast, knife-prowed destroyers sped at full steam up and down the lanes of ships. Cruisers pushed along as heavy-weight protection for the giant convoy. In the stream of ships bearing toward France were Landing Crafts Infantry, Landing Crafts Vehicle, Landing Crafts Tank, Landing Ships Tank, transports and all the rest that go to make up a modern overwater assault wave, including battleships and fighter planes.

"No one seemed greatly disturbed over the prospects of the future," reported one of the tank officers who was with the invasion force. "There was a confidence the

Navy would get us on the beach, and once we were on the ground, we knew what we were going to do . . ."

iv.

WE knew what we were going to do . . .

Yes, before men hit the beach, it had all been reduced to a neat battle plan, with neat maps, and neat orders. Everybody knew his exact part. Everybody knew what he was supposed to do. Or did he . . .? No matter. Forget the men a moment as individuals. Forget that but a short time ago most of them were not soldiers, trained to the business of war. Forget them a moment except as one part of the vast plan to put armies ashore on France.

This is the background of the landing . . . Months before the assault wave started out from England, the battle for a beachhead began. It began through the air. The American Eighth Air Force and the British R.A.F. smashed at Germany's war industry for nearly a year, hammering with special purpose at aircraft factories. In the Battle for the Sky, the Luftwaffe was steadily reduced in power day by day while Allied air superiority increased. As the time for D-Day narrowed down to weeks, German land fortifications and supply points were heavily and repeatedly bombed along the whole invasion coast.

The vast military wheel which was the Invasion of Europe began turning toward the French coast east from its starting point in Britain on the night and morning of June 5th and 6th. It was the greatest amphibious operation by armed forces in all military history. It was as well the most highly complex undertaking ever put into effect. The vast and complicated scheme of getting men and guns ashore on France was accomplished despite all hazards — sea and land mines, enemy submarines, E-boats, and Nature's own fickleness: a fierce gale whipped up in the North Sea that swept down the Channel and postponed the big jump-off by one day, from the early morning of the 5th to the 6th.

Some six hours before the tanks in their LCTs moved toward shore, Allied paratroopers were dropped in the largest landing of airborne troops ever attempted — everything about this invasion was on a huge scale. Behind Omaha and Utah beaches, the two land points selected for the ground troops assault, the American 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions 'chuted from their air armadas of low-flying big planes, struggled out of their harness on hitting the night-black ground, then swiftly assembled into combat teams to strike inland on the right or west flank of the beachhead zone. The British 6th Airborne anchored the left or east flank. Gliders were also used in great numbers at this time.

Army Intelligence thought there would be only a light holding force of German infantry to defend the Omaha sector. This "thin" coastal garrison turned out to be the whole German 352nd Infantry Division — moved up for combat "maneuvers" in the beach area a few hours before the invasion put out from Britain.

At Utah Beach on the right flank, the assault went like clockwork — the carefully designed clockwork planned and built months before . . . not without cost. The

treacherous waters off the coast swamped boats, drowned men, caused confusion and casualties. There was fighting at Utah. There was equipment destroyed and American youth slain there. But such casualties were held to minimum, and the advance inland was at the beginning swift and sure.

It was at Omaha Beach, to the left, that war's special hell broke loose.

For a time it looked like the non-bombed enemy coastal guns plus the weight of the defending German 352nd Infantry was going to doom the assault — to make the difference between success and disaster, to tip the balance from a precarious foothold to the loss of this foothold beneath an in-surging tide.

The plan was very big, very neat, and ably directed by the Allied Forces. Every unit had its own battle plan as one small part of the whole vast scheme. *Verify's* Battle Plan went like this:

For combat purposes, the sandy strip that was Omaha Beach was divided into sectors. These were named Easy Green, Dog Red, Dog White and Dog Green.

The tactical plan was carefully worked out and marked with meaningful phase lines in colored grease pencil on waterproof maps. Baker and Charlie companies' "D-D" tanks were to hit the beach at H-minus-10, with Baker on Dog Green at the right, and with Charlie on Dog Red in the middle. At H-hour, Able company was to put its unwaterproofed General Shermans ashore from LCTs on all four sectors of Omaha, so that a "dozer" — a medium tank rigged with a bull-dozer blade up front — would be available on each beach.

Combat engineers with demolition explosives were to be on the beach at H-minus-20, ten minutes before the armor, to destroy obstacles in the water and on the coastal front. As a particular mission, they were to blow the road blocks built by the enemy across two of the possible exits off the beachfront. When the tanks reached the beach, they were to give the engineers covering fire for this operation.

But Battle Plans don't stay the way they are drawn on paper . . .

The first departure from initial planning came in the Channel when it was decided not to launch the unseaworthy "D-D" Shermans but to take these tanks to the shore in the LCTs. Under enemy fire and buffed by rough surf, the LCTs brought in the tanks everywhere and anywhere they could along the four beach sectors, although the general plan was followed. Charlie company had the first tank ashore on Dog White at H-minus-6, four minutes behind the paper-planned time. Baker got units on land at almost the same time, and Able followed. The LCT carrying Baker and Charlie staff tanks, and another LCT with Headquarters Section aboard, tried unsuccessfully to reach the beach. Headquarters did not get ashore until the following day.

The way it was planned, the tanks would give support with covering fire for the combat engineers, move out across the beach and drive inland as soon as two exits had been cleared. The Shermans were then to advance as far as they could inland 2 miles to a phase line.

That again was the plan . . . which didn't work out that way.

The ice-cold Channel waters in an unkind mood played hob with the mission of the combat engineers loaded into small, tipsy invasion craft with heavy demolition equipment. Many of these craft capsized before ever gaining shore. The engineer doughboys suffered additional heavy casualties under the raking enemy fire that swept down from the cliffs on both flanks of the beach zone. The tactical result was that the road blocks at the exits — heavy concrete structures too thick to be destroyed by the 75 mm tank guns — were not removed and the assault wave of men and tanks became bottlenecked on the beach, exposed to the murderous fire from the cliffs.

The tanks were grouped in this open position for 16 hours of heavy fighting as the tide went out, then returned, threatening to engulf the assault operation before it could move inland.

It was not until 10 o'clock D-Day night that, as the last twilight was leaving the late evening sky, the combat engineers with the aid of tankmen and officers succeeded in blowing the concrete road block at Exit Dog-1. Meanwhile the rising tide had forced Baker and Charlie companies to move their tanks to Dog Red beach on their left in order to avoid being trapped by the incoming tide. They moved across the sea wall just before the water rose up to cover this passage. It was here on Dog Red, still under constant enemy fire — the artillery had the narrow strip of sand zero-ed in — that all tanks assembled before finally moving out through the blasted remains of Exit Dog-1.

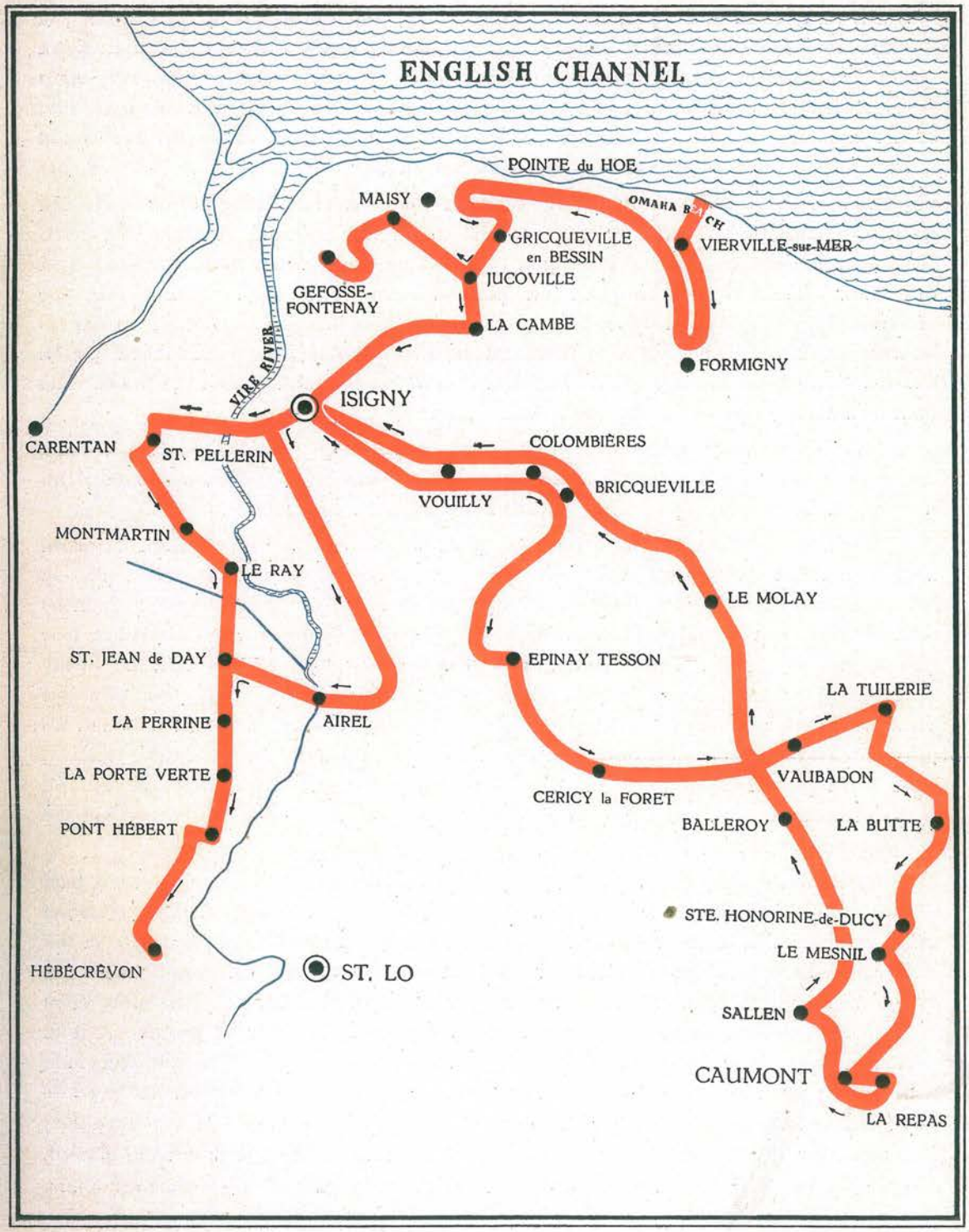
Not all tanks — and not all men — moved off the sectors called Easy Green, Dog White, Dog Red and Dog Green. The tide was to come up and seek and find motionless steel and lifeless flesh in the night.

v.

ALL that was the cold plan of D-Day but it by no means is the story of D-Day. Military history will reconstruct it carefully. Books have already been written about it. But the real story of D-Day will escape the books because it cannot be captured in words. For the real story must be found in the minds of the men who went through it — not one man, not a hundred, but the thousands.

To the men who came ashore at Omaha Beach — the men of the 743, for instance — there was only a secondary place for such military props as phase lines, coordinates, Dog Red or Dog Green or what the unit 500 yards to the left was supposed to do. To those men D-Day was, more than all else, a wild, confused, patternless experience in which they heard thin metallic voices over the radio, of ugly dead and dying, of live men who seemed to move forward as far as they could close to the sea-wall and of how some of them went on without apparent plan or reason. The words are all in the dictionary. Words to describe fear, hope, anger, surprise — all the emotions men have felt in battle. But how can words tell of the noise, of the horror and the tragedy and the heroism, and still make it seem real?

Those who weren't there can only imagine looking across angry, grey water, a glimpse of flat, white beach, and a green hill which fills the whole horizon. Those who


ENGLISH CHANNEL
POINTE du HOE
MAISY
OMAHA BEACH
GRICQUEVILLE en BESSIN
VIERVILLE-sur-MER
JUCOVILLE
GEFOSSE-FONTENAY
LA CAMBE
FORMIGNY
VIRE RIVER
ISIGNY
CARENTAN
ST. PELLERIN
COLOMBIÈRES
VOUILLY
BRICQUEVILLE
MONTMARTIN
LE RAY
LE MOLAY
ST. JEAN de DAY
EPINAY TESSON
LA TUILERIE
LA PERRINE
AIREL
LA PORTE VERTE
VAUBADON
CERICY la FORET
PONT HÉBERT
BALLEROY
LA BUTTE
STE. HONORINE-de-DUCY
LE MESNIL
HÉBÉCRÉVON
ST. LO
SALLEN
CAUMONT
LA REPAS

weren't there can only try to conceive of what it would be like to be a few hundreds of yards away from this beach, steadily approaching, while hundreds of guns fire at you — guns large and small and all deadly and all blurting death and injury straight down into your approach. Add to this the terrifying range of sounds made by the great shells from battleships firing inland, of the whine of high-velocity shells fired from the hill, of the thunder of explosions everywhere, and the rattle and snap of vicious bullets and the whipping sound they make as they strike the water.

That was the background for the moment that was marked by the calendar and clock as H-minus-6: 24 minutes past six o'clock on the morning of June 6th, 1944. That was the setting as the LCT bumped to a rocking stop, its flat bottom grounded on the beach. The front ramp dropped and splashed down ino the surf. With a great roar of its engine, the first of four General Shermans moved out. Rigged in its canvas structure intended to permit it to float and navigate in water, the tank looked like an unusually large canvas duck boat. Wet sand churned as the tank gained the beach. The tank commander looked down and saw white sand instead of water.

Charlie company had one of its first tanks ashore. The crew: T/4 Alvin Tisland, driver; Pvt Clarence Voakes, asisstant driver; Pfc Gene W. Johnson, cannoneer; Cpl Herbert M. Beireis, gunner; and Lt Dennis Maloney, tank commander.

Elsewhere, other tanks were landing. The Shermans of the 743rd Tank Battalion were committed on the soil of Europe. In the following minutes there was a platoon ashore. Baker tanks were coming in through the surf. Then Able Company. Tank by tank the Battalion assembled. As in any men going into combat for the first time, fear quickened many hearts. The tankmen knew that they were going in to fight the enemy with the protection of steel armor about them — that perhaps they could consider themselves better off than the doughboy who was going in to battle with a rifle and his shirtfront and his wits as his only protection. Yet the tankers knew from their training, from word passed down to them of combat experience in Africa, that the General Sherman medium tank was far from an invulnerable weapon — that the enemy had the fire power to knock it out.

At Omaha Beach, about the only type of direct fire that the enemy did not hurl at the tanks was bazooka. The bazookas were to be met later inland. The beachline was a maelstrom of shells ranged in by heavy artillery up to 155 mm. Down from the cliffs came the direct fire of anti-tank guns. Mortar shells dropped down. Light and heavy machine guns spewed lead, and there was the crack of small arms, the spray from such automatic weapons as the German "burp" gun. While four of the five men in each tank crew were not immediately concerned with the hail of machine gun and small arms bullets, the fifth man — the tank commander with his head out of the turret — stood exposed to constant danger in the storm of splattering slugs and whistling shell fragments. Enemy snipers with small bore rifles took a toll of men as did the massed, complicated artillery pieces mounted behind the green heights of the Normandy bluffs.

THE real story of D-Day is not in the plans and it is not shown on the maps . . . It is in stories like these about men of the 743 — just some of hundreds.

Corporal Frank Booher was a tank gunner, sweating it out like everybody else on one of the LCTs. He worried a little more than some of the rest of them, because he hated boats. He hated the water and waves. He tried not to think too much about it — tried to think instead of his job and what he would do behind his gun when they hit the beach. But the LCT kept lurching drunkenly from side to side, shipping water and with every deep roll tipping just a little more .... Then Frank's fears happened. The LCT went over, spilling men and tanks into the sea. Frank found himself hanging onto a liferaft. He hung there for six hours, feeling the cold numbing his life away. A sailor beside him held up another Navy man through the hours. The Navy man kept screaming and shouting until his voice was only a desperate moaning. He died in the water, and the sailor kept holding onto the dead body . . . A British minesweeper found them just as Frank thought he must give up and let go. He doesn't remember being taken out of the water. He remembers whiskey burning his throat and the feel of warm blankets. The minesweeper carried the survivors back to England. Here, after a rest, Frank was given a British Army field uniform and in this rig returned to the Battalion fighting in France . . .

T/5 Sammie J. Coil and Private John P. Douglas, hometown buddies from Washington Court House, Ohio, also could tell what it is like to be adrift in the Channel after their LCT capsized. They saved another tanker's life by keeping his head above water until rescued . . .

Corporal Arthur Graves saw action in two jobs on D-Day. He came in as a tank driver, his regular job. He was driving one of Able Company's tank-dozers. It was still in the water just after leaving the LCT when it was hit and began to burn. Graves found himself on the beach which was then under heavy shell and mortar fire being put down by the German defenders. A gunner in Lieutenant Harry Hansen's tank had been injured and evacuated. Graves climbed into the turret and got behind the gun. For the rest of that day and night, he was a tank gunner. Later he would go back to tank driving — and have five more tanks knocked out from under him, and yet finish the war alive . . .

"The weather in the Channel was plenty rough," Staff Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Floyd M. Jenkins, of Jamaica, Iowa, recalls. He was a tank commander. "The waves were coming in both sides of the LCT. We started bailing — spent four hours at it. In spite of all we and the Navy crew could do, the ballast tanks began to fill up with the overflow running over the deck. Our boat began to list pretty bad. By nightfall the LCT was in sinking condition. The commander called an LCM over and he had all Army personnel climb in — he thought his own ship would capsize during the night.

"This LCM was plenty crowded after we all piled into it. It bounced around in the Channel and we all got seasick. We spent the night huddled in blankets, sick and wet. At daybreak, we saw that the LCT was still upright, so we got back in it again.

"When ready to land, the LCT commander grabbed up all his papers to take with him, as he figured he'd never get the craft off the beach again. He took her in and grounded in fairly shallow water. We got our two tanks and one 'dozer off. After the heavy tanks were unloaded, the commander was able to get his boat off after all, and he headed back into the Channel.

"So we were on the beach. It was so congested with knocked out vehicles, and with dead and wounded men, that it was tough following out our plan of movement."

A shell burst shattered the leg of tank commander Sergeant Gerald M. Bolt, of Sac City, Iowa, as he was climbing into his turret while the landing craft headed for the beach. He refused to be evacuated out of combat but insisted on staying with his tank and crew. When his tank plowed through the surf to beach, Sergeant Bolt was in command. He found that his wounded leg would not support his weight as he stood in the turret. He had his gunner lash the leg to the recoil guard of the 75 mm gun, using an empty cartridge belt. Sergeant Bolt remained in the fight for six hours. While he commanded, his tank knocked out at least one anti-tank gun and drove enemy infantry from a position on the sides of the bluff. At noon, when things had quieted down some, Sergeant Bolt allowed himself to be evacuated to the medics . . .

Corporal Wayne W. Fawcett, cannoneer from Garden City, Kansas, was one the crew of five who wondered what their tank had hit after it stopped a few yards away from a position on the sides of the bluff. At noon, when things had quieted down roaring, the tank refused to respond to the controls and sat motionless 200 yards from the beach. Realizing this was no spot to sit around motionless while German guns targeted in, Corporal Fawcett crawled out of the turret determined to find out what was the trouble. He dove into the icy water, swam under the tank, and discovered that it was hung up on a steel obstacle. When Fawcett's head broke the surface of the water, bullets and shells were splashing on all sides of him. He swam back to the tank, boarded it, and gasped out the story to the tank commander — no hope of getting off the obstacle. The crew abandoned the vehicle, swam ashore. Within 15 minutes, the tank was completely submerged in the rising tide . . .

The Baker Company tank in which T/5 Joe Kaufman served as cannoneer (a gun loader who slams the shells into the breech of the tank's gun) was another which bellied on an underwater obstacle and didn't get in. The tide was rising and the tank started to flood. The crew got out and were going to swim in when a mortar shell exploded several yards away. Two of the crew were killed instantly. Kaufman was wounded. The blast threw him into the water. His wounds didn't keep him from swimming to shore. Nor did they prevent him from picking up a doughboy on his way in — the infantryman had gone down with a leg shattered and couldn't stand in the surf where he had collapsed. Kaufman was faint from his own bleeding, but he got the doughboy up to some sort of cover from the fire and gave him first aid before he himself lost consciousness . . .

Hundreds of stories — each one different and yet something of the same in each:

Take the pluck of Private Irvin H. Reddish who came up from the assistant driver's seat to take over command of his tank-dozer on the beach . . . who climbed out when

the blade of the 'dozer got cranky and stuck, gave it a swift kick, released the trouble, climbed back into the turret, and calmly enough ordered the driver to move out . . .

Take the story of Lieutenant Harold Beavers, who got out of his tank in the middle of action, placed a wounded officer from his company onto the back deck of the Sherman, then moved the tank safely through an enemy mine field to a place where aid men could give the wounded man attention . . .

Staff Sergeant John DuQuoine, a 38-year-old communications sergeant, insisted on repairing a faulty tank radio in the open without stopping while an enemy dive bomber blasted dirt all over his work. DuQuoine brushed off the dirt and kept right on fixing the radio . . .

Lieutenant Henry Jones had the job of directing fire for the tanks over the radio he carried in on his back. He was wounded, but he kept right on talking into that radio, spotting the fire on guns that were cutting down the infantry . . .

Tech Sergeant Joseph Petrocy, on the beach in the afternoon as a Battalion casualty reporter, was about to take a lift in a truck, saw that it was a gas truck, changed his mind, and a few minutes later watched the truck disappear in a burst of flame . . .

The medics were busy that day . . . The Battalion medics came ashore right behind the early assault waves — and waded into a medical nightmare . . .

"Our time was H-plus-225 for getting on the beach," reported Captain Carl Tarlowski, commanding officer of the 743rd Tank Battalion's medical detachment. "Lieutenant Mitchell, our reconnaissance officer, was in touch with our tanks on the beach by radio. Our original instructions had been to get onto the beach and proceed through the exits when opened and rendezvous at a pre-arranged place with the tanks. The exits had not been opened and so we waited until 1330 hours. I remember there was a destroyer. It came up broadside to the beach and seemed so close inshore that we thought it was going to ground. It was firing point blank range . . ."

Wading in through water up to his arm pits, Captain Tarlowski and his men managed to get ashore. They spread out so as to lessen target possibilities.

"I noticed Captain Ned S. Elder walking up and down the beach evidently directing his Charlie Company men to cover," continued the report. "He had a patch on his neck where he had been wounded. I made a dash to the shelter of a tank and sat there talking with Lieutenant Hale. He had been slightly wounded in the back and I put a dressing on it. Captain Elder joined us and I asked to see his wound, but he refused. He insisted it was just a scratch. I learned that Colonel Upham had been wounded in the shoulder and was last seen 'up the beach' somewhere. No one knew his exact location or whether he had been treated by any medic. I was told Captain Chuck Ehmka had been killed. Lieutenant Hodgson was supposed to be down the beach somewhere badly wounded.

"I set out to look for the aid men who had come with me — Corporal Jay in particular, since he had been on the same LCT with me and had additional medical supplies which he'd carried in a gasoline truck. I couldn't find the truck or Corporal Jay. I didn't know nor could I find out whether the LCT which T/5 Bonczek was on

had landed or not . . . About this time one of our tanks which had been burning on the beach began to have its ammunition blow up so it was necessary to crouch behind the sea wall. Jerry sniper fire increased about that time also. I began a search for Colonel Upham but couldn't find him. I came across one of our sergeants who had been wounded in the leg. Treating him, I had some of the men carry him to the protection of the sea wall. The tide was coming in. I then found Lieutenant Hodgson. He was almost completely covered by a rubber life raft. He was conscious despite a nasty chest wound. I applied dressings and with the help of some of the men we carried him in the life raft to an aid station where the wounded were being collect for transport out to sea. I was then busy for the next few hours treating men who had been unattended since H-hour and who seemed to be lying about every four feet . . . ."

The story of the Battalion and D-Day was not alone in the tanks. Some of the men came in on peeps — the jaunty, indispensable little vehicles the Army unimaginatively calls trucks, ¼ ton.

Corporal Charles (Chuck) Reynolds, a liaison non-com from Holton, Kansas, watched his peep sink in the deep water while an attempt was made to unload it from the landing craft. He waded ashore, joined his Able Company on the beach and aided in the maintenance and supply of his company's attacks during the fighting for the next two weeks until he got another peep and resumed his liaison work. Another liaison corporal, Francis M. Dorer, of Philadelphia, had the same experience of losing his peep in the surf and wading ashore on foot to do the best he could with equipment picked up on the beach. Corporal Arthur Wood, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, did manage to get his peep ashore to take up liaison duties.

Four 2½-ton trucks were allotted to the combat elements of the Battalion for supply. Two of these got onto the beach D-Day, the other two were not able to land until the next day.

Captain Vodra Philips, company commander of Able company, completely disregarded enemy fire when he led his tanks ashore. The onetime teacher of social studies dismounted from his tank and guided the four General Shermans in his LCT from the landing craft through the beach obstacles to above high water mark. The entire beach was covered with enemy rifle and machine gun fire, but the captain remained intent on the job he was doing — marking the routes for the rest of his company tanks as they rolled in from the landing craft. In the confusion ot the beachfighting, Captain Philips never did see Lt Col Upham during battle, but upon learning that the Battalion Commander had become a casualty, the captain assumed command and directed the movement of the tanks toward Exit D-1, organized a fire fight on the beach to help engineers blast the exit, and then commanded the movement of the Battalion inland.

In the D-Day plan, Colonel Upham was to follow his assault tanks in at H-plus-90 minutes. But from H-minus-20, Colonel Upham's calm, crisp voice was directing operations of his Battalion by radio from a LCT a few hundred yards offshore. From this craft his eyes calculated the beach action. He saw his men hurt, some of their tanks knocked out, destroyed. He watched while his tanks assembled and then found themselves

bottlenecked in a bad situation on the beach. Movement was confused, tanks and wreckage in a traffic snarl under heavy fire.

When the LCT swung into the beach at last, the Colonel was first over the side. He waded ashore in the face of enemy fire. His one concern was to get to his tanks. He reached the first of these vehicles and personally guided them across the first-swept beach. Then, still afoot, he began to direct their fight to open the beach exits.

Sometime during that hectic morning, a German sniper took careful aim upon the slim figure of an American tank colonel walking in the water on the beach beside his tanks. The sniper squeezed off his shot and probably never knew he had hit his target. The slug shattered the Colonel's right shoulder, but he refused medical attention, kept on with his work.

He came upon cannoneer Private Charles J. Leveque and gunner Corporal William C. Beckett, both of whom had abandoned their Able company tank after a track had been knocked off in the water and the rising tide threatened to engulf the uninjured crew. The Colonel was moving up and down the beach giving instructions to the dismounted men on how to move and avoid the mortar and artillery fire. His clothes were wet, his one arm dangled uselessly, but he remained cool and calm as his men always knew him. "You couldn't get the Colonel excited — not even *then*," Corporal Beckett said of that moment.

Colonel Uphan remained exposed to the enemy fire all morning and into the afternoon. He continued, although his wound was a bad one, to co-ordinate the fire and movement of such of his tanks as he could personally control. It was not until after 0100 hours in the afternoon, when at least one beach — Dog Green — had been cleared and the situation was beginning to show some promise of success, that Colonel Upham submitted to the medics and left his Battalion.

Major William D. Duncan, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, was in another LCT with Headquarters company men, trying to get ashore but having little luck except in avoiding enemy shells which plunged into the water where the craft had just been as it maneuvered about. Captain Vodra C. Philips, of Fayette, Missouri, was on the beach, also like Colonel Upham on foot, leading Able Company. Until the LCT with Major Duncan could gain the beach, Captain Philips took field command with the tanks.

For his part on D-Day, Colonel Upham received the Army's Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism in action. It was one of nine won by the Battalion during the first 16 hours of the invasion.

The story of D-Day is the story of all who were there — peep drivers, truck drivers, halftrack crews, supply and communications men as well as the tankers. Many — too many — of the stories were posthumous.

The Presidential Unit Citation was awarded the Battalion for the day's fighting. There were the D.S.C.'s won, and a gallaxy of Silver Stars and Bronze Stars. But the Battalion was not thinking of glory as it fought its way through Exit D-1 toward Vierville-Sur-Mer. Glory is a tainted angel to tankers who have just had to run their

steel treads over the bodies of fallen GIs because there was no other way to advance over sand cluttered with American dead and wounded.

"If there was any sign of life at all, I tried to avoid them," one tank driver said. "But buttoned up, looking through the 'scope, it was hard to see. You just had to run over them."

In war there is no easy way. The grinding tracks of the Battalion's tanks trailed blood through the sand, rolling inland off the beach. The whole war in France, Belgium, Holland and Germany was ahead of them.

# II . . . . THE MAKING OF VETERANS

i.

THE men of the 743rd in the tanks, the halftracks, the trucks, the peeps and on foot, came from all States — but mostly from the Northwest. They came from places like Spokane, Coffee Creek, Thief River Falls, St Paul, El Paso, Chicago, Philadelphia. They were ex-butchers, bakers, rich men, poor men. They were young — though a few faced 40. They were draftees and regulars and volunteers. They thought their outfit was the best damned one in the Army. It never entered their heads the 743rd could do anything but whip the enemy. In short, they were any American Army group, highly trained, confident, a little scared, seeing combat for the first time.

D-Day at Omaha Beach was their baptism of fire. By the second day, some of the dead were buried in a field just over the first hill. The wounded were on their way back to England. The rest had the job now of clearing the coastline, of pushing inland. A day ago they had been untried in combat, soldiers well-trained but new to war's

payoff — the front line. Now they were on their way to becoming veterans. They would learn to fight with the vulnerable "iron coffins" as no men before them, even in the mountain passes of Tunisia, had fought.

Their fighting was to be obscure, often hidden in the equivocal phrase, popular with newspaper correspondents, "American tanks and infantry."

It was the sweeping, powerful, great armored divisions which so often took the spotlight and the bows for their mile-consuming exploitations during the war on the Continent. "Tanks," in the public mind, were usually identified with the headline work of the armored divisions. For the basic function of these big units was the stuff of which headlines and public glory is made. In modern warfare, it is the job of armor to get in behind the enemy's lines, rip up his communications, confuse his rear, drive him into pockets, bewilder him and cut him to pieces before he can reorganize and recover. All this whole divisions of tanks did whenever they got loose.

But this sort of spectacular warfare, the "blitz" with which the German panzers first set out to storm the world, was not the sort ordinarily fought by the 743rd, a separate tank battalion attached to doughboy divisions.

A separate tank battalion assigned to work with an infantry division fights at the footsoldier's pace. Its job was to give the dougboy's attack the added punch that tanks have, to bull ahead when the going got rough, to knock down houses Jerry tried to use as forts, to stop enemy tanks in the counter-attacks, to spearhead a way for the doughboy and his rifle, his machine gun and his mortar. The battery of 105 mm guns in the six medium tanks of the assault gun platoon provided the infantry with mobile medium artillery. The 75 mm cannon (and later the much better 76 mm cannon) in the 54 medium tanks of the line companies gave the doughs direct fire power right where they needed it the most — right beside them at the front. A company of 17 speedy (though thinly armored) light tanks was available for swift scouting thrusts. All tanks were machine gun nests on treads to spray lead when and where it was wanted. In addition, the Battalion provided four halftracks mounting machine guns and with three 81 mm mortars to drop high explosives into the enemy's lap. Altogether six 105 mm assault guns, fifty-four 75 mm guns, seventeen 37 mm cannon, eighty-five .50 caliber heavy machine guns (twenty mounted on trucks, sixteen on halftracks), one hundred and ninety-four .30 caliber machine guns — this was the punch of *Verify*.

Often the doughboy regiment and its attached tank battalion slugged it out with the Jerry on the line for days, inching painfully ahead to engineer an opening in the enemy defenses through which the star ball carriers, the armored divisions could do their free and fancy open-field running. When this happened, it then became the job of the doughboy and his supporting tanks to follow up as fast as they could, moving behind the swift, surging, 20-mile-a-day drives. The infantry moved and fought, mopping up the pockets of resistance always left in the wake of such drives. But mostly, while the big armor waited in reserve for the quarterback to call their

number and set them going through the line, the infantry and the separate tank battalion were in the thick of the line play, fighting and getting hurt, replacing their losses, then fighting again, always under fire, within enemy artillery range, doing their work ever at the front of the division's sector.

An American tank battalion in the second war against Germany was made up of four line companies to do its fighting. A headquarters company contained the Colonel's staff personnel, plus such combat units as the mortar and assault gun platoons and the reconnaissance scouts. A service company maintained and kept rolling the Battalion's vital vehicles, brought forward gas and ammo and food to the tanks on the line.

In the 743rd, Able, Baker and Charlie ("A", "B", and "C") companies fought with General Sherman medium tanks on the line. The fourth line company, Dog (for "D") company, operated with light tanks. At full strength, each of these companies had 17 tanks, including its two staff command tanks. The companies in turn were made up of three platoons, five tanks in each platoon. In addition each company had its own maintenance section, kitchen, and attached medics. Normally, when on the offensive, three of the line companies would be attached to infantry regiments, one tank company working with each regiment, and one company would be in reserve. Often all four were committed — sometimes all with one regiment.

A tank company might work with one infantry regiment one day and another regiment the next, but it was always working, always moving ahead on the attack or remaining on the alert in an advanced road block or defensive position.

On D-Day, the Battalion was grouped under a battle team plan — tanks, engineers, infantry — with two companies (Baker and Charlie) of special "DD" tanks and one company (Able) of regular medium tanks, four of which were equipped with bulldozer blades. Following the line companies were Headquarters section (the commanding officer, his staff, and some administrative personnel), service crews from Service Company and medical personnel from the Medical Detachment. In England remained the balance of the Battalion — Dog and Service Companies, the rear administrative echelon, the company kitchens. They would not reach the assault elements for nearly two weeks, on June 19th.

On June 7th, the second day of the invasion, Headquarters section was still out the Channel, still trying to get ashore.

By mid-afternoon, Major Duncan had argued long and loud enough to have the commander of the LST hail a passing Duck — the Navy's smallest invasion craft. The Army personnel of Headquarters section scrambled aboard into the Duck and started for shore. The Duck developed rudder trouble and was unable to navigate. In order to reach the beach, Major Duncan and his men had to transfer into still another boat — an LCM — which put them in at about 50 yards from the water line. The men jumped into five foot depth of water and waded ashore. After 36 hours of trying and many close calls from artillery, Headquarters section was at last on the beach.

The command halftrack was located on Easy Red beach where it had been unloaded by the shore brigade. Nobody knew what happened to Pfc Oldvader's peep. It never did turn up. The Headquarters men loaded into the halftrack and proceeded

out Exit D-3 to a transit area behind the beach. There Major Duncan contacted Captain Philips by radio. Captain Philips advised against proceeding to join the tanks at Vierville-sur-Mer because the German infantry snipers and the zero-ed in artillery was still making that area plenty hot. Headquarters spent the night in the transit area, their waking hours spent listening to the bang-wail-*crump* threnody of incoming shells and watching the spurting streams of red and orange ack-ack rise up to meet enemy planes in the night sky.

Meanwhile the combat elements of the line companies took up the action at early dawn on D-plus-one.

Baker Company moved out at 5:30 with infantry of the 116th Regiment to clear a way west along the coast towards the first sizeable town named Grandchamps. The infantry had no more than inched ahead a few yards before they were met with machine gun fire and damnably accurate sniping. A slow, creeping and crawling, running and falling advance was kept up by the doughs through the farmsteads along the Grandchamps road.

After four hours of work, big stuff commenced falling in among the men and tanks. Two tanks were hit by the heavy artillery and damaged but not knocked out. The attack was broken off and a withdrawal was made back to the Vierville-sur-Mer bivouac area. During the fighting, Baker Company knocked out its first anti-tank gun, took its first prisoners (four in number), and destroyed its first machine gun nests.

Charlie Company destroyed the Battalion's first German tank. The direction of its attack was south, toward the hedgerows and a village a few miles inland called Formigny. It, too, was supporting doughs of the 116th Regiment. The enemy tank, a low-silhouette Mark IV armored comparably to the General Sherman but with a much more powerful 75 mm gun in its squat turret, was sighted by the advance guard. Hit with armor piercing shells, the Mark IV burst into flame. The panzer crew of five did not get out.

The advance on Formigny bogged down partly due to the fierce defense put up by enemy infantry holed up in strength in long prepared field defenses, and partly due to the confusion that developed when the men of 116th were met and fired on by friendly troops of the 115th Regiment. These friendly troops opened fire on Charlie Company tanks. The tanks were still rigged out in their "DD" seagoing dress, and the American infantry, not briefed in the strange outline presented by this top-secret invasion weapon, thought it had come upon Nazi armor. No casualties resulted from this error, but the attack was a mess. Artillery fire thought to be from our own guns began tearing up fields and men, adding to the confusion. Tired field officers hurriedly snapped orders to tired men, and as the day wore on the confusion lessened. The crack and whine of bullets through barnyards and hedges kept up with nasty persistence. Charlie Company now reassembled and sent out its tanks in twos and threes to support the 115th Infantry against the constant hail of machine gun fire and sniping. Slowly, acre by acre, farmhouse by farmhouse, the enemy infantry was rooted out. Through the day, the tough,

unglamorous work of reducing strongpoint after strongpoint in one small part of the war continued.

Able Company was held back in Division reserve, ready to move out as soon as needed. It was not an idle day. Some tanks helped mop up Vierville-sur-Mer, as snipers were making themselves deadly nuisances there. Two tanks were sent back to the beach to assist the shore brigade in towing loaded but stranded invasion craft out of the surf. Maintenance crews recovered two more tanks and got them in shape to make their way off the sand under their own power. In mid-afternoon, Able Company moved to the battleground west of a group of houses called St. Laurent-sur-Mer where it backed up Charlie Company in decontaminating that area of the Wehrmacht. When darkness near midnight at last called a halt to the long day's work, the company assembled in the Vierville-sur-Mer bivouac fields.

ii.

THE story of Skipper and the Sniper is typical of D-plus-One.

Captain Lloyd J. (Skipper) Adkins, a fountain pen salesman from Peoria, Illinois, had brought his live-wire energy a month ahead of the Battalion in England and begged his way into the combat assault wave on D-Day. He landed as Battalion Supply officer, which meant he had responsibility for the vital ammunition and engine fuel to keep the tanks fighting.

As could be expected under the circumstances, the M-9 Army trailers loaded with these vital supplies were landed all over the French coast. Two out of four trucks got in on D-Day, the other two put their wheels ashore on D-plus-One.

Skipper Adkins located the M9 trailers and got nine of them off the beach into the first assembly area. As his trucks reached France, he began the job of seeing supplies through to the tanks.

Near the close of D-plus-One, at least one man in the Battalion was sure the Skipper was dead. Lieutenant Floyd Mitchell, a liaison officer, had come in on the same LCT, and at the close of this day he happened to be flat on his face by the side of the Pointe du Hoe road, under sniper fire, waiting for a pre-arranged meeting with Captain Adkins and the first supply trucks. He had a worm's eye view of a clump of buildings from which smoke was rising. This had been a village until a few minutes ago. The Jerry had thrown in a terrific artillery barrage, pin-pointed directly on the road at the center of town, Vierville-sur-Mer.

And by Mitchell's watch, when that barrage hit, that was precisely the time Skipper Adkins would be leading his trucks up to find the tanks. An infantry dough confirmed Mitchell's fears.

"They caught a whole bedpot full of trucks, sir," the dough who had just been there said. "Trucks and GIs knocked out all over the place. I couldn't tell what outfit."

The reconnaissance officer was still pinned down by the side of the road when he heard the motor of a peep. He raised his head cautiously and took a look. There in the peep was Captain Adkins. He had missed the barrage by seconds.

But artillery barrages were not the only worry to hamper a man about his job just off Omaha Beach. There were the hundreds of sharpshooting snipers. The barrages were noisy and terrifying, but they did have the mechanical, impersonal quality which is a quality behind a catastrophe that is hurled across miles. The sniper was a personal villain, one man sighting one gun, selecting a personal target and purposefully, deliberately aiming the bullet. The barrage and the bullet were both deadly. But at least the whine of a large shell gave warning. The bullet came suddenly. It came from a bush, or a tree, or an attic window, a cellar doorway, a hedge, or a log. The sniper was everywhere.

And here Lieutenant Mitchell saw Captain Adkins' peep rolling along as if for a garrison jaunt between the company area and the post exchange. It was heading directly for an intersection where already lay a young American fresh dead from a sniper's slug. The German sharpshooter had the intersection covered from a nearby house. He could pick off anything that tried to move past that corner — except a tank, and a peep is not a tank.

"Skip!" shouted Lt. Mitchell. The peep squealed to a sudden stop. "Don't move past that corner — you'll be killed!" Mitchell yelled. "There's a sniper in that house!"

"There is?" said the Captain, taking a quick look at the house. At the same time he jumped out of the peep. "Well, let's get him!"

Without any further ado, Captain Adkins led the way up and into the house. Grenades were tossed in. Then every room was given a quick search — each room a short, grimmer drama of an old childhood game, hide-'n-seek. It was an old French house of many rooms and many passages. It would take a long time to probe every spot. A well-concealed sniper could easily be overlooked in a quick search.

Captain Adkins squinted at an innocent plaster wall and thought of his trucks and the supplies and the tanks that needed shells and fuel. He thought of one sniper that was holding up his trucks. The Skipper clipped out his decision: "Everybody out!" he said.

As they left the house, Captain Adkins struck a match. By the time he got back to his peep, the house was burning fine. Traffic began moving undisturbed past the intersection . . .

In other ways the 24-hour a day nature of combat was being brought home. Darkness in Normandy brought a close to tank action until daylight, but by night tanks did not just stop where they were and wait for dawn. Whenever possible, the companies withdrew to a bivouac where the tanks could set up a perimeter defense, each tank covering a field of fire. Men exhausted from fighting all day then had to stand a share of guard through the watches of the night. At least one man on each vehicle stayed awake at all times, ready to alert the rest.

The Battalion was never asleep. It could never completely relax. Its men lived on a day-to-day life or death basis. There was ever the presence of danger.

Staff Sergeant Vernon D. Skaggs, a tough and popular tank commander from Clarkson, Kentucky, took his tank to the "rear" on a routine supply mission. On the way a whole platoon of German infantry popped up and tried to ambush the Sherman.

Skaggs grabbed his tommy gun and began shooting at point blank range. The Germans were driven off, leaving their dead behind. The tank continued its routine mission.

The days — and nights — would go like that from now on.

iii.

FOR three days the Rangers had found themselves in trouble. On D-Day they had scaled the perpendicular cliffs rising up from the beach at a hot spot on the map called Pointe du Hoe. This steep-walled jut of land was one of the Germans' key strongpoints in its big-gunned coast defense system. The big caliber artillery pieces had been installed on high ground so as to point down the throats of an invading army, and the gun crews were protected from counter-fire by thick steel and concrete fortifications. In this well-shielded position, the Germans thought they had an impregnable gun site. The American Rangers, trained to tackle anything, proved it wasn't. They were assigned the job of knocking out Pointe du Hoe. On D-Day morning, they had clawed their way up the cliffs, broken into the defenses, knocked out the key guns. But while they had occupied the gun emplacements, the enemy in turn had surrounded them. The surviving Rangers found themselves in a siege circle. On the third day, June 8th, they were fighting on with their last remaining bullets, in some instances using German guns and ammunition after their own last rounds had been expended. They had no food, no water. At six in the morning, Able and Charlie Companies of the 743rd Tank Battalion moved out from Vierville-sur-Mer to break through the siege circle and relieve the hard-pressed Rangers.

As the tanks, with Able Company commanded by Lieutenant Joseph Ondre leading, rolled along the coastline road without meeting early resistance, the Battalion Headquarters section made their way out of the Transit Area off the beach. With the command halftrack and command tank, Major Duncan joined Able and Charlie Companies Advancing on Grandchamps.

The assault had begun at 10.15. By noon, contact had been made with the Rangers and infantry of the 3rd Battalion, 116th Regiment, 29th Division, moved in to relieve them.

Charlie Company ran into trouble with anti-tank mines. During its assault maneuvering about "the Point" three of its tanks were damaged and stopped. Two more dropped out with engine trouble. As maintenance crews came up to start the work of getting these tanks back into action, the two companies moved on west toward Grandchamps. They didn't get very far. Anti-tank mines were everywhere. Combat engineers had a grim job cut out for them, sweeping this road.

Able Company split from the column to go a mile south through sniper-infested, hedged terrain to a scattering of houses called Criqueville en Bessin, where it followed a route west again toward Maisy. There wasn't much that was impressive about Maisy. It was a station stop for the railroad and it controlled a network of two important roads and several lesser routes, but the town itself was little more than a stone pile — all the once-quaint and once-quiet French villages in that sector were being reduced to so much rubble and so many shattered walls to mark where dwellings once stood. The Germans were determined to defend these piles of masonry, for each place defended meant delaying

the invading forces. And delay meant time for German Field Marshall Rundstedt to throw in his powerful mobile armored reserves. As tanks and infantry came up to take Maisy from its rear, the rattle of machine gun fire and the sudden fall of mortars and artillery greeted the advance. Tank gunners went to work with the 75 mm cannon and re-assorted the rubble heaps. The enemy was knocked out of Maisy, but he continued to put down heavy artillery on the place in an attempt to keep Americans from occupying the ruins.

One tank of Able Company (with Major Duncan, Captain Miller and Lieutenant Jones giving it close support with carbines) was sent through this storm of artillery. They went right through Maisy. Two enemy pillboxes were sighted by Major Duncan and Captain Miller on this expedition. Lieutenant Jones handled the fire orders over the radio that brought destruction to both fortifications.

On June 9th — D-plus-Three — Baker Company, which had been maintenancing the day before, now took over to support the work of the 116th Infantry around Maisy. The Rangers, still fighting on after being released from their costly siege battle at Pointe du Hoe, found themselves handed another tough assignment — a series of strong pillboxes just south of Maisy. They began the job of blowing the deadly ground fortifications sky high. But it was a costly business. The Rangers asked for support. Baker Company moved south of Maisy to help. The Rangers wiped out the pillboxes. 125 ex-occupants were taken prisoner, the first sizeable batch of Wehrmacht to be taken in the early fighting.

Able Company in the evening saw 40 more Germans into the Prisoner of War cage. The two-score Nazis gave themselves up to the maintenance T2 — an old General Grant medium tank rigged out as a tank recovery vehicle with block and tackle hitches, bulging with extra bogey wheels and strung like some strange Christmas tree with a variety of chains, tools, special maintenance equipment. An imposing looking gun projected from its turret — a fake barrel. The T2 recovery tank was armed with nothing bigger than a machine gun. But it bagged 40 krauts with its ferocious appearance.

All companies camped near Maisy that night. Maisy had by now all but disappeared — except for the wine shop. Either by chance of war or through some sentiment of German gunners, the wine shop stood invitingly, practically undamaged and intact.

The night of June 9th is marked by Sergeant (then Private First Class) Jean M. Blanchette, of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, as the night on which, after four days of fighting, he finally got some food, some sleep, and a remarkable letter from the FBI in Washington.

Sergeant Blanchette, who once had to make up his mind whether he would join the American or the Canadian forces and decided to pitch in with the forces of the United States, waded through the surf on D-Day at H-hour plus 15 minutes. His job was to maintain radio contact between the 743rd Tank Battalion and the 116th Combat Team. Ahead of him through the water, the French-Canadian pushed a water-proofed radio on a lifebelt pontoon. Through the next four days he moved with the commanding officer of the 116th Combat Team directly behind the assault force, relaying over the radio to

the tanks orders for fire support. (The tank radios were of utmost importance during these first four days of fighting, as the infantry had lost most of their communications in getting to the beach had to rely almost entirely on tank radio relays to get important field commands and information through.)

Once during this time, the Woonsocket soldier's radio brought fire from the Navy offshore to help the tanks through a tough spot. On June 6th while many of the tanks were held on the beach by enemy artillery fire falling on the only exit, Blanchette radioed the Headquarters section adrift in the Channel aboard LCT-29. He gave the position of the enemy battery. This information was relayed by the radio in the command halftrack aboard LCT-29 to the Navy. The ancient battleships standing offshore gave the position a broadside. The enemy battery was silenced.

By the time he was sitting outside Pointe du Hoe controlling fire on the assault to relieve the Rangers (his radio went dead and he was unable to correct the few rounds that smashed into the Rangers' positions) Blanchette was beginning to get mighty hungry. On the 8th and 9th of June he was still with infantry, still with his radio, and much hungrier. A begged chocolate bar was a feast. Everybody in the infantry seemed to be in the same fix — no rations.

On the close of the 9th, Blanchette got back to his own outfit. Somebody dug him up a K-ration box. There are a few times in the Army when a cold K-ration tastes just fine. This was one of them.

But before the dog-weary soldier from Woonsocket grabbed himself some sleep, he was handed a long, white, official envelope that had come over with some last-minute mail tossed into the reconnaissance halftrack just before the invasion convoy left Southampton. It was a letter addressed to Private Blanchette from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The letter informed him that because he was not a naturalized citizen of the United States, he would report "immediately" to the FBI branch office in New York City, New York, without delay.

The matter failed to keep Blanchette awake that night.

iv.

BY D-plus-Four — June 10th — the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff meeting in London could consider the beachhead won. Despite German reserves rushed into Normandy by Marshall General Karl von Rundstedt and Marshal Erwin Rommel, thousands of American and British soldiers landed as reinforcements, ferried from Britain in the face of high winds and heavy seas. 60 miles of costal front was in Allied hands.

But a beachhead was hardly enough room in which armies could maneuver. And it would take armies to knock Germany out of France. The Allies began driving inland. The infantry pushed through the hedges southward and cleared the wooded area called Foret de Cerisy — a big block of green shown on waterproof combat maps that smelled like linoleum. Able and Charlie Companies teamed with the 115th Infantry of the 29th Division to sweep with the southward attack. The tanks moved out at 3.30 in the morning just before first light. The 29th Division jumped off from Colombieres, a town

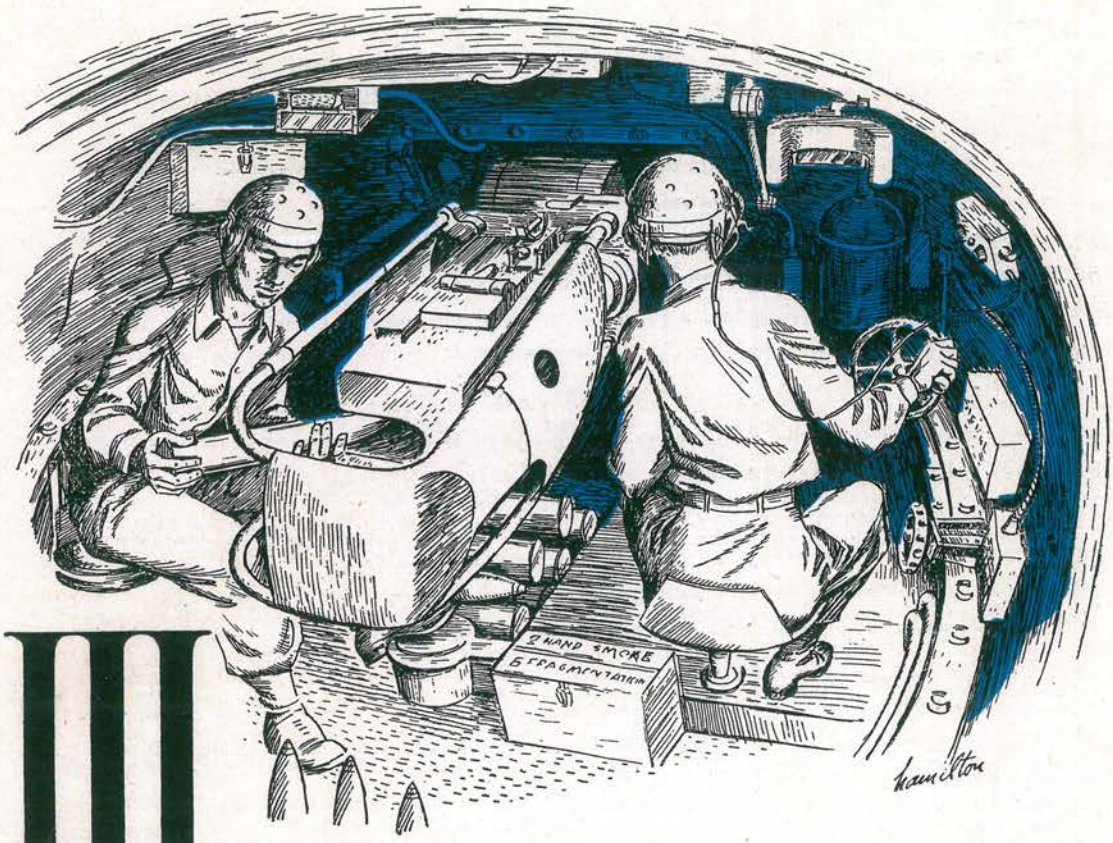
distinguished by a church and a steeple a few miles from the night's bivouac near Maisy. The advance swept three miles to the vicinity of some dwellings named Baynes. That was the push for the day. Terrain was the toughest obstacle. Although enemy resistance was expected every foot of the way through hedges and fields, no real opposition developed. Bivouac was made a mile farther south of Baynes at six in the evening near a sprinkling of farmhouses and barns known as La Communette. There Able and Charlie Companies waited for gas and supplies.

In the old horse cavalry, the horses were combed and fed before the men looked after themselves. In the tank battalions, the crews gas up and re-stock their shell loads when the supply trains reach them before any other consideration. This was done often under shellfire.

The following day, June 11th, Colonel Duncan went back to Maisy for Baker Company and led it to La Communette just in time to catch Able and Charlie Companies at noon before a move to Vaudebon. The afternoon move was a 32-mile road march through an area previously swept by infantry and placed the Battalion near Vaudebon beyond the heavy woods of Cerisy Forest.

The tankers had learned to dig in. A medium tank during the fall of artillery is about as safe a place a man could be, unpleasant as the experience is. But a human being — being human — does not want to stay canned inside a steel shell for days and nights on end. Tankers would tell of times when they spent three days and nights buttoned up inside their vehicle, never daring to expose themselves, and throwing their refuse out in empty shell casings or a steel helmet.

In the fields of France, tankmen always within a few yards of the enemy, got out of their vehicles during night halts and preserved their lives by a bit of energetic spadework. Enough earth was dug to allow the men to lie down with some degree of comfort underneath the tank. First the hole was dug, then the tank driven up over it. Extra dirt was heaped up at the front of the tank which always faced the enemy.




# III

## TURNABOUT

i.

ON June 12th, folks back in the States picked up their newspapers and read that "more than" 1,400 U. S. bombers, the largest number ever sent over Europe to that time, hit 16 German air bases in a 400-mile area.

The war was also going on down on the ground.

Four miles south of where the 743rd was waiting in the fields for orders existed what war left of the town of Caumont, a town once of respectable size and still of considerable military importance. A half dozen main roads radiated from this hub. To an army intent on building up a superiority against the enemy in men and arms, it was vital.

To the tankers and the doughs, Caumont was just another town, a little bigger than most they had seen so far. The orders were to take it.

While Baker was held in reserve, Able and Charlie Companies moved out at 3.30 in the morning to work south toward Caumont with the 26th Infantry Regiment of the

1st Division. An occasional house or a bush or a position suspected of harboring undesirable tenants was given a treatment of lead by trigger-happy machine gunners and riflemen. Tanks joined the spraying parties whenever the infantry called for it. In working with infantry, a separate tank battalion learns not to shoot at everything in sight. It might turn out to be a platoon of friendly infantry. Tank-infantry co-ordination is a difficult operation. It might appear to be an easy matter of simply moving tanks along with men. It was far from that, as tankmen and infantrymen were to learn so well later in the hazardous hedgerows beyond the Vire River.

On this day, tank-infantry operations were going smoothly as ever set down in an official Army field manual on the subject.

But before more than a few hundred yards had been gained southeast of Sallen, it became obvious that the doughboys weren't just going to walk right in and take over a place like Caumont. Jerry was going to fight for it.

On the way down, Baker Company encounter two pillboxes manned by machine gunners. They were destroyed. A little farther along, the tanks met the formidable obstacle of an 88 mm anti-tank gun capable of sending a projectile through a Sherman as if its hull was made of cheese. The anti-tank gun was destroyed . . .

Charlie Company on its way spotted a number of German armored cars on the roads outside of Caumont. It was succesful in knocking one of these out. The others played hide and seek among the roadside trees and embankments, firing and running. The tanks pressed on.

As the evening wore along both companies began receiving heavy concentrations of artillery fire mixed in with the customary mortars. Direct fire from anti-tank guns worried tank commanders. Machine gun fire pinned down the doughboys. The attack, however, kept moving in toward the objective. It was slow and cautious work. The tank-infantry co-ordination of the 26th Infantry Regiment, veterans of the proud and battle-hardened (in Africa and Sicily) 1st Division remained extremely good on this attack as strongpoint after strongpoint was reduced and overrun with the minimum of casualties to the doughs. The infantry efficiently infiltrated anti-tank gun positions — a tank cannot bull its way past an anti-tank gun without somebody getting hurt: a sorry lesson learned in Africa by Armored Force men. Machine gun positions, deadly to doughs, was another story to tanks. A few rounds of H. E. (High Explosive) from the 75 mm fired into the laps of the crews usually was all that was required. An anti-tank gun was almost always protected by flanking machine gun nests. Each was a tactical problem to be worked out by infantry and tankers.

By 11 o'clock, with the last flush of twilight leaving the sky, men and tanks had worked problem by problem to the outskirts of Caumont. A few of the infantry kept right on going into the town, but darkness made it too tough to take. The line was pulled back to the edge of town. Caumont was to be stormed by daylight.

ABLE Company, northeast of Caumont at Mitrecaen, pulled out of a farmer's cow pasture at 5.30, the low morning sun casting long shadows beside the southward moving tanks. It was hardly a quiet sunrise. The Germans, expecting the attack, were throwing in plenty of mortar and artillery, making it hard going for the infantry.

At 6 o'clock, Charlie Company pushed in from the northwest. A German scout car went up in a sudden burst of flame touched off by a blast of H. E. from platoon leader Lieutenant Al Williams' tank. An anti-tank gun position spotted by the 29-year-old company commander, Captain Ned Elder, was knocked out by his gunner. All Charlie tanks were in action, crashing shells into German-occupied buildings, spraying enemy infantry with hundreds of rounds of machine gun fire.

When Able Company rolled up to Caumont, the Germans were pouring out of the town, trying to escape to the southeast. Gunners lined up their sights on several armored cars and selfpropelled guns. Nobody kept track of the actual number knocked out. Things were too hot and too busy. But not all the Germans got away.

As dusk set in, the 743rd line companies were together except for the three Able Company tanks holding with the infantry at La Repas where the British were seen on the left flank.

And then Sergeant Mayo's tank showed up — battered, muddy, nearly out of gas, badly in need of maintenance, but still running. It came rumbling into Sallen after Sergeant Mayo and his crew had fought with the 745th Tank Battalion since getting mixed up on the beach D-Day.

As night (and enemy shells) fell on the bivouac area at Sallen, the rumor went around from tank to tank that here it was, men — a break.

It was a rumor based on information from higher headquarters. For the Battalion Commander was told that the 743 would be given enough time to maintenance their vehicles and rest their men before going on.

It was a logical time for a rest, even a short one. The tanks had been in constant action since 10 minutes before H-hour on D-Day. They had taken heavy losses in the first two days of combat. They had helped crack open Hitler's allegedly impregnable Atlantic Wall, established a beachhead across which would pour armies of men, and had aided to secure that beachhead by clearing out the road network behind Omaha Beach, then had rolled inland more than 50 road miles to take their most important prize to date — Caumont. For Caumont was the furthest penetration made by the Allies into France prior to the later St. Lo breakthrough. Its capture helped in a great measure to secure our brand new life-line. It sealed off roads that limited German retreat routes, and it was to be an Allied supply hub through which would pour the raw material of men and machines that would result in a great all-out offensive to break into the interior of France.

The tankers thought the taking of Caumont was a good place to blow the whistle for a rest.

And that's how matters stood the night of June 13th.

On the morning of the 14th, Major Duncan received orders detaching the 743rd from V Corps, under which the Battalion had been fighting, and attaching it to XIX Corps and the 30th Infantry Division, just landed in France and assembling south of Isigny.

Once again it was "Move out, *Verify!*"

And *Verify*, now a battalion of veterans, moved out . . .

# PART TWO

# GUARDING A LIFE-LINE


# I . . . . . CROSSING THE VIRE

i.

THE 743rd Tank Battalion, having had their baptism of fire on the Normandy beach and having gotten their war catechism through the green fields and woods 54 miles inland to Caumont, now rolled their combat-scarred General Shermans almost back to the starting point near the coast. As the tanks lurched unchallenged along the roads through forests and past farmyards and apple orchards, the British and Canadians were holding the Allied left flank in bitter engagments with German armored and infantry forces, and the American First Army under General Omar Bradley was fighting on the right flank in moves aimed at cutting off the Cherbourg Peninsula. A German counter-attack recaptured Carentan. The 2nd Armored Division was thrown into the breach to keep the German thrust at Carentan from splitting the invasion forces in half.

By the time dirt-grimed tankers rolled up to the assembly area south of Isigny and staff officers had gone out to report that the 743rd had arrived as ordered, the XIX Corps

had already planned an attack for the 30th Division on its right front. A hastily assembled combat team was put together for a jump-off to the line of the Vire-et-Taut Canal that next morning, June 15th.

The Big Plan, as conceived earlier by higher headquarters peering at situation maps, was to touch off a big offensive for St. Lo. But the inevitable counter-punches of von Rundstedt's powerful mobile reserves threw a monkey wrench into the Big Plan. On June 14th the Allies had shattered the first line of defense, held a coastal strip 60 miles long and were using captured airfields. But assault units were dogtired and casualties had cut down their size. The Big Plan was scrapped. St. Lo would have to wait. It was first necessary to give depth and strength to the most vulnerable stretch of the American front — the single road, the sole life-line between Isigny and Carentan linking the two bridgeheads, Utah and Omaha beaches.

The Germans on June 14th got into Carentan, were thrown out again. But it was close. The whole Invasion effort was still touch and go. Thus it was imperative that the 30th Division make what one of its officers described as an "impromptu" attack to clear the area south of the Isigny-Carentan road to the Vire-et-Taut Canal. The attack was to be made by a "motley combat team," to use the words of the Division's own report, "assembled around the 120th Infantry Regiment." The 30th Division was the only complete division available. Their line was a sprawling 7,500-yard sector taken over from the 501st Regiment at 1 A.M., June 14th.

All the man in the tank knew about the situation was that he was damned tired after the long road march, that the attack was going to jump off at 8 in the morning, that it would be a limited attack and it shouldn't take more than a day to do the job . . .

At 5 in the morning of June 15th, the tanks of Able and Baker Company turned over their motors and set out to join the attacking forces for the 8 o'clock jump-off. At 6.30 the artillery went to work, supported by big shells whooshed in by battleships which had Naval forward observers ashore. At 7.30 fighter-bombers droned in and struck at suspected enemy positions. At 8 the infantry doughs started forward.

This was the baptism of fire for the 30th Infantry. As an attack it was not impressive. Men moved slowly. Officers sweated to get platoons under way.

The attack inched painfully ahead.

"I saw one of our tanks coming up the road and it made me feel good," an infantryman was quoted by a war correspondent. "Then I saw his gun go off and wondered who he was shooting at. A second later I knew — it was *me*!"

Things like that happened. Infantry cursed the tanker. In that same day's operation, Charlie Company was to go into bivouac and discover during the night that the infantry suddenly would pull out without notice, leaving the tanks without a line of protection under enemy fire in the darkness. Then the tanker cursed the infantry.

The morning's work and the taking of Montmartin had been done by two battalions of infantry with two companies of tanks. In mid-afternoon, a third battalion with Charlie Company passed through, swinging southeast to threaten a group of dwellings named La Ray. Meanwhile, painstaking progress was continuing as one of the infantry battalions

kept inching below Montmartin on the west side of the main southward road, pressing on hedge by hedge on their way to La Compte, astride the highway about a half mile south of Montmartin. Lt Al Williams took the 3rd Platoon of Charlie Company plus three tanks from the 2nd Platoon and made up a task force with a platoon of infantry to sweep wide around La Compte in order to bring pressure on the flank. This foray knocked out an 88 mm field gun, an armored car, and a number of machine gun nests. The rest of the company continued to a point east of La Compte where heavy resistance pinned the attack to a halt.

The next day, June 16th, Able Company accompanied the doughboys to push through the barnyards and fields to the canal by way of La Ray, which was mopped up as they went. All was as the patrols had reported. The bridges were blown — the enemy's stand was to be made south of the canal. The front line doughs dug in and prepared to stay awhile. The Carentan-Isigny life-line, the vital supply road, was now protected in depth. A further advance was postponed.

While infantrymen watched the enemy from foxholes, the tanks were to get their first break from actual combat. But nobody rested. There was too much to do.

ii.

FROM D-plus-Two to the Vire-et-Taut Canal, the 743rd Tank Battalion did not have a fatal casualty. Men had been wounded in the tanks, but not killed. Now from June 17th to July 7th, the Battalion remained in bivouac areas, out of action.

The war was going on all about them as the tankers got to work to give their vehicles the maintenance they so badly needed. In those three weeks, Cherbourg fell, putting one of the chief French ports in Allied hands. The British were having one hell of a time taking Caen on our left flank, with the road hub itself a no man's land. On the right flank, the 1st Army began a drive southward below the base of Cherbourg Peninsula along a 30-mile front, so that at the end of July 3rd, the offensive line extended in a southeastward curve toward St. Lo, 30 miles inland from the west coast and 16 miles below the north coast.

For the tankers, it was a time of work. But it was also a time to discover that the Normandy countryside produced such things as eggs, cheese, milk, and — to the fortunate — cognac. To those who were too late in liberating a choice bottle of cognac or some rare vintage wine, there was always calvados. Not to mention a French version of apple cider.

A souvenir fever swept through the Battalion and searching eyes were peeled for German "Gott Mit Uns" belt buckles, Luger or P-38 pistols, Nazi swastikas. The Reconnaissance halftrack began to bulge with battlefield loot picked up from the fields over which the invasion had swept.

Searching eyes were peeled as well for chickens. And a few youthful, pretty French farmgirls remained on the land so that grinning men from Idaho and Utah and California and Pennsylvania could call out "'Allo, baybee! Comment allez-vous?"

On June 19th the 743rd became a complete unit in France as the rear elements sailed from England, crossed the Channel, and debarked at Omaha Beach at the same point where Americans had fought so bitterly just 13 days before. The rest of the trucks of Service Company, the medium tanks of the Assault Gun Platoon, the halftracks and peeps of all companies, the light tanks of Dog Company — all passed the rusting hulks of dead ships. They passed the first French fields and the apple trees. No one went into the fields. Many of them were posted with small white signs with a black death's head and worded: "Achtung! Minen!"

The newcomers had listened to training lectures about the value of foxholes and slit trenches in safeguarding the more precious parts of the human anatomy, but no one turned much thought to the shovel during their first hours behind the front. Although the evidence of war was clearly all about them in the form of dead horses, cows, fields that looked as if an army of golf duffers had been digging divots there, and whole villages piled into rubble — although there was this and more to remind the new arrivals that they were moving into no picnic ground, the day was pleasant enough, and there was no shooting right then. But it wasn't very long after they had settled into their respective bivouac areas until Jerry obliged as a reception commitee. Artillerymen lobbed in greetings. These greetings were loudest in the form of some giant gun, possibly a railroad gun, that sent "boxcars" rumbling through the sky to explode with a great earthquaking concussion near the Isigny highway. When these and the smaller editions of steel-cased death began crashing in, the simple shovel became instantly the most popular item of equipment the men had brought with them. It did not take long either for many to discover that berry bushes by the sides of the roads and at the edges of some fields concealed excellent deep ditches.

Bedcheck Charlie was on hand every evening, the uncertain, throbbing drone of his German engine putting extremely unpleasant thoughts into the minds of earthbound creatures below his prowling wings. Bedcheck was always spoken of in the singular, although he might be a whole flight of enemy, night-flying over Allied lines with bomb racks ready to empty out on likely troop concentrations.

On June 20th, Headquarters Company found its way to the Battalion fold. Tech Sergeant Jim David, of Detroit, who had come in on D-Day with the Headquarters Group now hitched a piece of canvas to the side of a halftrack and set up his S-3 operations office. Elsewhere, the kitchen trucks were proving their worth more than gold as cooks prepared the first hot meals. Mess kits rattled expectantly in long chow lines. The enemy usually picked chow time with malice aforethought to send in some artillery, but this became accepted by the men as a nuisance of war. The wonderful good humor which went automatically with the trigger-happy, brass-cussing, proudly individualistic American GI was an ever-present quality in the Battalion's spirit and never wholly absent from it. After diving into a ditch with a full mess kit, losing most the food in the plunge, and ducking a shell safely by a split-second, a man can get up, look at his dusty remains of chow, and express himself definitely in a very colorful manner. It is a part of soldier-

humor, never to be entirely understood by anyone else, that his outfit thinks this to be a hell of a good joke. It is a story that will become part of the outfit's lore, always beginning: "Remember the day Frank So-and-So got mad at the mess sergeant because he wouldn't give him seconds . . . ."

The Battalion re-shaped itself for combat from an assault team to a full-strength outfit. Major Duncan became Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, the commanding officer of the Battalion. A square-jawed, German-hating Scotsman from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, he had already left far behind him the cloistered and somewhat prosaic life as a school teacher of biology to adopt the aggressive pugnaciousness expected of tankmen. Major Clarence L Benjamin, a Californian, joined the staff from England as executive officer. Captain Philips took over Major Duncan's former staff duties as S-3 officer, plans and operations.

On the Fourth of July, Colonel Duncan saw the field order he had been expecting. The Battalion was alerted for the Vire River attack to jump-off July 5th. But July 5th and the next day were spent in bivouac as operations were put off. Finally, on July 7th, the attack was on. The "dry runs" through the hedgerows in practise maneuvers during the wait were now to be put to the real test.

iii.

DURING the night before the jump-off of a big attack, no man who is to take part in it sleeps well if at all. While the dark front line may appear quiet with only an occasional nervous spasm bothering it — the arc of a flare shooting up and drifting a minute in space, the man-made lightning and thunder of artillery flickering and grumbling on the horizon, the brief little cataclysm as a shell bursts blindly in an orchard, the sudden chatter of a machine-gun startled awake, or the solitary bark of a watchdog rifle — yet behind all this combat normality a terrific tension is building, so terrific that it seems to be a tangible thing of which even the enemy must be aware. In a window-curtained room of a farmhouse men rustle maps and papers and talk in almost normal voices as they peer by gaslamp at grid squares and phase lines, and they speak of "Objective Nan" or "Mike" or "Red" or "Blue," and their language is the shoptalk of war. Somewhere in the outside darkness, a group of tired men crack open their multi-hundredth crate of ammunition. Somewhere in that dark corner of Normandy a night patrol is making its infinitely cautious way to bring back last-minute, all-important information on the rate of flow of the Vire canal, the depth of the water, the position of enemy outposts. An artillery officer looks at the luminous dial of his watch and checks the time ticking toward the second when his own battery will join others in giving throat and voice to the night, to the dawn that this morning will truly come up like thunder. An infantry rifleman slumps as if asleep in his self-dug womb of earth, but his mind is turning on thoughts of what he is supposed to do when his squad goes forward, and how he will do it, and of Home and the Girl, and whether to open his K-ration now or wait . . . Wait? For what? . . . And so the tension builds.

At 3 in the morning, the tanks had an hour before they were to move out. A bow gunner sentry looked to the east and thought he could detect the first grey glimmer of morning in the sky.

One platoon of Shermans had already been at work doing its part in the attack — an unorthodox part. They had been busy running up and down behind a part of the front where the attack was *not* to be made. The noise of the tanks hopefully was intended to throw the waiting, listening enemy off balance — fool him into looking the wrong way. At the least it was calculated to disturb his vigil.

The tension snapped at 4 o'clock. The first early birds had awakened and were twittering in the trees out of habit that even a war could not stop when all else was quiet. But in that pre-dawn, the birds stopped singing. For the artillery let loose.

"I almost jumped out of the turret," said one Able Company tank commander. "We were moving along the road — we had about 15 miles to go to our assembly area with the infantry — and all of a sudden our artillery let go right next to us when I least expected it. It sounded like the world blowing up. Scared me until I realized what it was."

The artillery preparation pounded the Germans in their dug-in positions along the canal water line until the jump-off H-hour at 7 o'clock. The artillery lifted. 30th Division infantry moved forward through German counter-battery fire. Medium and light tanks moved beside them through the hedgerows into orchards down by the edge of the canal.

All morning the tanks had no choice but to sit in the orchards under shellfire, sweating it out with infantry doughboys while combat engineers tried to get bridges across the canal so the attack could move along. The engineers worked and sweated at high cost, their blood reddening the swift-moving Vire-et-Taut as heavy enemy mortar fire dropped into the middle of their construction efforts time and time again, and sniper fire picked off their numbers one by one. But by 1 o'clock in the afternoon, word came that the first bridges were in.

Tank commanders ordered their drivers to move out. There was only one route down to the location where the bridge was said to be in, and this was a road that exposed the tanks to clear observation to the enemy. The tanks raced down this open road — and then found the bridge wasn't open. The road was no place to sit quietly. The tanks churned off to the sides, crashing through the hedges into the fields. From there they could see the bridge and the magnificent job a bunch of unsung heroes were doing under fire in trying to hold a way for the attack forces to get across a 50-foot wide ribbon of water. The ugly bursts of artillery and mortar shells were almost constant. It seemed impossible that they could get the job done. But somehow those bridge-builders did. At five minutes after 2, an Able Company platoon of Shermans crossed the Vire-et-Taut and rolled on toward St. Jean de Daye. Others followed.

The tanks came up on the east side of the main road leading to St. Jean de Daye to get into that town by 5 in the afternoon. Word came that the infantry, which had been taking heavy losses in the fierce barrages of mortar and artillery fire laid in by Germans

with devilish accuracy because days ago the ranges on the whole Vire-et-Taut front had been calculated, were now being pinned down by machine gun fire at the west end of town.

Captain David W. Korrison, then a light tanker but later to be commanding officer of medium tank Able Company, got some Dog Company tanks to support his own "tin can" and poked the front of his vehicle around the corner of a building to find himself face to face with a concentration of Nazi infantry and a machine gun nest. His 37 mm cannon and his machine guns promptly went into action. The nest was removed.

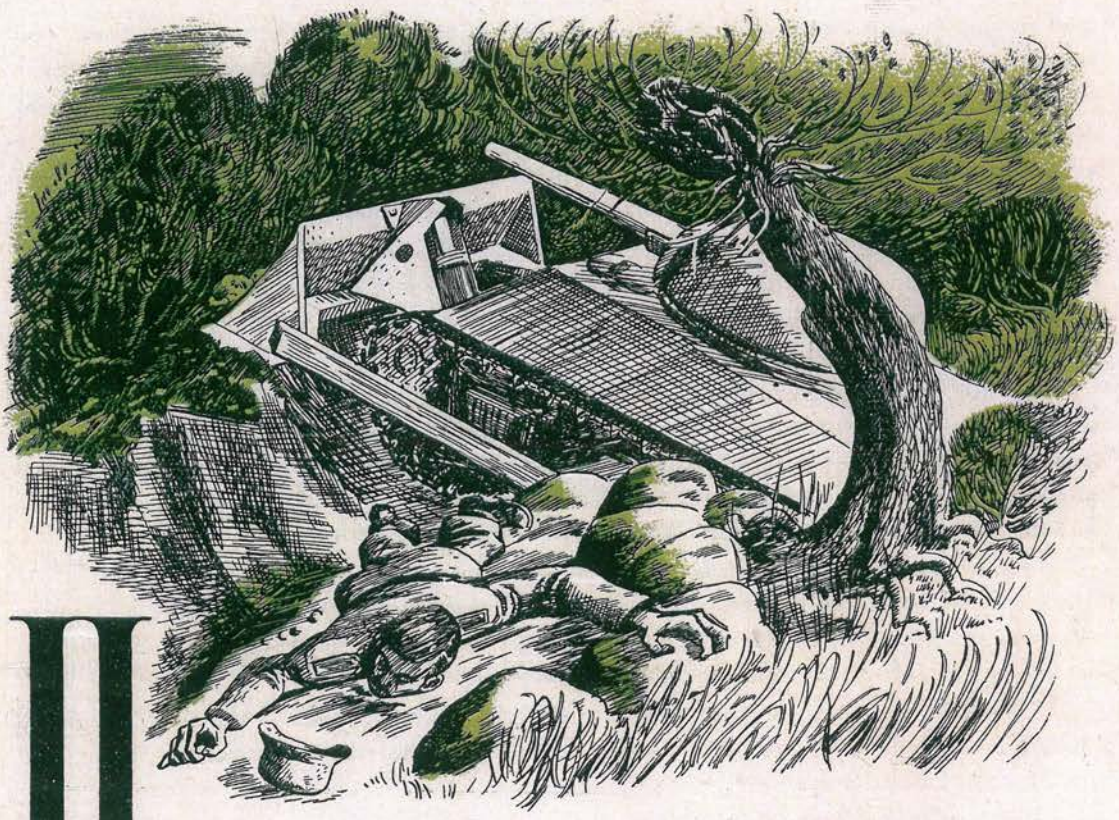
The captain and his light tanks smashed around where the enemy least wanted them until 10.30 that night, when the raiders pulled back to position with their company just east of St. Jean de Daye.

In one day the Vire-et-Taut had been bridged and a wedge driven into the enemy one mile south to St. Jean de Daye. The one thing that made the attack hellish was the tremendous amount of artillery and mortar the Germans put down on pre-determined ranges in an attempt to break up the drive. The drive faltered, but it did not break. The infantry of the 30th Division were now proving their mettle.

There was great confusion in the hedges and on roads caught by shellfire. At Airel, a small town by the Vire River and east of St. Jean de Daye, trucks and peeps were caught under a sudden storm of artillery. The drivers jumped for their lives to ditches by the side of the road or behind stone walls.

"They're throwing in everything but the kitchen sink," one of the drivers said to his helper from behind one of the walls. There was a terrific crash next to them, and bits of wood and brick sprinkled them without much harm.

"That was the kitchen sink!" said the assistant driver.



# II . . . . . GREEN DEATH

i.

THE open sun-baked stretch of beach was bad; now it was the green hedgerows, and these were very bad, too.

The hedgerows divided a battlefront into hundreds of separate small boxes, each box a separate battle, a lone tactical problem on a checkerboard of fields, each in itself a single objective to be fought for, gained, or lost.

South of St. Jean de Daye the hedgerows were spaced so close together that a man could sometimes run from one to another across an open stretch of field in four or five seconds — if nothing stopped him.

There was plenty to stop him.

The hedgerows made perfect field defenses for a holding army, and the Germans never slothful in military matters, took every advantage of this tough terrain to build a defense in depth that, to break through, would take all the fighting spirit, and many

of the lives, of "a soft generation," as German propaganda mistakenly plugged American youth.

Dirt embankments and deep natural ditches were standard accessories with every hedgerow. These embankments and ditches gave the German fighter fine protection — ready-made trenches on all four sides of each field, so that parallel hedgerows covered each other, and one hedgerow linked with another to form a system of communicating trenches.

The Nazi defenders, armed to the teeth, were able to sit well dug-in and concealed behind these curtains of green foliage. The greenery screened them from view while at the same time it permitted them excellent positions with good fields of fire to all sides. What had once been peaceful Normandy pasturage, each farmer's acreage neatly bounded by a line of hedges, now was a murderous, complex battleground where death came in sudden ways.

These hedges were no quaint provincial pastoral to the man who had to advance through them. They were green death.

Behind the leafy screens were such unseen targets a machine guns, big and little antitank guns, tanks, selfpropelled guns on tank chassis, infantrymen equipped with bazookas — all waiting, playing a deadly cat and mouse game.

There was one other unpleasant feature about the hedgerows. They concealed the disposition of the enemy, where he was located, and where he was bringing up reserves. So, when he threw in a strong counterattack against his attackers, the enemy often had the advantage of initial surprise.

There was only one way to fight the hedgerows — one at a time, expecting the worst at each (and almost always finding it) and thinking of each row as a fortress from which the enemy must be routed, field by field. And that was how it was done.

The GI had a word for it: "Rough!"

It *was* rough, all right.

On July 8th, the push went on south of St. Jean de Daye, starting at daylight. Compared with the first day of attack, the artillery and mortar thrown in by the German gunners was light. There was only brief resistance here and there. But then, about 2,000 yards south of St. Jean de Daye, things began to break loose again. No longer did tankers and doughs charge through the fields at will. There were now Germans waiting behind each hedgerow.

One Sherman was rolling along wondering where Jerry was when suddenly 15 rounds of high explosive shells struck it one right after the other.

"We're getting direct fire from some place!" shouted a tank commander back to his platoon leader over his tank radio.

The radio information was hardly necessary. The platoon leader in the same field had his own tank under direct fire by an unseen weapon.

From then on it was sheer hell in the hedgerows. *Verify* was again losing tanks, which could be replaced, and men, who could not.

Charlie Company was supporting the 117th Regiment infantry near La Perrine, below St. Jean de Daye. In the middle of the summer afternoon, storm clouds began to form in the sky and it rained. But nobody in Charlie Company worried about the storm clouds. There was a more serious storm brewing right on the ground. A column of six Mark IV and Mark V tanks were smashing into the American lines at one of its weakest points. Staff Sergeant Richard D. McCracken, of Waterloo, Iowa, was commanding a tank of a platoon directly in front of the oncoming Germans.

Sergeant McCracken took a fighter's gamble. Three tanks of his platoon had been knocked out in earlier action. There were only his own and the platoon officer's tanks left. His radio was knocked out, not working. He had no communications with his platoon officer. Six enemy tanks with infantry against one Sherman is terrific odds, but Sergeant McCracken ordered his driver to move out toward the enemy armor.

He guided his driver with two sections of radio antenna — like a steel fishing rod — prodding him on the left shoulder when he wanted him to steer left, on the right shoulder when he wanted him to move right, and on the small of the back when he desired a straight course.

In this way, McCracken got his tank up to a break in a hedgerow to train his guns on the advancing enemy armor now only 500 yards to his left front.

When the 75 mm American gun spoke, it drew the instant and undivided attention of the whole column. Artillery and mortar fire was falling on all sides of the Sherman spotted by German infantry. Armor-piercing shells ripped into the hedgerow on both sides and rushed past the turret in near-misses. One of the Mark IVs ceased firing and black, oily smoke billowed up from it. Meanwhile the bow gunner's machine gun was spraying German infantry, and on about every third round the tank gunner depressed the 75 mm to throw a high-explosive shell into the ranks of the foot soldiers.

The lone American tank held its hedgerow position until the Germans broke, abandoned their attack and withdrew, still firing at the single opposing tank. McCracken's crew had expended every shell in their ready racks. The sergeant prodded his driver with the broken radio antenna and turned his tank back to get more ammunition.

A Boston tank commander, Sergeant Harold D. Adams, was forced to abandon his Sherman in a field about a mile and a half southwest of St. Jean de Daye when enemy fire penetrated it. After seeing that his own crew was out of the tank safely, Sergeant Adams saw three wounded infantrymen lying in the same field as his disabled Sherman. The tank was drawing artillery and mortar fire of such intensity that medical aidmen had been driven back.

Sergeant Adams ignored the danger and went out to the doughboys. He gave them first aid and over a period of four hours in that shell-pocked field under constant fire went to each man at 20 minute intervals to adjust the tourniquets and dressings. Adams finally located an armored ambulance and personally directed the driver to the spot.

With the three wounded doughs safely on the ambulance, Adams then heard of two of his own men who were lying wounded in the next field. He hunted up a stretcher and started off to lead some aidmen to the next field. As Adams reached an open spot,

an enemy machine gun opened fire and shot the stretcher off his shoulder. The aidmen refused to go any further. The ground was muddy from recent rains and a cloudburst, and the driver of the armored ambulance said that he could not maneuver into the field without getting bogged down. Sergeant Adams then went into the field himself (the area was still under heavy enemy fire) and, one at at time, carried the two wounded men to a position that could be reached by the ambulance.

Corporal Lawrence A. Kassa, a tank gunner from Thief River Falls, Minnesota, knocked out three anti-tank guns during the afternoon. Then his own tank was knocked out. Corporal Kassa took over the gun in another Sherman.

Private Arthur S. Graves, who had been knocked out of his first tank on D-Day, was knocked out his second during the rainy afternoon. Dynamite on the outside rear deck of the tank, where it was carried to aid the infantry in blowing holes in the root masses of hedgerows, was set on fire by an enemy shell hit. Almost instantly the engine compartment at the back was in flames. These spread quickly to the turret. The clothes of the tank commander, gunner, and cannoneer, caught fire. The driver, stunned by the force of the explosion when the shell struck the dynamite, sat "frozen" to his controls. Graves, himself burning, pushed the driver by sheer force up through the driver's hatch and out on the ground. Crawling out of the driver's hatch himself, Graves noticed the predicament of the three stunned men in the turret. His own face blackened and burned, Graves leaned down into the flaming turret and helped the rest of the crew out. All this time artillery was bursting about the tank and the incessant snipers were trying to pick off the men.

Graves got the badly burned tank commander, the gunner and the cannoneer onto the ground, where he rolled them over in the grass, beating out the flames in their clothes with his bare hands. He then guided the dazed, suffering men to a ditch where they found cover from the enemy fire. Graves looked around and saw the driver was lying beneath the burning tank. He got up, ran through the field back to the tank, dragged the driver from underneath, and made his way back with him to the ditch. From there, Graves went out and found the medics who treated first the crew, then the assistant driver who had gotten them out of the flames. This was the second of six tanks Graves was to serve in during the campaigning in Europe.

The tanks were slugging back beside the infantry. In the confusion of the day, when at times nobody was sure just what was going on, or who was shooting at whom, tank gunner blasted numerous machine-gun nests into eternal silence. The Germans had a trick about machine gun nests in the hedgerows. They would tunnel underneath the matted roots from the rear. The enemy moles would then push through an opening on the forward side just big enough to stick through the barrel of a machine gun. At other spots the Jerry had rigged up machine guns that were fired by pulling a string, the string-pullers being elsewhere in a foxhole. Nearly every hedgerow had a heavy machine gun hidden at each end. Between the two heavy machine guns were dug-in riflemen, many armed with machine pistols or "burp" guns. Some snipers hid up in trees.

There were bazookas in the hedgerows, too. At one time, Captain Richard Bulkan, of Dog Company maneuvered his tank around a hedgerow to throw a grenade at some enemy doughs. Suddenly right in front of the tank's front plate, a German staff sergeant stood up and let go with a bazooka. There was a great roar and flame, but the bazooka rocket, which struck the final drive, did not go through. The range was only 20 feet. Captain Bulkan's gunner, angered by the German sergeant's temerity, let go with a round of high explosive 37 mm. The German disappeared with the shell burst — at 20 feet.

ii.

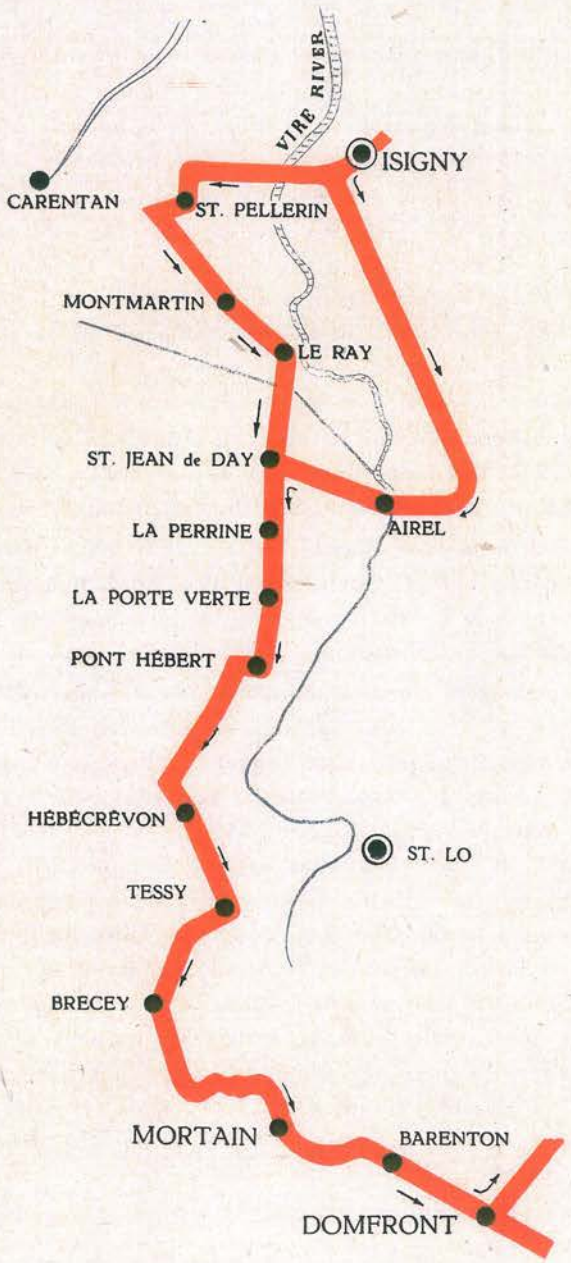
IT took 11 days and plenty of blood and sweat to push a bit better than 7 miles through the tangle of hedgerows to reach a point 2 miles northwest of St. Lo.

It was slow, cautious, costly going in this part of northwestern France. The weather was cantankerous — there were bursts of sunshine followed by a sudden clouding up and showers of cold rain. The nights grew bitterly chill and uncomfortable. 24 hours a day there was constant enemy fire pouring into the indefinite advanced lines. Rear areas were the targets for artillery barrages. And by dark, the Luftwaffe never failed to produce Bedcheck Charlie and his inquisitive pals.

In that maze of green pastures sided by the ancient earthen banks, waist high with weeds, bushes and trees, the tanks and infantry developed a close team work and a better understanding through mutual battle experiences. No foot soldier in combat liked the idea of having a tank near him when things were going well, for a tank always drew heavy enemy fire. But when the going was tough, especially when enemy tanks counter-attacked, then the foot soldier wanted American tanks around — the more the better — to blast the opposition with big stuff. The infantry could not have gotten through those hedges and trees without their attached tanks, and the tanks could not have done their job without the infantry. The tank-dozers were kept at work incessantly, smashing holes in the masses of foliage. A technique was worked out in which blocks of TNT carried by the tanks were used to blast holes. Three holes were blown in each row. Then at a signal screamed from the tank by use of its siren, everybody in that one operation took off at one time through the three openings. The tanks shuttled from field to field where needed, getting their orders by radio.

Radio was the chief means of communication, tank to tank, and from rear headquarters to the tank commanders on the line. Tech Sergeant Ronald Hyland, a 6-foot-plus boy from Minneapolis who early in life had been bitten by the radio bug, thought and worried and planned constantly about Battalion communications, ever bemused by all the various knotty technical problems that came up during the fighting. His job called for him constantly to risk his life working on one faulty radio or another to get it back in repair on the front line. Of Hyland, his commanding officer said: "He is the most brilliant radio man I have ever known — and a soldier's soldier in the field."

Even while he landed on D-Day at Omaha Beach, radio-man Hyland was mulling over a better system of communications between the tanker and the doughboy he was supporting. Tank-to-tank communication was satisfactory, but in a stiff fire fight, when


VIRE RIVER
ISIGNY
CARENTAN
ST. PELLERIN
MONTMARTIN
LE RAY
ST. JEAN de DAY
AIREL
LA PERRINE
LA PORTE VERTE
PONT HÉBERT
HÉBÉCRÊVON
ST. LO
TESSY
BRECEY
MORTAIN
BARENTON
DOMFRONT

tanks are buttoned up, it is almost impossible for a man outside the tank to get the attention of the crew. The racket of battle, the great roar of the tank's engine drowns out any shout that might be heard by the tank commander who may have his hatch open. But ever at the ears of tank crews, built into their crash helmets, are radio earphones through which they can hear orders spoken over the inter-communication radio-phone system.

The Battalion improvised two methods by which the doughboy could talk to the tanks. At the rear of the tank, an empty machine gun ammunition box was attached, a phone set put in the box, and the phone attached to the tank's inter-communication wires. Hyland evolved a radio hook-up by which it was possible for infantry troops to call the tanks while the doughs kept down in a ditch or a foxhole. Hyland overcame a number of problems — chief of which was static thrown out by the tank's engine — and installed a system enabling the foot soldier to call the tankers over the infantry "Walky-Talky" radio sets.

Taken down by radio monitors crouched for long hours beside a static-noisy receiver in a halftrack just behind the action, the dialogue of tankers in action makes its own terse drama of words. July 9th in the hedgerows was a day of particularly violent action as the Germans attempted a strong counter-attack with their own tanks.

On this day, the words of battle heard on the air between tanks began during the early hours of the morning before dawn, when the front was fairly quiet, and men snatched at sleep. The words heard then were routine administration calls. They sounded like this — taken from actual battle logs:

There is a buzz in the receiver as a tanker somewhere up front presses the button on his "mike" and begins to transmit. "Item," he gives his call sign, "to Able." Able is the station he is calling. "Item to Able — over." There is a chatter of static as the "mike" button is released and the dynamotor of the transmitting radio stops spinning. Then another buzz and another metallic voice: "Able to Item — over." A rising inflection is put on the last syllable of "over" so that it becomes "ov-*eh*!" Then Item — in this case Headquarters Company (the call sign changes daily according to a secret list) — sends his message. This morning it is one like this: "Item to Able. Listen carefully. I have a message for you." There is a break as the transmission snaps off the air a few seconds then comes back on. "You are now attached to the same unit that Able was attached to yesterday. Be ready to move out by the same time that you were to have moved out this morning." "I am not out with the unit I am with now. They have a mission for me. Is that correct?" "That is correct. Contact the C. O. and tell him." The transmission concludes when Able, which happens this morning to be Able Company, receipts the message with: "Roger. Out."

"Roger — out" was the standard closing of a message series, meaning that the message was understood. "Wilco — out" could have also been used, meaning that order will be complied with.

In combat, "Standard Operating Procedure" was frequently forgotten when action got hot. A sudden "Watch your right — watch your right!" would be blurted on the

air. Names, except in code, were not to be used. Locations were always given in code. The enemy was listening as well. But sometimes an excited tank commander would forget. There were times when he would forget to switch from "radio" to "interphone" when he wanted to give orders to his own crew only, and out on the air went such directions as: "Pull over to the left — left — more to the left — all right — okay — stop — Stop! Dammit man, stop! I said *stop*!" Such dialogue was sure to be interrupted by cries of "Get off the air! Get on interphone!"

Combat dialogue sounded like this:

"All One-Five stations follow me and watch closely. Give me some protection on my flank. Be prepared to lay smoke down on the road ahead of you .... Give us some fire support and use "H-E" on those buildings. Cover me while I go into those woods on the left .... Come down and give me some machine gun support .... Take a position in this field and make room for everybody ....

"We are fired on from the buildings ....

"That fire is coming from the left of the building ....

"Okay... Support with fire. Follow me down this road. I am coming down now. Love Seven is sort of bogged down so you back up and cover him ....

"Take off and help that tank down there...

"All stations One-Five pull in here with me, pull in that field ...."

Or this:

"The infantry is backing up — have run into some trouble — shelled by friendly artillery. Peter is trying to hold infantry from falling back..."

"Send up medics. Some men have been hurt ...."

"Medics on the way ...."

"X-ray Two-One is moving up to where Peter now is. We are doing okay and I think we can continue. Infantry is blowing hedgerow and have run into some bigger guns ..."

"Plenty of opposition... bazooka and machine gun mostly. Made contact with friendly troops on our left... What is your situation?"

"Infantry is falling back again. Most of them are half way back along the hedgerow ...."

"Prepare to move out ...."

"Move out!"

At the end of the normal fighting day, when positions were consolidated for the night, the calls became largely administrative again. There were locations to be given, officers to be checked and summoned to report to the Battalion C.O. Messages sounded liked this:

"Request Able and Jig co-ordinate a defensive position ...."

"Prepare to spend the night at position now held ...."

"Hello, Mike One-Zero — Hello Mike One-Zero — How do you hear me? How do you hear me? Over ...."

"Sugar One-Four has to have plugs changed. Sugar Seven needs hatch fixed ..."

"I have the supplies here. The reason for the delay was that the roads were blocked by enemy fire, but just as soon as possible will run the supplies down to you . . . ."

"That's swell!"

iii.

FIELD by field, hedge by hedge, the push continued through those 11 days from the 7th of July down the west bank of the Vire River. Service Company kept its trucks racing back and forth as far as the beach for supplies which it brought up to the tanks, frequently under fire. It was perfect sniping country and the Germans went in for sniping in a scale never seen before in warfare.

The 30th Division was proving itself again and again under fire. Sometimes a part of the front broke down in complete confusion under the onslaught of furious enemy counter-attacks.

Captain, then First Lieutenant, Robert S. Derby personally stopped one of these retreats when his slender figure appeared on the front lines. He wanted to find out what the situation was. It was bad — with doughboys running the wrong way. Captain Derby got many of them turned around — going the right way.

The casualties were high in this sort of warfare. It was a real blow to the Battalion when it learned of the death of one its most popular leaders, Captain Ned Seidel Elder of Charlie Company, killed in action on July 11th.

All companies felt the full brunt of the punishing advance. In one day (July 16th) the Germans threw in three successive counter-attacks with tanks. They were driven off. But the list of men killed, missing in action and wounded grew longer and longer. Baker Company had to drop back in reserve for awhile to completely reorganize — a difficult matter, as all platoon sergeants and leaders had become casualties. New crews had to be established.

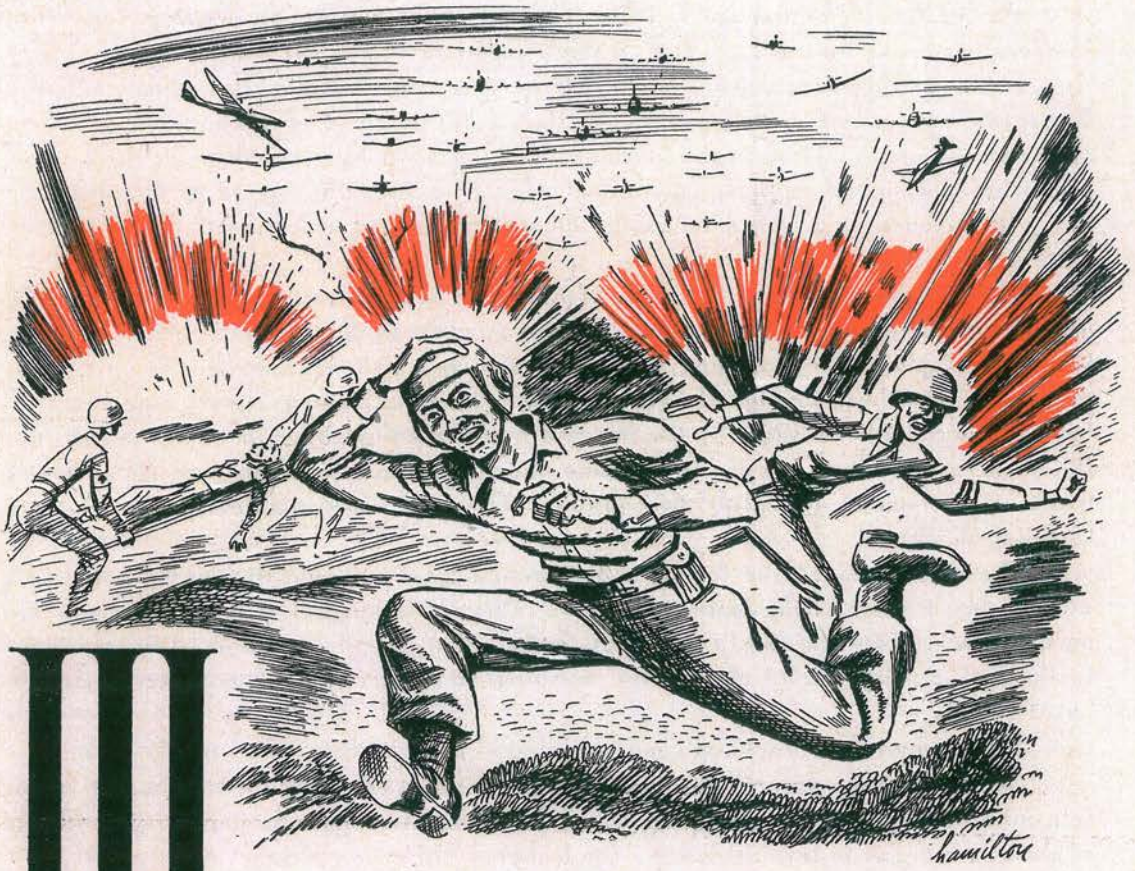
Some were lucky. Like Lieutenant Harold Beavers. A rifle cracked and a sniper's bullet snipped a jagged dent in the crown of his helmet. There was also a dent in the hull of his Sherman — a dent made not by a sniper's bullet, but the shell of an "88."

There were a lot of exhibits in the Battalion like that now.

While all this was going on, while the tanks and infantry struggled down through the hedgerows, the First American Army was being regrouped behind them. The tremendous flow of men and supplies were pouring across the beaches and were being assembled for the great punch that Allied leaders hoped would knock Germany out of France, perhaps out of the war.

Day by Day, the 743rd with the 30th Division passed French stone houses that marked in ruined ways places with names like St. Fromond, La Perrine, La Porte Verte, Haunts Vents, and Pont Hebert.

And while they worked and died to push the line deeper down the Normandy peninsula, behind them the First Army got ready to break out into France — after some very tired and very dirty tankers and doughboys were to make an opening in the German defenses near a place the world was to hear a lot about. The place was called St. Lo.




# III

## • • • THE EPIC CALLED ST LO

### i.

WHAT was left of the town of St. Lo fell to the 29th Division on July 19th. That was the beginning of an epic — the epic of a breakthrough that would be pre-climaxed by two great and tragic air strikes on July 23th and July 25th. The breakthrough was to be made just west of St. Lo. On the map it is marked Hebecrevon. But it was popularly to be called "The St. Lo Breakthrough."

The mission of breaking through, of cracking an opening for the might of the armored divisions to exploit, was given to the 30th Division and its attached armor — the 743rd Tank Battalion and the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

From July 17th to July 24th the line west of St. Lo was held stable. All units were alerted for an attack to begin at dawn on the 21st, but this was cancelled at the last minute. A heavy rain had fallen during the night. Visibility was bad for the planned air strike — the mightiest ever planned to support a ground attack.

On the 22nd, it rained again. Once again the attack was put off pending clear skies. The weather broke on the 23rd, and on the 24th the favorable conditions held.

In the rallying area in fields north of Hebecrevon, the Battalion had spread its tanks. The leaders and crews were thoroughly briefed, ready to go. The schedule called for the air strike to begin at 11.40 in the morning. The tanks would start ahead for the Line of Departure to jump-off with the infantry at noon. The bombing was to be by advancing phase lines, the ground forces moving up behind the pattern of bombs.

All was set.

Right on the minute, the first wave of American bombers came over. The men on the ground looked up into the bright glare. It was an enthralling spectacle. Hundreds upon hundreds of planes were coming in neat formations, their engines setting up a great drumming. Overhead thundered fighter bombers, medium bombers, heavy bombers.

A new sound was added to the steady drone — the deep blast of bombs falling into the enemy lines. The earth began to shake under the impact of these explosions. Great windrows of smoke began to float upward from the lines where the bombs were tumbling down.

The morale among the troops in the ground amid the recently cleared hedgerows was soaring as high as the planes up above. This was the attack that was to break the enemy's back. This was the attack that might even end the war.... This confident feeling was punctuated by the bombs crashing in unprecedented numbers upon the hated enemy.

It looked good. It sounded good.

"Prepare to move out!" came the signal, and tank engines added their roar to the full noise of battle. Some tanks moved forward. Infantry began to deploy. The wheels of the attack began to turn. Overhead the bombers still were coming.

Then the worst happened. The bombs began dropping short behind the phase lines. They were falling into friendly positions. The mighty explosions began killing Americans. Sudden horror spread through the ranks, and with the horror went fear and panic. The bombs kept dropping — short. And as far as the eye could see from the ground, new flights of planes were winging in, ready to drop destruction in the wrong place.

Air liaison officers on the ground frantically tried to contact their planes. But it was too late to correct the tragic error. They did manage to stop the last flights from dropping their bombs.

All was turmoil and confusion on the ground. Stretcher bearers and medics were there, but there weren't enough of them. Doctors did what they could. Ambulances backed into fields and went jouncing off to make trip after trip.

The attack was called off — postponed 24 hours. Overhead the bombers circled and winged back toward England through a serene blue sky.

Drivers killed the motors of their tanks. The drone of the last planes died away, and there was only the smoke of the bombs drifting back over the pastures to indicate they had been there. That and the ambulances with the blood-red crosses on white panels taking away the wounded. That and the dead who were yet to be buried.

The Battalion was shaken, but casualties miraculously had missed them this day. One man was injured by a bomb fragment, but he refused hospitalization and remained on duty.

ii.

THE remarkable rejuvination or "come back" abilities of the American forces in France was once again evidenced when, on the next day, July 25th, the breakthrough attack was ready to start off as before. Fresh troops replaced the casualties overnight. The plans were the same. The bombers were to come over in great strength, drop their tonnage of explosives before advancing phase lines, and the infantry with tanks would then lunge ahead to rip a hole in the German line through which waiting American armor could pour.

Once again the weather smiled favorably. All was in readiness. All was as the day before.

But this time there was an uneasiness in the hearts of the men waiting to attack, "sweating out" the time before H-hour doing trivial little things like brushing dust out of the sights of a tommy gun, or boiling a cup of coffee because it was something to do while waiting. This time there was the question haunting everyone: "Will they do it again?"

"They" meant the bombers — the bombers that had taken a wrong reading yesterday. It was a strange situation. Friend and foe waited on a July morning, both fearing the same thing — bombs from the sky.

At 11 o'clock in the morning, the Battalion moved out of its assembly area and moved up to the Line of Departure. Anxious eyes looked upward. Again precisely on time, the silvery shapes of the first planes were sighted. The pathfinders flew true to their target over Hebecrevon. Their bomb bays opened and down hurtled their loads. A moment later the earth was shaking, the air was disturbed as if by a sudden stormy gust, and there came the successive, pile-driving thumps of bombs exploding almost a mile away.

Men on the ground breathed just a bit easier. The first planes had hit their mark okay. Maybe this time . . .

Hopes went up as the second flight came over and the tons of destruction descended where they were supposed to on the enemy's lines.

But then . . .

"I was looking up, watching our medium bombers," communications sergeant John Ovind says of that time. "I was standing near one of our 'dozers — just in case. I thought a 'dozer would be a good thing to get under if anything went wrong. When the bombers were directly over our heads, I saw that their bomb bays were open and I thought 'Oh-oh! Here she comes!' Then the bombs came out. They looked like a handful of peanuts-dots coming straight down at you . . ."

That whole high noon was immediately filled with a sound more terrible than anything veterans from D-Day could remember. It was a rattling sound — not a swish or a scream the way bombs usually go, but a clacking like dry peas shaken in a wooden

basket. This rattling increased with a terrible rush. Then the bombs began hitting. And there wasn't any more rattling in the air. Just the indescribable bang and roar of explosive, like hundreds of volcanos blowing up in those fields at the end of the world.

Three entire flights of bombers dropped their missiles mistakenly on that area. For many a man, that chaos in the fields near Hebecrevon *was* the end of the world. Generals and privates alike scrambled for whatever meager protection they could find. And generals and privates alike died. It was one of these bombs that killed General Leslie McNair, chief of the ground forces.

In the nightmare deluge, there were acts of heroism . . .

Halftrack driver T/5 Arthur R. Thomas of the mortar platoon had his vehicle parked near a road. When the bombs hit, a number of doughboys in the nearby field were wounded. One of the doughs struck down was a stretcher bearer. Thomas saw the stretcher bearer go down. The driver crawled out from beneath his halftrack, ran across the ground while the bombs were still falling, and grabbed an end of the litter. For the next hour, the halftrack driver acted as a stretcher bearer and gave what first aid he could to the maimed, suffering men lying in the fields along the road. During much of this time, bomb fragments were hurtling all about him. He was not hit.

The mercy-promising helmets emblazoned with the Red Cross worn by Captain Carl F. Tarlowski and Captain Leland Evans, doctors attached to the Battalion, were prominent in moving about the painwracked fields. To make the hell worse, concentrations of German artillery began falling in the 120th Infantry Regiment's area along with the bombs. The holocaust was made complete when several trucks loaded with gasoline were struck and the high-test fuel blazed up as evil pyres. Amid this scene, doctors and aid men performed brilliant and unselfish and perhaps purely automatic deeds of bravery

Tech Sergeant Bernard T. Leviton saved the life of an infantryman by grabbing up a shovel and digging the injured dough out from being buried alive by bombs that still were falling. There were several instances of this sort — men being suddenly engulfed by an upheaval of the earth. Not all of them were dug out in time. And in some cases it was a merciful grave, concealing the final ugliness of war.

At the end of it, that second tragic noon hour, the last flights of bombers checked the error — and bombs were falling where they were supposed to strike. As many as were the bombs wrongly placed on American lines, many more rattled into German positions.

Earlier, when the awful realization came to the men that the the nightmare of the day before was to be repeated again, there was unrestrained panic amid the episodes of heroism. Some men simply dropped everything — rifles, personal gear — and ran blindly. Again there resulted almost complete confusion.

But the orders were: "Attack!"

Field officers, sergeants, staff officers, corporals, generals — all worked to reform the lines, to get a jump-off under way. Somehow the new line was put together.

In mid-afternoon, the ground forces of the 30th Division moved out over the bomb-chewed phase lines. They moved over their own dead.

"My men stumbled ahead — as if walking in their sleep," one infantry officer reported. "Their hands and feet lacked co-ordination. They had the look of punch-drunk fighters — and that's just what they were at that time."

For most of these men, this dazed condition after the drubbing by bombs continued until they were actually engaged with the enemy.

"Then they got mad — that cold anger that comes to you at the front — a hate that is directed toward the Jerry who got them into all this mess," said the infantry leader. "They got mad — and then they were all right."

iii.

TWO columns of 743rd tanks moved out with the attack toward devastated Hebecrevon. The head of one of the columns rolled only 200 yards before engineers sweeping the road up ahead found the road blocked with those deadly round disks — Teller mines. There was a halt while the engineers went to work at the risky business of clearing the mines. This done, the tanks rolled another 50 yards before a second group of mines was discovered. Another halt was made. Artillery and mortar fire began harassing the stalled column. A third successive group of mines had to be cleared from the road before the tanks could get moving again. They didn't move very far before the advance light tanks got into trouble.

Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Hibnes was commanding 37 mm cannon fire from his light tank on a stone house from which a machine gun crew had opened up. Hibnes had gotten off 4 rounds when his tank was struck by direct fire. The crew baled out just before the light tank was struck three more times and began to burn. The shells came from a Jerry tank which had been dug-in to make a road block.

The leading tanks backed up a little way to get out of the line of fire. The infantry withdrew with them. The terrain on the right of the road was found to be poor, so it was decided to try a cross-country route to the left to get around the road block. Lieutenant Donald H. Ticknor, took off in the leading tank. There was too much artillery falling for the infantry to move out, but the tanks tried it alone. Ticknor led out to the left — but not quite far enough. Direct fire caught the flanking platoon. Ticknor was killed. Two of the tanks were knocked out before the platoon found cover.

The tanks were then pulled back and sent out to the flank on the extreme left. Here they were able to even the score a bit, Able Company knocking out at least two Mark IV tanks.

"After our fire fights we saw a lot of Jerry tanks lying around there as we moved on through," one tank commander described it. "Some of them had apparently been bombed out by the air strike. It was hard to tell who had knocked out what. We reported four enemy tanks K. O'd."

The attack continued to Hebecrevon, moving ahead slowly without stopping when darkness closed down. The town was attacked at 10 o'clock in the evening — there was still twilight in the sky. It was taken after dark.

EARLY on the morning of July 26th, Able Company and two platoons of Dog Company's light tanks were ordered attached to the 117th Infantry Regiment. The tanks started out to find the infantry they were to work with. They moved up to Hebecrevon in column on the road. The first two lead tanks turned a corner in the town, getting by without mishap, but the next two were knocked out by enemy direct fire. Foot reconnaissance failed to disclose what type of weapon had fired on the corner or its location. After talking it over, the remaining tanks in line decided to charge the corner, taking it at the highest speed possible. The tanks charged past at intervals, but the enemy gun did not fire again.

The tanks reached the area where the infantry was supposed to be, but there was no sign of the doughboys. Those fields weren't a place for anybody to be. The advance of the lines had left many enemy artillery observers secreted in the hedgerows, able to spot the German shells and correct the fire. They were also able to call for fire when they sighted any troops or vehicles.

"One of the hottest spots I've seen," Captain Korrison said of that field. In it, five tanks were disabled — temporarily knocked out — with some casualties among the crews. The tanks pulled back from that zone of artillery concentration to re-organize.

Another route was tried, but mines blew the tracks off two of the light tanks. Captain Ernest Aas, of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, dismounted from his tank to look about on foot for the missing 117th Infantry. As he was poking about the hedgerows, he came face to face with a German infantryman. The German came up with his gun, but Captain Aas was quicker with his pistol. Going on past the dead infantryman, the officer discovered the position of an enemy anti-tank gun camouflaged in the hedgerows. Cautiously he worked his way back to his tank, directed it to just the spot he wanted, pointed out just where he wanted his gunner to fire, and destroyed the anti-tank gun.

By mid-afternoon, the tankers became convinced that the 117th Infantry was not in that rendezvous area and pulled back. The incessant shelling was still going on. It was later learned that the infantry also had been caught in this shelling and had been pinned down near the Vire River about 1,500 yards from the planned rendezvous.

The bivouac area near Hebecrevon was no cooler. The artillery storm continued to rage.

It did not seem like the battle was getting any place in that welter of confusion, with the attack beginning under the ill-starred bombing, with the roads heavily mined, with direct fire weapons hidden in the hedgerows, with the enemy shells falling constantly, and with the infantry disorganized. It did not seem that anybody was getting anywhere.

But that was the epic of St. Lo.

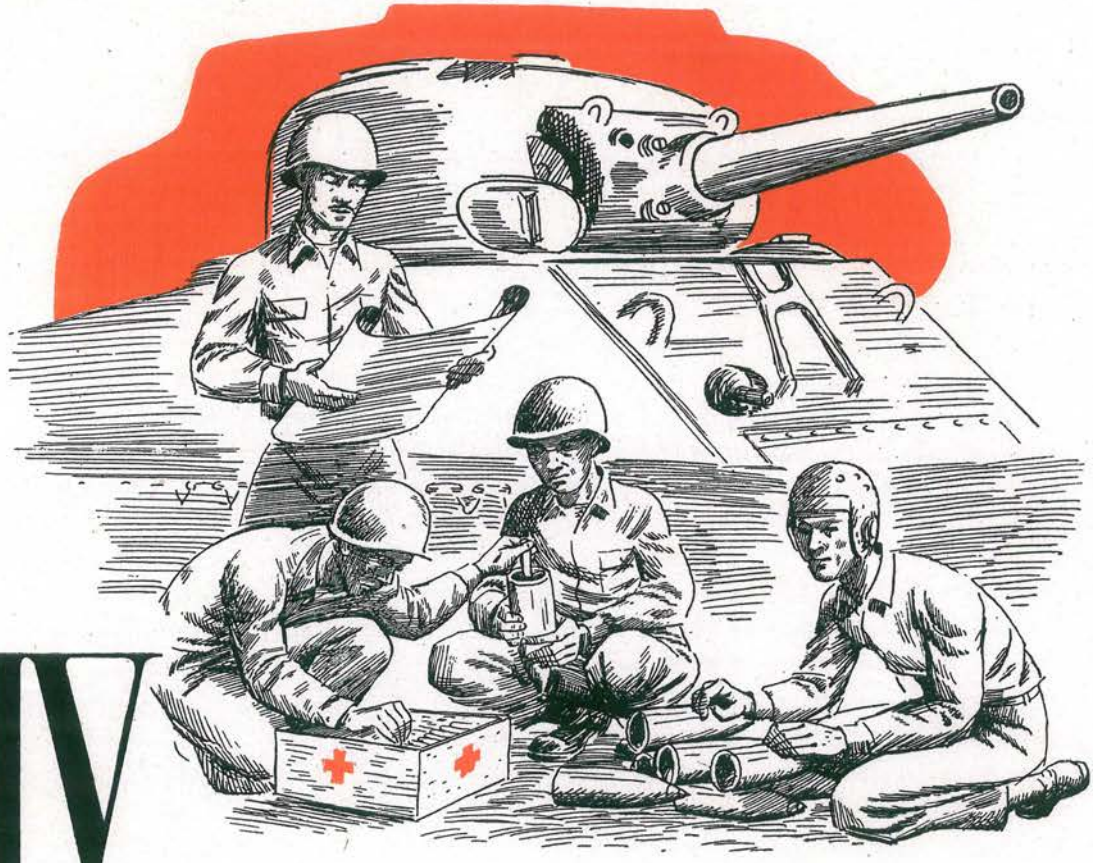
For all that night the men could hear the deep rumble of the tanks of the 2nd Armored Division rolling through Hebecrevon to the south, into France.

Stumbling through hedgerows, fighting blindly, doggedly doing a job, the 30th Division with *Verify* tanks had made the opening for the waiting 2nd Armored tanks

during the long, shell-blasted day of July 26th. All night the armored division's tanks pounded through — and all the next day.

"Tanks Break Through at St. Lo!" Newspaper readers scanned the headlines back home. "American Armor Smashes Out of Normandy!"

Through the night of July 26th, the 743rd Tank Battalion sat waiting in the fields. Men slept a little between a day's action and orders that would send them out again for more.



# IV . . . . . THE LONG, HARD DAYS

i.

THOSE summer days in France gave an almost unceasing length to battles, for night lasted but briefly. The first light of morning began stealing into the sky at about 4 o'clock. Nearly one hour before midnight, dusk faded to darkness. It was not unusual for a tank platoon to be working from pre-dawn to darkness, sometimes after darkness — not just for one day, but days on end.

Driven from the skies by day, the German Luftwaffe appeared in strength only at night. Shielded by blackness, it had only about five hours in which to work. It made the most of those hours as Service Company found out at 2 in the morning, July 28th, when enemy bombs wounded nine men, made so much scrap of a 10-ton wrecker, four supply trucks, a halftrack and a 1-ton trailer.

The German artillery could aways be counted upon to be a nuisance during those five hours of darkness, harassing bivouac areas with uncomfortable accuracy.

These were the long, hard days. And the short, uneasy nights . . . .

ii.

THE monstrous blow near St. Lo cracked the highly organized defense of the enemy. On July 27th, the 2nd Armored Division rolled down to cut the east-west highway from St. Lo to Coutances. But the enemy defense was only cracked, not yet destroyed. For this was still hedgerow country. Somebody had to mop up the fields and woods where strong groups of enemy still held out, still had tenuous escape routes by secondary roads, still had guns and tanks and plenty of fighting spirit. The mop-up area for the Battalion was the west bank of the Vire River. But the generals also wanted Tessy, a very important road junction town, sizeable enough for a railway station, with the full name of Tessy-sur-Vire. It was directly on the Vire River, at its west bank, and controlled a number of roads the Germans needed to maintain supply routes or possible routes of escape.

The drive toward Tessy began on July 28th. "You can't paint the fighting around Tessy any worse than it was," a tank officer declares. This was said not only because that officer lost some of his best men just north of Tessy in fields about Le Mesnil Opac and Troisgots, but because the Germans were fighting to hold at all costs.

While the Germans could slow the American drive, they couldn't stop it. Sometimes it was sheer spirit that kept the American attack going.

Like the time a bazooka got Staff Sergeant Oski's tank. His was one of the Shermans on line waiting in a hedgerow after smashing through another field south of Le Mesnil Opac. The tanks had gotten ahead of their infantry and were waiting for the doughs to catch up. That was when the bazooka hit.

Tank commander Oski, of Mavie, Minnesota, was knocked unconscious. His gunner, Corporal James C. West, of Adairsville, Georgia, and the rest of his crew thought the tank was burning. They pulled Oski from the tank and crawled with him 100 yards back to take cover in another hedgerow. They started through a field. In the center of this field, a German machine gun opened up on them. A Charlie Company tank spotted the machine gun and silenced it. By this time, Oski had regained his senses.

The cannoneer was wounded in the face, head and arms. He was bleeding profusely and could not go on. Oski and West pulled the wounded man to the cover of the hedgerow. From there, the crew got the cannoneer to an aid station. At the aid station, they learned that their tank had not burned after all.

Oski and the three remaining members of his crew went back after their tank, ducking artillery shells on the way. Twice concentrations almost got them in a shallow ditch beside the road. Finally they reached the hedgerow 100 yards behind their vehicle. The company commander met the crew and told them that the company had pulled back — that their tank was now out in "no man's land." Oski said that he thought he could get to it.

"It's up to you, Sergeant," said the company commander.

Occasional artillery was coming in as Oski, his gunner, driver, and assistant driver moved down the hedgerow to an opening behind the tank. But now the German artillery

stepped up its work and barrages, rather than individual shells, began exploding in the area. One of the crew moaned. It was the assistant driver. A shell fragment had struck his arm, nearly severing it at the elbow. The others gave him first aid, stopped the bleeding, and moved him to a spot where the medics were called.

The artillery came in steadily for two hours, then lifted. When the lull finally came, Oski, his gunner and driver, tried it again, crawling through the concealment of the hedgerow until they were able to reach a point about 50 yards from their tank. They had open field between them and the Sherman. German troops were known to be less than 200 yards away.

The crew made a run for it. Oski scrambled into the driver's seat. The other two manned the guns. Oski got the tank started and under way. He drove it back to his company, ready to fight on.

iii.

"BATTLE is never a maelstrom, but a series of whirlpools and eddies," a combat man once wrote. "It starts with an incident somewhere along the line and is carried on in other incidents. It is never true that all men of an outfit fight at one time. And even in a sustained engagement hours long, a number will not be in the fighting at all . . ."

But during those days, there was no man in the Battalion for removed from the fighting. All elements back to and including the rear administrative echelon were within artillery range of Jerry guns. Cooks and clerks worked next to foxholes with their carbines within easy reach. Supply trains of Service Company went forward under heavy artillery fire, often ran into snipers and machine gun fire. The halftracks of the mortar platoon went into firing positions that seemed immediately to attract the attention of German counter-battery. Captain Derby, the mortar platoon officer, was wounded in one of the enemy barrages. His place was filled all through the Tessy fighting by Staff Sergeant Peter Jula, of Chisholm, Minnesota, who kept his mortars delivering effective blows into the German lines. The platoon of assault gun tanks kept up a steady rate of 105 mm shells lobbing into German positions, firing with Division artillery. And on the line, every tank that could move was a part of the action.

By the 31st of July, the line had worked its way down to the outskirts of Tessy. The preceding day, Able Company had six tanks knocked out of action and was forced back in reserve. Baker, Charlie and Dog Companies carried on, taking heights about Tessy, destroying machine gun nests and several German tanks. Lt Hansen, from Charlie Company, led an infantry bazooka team into a village, knocked out two Mark IV tanks and then called back for and directed artillery fire that made so much wreckage of an enemy 105 mm self-propelled gun mounted on a tank chassis. Earlier, Lieutenant Hansen's company had lost two Shermans to direct fire. The crew of one got out safely. The other tank exploded and the entire crew was marked "Missing in Action."

As the last hours of July ebbed away, the Battalion received word that it was to have a break — that it was to pull back to St. Romphaire for maintenance and rest.

It was hard to believe. But it was so. As it had worked out, the enemy had been beaten in his stand before Tessy. His resistance collapsed. He had tried to make his stand at Le Mesnil Opac and at Troisgots — and failed. American infantry was able to move without tanks into the important road center of Tessy.

So, that night, the Battalion assembled in rest bivouac midway between Hebecrevon and Tessy. During that one month, from the 1st to the 31st, it had lost 38 tanks destroyed in combat out of a full strength of 70. It officially reported 15 enemy tanks knocked out — there were probably more not claimed. Killed in action had been two officers, 14 enlisted men. Two officers and 17 enlisted men were missing in action. Hospitalized for wounds were 9 officers and 89 enlisted men — a total of 133 casualties.

These were long, hard days . . .

iv.

REST bivouac lasted through the first five days of August. During this time the Battalion saw its second movie (the first had been shown in a factory building near Isigny — Mickey Rooney in "Blonde Trouble"), received its first pay when Warrant Officer Leon Russell showed up with French francs, and had coffee and doughnuts from a visiting Red Cross clubmobile. There was also a long-to-be-remembered speech by the 30th Division's Major General L. S. Hobbs.

On the morning of August 6th, the Battalion was on the move once more. It was a tactical road march of about 40 miles south to a village named Le Mesnil-Ramfray. The fields of this bivouac area were some four miles west of a larger place called Mortain . . . .

During the march, eight enemy aircraft livened things up by attacking the rear of the column, firing rockets. The rockets missed.

Baker Company joined the 120th Infantry Regiment to make an 18-mile road sweep through enemy territory to Barenton, southeast of Mortain. Barenton was supposed to be in friendly hands. But the hands that held it on August 6th were clearly unfriendly. The Germans showed extreme and active resentment toward any approach into Barenton.

There was the usual artillery activity. Otherwise there was little indication that all this was the calm before the storm. And that is what it was. For the German High Command had readied an all-out counter-attack. It was set to crash into the 30th Division the next morning, August 7th.

v.

WHEN veterans of the Battalion review the rough spots in the fighting through northern France, they speak of D-Day, the bombings near St. Lo, the Vire and the hedgerows, the fighting around Tessy, and — Mortain. They speak of Mortain with a special significance,

stressing the name "Mortain" as a civilian speaks of the word "morgue." For it was at Mortain, a place of rugged hills and woods, that von Rundstedt hurled his great bid to split the First and Third American armies. The 30th Division stood directly in the main path of von Rundstedt's plans. It took the full force of the German blows.

Von Rundstedt meant the punch to be a haymaker, to knock the 30th out cold, overwhelm its prostrate troops, then sweep swiftly west across the road network at the base of the Normandy peninsula in blitz style to Avranches at the coast. This maneuver, if successful, would cut cut off General Patton's Third Army from the First Army and the beachhead supply bases. He threw the punch with the best the German army had — the Adolph Hitler 1st SS Panzer Division — tanks, infantry and mobile guns.

The attack began on August 7th, coming in the morning out of a vicious barrage of mortar nebelwerfer and artillery preparation. The Nazi tank-infantry spearhead hurtled straight at Mortain. Just to the town's north was the village of St. Barthelemy. This rural little grouping of French homes and farms happened to stand on a junction to the main road which could carry the Germans west. Just north of St. Barthelemy again was dominating Hill 314. On both these points the fury of the attack concentrated.

The 1st Battalion of the 117th Infantry bore the first shock of the attack at St. Barthelemy. Its front-line defense positions were overrun. Clerks, messengers and truck drivers went into action to fill gaps in the line. The real nature of the German punch became known. As riflemen fought hand to hand with enemy infantry, as bazooka teams and antitank gun platoons repelled columns of enemy tanks, as command posts were overrun and command groups fought their way out again, the whole division was alerted and set itself for the sort of fighting that was already going on at St. Barthelemy.

This was the Battle of Mortain. It was to last through six days.

The 743rd Tank Battalion moved its mortar, assault gun and reconnaissance platoons on the morning of August 7th out of the Ramfray fields to cover all road junctions within a radius of 2,500 yards leading west from Mortain. They were guarding the Division's right flank. All men, alerted for the counter-attack, helped set up road blocks everywhere. Bazookas were made ready for instant use. The tanks took up defensive positions, prepared to meet the onslaught of Mark IVs and Vs that von Rundstedt had committed by the hundreds.

Charlie Company moved into position on the Division's left flank in the hills three miles northwest of Mortain.

At the close of the first day's attack, no one was too sure just what the situation was — except that it was not good. The German armored punch penetrated the Mortain defenses, overran positions, threatened a general breakthrough. Hill 314, held by the 120th Infantry's 2nd Battalion, was completely surrounded. But nobody was giving up. The Germans pounded at the road blocks that were holding up their armor. Division artillery, augmented by the 743rd's assault guns and its mortars, pounded right back. There were casualties at the road blocks, but guns still fired, ammo still got up to them, and the panzers did not get by.

HILL 314 was what military commanders call a "vital terrain feature." It reared its wooded height just north of Mortain and overlooked all the main roads — the roads the Germans had to have for the success of their counter-attack. When the enemy began its smash at Mortain, orders directed the 120th Infantry's 2nd Battalion to hold Hill 314 at all costs. It did. The story of Hill 314 is but one part of the Battle of Mortain, but the heroic stand made on that height of ground mirrors the sort of gritty action that went on during those six August days and nights.

At the end of the first day's assault, Hill 314 was isolated — cut off completely from supplies. By the third day of the attack, with Hill 314 still cut off, still besieged, and still held, frontline war correspondents began to cable back stories about the "Lost Battalion." The 2nd Battalion was far from lost. Everybody knew where it was on its fortress height. The problem was to get food and supplies to it. The doctors and medics expecially needed medical supplies. Casualties were heavy on Hill 314. As time went by, the need for morphine, sulpha drugs, and other mercy medicine grew critical. Attempts were made to fly in supplies by airplane, dropping bundles over the lines. Most of it fell into enemy territory.

The assault gun platoon had been doing its major share in hurling death at the enemy. Now one of its guns was called on to perform a mission of mercy. It was to attempt to fire the desperately needed medical supplies to the isolated troops.

"The subject of the encircled 2nd Infantry Battalion of the 120th Regiment was one much discussed and in our minds right then," said Lieutenant (later Captain) George W. Dieser, commanding officer of the assault gun platoon at that time. "We were working as a six-gun battery with the 230th Field Artillery who were supporting the surrounded battalion. We watched the cargo planes as they attemped to drop supplies. Every night we laid our protective fires on all sides — and by day we fired constantly as we were called. This was a 24-hour business. We slept and relieved each other when we could."

On the evening of the 10th of August, the platoon received a strange order: to fill three smoke shells with a half pound of sand and stand by for special ammunition for a mission. The sand was weighed out against a package of sugar from a 10-in-One ration box. The assault gun platoon reported ready.

A peep arrived at the gun position carrying six shells filled with medical supplies. At ten minutes past ten o'clock, Sergeant Heatherton received the fire command and the first sand-filled shell was sent on its way. The correction was made with the firing of a second sand-filled shell, then the shooting of the "mercy" shells filled with medicine began. Three medical filled shells were sent to the men on Hill 314 before an adjustment was made on range and a second group sent on the way.

Darkness was closing in fast, for the firing was at five minute intervals to enable the dougboys to spot the shells. At 10:40, the assault guns went back to firing the lethal high-explosive shells at the enemy.

On the 11th, six more medical shells were placed on Hill 314. An encouraging report came back. Five of the six shells recovered — all supplies okay with the exception of the morphine, which had burst.

The guns then got busy with their different sort of medicine for German tanks and guns until in mid-afternoon when another hurry-up job came along — this one three specially packed shells filled with morphine. The morphine was crucially needed on Hill 314. All three of the shells were recovered.

"We felt we had the best guns and the best crews on the front," was the way Lieutenant Dieser put it at that time.

That night the pressing need for medical supplies turned the assault guns to more mercy work. Seven medical rounds were sent on the way, and then the assault guns returned to their routine job — slamming death at the enemy.

A total of 22 medical shells were fired during the special missions. An estimated 75 per cent. of the medical shells were recovered by the infantry. The tank-mounted 105 mm howitzer was chosen by the S-3 of the 230th Field Artillery Battalion for the mercy missions because of its stability, extreme accuracy, and the known work of the gun crews during past performances.

Hill 314 refused to surrender. The Germans tried to annihilate the surrounded position, threw in great concentrations of artillery followed by strong tank charges. They were driven back. They tried to infiltrate at night. Again they were driven back.

On the sixth day, the 12th of August, von Rundstedt acknowledged defeat in northern France. General Patton's Third Army had swung wide around the fierce Mortain fighting, then began to close in a giant pincers movement toward Argentan to near a link up with the British and Canadians pushing down from Caumont and Caen. Thus was formed the "Falaise Pocket" — a trap of some 300 square miles in which the best part of the German Seventh Army was trapped. The German High Command ordered a general retreat. Hill 314 still stood invincible overlooking Mortain.

Now there was time to bury the dead.

vii.

EVERY man had a part in the Mortain corridor. It was a time of fierce action from all quarters. A hundred things an hour happened as the attack swirled about — but the Germans never got loose, never made their dash across the base of the Normandy peninsula.

New battle stories were added to the Battalion's growing record. There was the time, on August 8th, that friendly planes again bombed the tanks.

One platoon of Charlie Company was making its way north from village of Juvigny near Mortain when the planes, Typhoons, flew over. The tanks were trying to outflank the enemy in that area when the Typhoons dived in, bombed and straffed. Two of the tanks caught fire.

At the same time, artillery from friendly guns began to pound into the nearby orchard. "We were caught between two fires," said Corporal Robert P. Leen, of the Bronx, New York, "and it wasn't a very good feeling, knowing it was your own side shooting at you."

Lieutenant Frederick F. Fleming, Baker Company's commander, went on foot reconnaissance with a German speaking GI into a sadly beaten up village to ask the surrounded Germans to surrender. They barely got back with their lives as they were chased out of the place with machine guns rattling at them, spraying the dirt to all sides. Both Fleming and the infantry soldier received cuts from bullets glancing off the ground. But before leaving town in a hurry, Fleming noted the position of two German machine gun emplacements and an anti-tank gun. With the pin-point co-ordinates he was able to furnish, the mortar platoon had a ready-to-order mission. It dropped 81 mm high explosives precisely where they would do the most good.

Sergeant gunner Waldo P. Wennerberg, of Kerkhoven, Minnesota, happened to be around when a volunteer was needed to go forward into an open field where a disabled tank was sitting, abandoned, with the enemy approaching. The job was to get to the tank, climb into it, and disable the guns so that they could not be used if captured by the Germans.

Wennerberg did the job. He crawled across 40 hell-fire yards of the open field from a hedgerow, got into the tank, removed mechanisms from each gun to render them useless, and got back safely to his own lines with the various parts of the guns bulging in his pockets.

Through the six days, there were more tanks added to the Battalion's list of "Tanks Lost." Direct fire accounted for several. Many were only temporarily knocked out by mines There was one dead loss in the mistaken indentity bombing. But the one thing that those who fought through Mortain will never forget is the scream and wail and crash of artillery — enemy and friendly — that seemingly never stopped.

"You'd lie in your hole at night," said one Headquarters man, "with your gun handy, and you'd listen to the artillery going both ways — going by a few feet right over you, it seemed. You'd lie there and wonder if two shells would crash into each other, and what would happen to you if they did . . . By day, it was as bad, but you'd be usually too busy doing something to take much notice, except of the close ones. It was worse at night when you saw the tops of trees disappear over by the next field . . ."

viii.

ON the 12th of August, Baker Company went into Mortain with only sniper fire to meet it. The infantry quickly cleaned out Mortain, and the battle was over. Jerry was on the run. He was in reverse — thoughts of splitting the Allies knocked out of his head. Lieutenant Folkestad commanded a platoon of Shermans in a fast march southeast and east out of Mortain to see what was out in front. The platoon got all the way to Domfront without meeting any important resistance. Jerry was definitely on the run.

In southern France, the Allies were making a new landing along the Riviera just when the Germans were finding the situation in western France most serious. The Battalion didn't hear about the new invasion until two days later when the message center crew picked it up on their CW radio receiver.

This news was heard on the 17th, the day the Battalion began a two-day respite in a "rest" bivouac north of Domfront. Here the Battalion was presented with the Presidential Citation Ribbons (for the assault on D-Day) in a brief but impressive ceremony. Lt. Col. Duncan, as Battalion Commander, turned the gold-framed blue ribbons over to his men.

Again the Red Cross clubmobile made a visit with its coffee and doughnuts — with an American girl's smile to go with them. And there was an ice-cold stream running through the area. It was good to clean off the battle dirt in the chill fresh water.

There wasn't any artillery for a change. A man could almost forget the war . . .

# PART THREE

# PURSUIT

# I . . . . . FULL SPEED AHEAD

i.

THERE wasn't any doubt about it now. The enemy had broken. He was pulling out as fast as he could go. Mortain alone cost him 135 tanks, 195 armored vehicles. Caught between four Allied armies who had out-fought and then out-maneuvered him, his own 7th army was wrecked, a sorry remains — most of it dead or wounded or in Allied prisoner of war enclosures. Some remnants and high priority troops did manage to disengage in time to escape the Falaise trap. Elsewhere in northern France, except at the Channel ports (for which he would fight) the enemy everywhere was pulling out.

For all Allied forces, the war now became a time of vigorous pursuit. It was wide-open warfare where troops climbed into trucks, peeps, halftracks — anything that could hold them — and moved through clouds of white dust chasing after the enemy to try to beat him to the next line of defense. Not all troops rode, as many infantrymen will be quick to say. Many of the infantry walked. But most climbed onto the historic military

caravans in some way. Many divisions acted largely on their own in the sudden chase east. The enemy was running. And the Allies pounded on his heels.

For *Verify*, it was a complete change of pace after the grim hedgerows, this rolling wide open down French roads to the almost frantic plaudits of deliriously happy, holiday-spirited natives at every village — gabbling, shouting, laughing, crying natives who invariably had flowers, kisses, wine for the wonderful, wonderful *Américains* . . .

"Hell!" said a peep driver as it looked as if *Verify* wouldn't stop before Paris. "This is the way to fight a war!"

ii.

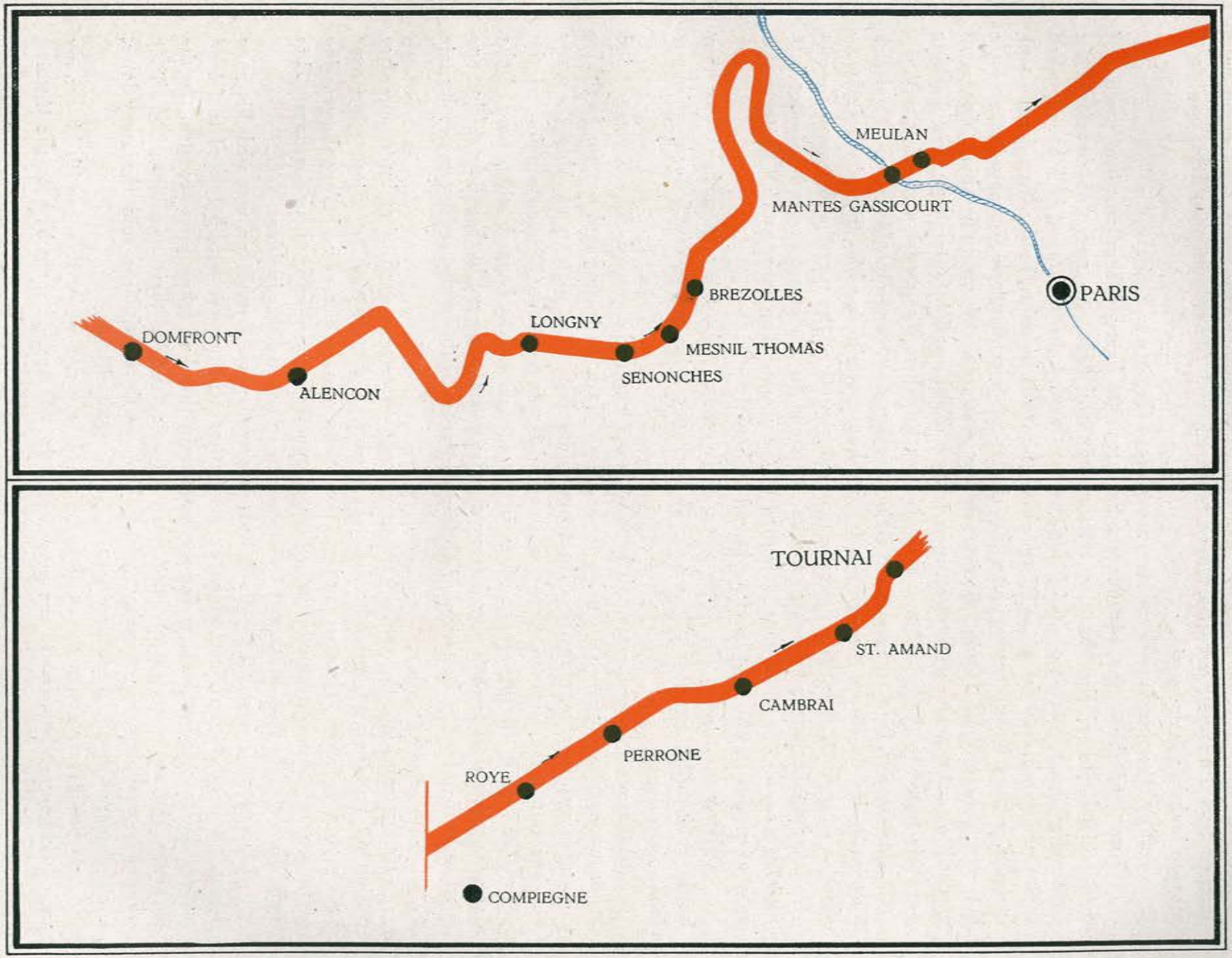
ON August 19th, Lieutenant Colonel Duncan led a quartering party out of Domfront to look for new areas 123 miles east. That day Third Army tanks were already nosing about the suburbs of Paris. Americans and a Polish division of the Canadian First Army linked up at Argentan — dooming any Germans who were left in the Falaise pocket. A much greater pocket was being made out of the whole of France. For in southern France, 10,000 Nazis, including two generals, were captured as the Allies advanced north and the Vichy government fled for Germany . . .

That night, at 10 o'clock, the Battalion began to move. It was on the road all night, racing through dark, shuttered French towns. At daylight, it was still on the move, and by daylight the pleasures of "rat racing" through friendly territory was discovered. The French citizens who wakened to find themselves liberated, now were turning out in joyous droves to greet every truck, tank, peep or halftrack and the dirty-faced, unshaven, grinning soldiers.

"There was a guy in one town," a tank driver recalled, "who kept running like crazy beside my tank. He had one of those long bottles of wine in his hands, and he kept trying to jump up on the tank with it. Every time he jumped I was sure he would be caught in the tracks and be mashed to a pulp. He wasn't though. Guess he had a charmed life. The wine turned out to be cider . . ."

A truck, held up and behind the convoy, was trying to catch up with the column. Between towns it would hit top speed. At the approach to every town or excuse for a town the driver never failed to be confronted with a throng — usually the whole population of a small village — leaping and waving in the road. In the face of this reception committee, the truck would be forced to slow down to a snail's pace. All through the length of the town or settlement, the driver would roll his truck cautiously. Little children and dogs somehow miraculously seemed to scamper unharmed beneath the vehicle. Then, with the village cleared, the driver slammed his foot down on the gas, the truck picked up speed, and down the open road it pounded recklessly — until the next village.

Often the long column ground to a halt — for no clear reason to those behind the advance vehicles. Whenever there was a stop, the convoy lined up pulled over to the side of the road. Men would jump out and tretch their cramped legs. Engines were


MEULAN
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SENONCHES
DOMFRONT
ALENCON
TOURNAI
ST. AMAND
CAMBRAI
PERRONE
ROYE
COMPIEGNE

switched off to save gas. Then the head of the column would come alive again, men jumped back into their vehicles, engines roared, and the column would be one great moving highway snake again.

And so it went across France — two-thirds of the way to Paris.

Here and there, the advance combat elements bumped headlong into groups of disorganized enemy who chose to turn at bay and fight. In such fluid warfare, the enemy was apt to turn up almost anywhere. Most of the resistance had been pushed into a position before the Seine River where the Nazis hoped to hold. The advance tank companies thus began cutting into the clutter of miscellaneous Germans in a sector between Evereux and Dreux. Resistance was scattered and unpredictable. Movement was still on a big scale, with wide open tactics. Tanks and infantry were now working smoothly together. Each had mutual praise for the other. Teamwork was going well.

Near Droisy, Nazi treachery sent Baker Company's commander, Lieutenant Frederick Fleming to his death. A German ran from a house waving a white flag of surrender as Fleming's Sherman drew up. Fleming exposed himself in the turret and was in the act of accepting the surrender when another rifleman in the house cracked a bullet into Fleming's head. The lieutenant later died of the wound. The house and all its occupants were destroyed on the spot by the angered tankers.

Driving up toward the large town of Evereux, resistance stiffened. A two-hour battle held things up near the village of Brezolles, with a bag of 25 Jerry prisoners taken there.

In that area, three German airfields were overrun and captured. The Germans tried an unsuccessful counter-attack using tanks. Two Mark Vs turned and ran for healthier country when the Shermans brought them under fire. One platoon of Able Company knocked out three German trucks, a small Volkswagen — the German version of the peep — and took 40 prisoners. More important game was bagged when one of the dangerous dual-purpose 88's was destroyed. The assault guns got in their licks during one mission by firing on a battalion of German infantry with, as the artilleryman's laconic phrase goes, "good effect."

By August 24th, the tanks were once again in critical need of maintenance after rolling off hundreds of miles beneath their tracks — fast, punishing miles racing over hard macadam roads. Time was at last taken as an opportunity came before the crossing of the Seine. Supply trains located their companies after chasing them for days. That night the Battalion lost another of its officers in an unusual war incident.

Lieutenant George Middendorf, Battalion transportation officer, was with his peep driver, Corporal James Near, alone on roads that neither were sure belonged to friend or foe. They were out looking for a supply train that had taken a wrong turn. In the darkness, they were not at all sure themselves just where their own lines lay. They stopped a command car coming toward them, as Corporal Near told the story later, and discovered they had captured a carful of German officers.

Corporal Near got in the command car. He covered the occupants with his tommy gun. Middendorf followed in the peep while the officers led them back to the German

command post, from which the Nazis had just left. The place appeared deserted. The officers were made to dismount and were herded into a courtyard. Middendorf then told Near to see if he could find out where they were and if any of their troops were nearby. What happened while Near was away on reconnaissance is a mystery. A party of Germans may have waited for a lone opportunity. A German or Germans may have waited for a sniper's opportunity in the apparently vacated house. For when Corporal Near returned, Lieutenant Middendorf was dead. He had been shot through the back by a German small arms weapon. The Germans were gone.

August 25th was the day that Paris was liberated. The Battalion pushed closer to the west bank of the Seine but encountered no fighting. On the 27th, Charlie Company crossed the Seine at Mantes, northwest of Paris, moving across at 4 in the afternoon with the 117th Infantry. The rest of the Battalion followed at later intervals. The bridge at Mantes had been thrown across the Seine by French rivermen who had pulled up their boats and barges on line as pontoons for the bridging.

As they crossed the Seine, many in the Battalion thought they were headed for the Big City, Gay Paree itself. The tanks were within 15 miles of the French capital. The men could see the Eiffel Tower.

But instead of wine, women and song, the 743rd tankers found they had previous engagements with Tiger tanks and Nazi anti-tank guns. Baker Company bumped into some tough resistance in a pocket at the east bank of the Seine. Four of its tanks were lost to direct fire. It remained very warm indeed in the Seine area northwest of Paris as the "rat race" became a real fight around such places as Gaillon, La Chartres, Ballincourt, Meulan. In fire fights, *Verify* knocked out a Tiger tank (Sergeant Oski's 75 mm gun nailed the Nazi heavyweight), 11 anti-tank guns, one large field piece, numerous machine gun nests, two halftracks, and more than a thousand Wehrmacht. The enemy proved himself extremely sensitive northwest of Paris as he made numerous bids to stop the Allied advance from a river line he had intended to defend. He had concentrated plenty of his artillery for this purpose, and it was extremely active in the little time its gunners had to man their positions.

On September 1st, the German's hand again ran out. Resistance suddenly crumbled away and the "rat race" was on once again — this time for *Verify* a move northeast toward Belgium.


# II . . . HELLO BELGIUM - GOODBYE FRANCE

i.

ON the first day of September, 1944, "Task Force Harrison" started out due northeast from the outskirts of Paris — a scramble of vehicles from tanks to peeps, was Task Force Harrison, with the mechanized 125th Cavalry as a screen and the 743rd Tank Battalion up front to spearhead. Just under 90 miles were made the first day and night. The march for *Verify* began at 1 in the afternoon. Orders were to keep moving as long as the gas held out.

And again it was holiday warfare.

There was a little shooting — but no casualties. The 2nd Platoon of Dog Company ran into some enemy at Cambrai. The platoon knocked out four Jerry halftracks, four 40 mm anti-aircraft guns on trucks, four supply vans — and one motorcycle.

South of Perrone, Major Benjamin and Captain Adkins in a command car were stopped by arm-banded FFI patriots who wanted some assistance in clearing out some

weren't there can only try to conceive of what it would be like to be a few hundreds Germans holed up in a old fort. Two *Verify* tanks were completing a bit of roadside maintenance nearby, so the pair were given the mission, moved over to the fort, cracked several rounds of high explosive shells into the ancient fortress, sprayed the historic stones with machine gun lead — adding modern battle-scars to the siege walls — and otherwise discouraged the tenants from holding the lease any longer. The FFI patriots profusely thanked the *Américains* and said they would take over from there. The *Américains* rolled an.

ii.

QUITE often as not, a peep was leading "Task Force Harrison." Sometimes the Cavalry was out in front of the peep and then again nobody was too sure that it *was* out ahead. That it wasn't became a certainty when the peep began entering towns where the French were still in hiding, still afraid that the vehicle contained Germans — and incredulous when it turned out to be American.

In the spearheading peep was Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, 743rd's commander, Corporal Frank Gartner, a native Estonian who spoke French and German fluently, and Corporal George Canfield, the driver.

"We began to sweat," said George. "There wasn't anybody around but us sitting in that peep, riding along, liable to run into anything."

It was not far from Cambrai and the peep was out ahead to reconnoiter for the right road. A little town appeared ahead. There was no glad reception committee out with apples and flowers. This was considered a sure warning to proceed with caution. Canfield stopped the peep at a crossroads outside the village. A lone civilian was passing. The Colonel asked Gartner to find out from the civilian if there were any Germans around.

"*Venez ici,*" called Gartner, but the civilian obviously didn't want to "come here." Gartner got out of the peep and asked the native for road directions. The native, a close-mouthed character who gave the impression it would take a torturer's tongs to make him talk, shook his head.

"We're Americans," Gartner told him.

It took a second or two for that to sink in, but then the Frenchman suddenly found his tongue.

"*Américain!*" he shouted, and he began to stream out torrents of excited French, ending with a voluble invitation to come immediately to his house for something to eat and drink.

He was told the Americans had work to do. And how about the Germans?

Yes, the Frenchman said, there were Germans. He thought they were just at the outskirts of the town. Yes, he thought you might be able to see them if you walked on ahead a bit and looked through the glasses.

Gartner and Canfield went up ahead on foot for a look around with the Colonel's field glasses. Canfield said he saw bicyclists when he looked. He was ready to bet three month's pay they were German.

Meanwhile civilians had sprung up out of the ground to swarm all over the peep. Gartner and Canfield had a hard time convincing themselves the war hadn't gone completely berserk as they got back to the peep where happy people danced about while Germans stood at rifle-distance away — or rode around on bicycles.

As if to add another mad note to an already crazy situation, a young, handsome French youth in the tidy clothes of a university student came along and announced that he was a member of the FFI and could lead them to a German ammunition dump at the edge of the town.

The Colonel told Gartner to see what *that* was all about.

The dump was there, all right. The FFI youth had led the way to 500 crates of 88 mm and 57 mm anti-tank ammo. On top of the dump was 20 pounds of TNT with blasting cap and time fuse all set to go. Gartner removed the blasting cap and time fuse.

"Fortunately the set-up wasn't booby trapped," Gartner told about it later.

By the time Gartner got back to the popular peep, carrying the fuse as evidence, there was another guest at the crossroads. It was General Harrison.

"Are you the 125th Cavalry?" yelled the General.

"No, sir," he got the answer back. "We're the 743rd Tank Battalion."

The General regarded the lone, diminutive peep, blinked a little as if the sun was too bright for his eyes, and drove on, looking for his cavalry, which was supposed to have been leading.

Anything could happen on a "rat race." As if the gods of war felt the need for a laugh once in awhile . . .

iii.

THOSE in the 743rd who had enough gas to make it were the first American tanks to roll across the French border into Belgium. They were trying to make Tournai on the night of September 2nd. Before a hill just south of Tournai, most of the Shermans were out of gas. The few remaining tanks with gas, plus halftracks and infantry, assembled on this hill for the entrance into the town. Two medium and three light tanks led the infantry into Tournai at twilight. Natives advised the tankers that the enemy had anti-tank guns covering some of the roads. The natives were right, as Colonel Duncan and Captain Miller discovered when they pushed ahead and came under the fire of a road block. Direct fire weapons opened up on other units. The campaign had moved into a new country — Belgium — and was getting a warm reception. But it turned out with daylight to be only light and spotty resistance, blasted by the tankers' guns.

"If we had the gas——" Many a tanker will forever be convinced that if there had been the gas to let them keep rolling, the American First Army could have plunged

through the Siegfried Line defense before the running Germans, now pouring in retreat back through the dragon teeth, could get set. The war in Europe might then have come to a quicker finish. It will remain one of the debatable "ifs" of the war — *If* we had the gas . . ."

As it was, *Verify* had its tanks and vehicles strung "all the way back to Paris" with maintenance troubles — or just out of the high octane fuel needed to keep going. Cambrai, they say, was one place on the approach to the Belgium border beyond which many tanks just did not seem to have the power to go any farther. The beer in Cambrai was also said to be excellent.

Behind the giant strides being made by the American First Army through France into Belgium, the Army Service of Supply was trying to keep up. It was an almost "impossible" task, but the "impossible" was done by organizing the famed Red Ball Express — trains of trucks that rushed the gas, oil, shells, ammo and food all the way from the coastal beaches to depots hastily formed somewhere near the advancing troops. Still, Service Company drivers wheeled their 2½-ton cargo carriers back nearly to Paris to pick up supplies, then fought fatigue to get the supplies to the Battalion in the fields of Belgium.

The balance of the Battalion, getting gas into their fuel tanks, reached Belgium the next day, September 3rd, where maintenance began immediately to prepare for another long move.

There were four whole days of maintenance — badly needed — and then *Verify* hit the road again. The move, an all-day one, continued the seven-league stride pace, marking off 68 miles to an area south of Brussels at a town called Lasne. There was a halt overnight and through the next day until 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The move then was due east through Wavre 33 miles to Herbais. Here another day was given over to maintenance. On September 9th, a third successive long march through Belgium toward Holland carried the Battalion east near the famous Fort Eben Emael to bivouac close to the Dutch Panhandle border.

These moves — grinding rapidly through towns with names like Tourpes, Rognon, Braine l'Alleud, Wavre, Jodoigne — continued the swashbuckling, almost skylarking campaign begun just north of Paris. There was no fighting (occasionally a sniper tried his potshot luck to give a dash of danger to the adventure) and the job was to keep moving, looking for a fight.

It was hello, Belgium — goodbye, France. The French had waved the columns on. The liberated populace appeared (Service Company drivers going back and forth reported) to be growing accustomed to the novelty of American white-starred vehicles roaring past their doors. The Belgians took up where the French left off. Now it was they who furnished the wild welcomes. They cheered, and waved, and risked their lives to crowd up to the tanks in motion, and in all the demonstrative ways of a happy people they showed their enthusiastic thanks.

Everybody (except an occasional glum pro-Nazi face peering guardedly from a curtained window) felt fine about the war. It was quite easy for the combat men to forget the ugly Siegfried Line fortifications that waited for the shock of battle ahead. War is living from day to day. The Siegfried was a matter for tomorrow — after Holland . . .

# III

## . . . . INTO THE DRAGON'S TEETH

i.

THE first to send American tanks into Belgium, *Verify* tanks were also the first into Holland. The 1st Platoon of Charlie Company crossed the international boundry into the Netherlands and the town of Mheer at 5 o clock in the afternoon, September 12th.

And now the "rat racing" was over. When the platoon column began to move out of Mheer, the lead tank was fired on by a bazooka gunner. The rocket missed its target. Infantrymen took quick care of the bazooka-man. The doughs then kept right on hoofing it to the next town. The tanks stopped. They were again out of gas.

The reality of war was grimly present once more. Along the Meuse (Maas) River. the Germans showed a frantic — and fanatic — determination to throw up some semblance of a line from Maastricht to Charleville after vacating Charleroi, Mons and Tournai. The Meuse thus was the German Army's first defense line to confront the First American Army after the Seine crossing. There were remnants of four infantry and seven German panzer divisions dug in there. By September 12th, the First Army's sustained drive had

been stopped. The war settled down to a foot-soldier's walk again. Ahead was some of the bitterest fighting of the war.

The sprawling, ancient city of Maastricht threw away its Nazi swastikas and unfurled its black, gold and red flag of Holland on September 14th. Able Company worked with the 117th Infantry to clear Maastricht. At the same time, Charlie Company went eastward into Ond Valkenberg which was supposed to contain friendly troops. Instead the place was occupied by German infantry. When enemy artillery began to range in, the tanks set up a defense in nearby Valkenberg.

The Battalion was counting casualties again — artillery. As the 30th Division pushed along the Maastricht-Aachen road, the Germans threw in heavy concentrations of shellfire. This artillery was to be steady diet for months to come.

Across the 20-mile stretch of Holland that comprises the Panhandle thrust down between Belgium and Germany, the three key towns in the route of the 30th Division were Maastricht, Valkenberg, and Heerlen. Maastricht was cleared. Valkenberg was next. Then on September 17th Charlie Company helped to liberate the neat-as-a-pin town of Heerlen. Other units were entering towns north, south, east and west, such as Ubachsberg, Kunrade, Welten, Terwinselen.

On September 19th, *Verify* had its tanks — one company — inside Germany.

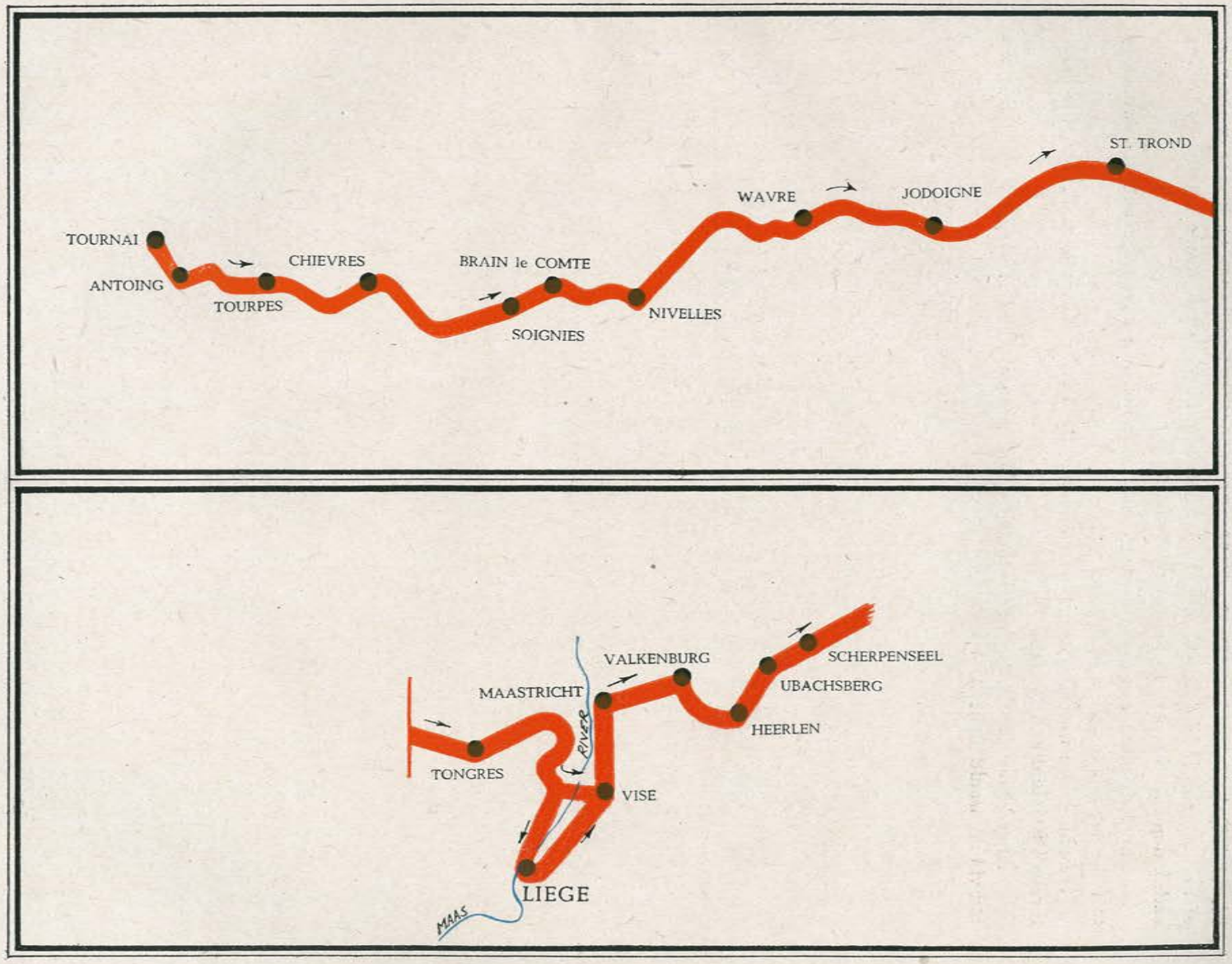
Earlier the mortar and assault gun platoons had fired on targets inside Germany. On the 19th, Able Company crossed the Dutch-German border and advanced into Scherpenseel, supporting the 1st Battalion, 117th Infantry. Plans were readied for an attack through the Siegfried Line beyond Scherpenseel, but bad weather settled down, grounding the air support, and the attack was put off 24 hours — and then indefinitely.

As the First Army marked time before the first pill boxes and dragon's teeth, an all-out attack was being planned to crack open the line. From September 20th to October 2nd, the companies and all units readied themselves for the assault. The 30th Division had a sector 10 miles north of Aachen. The swift and ugly ribbon of water called the Würm River ran through the sector before the Todt-built fortifications. And a few thousand yards in front of these bristling defenses as enemy artillery probed about seeking to destroy troop concentrations, tanks and infantry again, as they did before the hedgerows, rehearsed special maneuvers. This time the problem was not to crush natural barriers, but man-made structures: mushroom-thick, cunningly placed pill boxes, tank traps, barbed wire entanglements and field fortifications of every description. As the days went by to October 2nd, officers and men studied their maps, briefed themselves on every detail of the terrain and known defenses ahead. They studied aerial photos and made plans for the approach and breaching of each identified obstacle. And trucks took the men back to Heerlen for hot showers — and there were two U. S. O. stage shows . . .

Then the push to crack the Siegfried Line began.

ii.

WHILE the Big Pursuit from France to Belgium trying to head the retreating Germans off before they could scurry behind their Siegfried defenses was a vast operation on a


TOURNAI
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SCHERPENSEEL
MAASTRICHT
UBACHSBERG
HEERLEN
TONGRES
VISE
LIEGE
MAAS

canvas so broad that the individual soldier was almost lost to sight in the great mass movement, the individual was there. He was there hunched on the hard seat in the back of an overcrowded halftrack, or cramped into the bucket chair inside a tank, or feeling each bounce in the road in the rough-riding peep.

The individual was there — every man with his own adventure and his own story to tell — or not to tell — in his own way.

Behind him was the Normandy campaign, the Battle of Northern France, the drive through Belgium and Holland.

Ahead was the Battle of Germany. The generals had it mapped out. But the individual would fight it.

# PART FOUR

# SIEGFRIED LINE

# I . . . . . THE WEDGE

i.

THE Siegfried Line was a devilish arrangement of death traps, pill boxes and camouflaged emplacements in a continuous series hundreds of miles long and varied in depth along Germany's frontier from a mile to several miles. Teutonic military efficiency had, of course, taken every advantage of terrain and then installed minefields, anti-tank ditches, curved steel rails, steel-reinforced blocks of concrete (dragon's teeth), barbed wire entanglements, trenches, pill boxes containing everything from machine guns to 105 mm artillery. All these were covered by mutually supporting fire — a blanket of death which could be laid down wherever needed.

The Siegfried, in short, was a Super-Obstacle Course — an infantryman's nightmare. And in front of the 30th Division, the Germans had had time to man these defense, to get set for the inevitable assault. In their carefully planned hedgehog forts, they were ready and waiting. In GI language, the breaching of this line was to be a "rough go."

To crack the line, the assault was proceeded by intensive training, even while the units were in the line itself. By reshuffling reserves, it was possible for some 30th Division infantry troops with Verify tanks to withdraw slightly from their defensive positions for these "practice periods."

For example, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 117th Infantry Regiment went through 2-day training periods a mile west of Scherpenseel, Germany. To perfect co-

ordination of all types of combat teams, a replica of the Würm River was made out of a gully filled with stagnant water about the width of the Würm and with the same steep banks.

This training paid off. When time came for H-hour, October 2nd, not only the riflemen, but the heavy weapons men, engineers, tank destroyers and tank commanders all knew one another's part — and what was expected of them.

H-hour was set for 11 o'clock of the morning of October 2nd. Artillery preparation actually began six days before, with the 258th Field Artillery Battalion firing 155 mm self-propelled guns — their mission being to destroy all pill boxes located on the 30th Division's front. These guns fired from September 26th to October 2nd on 45 pill boxes. Their success was described officially as "varied."

About two hours before H-hour, Division and Corps artillery boomed out to smash all known enemy artillery batteries. A few minutes later, 10 groups of medium bombers (360 planes) and two groups (72 planes) of fighter-bombers came roaring through the grey overcast. Up in a tree top at a forward position, Lt Col Duncan and Captain Miller clung to the limbs in what they called Verify's forward O. P. and sweated out where the bombs would fall. The memory of St. Lo was still fresh.

As an air strike it was disappointing. A half-dozen or so bombs dropped by the mediums landed in the target area. The rest were over or short. The fighter-bombers did a bit better. They got their "jelly" fire-bombs in the pill box target area.

At 11 o'clock, the men moved out into the attack. The Battle of Germany was on.

Lieutenant (then Sergeant) Paul J. Longheier and four men of the Reconnaissance Platoon went forward with the assault elements of the infantry to locate a suitable tank crossing over the Würm. They spotted one 15 minutes later and led a tank-dozer and another tank to the site. The second tank was towing the "culvert type" hasty bridge — a river crossing device which was an extemporaneous affair developed during the training sessions.

During this operation, the Germans were responding with thunderous storms of artillery and mortar mixed in with vicious small arms fire.

Able Company was attached to the 117th Infantry. An agreement had been reached between the Infantry regimental commander and Colonel Duncan that Able Company would not be called upon until the combat bridge over the Würm had been completed, unless the tanks were needed for direct fire support. There was a good reason behind this agreement. At the sheer banks of the Würm on flat terrain, there was no cover and no concealment. The tanks would be in plain view — and the presence of tanks always sent the enemy artillery into urgent action. And the fall of artillery, as any doughboy would quickly testify, would mean casualties to the infantry and to the engineers trying to bridge the river.

At 11.20, Able Company got orders from the infantry commander to move up. Out moved the tanks, expecting to be able to keep moving right across the river barrier, as

it was thought the infantry had found a new crossing. They hadn't. So the tanks sat by the river for four hours while the Germans rained down shells.

Captain Miller, who had a part in developing the hasty bridge to be used, was sent forward to try and speed its placement. On the way forward, he was wounded by mortar fire and carried back for evacuation. Shortly after this, another captain was lost to the Battalion — Able Company's commander, Captain Cowan. His tank was hit on the turret by an enemy shell, wounding him and his cannoneer, Private First Class Joseph Haddad.

Late in the afternoon, the engineers got the treadway bridge into place and across the Würm growled Able Company's tanks. A defensive position was taken up for the night with the infantry beyond the east bank.

Baker and Charlie Companies worked together with the 119th Infantry. The bridges across the river at Rimburg and Marienberg had been blown sky-high by the enemy — which was no surprise — and so emergency crossings were planned. Rains had made the ground a quagmire, but a treadway bridge was eventually gotten across under heavy fire and the 1st Platoon of Charlie Company made the precarious hop. Infantry cleared the river on foot bridges and began the assault on the opposite bank. Charlie Company's 1st Platoon advanced east about 200 yards and then began a losing battle with General Mud — three of the Shermans bogging down.

The snorting old T-2 recovery tank went to the rescue with its tow cable, snapped the cable, hitched up again, and got the tanks to higher ground. Here the situation was anything but comfortable as heavy concentrations of artillery caught them in the open. The platoon was ordered to holds its position there, however, and it did.

A platoon of Baker Company also made the river crossing that day. Its mission was to move north to Rimburg so that construction on a bridge there could be completed. They were also to help clean out the town. A castle in the place was proving to be a tough spot, holding up the advance of the infantry. But again mud defeated the tank's mission. The T-2 recovery tank tried to pull two of the Shermans out, and bogged down itself. In the hell of artillery, the rest of the platoon advanced toward the town, received direct fire and rockets from bazookas. The platoon leader requested that the tanks be permitted to withdraw, since friendly infantry could not be contacted there, but orders kept the platoon in position outside Rimburg. A company of infantry soon contacted the tanks and its defensive position was set up for that night.

Meanwhile another platoon of Charlie Company had moved with infantry west of the river at Rimburg to cover the engineers constructing the bridge there. The remainder of the medium tanks were in positions at Opdehoven to cover the approaches south. Dog Company was in reserve with the 120th Infantry and the light tanks were not committed.

Thus the assault of the Siegfried began. A start had been made in prying open the steel and concrete guarding Germany.

ii.

SO much has been written about the complex fortifications of the Siegfried Line that a stranger to it might suppose it was nothing but one pill box after the other with bands

of steel and concrete jutting out of the earth. This is a false impression. Much of the Siegfried looked deceptively like normal countryside. The massive barriers, a favorite subject for war photographers, were only a part of it. There were long stretches of green countryside — hilly in this region — with sleepy and normal looking villages spotted through it. There was nothing sleepy and nothing normal about these villages as *Verify* moved out through them.

For every village was a part of the fortress system. The countryside might appear normal because the pill boxes built by the hundreds into its woods and contours were carefully concealed and camouflaged. Some of them were built so as to hide in the ground — when they went into action, they rose out of the ground, and then after firing sank back into the ground out of sight again. Every house seemed to have its quota of snipers and gunmen putting out fire from the thick walls.

Ubach, Germany, was the first sizeable town within the 30th Division zone. On the second day of the Siegfried assault, October 3rd, Able Company with the 117th Infantry had passed through the worst artillery and mortar fire yet experienced to reach the outskirts of the place. The concentrated fire was so persistent and heavy that the supply trucks, which somehow had usually been able to get up to the tanks through almost anything, this time were not able to get through. And supplies were badly needed. The gunners were using plenty of ammunition.

The wedge had been driven into the Siegfried. The line was cracking at Ubach, although it did not seem that way to the men who were doing the cracking. It did not seem that way to Able Company tankers, sitting outside Ubach with ammunition and gas almost gone — with exploding shells rocking the 32-ton tanks on their treads. It did not seem that way to Baker and Charlie Companies still mucking around in the mire of soft ground around Rimburg and the Würm River. These units with the 117th and 119th Infantry Regiments were not alone in driving through the line. To the north, the 29th Division was busy exerting strong pressure outside Geilenkirchen. Elements of the Second Armored Division's Combat Command "B" followed through and fought at Ubach. And south, First Army troops were smashing through below Aachen. The "impregnable" Siegfried was being smashed.

Once through the line through and past Ubach, the 30th Division swung its attack south down toward Aachen. This put a pincer movement on the city fortress and rolled up the pill box line from its north flank and rear.

But it wasn't like rolling up a rug . . .

South of Ubach, the 2nd Platoon of Charlie Company was working on a line of pill boxes with a battalion of the 119th Infantry. In one day's operation they cleaned out eleven of the fortresses. At dawn the next morning, a strong force of Germans with tanks counter-attacked, moving through the grey early mist to retake six of the pill boxes and capture two companies of infantry. The Germans then started to move toward a second line of pill boxes, advancing behind a barrage of well-directed artillery and

mortar fire. Staff Sergeant Paul T. Jackson, tank commander from McFall, Missouri, with four tanks under his command, set up a hasty defense of the second line of pill boxes in which the infantry had two command posts. The tank commanded by Sergeant Donald E. Russ, of Oklahoma City, was placed in a position exposing it to direct enemy fire as well as artillery. But the four tanks put down a fire so devastating that the enemy swerved away into the cover of woods some 600 yards to the left front. Three Mark V tanks charged out of these woods toward Sergeant Russ. When the fight was over, Sergeant Russ still commanded his tank in its open position, a Mark V was burning, and the enemy had pulled back. Lieutenant (later Captain) Walter Macht came up with reinforcements during the fight and pitched in to stop one of the series of counter-attacks thrown at the open position. By 11 o'clock that night, the Germans gave up all idea of occupying the second line of pill boxes, gave up the first line again, and withdrew.

For two days the battle-fatigued crew in Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Donald E. Mason's Able Company tank held a position under enemy tank fire two miles north of Aachen. At one time the lone tank was under attack by five advancing Mark Vs. Four retreated. The other burned. Mason's tank kept fighting.

When a flank he was defending showed signs of collapsing, Lieutenant Peter L. Henderson dismounted from his Sherman amid heavy artillery fire and by personal contact on foot re-organized the position so that it held and then drove the enemy tanks back. Henderson's tank knocked out two giant Mark VI tanks during one day of battle north of Aachen.

T/5 John E. Smithson, a tank driver from Mayfield, Kentucky, was with the 3rd Platoon of Able Company as it closed with the enemy just east of Bardenberg. The leading tank was hit by a bazooka fired from a house. Smithson watched from his tank as four men jumped out of the burning Sherman — the gunner was trapped, wounded. Smithson drove his tank out of line of enemy fire and went on foot through enemy machine gun fire, climbed into the burning tank, slid into the driver's seat and backed it out as enemy gunners tried to register hits. The tank was still a-fire as Smithson then dragged the injured gunner from the turret to safety.

A Nebraska truck driver, Einar Sorensen, was servicing tanks with ammunition and gasoline when a barrage of shells came whining in, exploding a gas can and throwing burning gas over the rear of his truck. The truck began to blaze. Sorensen, realizing the danger of the gasoline-loaded truck to the nearby tanks, jumped into the cab of his burning truck, started the motor, and drove it some distance away. He then got out and attacked the fire with an extinguisher, getting the blaze under control before badly needed ammunition, also in the back of the truck, could be exploded.

There were numerous instances of men who saved a life in those hours packed with death and injury. Lieutenant Lambert V. Wieser went forward between two burning tanks with Sergeant Norman Willson and Private Jim A. Pearce to rescue a tanker who was lying on open ground, bleeding to death. Pfc. Chester Sobkiewicz and Private

Russel Schober, both knocked out of a tank, carried the wounded tank driver through a rain of enemy fire to a ditch where they gave him medical attention for two hours before they could summon medics with a stretcher.

Two stories of action are in the Battalion lore concerned with this period of the heavy fighting. Both action resulted in the award of Distinguished Service Crosses to two tank commanders.

The first action occurred on October 10th when Sergeant Earnest L. Kirksey commanded a lone Baker Company tank against nine enemy tanks at close range. In 15 hot-action minutes, the American gun poured 60 rounds of ammunition into the armor that was attacking Sergeant Kirksey's position. The lone Sherman stood off the Nazi tanks, knocking one of them out, before help arrived to run back the armored thrust.

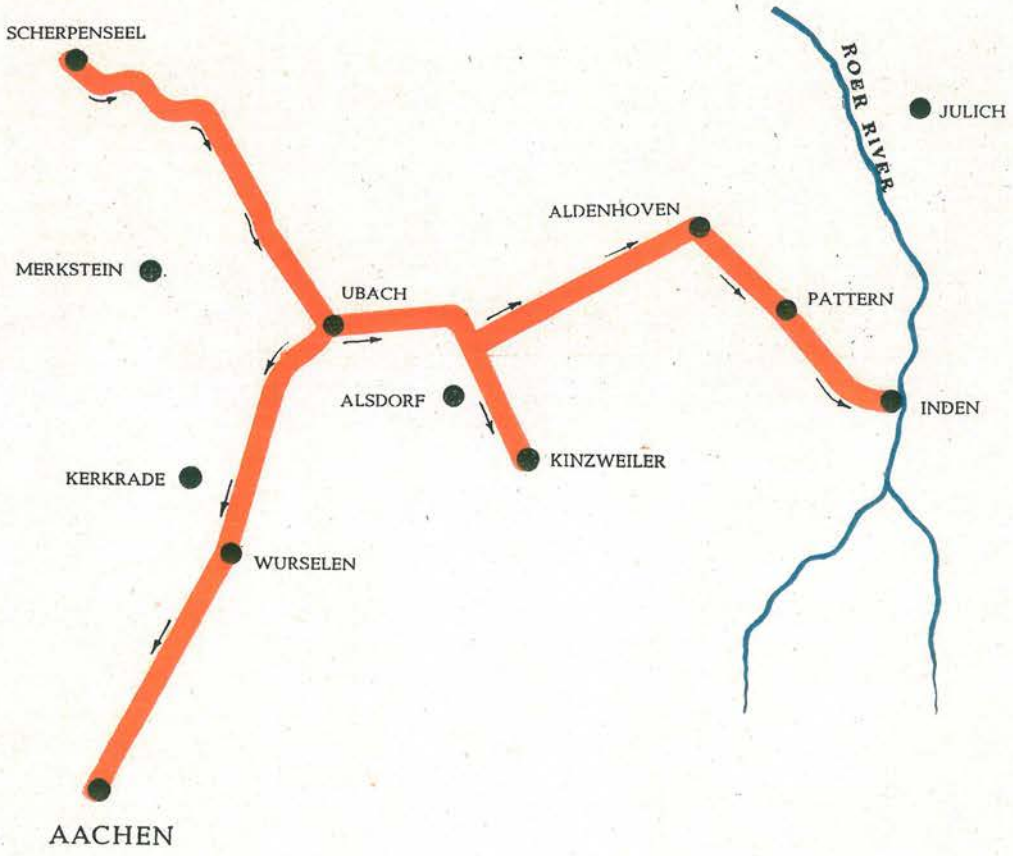
Two days later, on October 12th, Staff Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Melvin H. Bieber stood off five German tanks which assaulted his Sherman, also in a lone position. Again enemy armor was turned back — after three hours of bitter dueling.

On the northern rim of Aachen, the tank platoons smashed ahead with the infantry town to town — Kerkrade, Merkstein, Alsdorf, Herzogenrath, Bardenburg (here Able Company was cut off for 24 hours by an enemy counter-attack), Kohlscheid. This push was to link with friendly forces driving up around Aachen from the south. The citadel city of Aachen itself was encircled and on October 10th the German commander was given a 24 hour ultimatum to surrender. The ultimatum was ignored. American troops went in. There followed a week of fierce house to house fighting. None of *Verify*'s tanks took part in the interior Aachen battling; it was occupied in keeping the pressure on the northern rim of the ring and helped to close the "Aachen Gap" to seal off German supply or escape.

Aachen fell and the American line became a solid front. But while the main defenses of the Siegfried had been breached, the Germans were determined to stop the advance. They did. They massed artillery, sowed broad and deep mine fields, maneuvered their tanks and their tank-killing 88s, put thousands of bazookas into the hands of infantrymen, and mounted one sharp counter-attack after another. For many weeks the line did not advance far beyond Alsdorf or Wurselen. The attack was not being pushed at October's end. Small pockets of resistance were cleaned up — and then the waiting began while defensive positions were maintained.

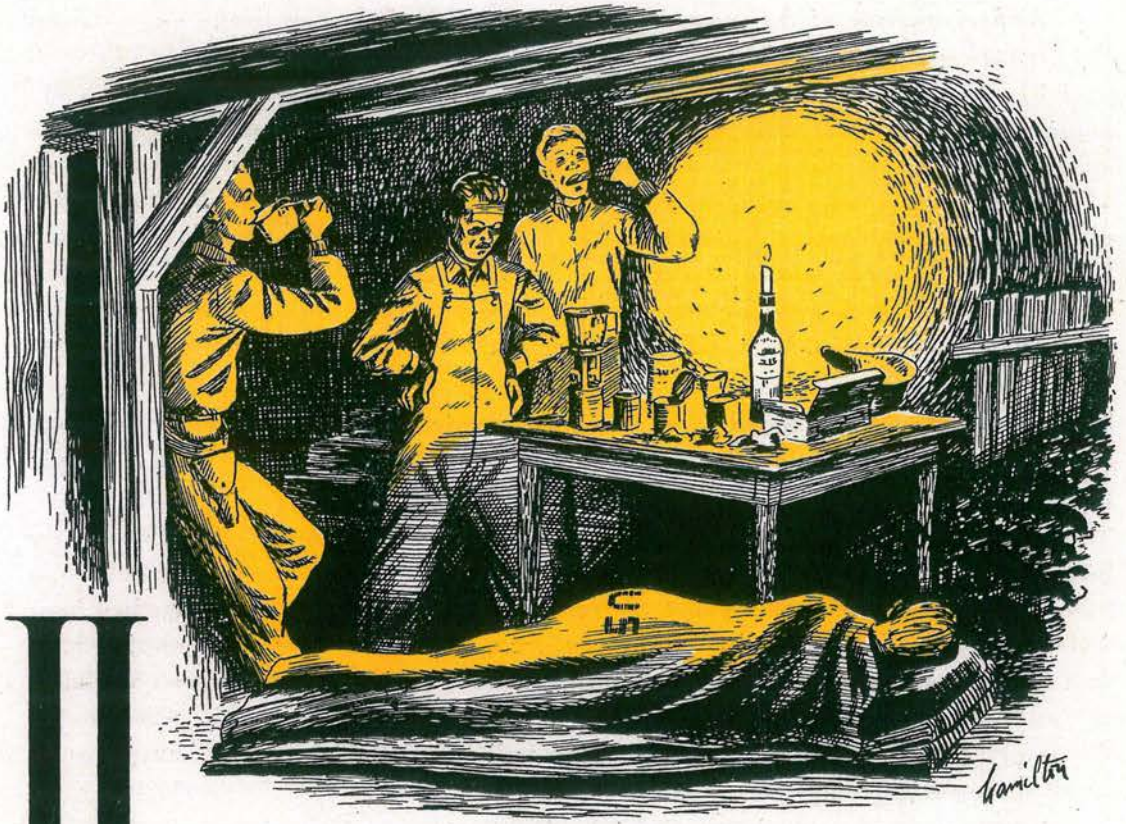
There was good reason for the waiting period. Something big was in the wind. On October 22nd, the man in the line got a hint of it. He found that the 30th Division had become a part of the new American Ninth Army.

Another hint came from far behind the lines. "You should see the roads," a Headquarters Company driver reported after a trip back to Holland. "More stuff on 'em than I ever saw before — artillery, tanks, trucks. They're piling ammo along the roads all the way back for miles. We're *really* getting ready to sock the Germans!"


SCHERPENSEEL
MERKSTEIN
UBACH
ALDENHOVEN
PATTERN
ROER RIVER
JULICH
INDEN
ALSDORF
KINZWEILER
KERKRADE
WURSELEN
AACHEN

In driving the early wedge, the Battalion knocked out three Tiger Royal tanks (plus two probables), 11 Mark Vs, four Mark IVs, 20 anti-tank guns, a number of artillery pieces large and small, and uncounted enemy dead or captured.

And this was the cost: 20 men killed; 75 men — including 13 officers — sent to hospitals where some lost arms, eyes, legs. There were seven men missing in action. Twenty medium tanks had been lost; one assault gun tank, and one light tank . . . .




# II

## • • • HERE A TOWN, THERE A TOWN

i.

AT the close of October and the opening of November, the tankers became cellar dwellers. The fields after constant rains became a vast morass: the houses in them were little more than desolate ruins — but at least many of them had cellars intact, and these were usually dry. The Germans, being on their home grounds, had all the artillery calculations they needed to pick off any brick house in the Aachen sector. German gunners were constantly at work re-arranging the piles of bricks that were such homes. So, in here a town, there a town, the men learned to live in the deep shelter of the basements where they hoped an artillery shell would not deposit the upper floors into their laps.

The German basement was found to be clean, usually with whitewashed walls, and almost always a part of it was buttressed and braced with wooden shoring — each house, in effect, containing its own personal air raid shelter.

Alsdorf was one of the towns in which some of the Battalion lived — it contained the forward command post. In its way, it was typical of the Battalion's mode of living.

The command tank, a Sherman, was parked in the backyard garden close to the house. Every so often artillery would come in and throw old beets, carrots and rutebagas all over the Sherman. The enemy provided other delights of living. He had a curious self-propelled gun that roved what hills could be found in the dish-like land north of Aachen. He evidently suspected or knew the command tank was in that certain backyard, for he made it a regular habit to pay an evening visit, dropping around and leaving four calling cards night after night. Then he would move on. He never did hit the tank, although he did damage to the real estate.

It had became customary for advancing American troops in Germany to locate a house that looked liveable and then, if it was occupied (a surprising number of them were, although Hitler himself had issued them orders to move), give the German family perhaps an hour to pack up and get out.

The brick house in Alsdorf was representative of the others because it was fairly intact. That is, it still resembled a house. Shell fragments had made a sieve of its tile roof — sections of tile kept dropping off from time to time. The worst damage had been done by a large shell which had struck the front of first floor, carried away a half-wall of bricks, and chewed a huge gap into the corner foundation. There wasn't a window left with any glass in it: torn curtains fluttered in any breeze that found its way through the empty frames. But while it was thus a well ventilated place, the house was in excellent condition compared to many.

There was a kitchen in the back of the first floor, and when things were quiet, the men cooked up 10-in-1 rations, growing skillful at injecting variety into otherwise uninspired menues. Sometimes the kitchens in the rear area sent up bread — when they had it. Then toast was made. Experiments with pancake batter provided flapjacks such as mother never baked, but were usually eaten anyway. Potatoes (the Germans had plenty of potatoes) became a staple part of the meals in cellar living.

The skeins of telephone wire without which no operation was complete put one line into the cellar room directly under the kitchen. Here the Battalion commander had set up a basement office. It was an almost airless cell, once a large wine closet, with its one window barricaded with logs and boards, blacking out all light. A gas lantern (when it worked) hissed from a wire tied to a water pipe, and this gave the room a hard, white glare.

For sleeping, mattresses had been hauled down from bedrooms and distributed through the coal and potato bins.

A cellar was larger and drier than a foxhole, but it was not always safe. At Floes, a few miles from Alsdorf, the Germans dropped some 500-pound bombs one night. A house received a direct hit. Eight Service Company men of the Battalion Maintenance section were living in the basement. All eight were killed.

ii.

THERE was time, waiting in the cellars of the towns, for talk — to sit around and tell about last Christmas in England, or the girl back home, or French calvados and stories like the time the reconnaissance sergeant rode a white farm horse up to a German-filled hedgerow and got back alive. Coffee was brewed on German stoves or over GI Coleman burners, and talk was easy and full of memories, rumors, and guesses about tomorrow.

And there was a lot of discussion, now that there was time for it, arguing about the comparison between the Sherman and the German tanks. Sometimes, in this town or that, the talk on this subject by American tankers grew bitter. It was a bitterness produced by hard experience.

"Why don't they give us a tank we would have a chance in?" a tanker exclaimed.

This is what he meant — —

He meant he wanted something bigger with which to fight the thick-skinned big Tiger Royal tank. He wanted more armor, bigger guns.

It wasn't much comfort to hear about how such heavier tanks with guns packing more punch were beginning to come off the American assembly lines. Most of the men were sure they would be fighting in their present General Sherman type tanks long after the first new models reached Europe — if they lived and the war lasted.

The 32-ton General Sherman was not exactly a tin can. The men liked this about it: it was maneuverable, it was fast.

"Fine for rat racing when you don't have much opposition to fight," said a tank commander. "But in the big scraps, you move at a foot soldier's pace — maybe slower. We don't need speed on the battlefield when we're supporting infantry."

The Sherman M-4, the basic tank of armored divisions and separate tank battalions of that time, had two and a half to three inches of armor up front. It came in three principal models, one mounting a 75-mm gun, the second a 76-mm, and the third a 105-mm howitzer. This third model was the assault gun used as ordinary artillery.

Of these, the 75 could penetrate about two and half to three inches of armor, and the 76 could pierce three and half to four inches.

And what was the Sherman facing?

The basic German tanks encountered were the Mark V Panther and its grown-up brother, the Mark VI Tiger, and *its* big brother, the Tiger Royal.

The lightest of these was the Panther. It weighed 45 tons, against the Sherman's 32. Up front, its crew was protected by four inches of armor set on an angle of 55 degrees — or the equivalent of nearly six inches of thickness to face the Sherman's gun with its maximum penetration of four inches.

Panther tanks mounted "kratfswagen kanone" that were 75-mm, but with a muzzle velocity so high that it could slam its shell through almost six inches of armor at 1,500 yards. And the Sherman had a maximum of three inches . . .

The Tiger weigned 57 tons, or nearly twice that of the American medium. It carried six inches of armor in front, set at an angle making it equivalent of eight inches. Sherman gunners were lucky if they pierced four inches of rolled steel.

The big Tiger packed an 88-mm gun, a famed tank-killer, capable of driving this heavier shell through seven inches of armor at 1,000 yards.

And then there was the Tiger Royal to make even the Tiger seem small. These were not numerous, but the Germans had them and they were using them. It weighed 75 tons, had eight inches of armor in the turret and its gun was an 88 which could penetrate seven inches of armor at 1,500 yards. Small wonder that American tankers soon learned not to feel safe with but three inches of armor in front of their faces.

Somebody produced a newspaper clipping sent from home in which an Army ordnance man was quoted on the shocking disparity between the fire power of American tanks and the Germans'.

"We knew in early 1942," the ordnance officer was quoted, "that the Germans had developed 'pak' guns with enormous muzzle velocity and penetrating power and yet we did nothing to copy it or prepare our tanks to meet it. Now we can only lock the stable door. We should have given those boys guns able to punch holes into anything the Germans sent against them . . ."

Then somebody else told how a tank general said the Sherman was better than the German tanks because of speed, maneuverability, and reliability — that they were an offensive weapon to be used offensively — and that those who considered the American tank a failure because it was not as big as the German tanks showed a basic misunderstanding of tank warfare.

"Better, hell!" said a tank driver. "The only thing we have over the Germans is that we've got more tanks and can build more faster. And that's a comfortable thought for a guy when a Mark VI starts shooting at him, isn't it?"

"If I were building me a tank," said a buck sergeant tanker , "I would use Diesel engines so that there wouldn't be any high-test gasoline and its fumes to make an incendiary bomb out of my buggy. I'd get wide tracks — at least two feet wide — to keep from bogging down all the time whenever I hit soft ground. I'd get six inches or more of armor where I needed it and angle it so it would do the most good. I'd make it rolled steel — not cast. The rolled stuff is tougher. And I'd get a high-velocity gun that would pack plenty of wallop. I hear the 90 mm is okay."

"That's the kind of tank we ought to have now," a voice put in from the corner of a cellar . . .

Although there was honest griping and criticism about the inadequacies they saw in their Shermans, the fighting morale of the men remained magnificent. When the order came to go back into battle, every one of them would go ahead and do the best he could with that he had. War reduces itself to that in the end.

iii.

IN here a town, there a town north of Aachen, men of the 743rd Tank Battalion decided the war wasn't going to be over in a week or a month. In static defense positions, there wasn't much doing but the routine of filling in time before the next offensive. Artillery fell on the forward positions and sometimes on the rear areas — but this, too, was a matter of routine.

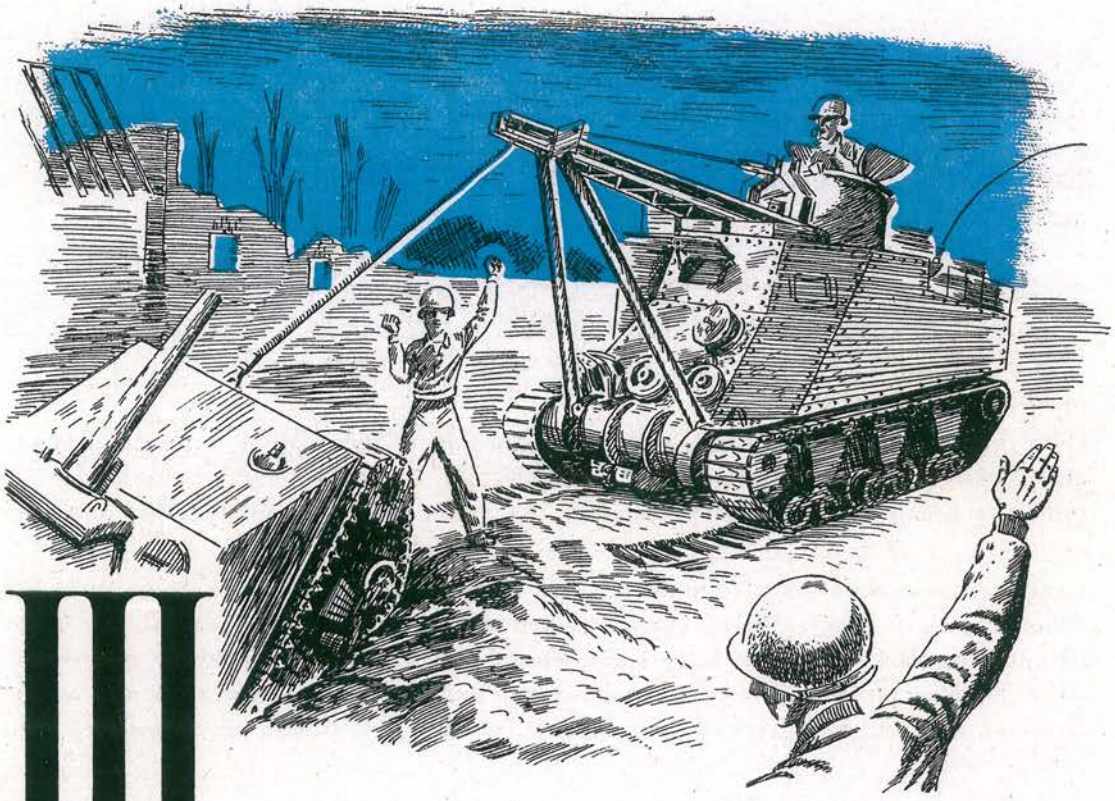
This was war — a long war, and there was nothing to do but make the best of it. There were rests for battle-fatigued crews. Some got back on pass to towns in Holland. Every one had opportunities to climb on a truck to hot showers. A Special Service team with a "liberated" French movie projector showed the latest releases from Hollywood in what had been a beer hall.

On November 9th the first snow fell. The chill of approaching winter was in the air. Maintenance crews prepared the vehicles for the cold weather ahead. Supply sergeants began to issue heavy clothing. As usual, they didn't have very much to issue . . .

There was time, too, for tank training. Instruction classes were carried on in the fields near Floes, where Shermans were maneuvered about the slag piles and beet fields by Battalion clerks who were being trained to take over in a tank should the future need arise. The new replacements — 102 enlisted men and 16 officers — also took part in this training. And the light tankers in Dog Company began familiarizing themselves with the Shermans.

The new replacements talked with veterans and waited in here a town, there a town, for their first day in combat.

It came on November 16th.



# III

## . . . . . ATTACK TO THE ROER

i.

THE drive to the Roer River, seven miles east of Alsdorf, was set to start November 8th but sloppy weather delayed it until the 16th.

At 1 o'clock in the morning Colonel Duncan learned that the big attack would begin that day at 1245 hours. Company commanders were summoned to the Alsdorf cellar command post. Able Company and the mortar platoon were attached to the 117th Infantry, Baker Company and the assault gun platoon to the 120th, and Charlie Company to the 119th. Dog Company was in reserve.

The hours before H-hour jump off were taken up with the final preparations for the long anticipated drive. Tanks moved to assembly areas from which they would move out with the infantry. Heavy artillery and mortar fire rumbled away, blasting at known and suspected enemy positions. At 11:15, fighter planes bearing the big white star on the blue circle charged in low over friendly lines, then circled over the sector like angry hornets looking for trouble.

These planes were pathfinders. They sought out the selected bomb strike area of Eschweiler, an assembly and distribution point for German troops. Smoke markers trailed their white streamers down through a hazy sky. At 11:20 the air became heavy with the sound of bombers. Again to the veterans on the ground came that old throat-tightening sensation as men, thinking of St. Lo, wondered if the air corps would find its mark as it was supposed to.

The air strike went off according to plan, the bombs smashing up Eschweiler. Now until H-hour, the artillery kept working away, delivering its own brand of heavy punches. Another H-hour arrived, and the 30th Division troops moved forward.

Charlie Company and the 119th Infantry hit the stiffest resistance. The other companies found the attack going ahead on schedule like clockwork. Able Company had raced past slag piles into Mariadorf and the 3rd Platoon of Baker Company was on its objective at the outskirts of Euchen within three hours after the jump-off. Charlie Company, on the right flank of the attack, was supposed to clear Wurselen of enemy.

These were short days of fighting now compared to the long days in France. Dusk settled down shortly after 5 o'clock, and when dusk arrived on November 16th, the infantry with Charlie Company began digging in only 400 yards from their jump-off point.

Charlie Company lost two tanks and some good men that afternoon. Second Lieutenant Thomas J. Johnston, leading the 1st Platoon, was knocked out of his tank by bazooka fire. He got one of his crew out, but the tank blew up before he could extricate the others. Later he was riding in another tank when this was hit, also by a bazooka. The lieutenant got out safely, but when he took cover from the incoming mortar and artillery shells, he realized that his crew was not with him. He had no way of knowing that these men had taken safe shelter on the other side of the tank, out of his sight. The young platoon leader returned to the burning Sherman to rescue crew members he thought were still inside. In this unselfish attempt, he was killed by machine gun fire.

The attack continued the next day. While the lines were moving ahead, particularly on Able Company's front at the left flank, this was no breakthrough. It was hard slugging. Charlie Company was still finding the going rough at the far edge of Wurselen. Baker Company took a sharp counter-attack on the nose and moved hardly at all in street-fighting inside Euchen. Seven enemy tanks made their presence known with direct fire from a neighboring town of Linden. No Baker Company tanks were lost in this fighting but Lieutenant Winthrope Hastings, a platoon leader, was killed in the turret of his tank, struck by shell fragments.

Charlie Company did get into Wurselen on this second day. During the night, an estimated nine German companies had withdrawn in the darkness, but before Wurselen they had strewn many anti-tank and anti-personnel mines to add to the difficulties of the advance through observed artillery fire.

Hongen was a complete mess — the interiors of its houses strewn all over its narrow streets. In this setting it amazed the eyes of some to see the debonair figure of a man

in a frock coat and top hat strolling along and, with deliberate care, he was flicking bits of the littered town out of his path with a cane. Bits of rooftop, bricks, plaster and wood and rags were given the attention of this strange character who looked as if he might have stepped somehow from the pages of Dickens into the middle of a badly shelled town in the middle of a World War. The man in the top hat and frock coat was not out of Dickens but out of a Baker Company tank — Captain Jean Ubbes.

As through all the previous fighting, the Battalion's advance command posts set up to work closely with the three infantry regiments. These three "CPs" were under the control of Lieutenant Colonel Duncan, Major Philips, and Captain Speers who kept in close contact with the tanks by radio. The "CPs" were often under heavy shellfire.

The attack pressed on for the third day. The mortar and assault gun platoons were keeping up a heavy schedule of firing. The taking of the town of Warden was a good example of how tanks, infantry and artillery worked together to move the lines a few miles ahead in a day's work.

The day's plan was for Able Company to hold while the 3rd Battalion of the 117th Infantry took the bleak and unimpressive collection of homes, now brick piles, that was Warden. But the Germans were strongly entrenched in these brick piles and they threw the attacking doughs back several times. The commanders in the field drew up a new plan. To take Warden an artillery-infantry-tank attack was planned and offered to the Infantry Regimental Commander by Colonel Duncan. The plan was accepted.

One infantry company (Company "C," 1st Infantry Battalion) was to drive in from the southwest of the town with three tanks led by Lieutenant Joseph Couri. Another infantry company (Company "F," 2nd Infantry Battalion) with Lieutenant Joel Matteson, of Interlaken, New York, leading with his platoon from the town of Hongen. A third infantry group (Company "A' of the 1st Battalion) was to move in from Mariadorf with Lieutenant Jenkins and his three Shermans. The plan called for the doughs to ride the backs of the tanks with other doughs supporting on foot. Artillery was to put down a barrage of advance fire on Warden and all suspected gun positions.

That was the plan. It was a neat, compact little plan — but like all battle plans, it was neat only as it would look on paper. Plans and maps leave out the human element — the man. An unfought battle is the only one that seems clear and orderly as it is set down on a military map. Plans and maps have a way of leaving out the puddles in the ditches that a man slogs through, the stone wall that saves his life as a mortar shell bursts near him, and most certainly it leaves out the fear and the hesitancies that snap through a man's mind out in the field, and it does not take into account the foolish things he does — and the brave things.

So the plan was set, a neat little battle. Then it was fought.

Right at the beginning there was a slight hitch. There was trouble in getting everybody set to jump-off at the same second. The attack was delayed at the last minute. But the information of this delay did not get through to Lieutenant Matteson in Hongen.

He moved out for Warden alone. Sergeant Mason in a tank behind Matteson tried to inform his platoon leader of the time change but could not raise him on the radio. Rather than let Matteson proceed alone, Mason followed with his tank section, two other Shermans commanded by Sergeants William C. Beckett and Edwin D. Goodrich, both top-rate tank commanders. The four tanks raced for Warden. There were 16 doughs on the tanks. The artillery support was excellent, smashing up the opposition ahead of them. Within 30 minutes, the section was on the objective at the town itself. The infantry on foot moved up and then walked with veteran deliberateness into the town with the four tanks

By this time, Lieutenant Jenkins' section with infantry had launched their attack and were well inside their section of Warden. Lieutenant Couri's section also smashed into the town from its flank. Warden was now penetrated from three sides.

On their way in, Matteson's platoon knocked out one anti-tank gun firing from the flank, an enemy artillery observation post complete with observer, overran two anti-tank guns and put out of action two self-propelled guns mounting 75 mm weapons. Jenkins section knocked out at least four enemy machine gun positions. Couri's tanks could account for three machine gun nests silenced by a railroad bank. All tanks had opportunities to shoot up enemy infantrymen — and made the most of such opportunities.

And so, by the end of the day, Warden was taken. Nobody in the tanks had gotten hurt, even though enemy direct fire weapons had tried to shoot them at the last through buildings — firing armored piercing shells into the houses in an attempt to blast holes in the structures to expose the tanks behind them to their fire. The infantry, as always, had its casualties.

In Warden, as night fell, positions were consolidated. The ambulances went back and the supply trucks came forward. The Germans had a new town to put under artillery fire. The artillery came in, salvo after salvo, the final emphatic touch to the taking of another German town.

ii.

WEEKS of patient planning and re-planning of the attack now launched toward the Roer River — weeks in which the closest co-ordination between artillery, infantry, tanks and air was sought — were showing results, not only before the 30th Division front, but in the many active sectors now pressing back Germany's border. In grim, dank November weather — its cheerless, overcast days marked the mood of the war — Allied pushes were slowly but steadily forcing a patchwork wehrmacht back through the defenses it was trying so stubbornly to hold. The Germans made each town a battle point.

*Verify*, with infantry riding its tanks, moved ahead. Able Company chased the enemy out of a beaten-up coal town named Kinzweiler. Baker Company lined up its Shermans and gave direct fire support to Charlie Company which made a quick, all-out dash in a blitz attack on St. Joris simultaneously with "A" Company on Kinzweiler. Enemy mud and mines hampered operations, but did not stop them.

Some 400 yards outside Kinzweiler, during the attack there the tanks ran into a minefield. All tanks were held up except Lieutenant Jenkins, the first on the scene, who went right across the field followed by his platoon without striking a mine. Then the rest of the tanks tried it, with less luck. Three struck mines and another bogged down in deep mud. No one was hurt.

The rains came and continued to come. But on November 21st, the attack was taken up after a one-day respite. From a southerly direction, the attack suddenly shifted northeast and took the five towns of Lurken, Langweiler, Laurensberg, Obermerz and Langendorf. The enemy was caught by surprise.

"The battleground off the roads is so muddy that there seems no bottom to it," reported a tank commander of the operating conditions under which the drive pressed forward. And the rain continued to fall.

The enemy, off-balance on the 21st, stiffened his resistance on the 22nd. Enemy direct fire was heavy. It came from anti-tank guns, tanks, and self-propelled guns as Baker, Charlie and Dog Companies worked together. And there was the rain — a constant, cold drizzle that fogged tank periscopes. "A man just got wet and stayed wet." a tanker said. "At least we don't have to walk through the stuff like the doughs."

Five tanks were lost in action on the 22nd, the day before Thanksgiving. Three of these were light tanks caught by direct fire in a muddy orchard outside the village of Erberich. One officer, Lieutenant Frank X. McWilliams, and four enlisted men were killed by the enemy weapon, thought to have been a self-propelled 75 mm gun. An enemy anti-tank gun stopped Lieutenant Clyde S. Thornell's new medium tank, killing his assistant driver. Ten minutes later Lieutenant Clifford H. Disbrow was knocked out of his Sherman, also a new model, when it ran into some American mines. Both of these tanks, which were built with more armor than earlier Shermans, burned later when they were enveloped by direct fire from enemy tanks which appeared from the south.

iii.

THANKSGIVING Day was just another day of warfare for the Battalion — marked by the traditional turkey dinners wherever it was possible for the cooks to get the "holiday" meal to the men. Charlie Company was busy until the next day, and Baker Company was two days late eating their share of the fixin's. On Thanksgiving Day, one platoon of Baker Company with a platoon from Charlie Company supported the 120th Infantry's attack to overcome the resistance at Lohn, at last taking the town in a one-hour battle. Able Company attacked Pattern, a town almost at the banks of the Roer River.

The Able Company attack was climaxed by the adventure of Captain Korrison, Able's commander, and three new giant specimens of Nazi armor, Panzerjager Panthers, These "tank hunters" were steel brutes that mounted 88 mm guns.

While elements of Baker Company put down supporting fire at one side of the town, Able Company's column barrelled down the road into Pattern from another direction.

The tanks tore into the place wide open. Captain Korrison was in the lead. He could hardly believe his eyes when he spotted the sides of a twin pair of Panzerjager Panthers parked on a side road and apparently concerned with Baker Company's diverting fire. The fast charge almost got by the two enemy tanks — but not quite. Captain Korrison pulled up short, and in rapid order put shells into the Panzerjagers, knocking both of them out at a range of between 50 and 75 yards. The flying column then proceeded into Pattern.

A third Panzerjager was put out of action a little later in the fighting when it was spotted trying to hide behind a building. The Shermans took a position less than 100 yards away, then blasted a hole through the building. Through this hole, the Panzerjager was knocked out . . .


# IV . . . . . WAR IS WAITING

i.

MURKY weather continued — and, of course, rain. Ground conditions were so bad by the day after Thanksgiving, November 24th, that nothing was done but to hold defensive positions in the wet gloom until November 27th when the weather cleared. The infantry tried an advance on Altdorf, a small town near the Roer's west bank but got pinned down by fierce machine gun fire. Baker Company was prepared to move up, but the tanks were not called. There was an open area of flat fields for 2,000 yards over which the tanks would have to move, and this field was receiving direct fire. It was decided to take the town by night.

The night attack came at 4:30 before dawn. The 1st and 3rd Platoons took part in this advance — a one-town jump from Pattern to Altdorf. It was a tough move in the darkness, but it turned the trick. The dangerous open ground was covered without mishap,

the tanks being led on foot by Baker Company's commander, Captain Jean M. Ubbes. As dawn tried to break into the heavy sky, seven enemy tanks were seen leaving Altdorf in a hurry, running east to escape across the Roer. One enemy tank was found abandoned inside the town.

The objective was secured.

ii.

THE four planes were friendly.

"P-47s," one of the assault gun platoon said as he watched them sweeping low overhead. "They're going to give Jerry a hard time this afternoon."

"There go their bombs!" another shouted.

It was November 29th, nearing dusk in the late afternoon. And the bombs were dropping on Langendorf, a small town not far from the position where the assault guns were firing missions. The only trouble was, Langendorf was occupied by American troops . . .

When the bombs began dropping, an anti-aircraft unit in a beet field outside the town sent up a yellow identification signal. The P-47s were still circling. Crewmen in the assault gun tanks hunted around for their yellow indentification panels and put them out on their rear decks.

The signals did no good. Down came more bombs, straight on the assault gun position. When the P-47s flew off, eight men were casualties. One, Corporal Arlis E. Johnston, died of wounds.

The commanding officer of the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, with which the assault guns had been working, suggested that the platoon be returned to the rear to re-organize. That night, the bomb-battered platoon pulled back.

iii.

OFFENSIVE operations halted at the end of November for the 30th Division at the brink of the Roer River in the flatlands of northern Germany. Defensive positions were maintained as higher headquarters planned the next phase of battling into the Wehrmacht's secondary defenses west of the Rhine.

War became waiting. "War," as Lord Gort once made an epigram of it, "consists of short periods of intense fright and long periods of intense boredom." But soldiers know how to make the best of boredom.

Most of the Battalion took up quarters in the town of Kol Kellersberg, some six miles from the Roer front. This town was the scene of one of Germany's "modern" housing developments. It also had been the scene of sharp fighting. The modern housing development was a little the worse for wear.

Here the men found time to fix up a few comforts of home. They cleaned out littered cellars, patched up windows, rigged up electric lights (power was obtained from

a "hot wire" running from a nearby coal mine), got the German stoves working against the winter dampness, and fixed up beds and mattresses.

Whenever the sun decided to smile — and sometimes when it didn't — the men got to their laundering. There were plenty of big tubs to be found in the mess left behind in a hastily evacuated town. In Headquarters Company a message center sergeant and an operations technician fifth grade went into business with an enterprising "Moe Lee" laundry service.

One room of a large school house was blacked out and became the movie theater. A new film was shown every day. A U. S. O. stage show set up for two performances on December 6th — and this was the deepest any such unit had played inside Germany to that time. The sound of artillery (outgoing and friendly) accompanied the acts.

There were 48-hour passes to Holland. On the 14th of December men from each company went back by truck to one of the Dutch cities the Battalion had once helped to liberate— Heerlen. There a dance was given for them by the town where they were the guests of 80 English-speaking Dutch girls. Trucks transported 200 tankers for the occasion.

The first Christmas packages were beginning to arrive from home. The Battalion was beginning to accumulate an impressive collection of German home radios in working order, and the evenings were made cosy in blacked out rooms, warmed by stove fires, with good radio programs over the shortwave channels.

But it was not all rest, this waiting.

A tank training school was again set up and put into operation. And the huge iron racks that were secret rocket launchers were installed on some of the Shermans, and there followed rocket-firing demonstrations.

Officers mulled over possible plans of attack over the Roer. Reconnaissance parties went out to inspect routes and possible roads of approach.

There was work to be done during the waiting — the incessant work of keeping the tanks in shape, of checking all vehicles, of cleaning all guns, ever prepared for combat on short notice — or no notice.

Nor did the war stop. The American Third Army took Metz, the mighty fortress of Central Europe, and continued to advance from the Moselle River to the German frontier. The American Seventh and the French First Armies broke through at Saverne, seized Strassbourg and pushed northeast to the German border, smashing into Germany on December 7th. The Reich was being ringed.

As one winter day passed into another, as December passed mid-month, the Battalion prepared for the master effort to cross the Roer and finish off the great number of troops the Germans were supposed to have for a last ditch stand west of the Rhine. As the waiting passed, there was no loose thinking that this would be an easy effort. The memory of the last push through Germany after the Siegfried was too recent, too sharp. Each little town, hamlets separated from its neighbor villages by no more than a kilometer or two, had been defended by the Germans as if that one dot on the map was

the most important fortress in all Central Europe. Each house became a pill box, each clump of woods and knoll a strong point. Would it be this way all across Germany? . . .

Meanwhile the men were out of the line. They were out of the mud and slime of German beet fields. They did not have to sweat out the easily defended secondary German roads, every road fixed in the calculations of enemy artillerymen. They weren't fighting in the angled, tricky streets of those German coal towns spotted between the slag piles.

From the end of November to mid-December, it was a rest from such labors. Then came orders putting the Battalion on the alert. Another jump-off was coming up. But it wasn't to fight through more German coal towns in the Rhine flatlands. From quiet waiting, the Battalion was going to jump down to extreme violence. All that the Battalion knew on the 16th of December as it hastily jettisoned its new 60-barrel rocket devises was that the Germans had begun an all-out counter-attack in Belgium — and the 30th Division was being called down to meet it.

The Roer and all the elaborate plans were immediately forgotten.

And the waiting was over.

# PART FIVE

# WAR IN THE SNOW


# I . . . . . DOWN TO THE BULGE

i.

ON the 16th of December 1944, the German Field Marshal von Rundstedt unloosed a powerful army of the Nazi's best remaining troops in an effort to burst through the mountainous Belgian Ardennes country, sweep on to Liege and Antwerp, and throw the whole Allied offensive out of gear.

The VIII Corps had a thin holding line where the German panzer Army hit. The 106th and 99th Infantry Divisions were overrun. In the Corps zone, three American divisions in all were being badly battered. The Nazi threat was a serious one. The 30th Division was ordered to rush down to Belgium to help stem the drive.

As a part of the 30th Division, the 743rd Tank Battalion was alerted to move on December 17th. At 25 minutes past noon, Colonel Duncan received notice to alert all his units and be ready to move out within five hours. A quartering party led by General Harrison left Wurselen, Germany, two hours later. Major Benjamin and Lieutenant Paul J. Longheier represented the Battalion in the Belgium-bound quartering group.


JULICH
ALDENHOVEN
PATTERN
KINZWEILER
INDEN
ROHE
AACHEN
VERVIERS
LOUVEIGNE
FRANCORCHAMPS
MALMEDY
STOUMONT
LA GLEIZE
STAVELOT
LIGNEUVILLE
PONT
VIELSALM
ST. VITH
OTTRE
CROMBACH

The Battalion got ready to pull out. Once again the word went around to the men — action was coming up. This time there was a grim sound to the news.

Only this much was known then: the Battalion was getting out of Germany. The enemy had counterattacked in strength in the VIII Corps area in Belgium, had broken through our thinly held lines there, had advanced eight miles in one day. The whole Allied balance along the Western Front was being quickly shifted to meet the threat of this enemy attack.

At 5 o'clock on the dreary, cold afternoon *Verify* was set to pull out. The vehicles were gassed up, all personal gear was packed, the trucks loaded, the men ready. The order was awaited to move out. At 6, Colonel Duncan went to 30th Division headquarters and was given the move order — to be at 2 o'clock in the morning from the Battalion area at Kol Kellersberg.

It was a sloppy, dirty night. Shortly after midnight, the Battalion command group assembled its vehicles on the road in Kol Kellersberg, lining up in column in the pitch blackness that would be brightened for a few minutes at a time by flares dropped from enemy planes. These planes, unusually active, droned about in the rain. One lone bomb was dropped near the command unit before the march began.

At 2 in the morning, the column moved out down the wet roads to Aachen and kept moving south toward Eupen. During the march, the column kept alert for enemy parachutists. Aerial activity overhead was intensive. Flak and anti-aircraft fire was almost continuous to all sides, filling the dripping night with spurts of red tracers, orange shell bursts, and the enemy planes contributed to the weird display with garish white chandelier flares.

It was still night when the head of the column reached the planned assembly area north of Eupen. But here the Battalion commander was notified that the units would continue on through Eupen into Belgium to a point one mile north of Malmedy.

This new order was given to the operations officer, Major Philips, and the executive officer, Major Benjamin. Colonel Duncan, Major Philips and Lieutenant Longheier then went on ahead to the new area in the Reconnaissance halftrack and two peeps. The combat column then followed, not knowing what it was going to find ahead of them. By dawn they were in the hills of the Ardennes and by 10 o'clock in the morning were halted at the side of the road leading down into Malmedy. When the Battalion arrived in this position, the tank commanders had no maps, no orders, no knowledge of the position of either the enemy or our own troops.

The Battalion commander went down into Malmedy to report to the Regimental commander of the 117th Infantry there that *Verify* was available.

So began the Battalion's part in the Battle of the Bulge.

# II

## • • • • RETURN BOUT - - - 743rd vs 1st SS

i.

THE first indication of the enemy outside Malmedy came from the air. Out of the east came a strange, bumbling drone, like a low-flying plane with a missing engine — buzz bombs. The things thundered over several an hour on their general way toward Liege. This was "Buzz Bomb Alley." At night they could be seen furiously sputtering their course, the gas-oxygen propulsions flickering through the sky to mark their flaming way.

But the real threat was on the ground. The buzz bombs were only a nuisance. Through Malmedy and Stavelot, however, the best troops the Nazis had — the 1st SS Panzer Adolf Hitler Division — were spearheading toward Spa and Liege. It was up to the 30th Division and attached units to collide with the 1st SS head on — and stop them.

Major Philips summed the situation up as the tanks waited for orders on the road to Malmedy. The company commanders had been called to the head of the column. Major Philips had a map of the area. He spread it out on the front plate of the staff command tank and he told the officers as much as he knew of the enemy positions.

"This," summed up the Major, "is another Mortain for us. I don't like it any better than you do, but that's the story. It's our job to meet the enemy, stop him, hold him, and destroy him."

Then the company commanders were given their assignments.

ii.

The scenic beauty of the Ardennes is a tourist's delight and a soldier's terror. No battleground is beautiful to the man who must fight upon it. The narrow hinterland roads that climb and descend through stands of trees, skirting streams and cliffsides, might look well on an artist's canvas, but wet and slippery they are a dangerous stretch of hazards for the man at the controls of a tank — particularly at night, when he had to guess where the road stopped and a drop down the mountainside began.

These wooded hills and deep furrows of valleys served, like the French hedgerows, to hide the positions and the movements of the enemy. Rundstedt had counted on this in his carefully considered plans. In such country he had already managed the job of keeping his army-sized attacking force a secret from Allied ground and air intelligence until he was ready to unleash it.

At the beginning of this counter-offensive, the Germans enjoyed a great fortune of modern warfare — cloudy, thick skies which kept Allied planes from spotting their movements. Even so, patrols of fighters flying above the "soup" went down through occasional holes in the cloud-blanket to shoot up advancing Nazi columns. But the giant weight of the Air Corps was out of the early action — grounded by bad weather.

The first job for the ground troops rushed down from the flatlands of Germany to the hills and forests of southwestern Belgium was to meet the enemy. When the enemy threat became a breakthrough and the true power of the attack was known — Rundstedt was committing his carefully hoarded 6th Panzer Army — the Allies made a quick shift of divisions. Supreme Allied Commander General Eisenhower re-grouped his forces. He gave British General Montgomery control over all troops in the north. General Patton, commander of the American Third Army, had the responsibility of the southern flank. Together the mission of these two commands broadly was to channel the force of the German blow, contain it within the north and south flanks, keeping it grooved as an east-west shaft whose steel-tipped drive could be stopped after it lost some of its momentum 50 or 60 miles inside Belgium. It was a race against time, for if the Germans cracked through the flanks to exploit behind the Allied lines, or rolled beyond the Meuse to Antwerp, the Allies would be handed a crushing setback that would delay the war's final campaigns against Germany for many months. And in this race, the Germans had gained a head start.

iii.

*VERIFY* had reached the Ardennes and for the next week of action all would be a strange and somewhat mad confusion. There was an entirely new feeling in this fighting. After

months of being on the offensive, with German armies whipped and the end thought to be in sight, the men suddenly found themselves thrown on the defensive to fight for their lives. There was no belittling the seriousness of the situation.

What was strangest of all was the almost complete lack of information. The wildest rumors sprang up . . . The Germans had cut the roads north of Malmedy, said rumor . . . the Germans had reached Liege . . . the Germans had dropped parachutists and were fighting in Antwerp . . . the Germans were having gigantic success . . .

The only thing that the Battalion could be certain of when it went into action in Belgium was that it was to face the 1st SS Panzer Division — the same nominal division it had faced and beaten at Mortain. After its licking in France, the 1st SS had been reformed and refitted. This was the return bout.

There had been vague situations before, but none so mystifying as this. Some platoon leaders got maps of the area, but some men did not get maps for several days after the fighting started. For those who had to travel the steep, torturous roads without maps, it was like groping in the dark, often not knowing whether the road was in friendly or enemy territory. Tanks and platoons soon were scattered to all four winds, braced to hold vital road blocks. And supplies had to get to these men.

"When our column finally came to a halt after the long and cold march, I had no idea where we were — and I wasn't alone in that, either," recalls Lieutenant John D. Hess, transportation officer for the Battalion at the time of the breakthrough. "I checked the column and found that ten of my trucks were missing . . . probably had taken a wrong turn in the blackness of the preceding night. I went back in my peep to hunt them up, and when I finally found them and returned, much of the column was on the road at the same spot I had left it. I learned then we were only a mile or so north of Malmedy."

There were some who said Malmedy was in German hands, some who said it was in ours. Lieutenant Colonel Duncan had gone down into Malmedy, and it was supposed that if the Germans weren't there, he had set up his command post in the town. Down went Lieutenant Hess into Malmedy, saw no Germans, but did find the Colonel set up in a large hotel room.

"What's the situation, sir?" the transportation officer asked as he reported for orders.

Colonel Duncan was entirely candid. "I don't know what the situation is beyond this: the Germans are on the loose and can be expected anywhere anytime. It's our job to find out where they are and then stabilize a line to stop them and hold them."

Colonel Duncan had sent one platoon of tanks into Stavelot, but the direct road between Malmedy and Stavelot was reported cut and the only inlet was by way of Francorchamps — a most roundabout way over questionable roads.

Off went Lieutenant Hess to make a reconnaissance in his peep, driven by Corporal Near, to find out if the supply trucks could be brought to that platoon later in the day. Before he left the Colonel, however, the transportation officer asked for maps. The Colonel smiled and produced one dirty wrinkled sheet which was his entire map supply.

He said it had been found in the building and that it covered only a part of the area the lieutenant was to travel.

"Some of the roads in the area are mined," the Colonel added. "Don't go on them . . ."

It was a little touch of war humor — for both of them knew that there were no maps to indicate which roads were mined and which were not.

Lieutenant Hess stopped at various command posts, and in each one found that no one knew any more about the situation — of where the Germans were, where they were headed, what sort of stuff they had. Each officer and man had a different rumor — that the krauts were using all American vehicles and were attacking in American uniforms. (Some of them did.) That paratroopers had cut the road into Stavelot and American tanks in there had been completely isolated. (Some paratroopers had been dropped but were rounded up by infantry troops and company clerks, truck drivers, ordnance men who grabbed carbines and rifles to do it.) That there were four tank divisions attacking through our general area. (There was one — the best the Germans had.) That some Jerries had atready reached Liege. (They hadn't.) And so on went the rumors.

"The only way to find out what was going on was to get into Stavelot and see — and the first thing about getting to Stavelot was to find a way into the place," Hess told about it later. "I did, and I found Lieutenant Hansen's tanks behind some buildings in town. He said he knew nothing of what was going on except that the Germans were mighty damn close because they kept shooting at him all the time . . He was very anxious to learn what was happening elsewhere in the neighborhood, but I was able to tell him absolutely nothing . . ."

For two or three days it was like that — no one knowing exactly just what was going on, except what he could see for himself. The supply trucks, the peeps, the half tracks, the tanks, moved about on roads that weren't on the maps, if anybody had a map, and were roads that might or might not be the right ones to use. The only way to find out who was at the other end was to go down them and see . . .

And it was this terrific uncertainty, this unsettling ignorance of what and who was where with how much, this near total lack of control that was the worst thing about the whole business. There would be much cold in the Ardennes, there would be shooting, and there would be more of confusion and uncertainty, but it was during those first few days that the tension and the discomfort were at their peak. Being on the defense, without any real knowledge of an enemy who is reported to be running wild on a fluid front — these were the things that tested every soldier called to face a tough situation of a war gone haywire after it had seemed to be going so well.

iv.

IT was immediately apparent to those who could get some idea of the overall picture on December 18th that one of the most critical points in the 30th Division zone was the town of Stavelot just southwest of Malmedy. Murdering SS troops were already in

control of a good part of the town as the 1st Battalion of the 117th Infantry Regiment moved in from the north. Lieutenant Jean Hansen's 3rd Platoon of Baker Company with three assault gun tanks saw the first action on reaching the northeastern limits of Stavelot. There was sharp fighting all afternoon, and by nightfall two tanks were in position defending one side of the town square. The Germans were on the other side of the square.

Twice during the night some Germans tried to rush the lines across this space. The first attempt was stopped by tank commander Sergeant Earnest Kirksey's tommy gun and the rifle of a nearby doughboy standing guard. Their fire stopped a small German vehicle and some German infantry. Later an armored halftrack filled with enemy tried to come through. A cannoneer, Pfc. Roy R. Hemke, loaded and fired the 75 of his tank, while an assistant driver, Private Donald Pokarth opened up with the bow machine gun. Morning light disclosed dead Germans lying in the uncrossed square amid the ruins of the halftrack.

Other first assignments on December 18th sent Able Company into Malmedy to guard all entrances to a town the Nazis very much wanted back, while two platoons of Baker Company went west to the village of Masta. A hill site with a few houses and a large school building, Xhoffraix, north of Malmedy, had been selected as the place to quarter the rear echelon units of the Battalion. From Xhoffraix, Charlie and Dog units received radio orders for a night move through Malmedy west to Stoumont.

This night move was a risky business, crawling with almost no forward visibility over slender ribbons of road with treacherous drops to the side. The tank-dozer came closest to disaster. It missed the road at one point, careened into a muddy ditch, tipped for a moment at a precarious angle at the edge of a sheer plunge down into a black valley hundreds of feet below — and then settled back down into the mud, stuck but safe.

And so, on December 19th, *Verify* had its tanks assigned to infantry units and was deployed in and about Malmedy-Stavelot. The first round of the isolated, headlong fighting had begun.

v.

NOBODY was sure of it then, but in retrospect it turns out that December 19th — the same day the world heard about "Bloody Bastogne" where the surrounded elements of the 101st Airborne Division refused to surrender — was the day the 1st SS was stopped cold. Elsewhere the Americans were holding off the assaults on the north and south flanks. The enemy was not going to get through Malmedy, Stavelot or Stoumont to Liege. He was not going to take Luxembourg.

The attack was being channeled as the Allied generals wanted it to be. A Nazi spearhead was still piercing west deep into Belgium and was approaching the Meuse, but troops and more troops were getting set to stop the attack if it reached this river line.

But for all the men in the tanks fighting around Malmedy knew, the Germans might be marching into Paris .... The rumors were wild.

Able Company was sent out of Malmedy, where the situation seemed to be well in hand, to meet a more immediate enemy threat in a valley near La Gleize to the southwest. The 1st Platoon spotted the enemy tanks at great range and moved into defensive position. Although the Nazi armor was too far for the effective range of the Sherman 75s, a shell fired by the German 88 from an estimated 2,000 yards pierced the hull of one tank, passed completely through it, and out the other side. Three men in the tank were killed.

As the infantry road blocks began opening up on the advancing German armor, the 1st SS Panzer commanders changed their minds about coming any further and withdrew.

It was typical of the Ardennes fighting that no one was sure just where the enemy went after they drew back into the cover of the woods.

The 3rd Platoon of Baker Company was still seeing stiff fighting in Stavelot. Slowly — literally house by house — the Germans were being driven back out of the town.

Charlie Company went into action at Stoumont where they occupied high ground on the eastern edge of the town. Within 15 minutes of their arrival early in the morning, the Germans began a counter-attack from the south and east with a force of 40 tanks and a battalion of infantry in halftracks. In the sharp battle that then occurred, Lieutenant Clyde S. Thornell, a platoon leader, received a shrapnel wound in the back but remained with his tank. It was sharp action, and at the end of it, Charlie Company had knocked out a total of six Mark V tanks, a big 150 mm self-propelled gun, and three halftracks.

After the enemy advance had been halted, the situation at Stoumont quieted down. Charlie Company had fought in the town for two hours putting down fire which allowed friendly infantry to withdraw in order to reorganize. Major Philips observed another tank battalion — the 740th — up the road towards Spa, and he at once suggested to General Hobbs that he request its attachment from Army. Army granted the wish and the 740th Tank Battalion relieved Charlie Company of the 743 after the German thrust at Stoumont had been halted.

Charlie Company went back into reserve for the night. In making its move in darkness, tank C-17 failed to make the turn onto a bridge crossing the small Spa river. The heavy Sherman toppled into the water. In the accident, platoon leader Lieutenant Clifford H. Disbrow and a member of his crew, Private Frank Ashley, Jr., were killed.

On December 20th, a combat command of the 3rd Armored Division passed through Able Company's positions to make two attacks at La Gleize. Neither attack was successful, thrown back by the now doubly desperate 1st SS Panzer troops.

In Stavelot, Baker Company was moving slowly through the town as, house by house, it supported the doughboys. And as the enemy was pushed out, the true story of German atrocities in Belgium began to be brought to light. At one corner there was a pile of 20 dead women and children, all brutally murdered. Scene after scene, the tankers saw with their own eyes the disgusting evidence left behind by SS bullies and

murderers who shot and sometimes butchered helpless Belgian civilians. In one house, tankers saw what happened to a family who had a small baby. The infant kept crying during the night. This annoyed some SS men who had a command post in the adjoining home. The SS paid a quick visit. The bloody corpses were the mute evidence as to what happened. The crying-baby excuse was one offered by a captured SS man himself.

In the Ardennes, the true nature of the German under Hitler was revealed in all its shocking starkness. After Stavelot, it came as no surprise to the men to hear of, and then see, the 150 American doughboys who had been shot down in cold blood in the snow of a field outside of Malmedy. The Germans couldn't be bothered with prisoners.

The warning came that specially trained squads of American-speaking Germans outfitted with captured American uniforms and equipment were trying to infiltrate the lines. It was expected that the Germans would try a paratroop attack in force. The enemy was at the end of his rope and would try anything. The American troops, admittedly surprised and confused when the Rundstedt blow first fell, now were grimly aware of the nature of the enemy. They were ready for anything.

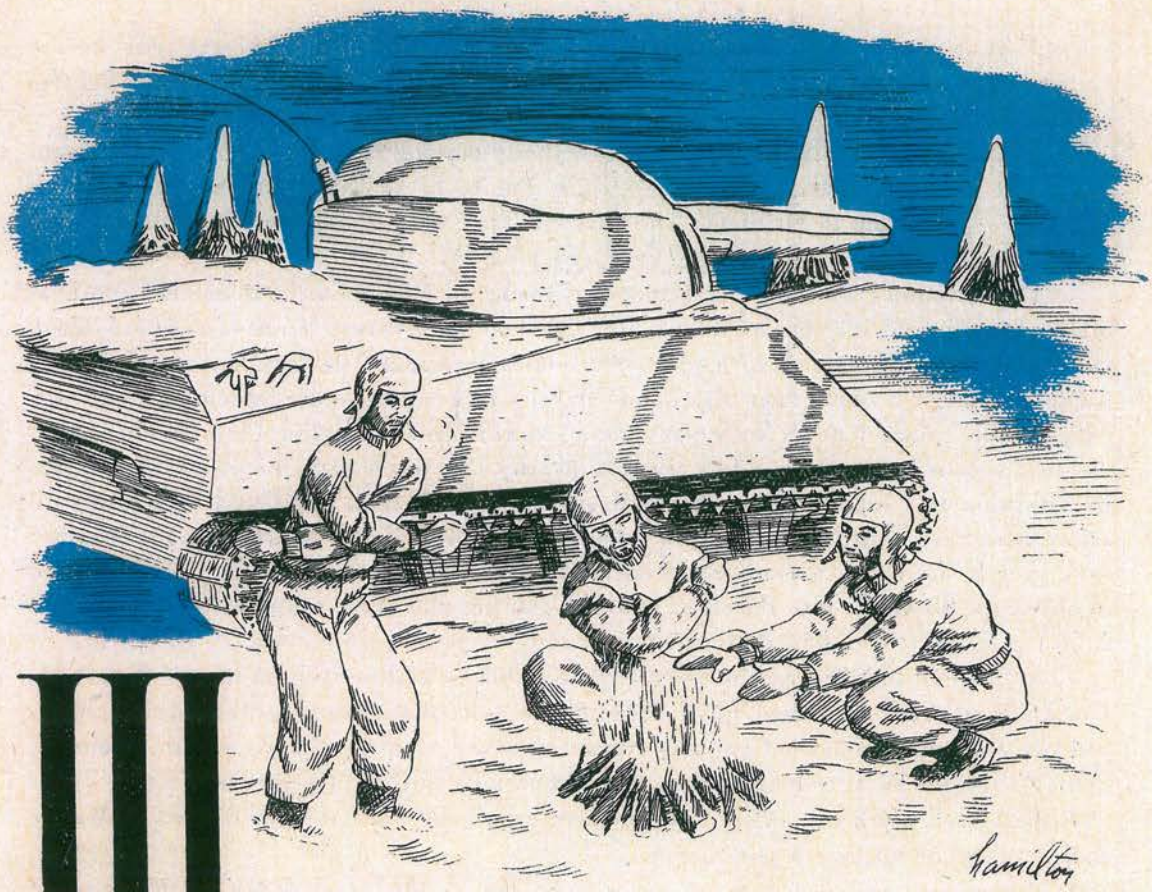
There were few German prisoners taken alive just at that time . . .

By December 21st, Stavelot was cleared. The 30th Division and attached units had performed the first phase of its mission — to stop and hold the three-pronged assault through Malmedy, Stavelot and Stoumont. The 743rd Tank Battalion once again had met the 1st SS Panzer Adolf Hitler Division and had turned it back.

On the day before Christmas, Task Force Harrison of the 30th Division with infantry of the 119th Regiment and tanks of the 743 and 740 tank battalions and elements of the 3rd Armored Division dealt a death blow to the 1st SS. It caught most of what was left of the panzers in a pocket at La Gleize and bagged 39 tanks, 70 halftracks, and a large number of assault guns, artillery equipment, and various vehicles. It was the end of the Nazi threat which boasted the Germans would be back in Liege, Antwerp and Paris by Christmas.

The 24th of December was a turning point in another way. The skies over the snows of Belgium cleared. Out in huge force came the Allied planes. They found that von Rundstedt's forces, which had gotten as far west as five miles from the Meuse River were now retreating east. In some instances, the retreating columns were bumper to bumper.

As if glad of the opportunity, the Allied Air Force went to work. The German fortunes of war had run out.




# III

## • • • • • • • PUSH SOUTH

i.

CHRISTMAS passed to New Year's with the Battalion in holding positions. The chief battle then was with the winter cold. The road conditions were almost impossible. Sleet fell upon the snow and froze over as a hard skin of ice. It took both skill and good luck to stay out of trouble on such roads.

Although there was no fighting between the line companies and the enemy, the period was not one of rest. The defensive road block positions were watchfully maintained. Everyone was still on the alert for possible paratroop landings. A check was still being made for German saboteurs wearing American uniforms.

On the 3rd of January — the turkey dinners of Christmas and New Year's were a memory — the American First Army started an offensive on its north flank of the "bulge" to drive south toward three main east-west enemy supply roads. The nipping of these roads would make the enemy's pocket in Belgium one more death trap for his

pummeled Wehrmacht. All through the days to January 3rd from the day before Christmas, the skies were crisp and blue — perfect visibility for bombers and fighters which made the most of such weather.

The ground offensive started with everybody moving forward so that the Germans could not tell where the main drive — which was to be to the right flank of the 30th Division — was going to hit them. The Division itself was to make only a limited attack. The 1st and 2nd Platoons of Charlie Company took part.

The Division's diversionary attack was made on Hedomont, a town due south of Malmedy. The 526th Armored Infantry and tank-destroyers from the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion also were a part of the assault team. The 1st Platoon of Charlie Company, led by Lieutenant Raymond Staffilena, went through Hedomont until the doughs were pinned down by enemy machine gun fire. The 2nd Platoon dealt with dug-in German infantry on a hill position nearby. In this attack, Lieutenant Theodore B. Adkinson was hit by mortar fire and evacuated. His tank continued in action with a four-man crew until Sergeant Elno Schacher arrived on foot. After Sergeant Schacher took over in the tank, two successive enemy bazooka teams infiltrated the lines and tried to knock the Sherman out. Bursts of machine gun fire and three rounds of high explosive from the 75 destroyed both bazooka teams.

At the end of the day, the assault team withdrew to the original line of departure. The Division front remained quiet through the next day. On the 6th, Dog Company and two platoons of Charlie Company attack across the Ambleve River to reach Aisomont, south of Stavelot so as to be in a position to jumb off with infantry troops.

This push south commenced on the morning of the 7th, taking the town of Wanne and its neighbor village, Wanneranval.

The enemy was sensitive. From out of the wooded area south of Wanne, the enemy counter-attacked early in the afternoon with four Mark IV tanks and about 100 infantry. Units of the 112th Infantry Regiment, which the 2nd Platoon of Charlie Company and the 3rd Platoon of Dog Company was supporting, made a hurried and concerned field report back to their command when some of the enemy doughs and one of the enemy tanks succeeded in moving right up to the edge of Wanne. General Harrison, of the 30th Division, on hearing this report, commented: "Good! Let 'em come. *Verify* will stop 'em!"

And *Verify* did. The enemy withdrew — and without two of its tanks. The Battalion had no casualties, although one of the light tanks had a track blown off when it ran over a mine concealed in the snow, one of the Shermans had been hit by direct fire but the shell did not penetrate, and another Sherman had its turret hatch knocked off. Nobody hurt.

This assault to Wanne was again but a local affair, a matter of making a minute adjustment in the line.

Poor weather conditions had once more settled down over the white and green hills. In the attack on Wanne, visibility was out by fog to a few hundred yards. Then at dusk it began snowing again. About six inches fell before morning. Through this

snowfall, tanks crawled and slipped on sleek, icy roads to relieve other units which had been sitting out the freezing hours forward for several days.

The Division front remained inactive for several days. More snow fell on the 8th, deepening the already considerable drifts. Most forward units were serviced during the daylight hours by truck drivers and crews who somehow navigated the iced hazards of twisting, steeply graded roads that caused the vehicles to run out of control and slither into the banked drifts. However in the Stavelot area, supplies had to be shifted to the little peep for transfer to the tanks, as the road was under enemy observation and artillery fire. It was thought the peep would attract less attention . . .

The thermometer dropped to new lows. The men didn't need thermometers to tell them it was bitter cold, nor would they argue with anybody that told them this was one of the severest winters in Belgium. They could believe it with the cold that froze their feet, the deep snow that blocked roads and made almost impossible the detection of mines buried underneath.

In eight inches of snow, Baker Company decided to experiment with a tank and a tank-dozer. The Sherman was given a run to discover how it would operate under such ground conditions. It did fine except up steep hills and on icy curves. Flying snow churned up by the spinning treads, however, blinded the gunner by obscuring his sights.

The tank-dozer was tried out as a snowplow — and found to be little use. The snow piled up in front of the big blade, stopping the 'dozer in about 40 yards of forward movement.

The tanks began turning white. As an attempt at camouflage, lime was painted over the steel hulls to blend with the snow. Other improvisations were made to beat the winter. Strips of metal were welded to the tracks of some tanks to give them more traction on the icy roads.

The men were cold. Sometimes they were hungry. The freezing conditions brought on "trench foot," and many cases were beginning to plague the companies.

But the morale couldn't be beaten. *Verify* was ready to move out. It was ready for the next jump-off. The Germans were back on the defensive. The 30th Division was going over to the offensive, going after the enemy again.

This was more like it . . . . back on the offensive. With maps to tell where you were going . . .

The offensive on the 30th Division front began on January 13th at 8 o'clock of a cold, clear morning.

ii.

IN the summer-green hedgerows of France, the harvest fields of Belgium and Holland, and the winter mud of Germany, the 743rd Tank Battalion had fought beside the 30th Division infantry, engineers, artillerymen, tank destroyers, and anti-aircraft crews. Now in the white, frozen hills of the Ardennes mountains, once more an attack was being made beside the "Old Hickory" veterans.

For several weeks the Germans ahead of the Division's sector had the opportunity to dig in, to lay mines and let the deep snows cover the mines, to prepare his positions against attack in the pine forests and the icy ridges. What was left of the 1st SS Panzers had been withdrawn and its place taken by a collection of second-rate Volksgrenadier units stiffened with a few SS troops and by regular Wehrmacht men. But although the quality of the troops was below the military fanaticism of the more "elite" followers of Hitler, the hastily assembled defense forces had terrain and weather on their side.

While the hip-deep drifts of wet snow in the fields and the ice-glazed roads could be counted on to slow any attacking force, the Germans had thrown up field fortifications made of logs covered with soil. Sometimes these log-covered fortifications were connected by trenches. They were to be found along the roads, trails and the avenues made through the trees by firebreaks. The Germans cut or blasted down hundreds of trees as road blocks. Before the main line of resistance, a maze of wire and mines were placed in order to slow down advancing troops and bring them under planned defensive fire.

The dug-in enemy troops were supported by groups of tanks and assault guns. And they were prepared to fight, for to them had been given the responsibility of holding open the escape route by which von Rundstedt was trying to get his Sixth Panzer Army out of Belgium. Much of this traffic was going through a road junction, St. Vith, which was a sizeable town. Toward St. Vith to its south, the 30th Division attacked.

At the 8 o'clock morning jump-off, Able Company with one platoon of Capt. George Ganer's Dog Company light tanks moved with the 119th Infantry out of Malmedy a few miles south to Falize. Baker Company went into action with the 120th Infantry with objectives at Hedomont, nearby Hill 551, and neighboring Thirimont.

The immediate difficulty was with mines. Able Company even ran into American mines, a Sherman and a light tank being knocked out by American anti-tank explosives which somebody had forgotten to tell somebody else about. This was the only thing that temporarily stopped the tanks on their way to Falize.

Clear skies and freezing weather continued on January 14th. The push continued south. The enemy, being driven back on his own lines of communication and sensing the threat to vital St. Vith, reacted violently with vigorous counter-attacks. He threw in heavy barrages of artillery and mortar fire. The hideous and terrifiying noise made by the Nebelwerfer rockets, or "screaming meemies," was added to the din of combat.

Slowly, though, the lines were moving south. Enemy mines buried in the ground that had since frozen and been covered with a foot or more of snow, making detection and removal difficult or often impossible, remained a chief obstacle in a terrain of many obstacles. Maintenance men overcame incredible hardships to move up to mined-out tanks and get them rolling again. The company commander of Baker Company credited his maintenance section with keeping his entire 2nd Platoon going this day, as at one time or another during the operations around Thirimont, all the 2nd Platoon Shermans were disabled by mines. A total of 14 tanks were disabled within the 743 by mines on the

first day of the assault. Excellent work of company and Battalion maintenance had the tanks back in operation in a short time.

The mortar and assault gun platoons were working overtime putting harassing fire down on enemy positions when called for, particularly whenever the enemy exposed himself to make a counter-attack — a thing he now did more and more often as the push squeezed him off hill after hill. On one mission the assault gun fired nearly 500 rounds as fast as the 105 mm shells could be thrown into the howitzers. The acrid fumes became so intense in the confined turrets of the assault tanks that members of the crews began to pass out and had to be hauled into the fresh cold air to be revived.

Through hostile mortar, rocket and small arms fire, the tanks assisted in the capture of high ground about Bellevaux-Ligneuville and the nearby villages of Lamonriville and Recolement. Able Company with an attached platoon of light tanks from Dog Company accounted for numerous machine gun nests, one ammo truck (which went up with a fine bang) and an oddity: a horse-drawn sleigh filled with enemy infantry.

Again tanks were damaged by misplaced bombs from the air corps. This time a position of the 119th Infantry, supported by Able Company, was hit. *Verify* medics attached to Able Company helped recover the doughboys wounded in this bombing error.

The supply trains were getting up to the forward combat elements by sheer perseverence and some skillful, courageous driving. Again they were going up under enemy fire. One truck got through at night to two platoons of Baker Company by taking secondary roads (the main "highway" was blocked by enemy vehicles which had been knocked out by Division artillery during the day) and by taking off through the fields and snow in first and second gears, low range, using front wheel drive.

On January 15th, Colonel Branner Purdue, commanding officer of the 120th Infantry, put it into a letter to his men:

"You men," Colonel Purdue wrote, "have done what ordinary troops would believe to be impossible.

"Against the heaviest opposition this regiment has met, you advanced to secure your objectives. Here's what you did: You took the high ground and town that was the key to the enemy's defense north of the Ambleve River. When you knocked the enemy out of Thirimont and off Hill 551 he had to withdraw on our right and left, allowing our neighbors to advance rapidly with few casualties.

"In order for us to win we must beat the enemy in battle — and that is what you did. You beat up four battalions from two regiments of his crack parachute troops. You knocked out 10 tanks and assault guns — an entire company of his limited armor reserve. You captured more than 170 prisoners. You killed 500 enemy infantry, you fought as the 120th always does . . . Your teamwork was great. Take the enemy tanks knocked out: two by infantry with bazookas, one by mines, three by tank destroyers, two by tanks, two by artillery. That's the fine teamwork that makes our combination . . . a combat team that can't be beat.

"The cold was hard — you were harder. The enemy was tough — but you were tougher. Ordinary troops would have failed where you succeeded magnificently."

The tanks Colonel Purdue referred to were those of the 2nd Platoon, Baker Company, under the command of Lieutenant John J. O'Brien. The 1st and 3rd Platoons also supported the 120th Infantry but did not have quite as active a part.

The 2nd Platoon moved out at 8:30 in the morning to lead the infantry into Thirimont. The enemy was giving stubborn resistance. Yelling from his tank turret: "Come on, you doughs! We'll take this town!" Lieutenant O'Brien led the successful advance with his five tanks.

During the house to house fighting that then went on in Thirimont, O'Brien's Sherman was knocked out by a Teller mine. He climbed into another tank and continued to direct his platoon's movement by radio.

The enemy was driven out of Thirimont. The next objective was Hill 551. Moving out of Thirimont toward the hill. O'Brien's second tank came to grief on another Teller mine. Just behind was one of the 823rd Tank Destroyer vehicles. The officer in this vehicle, an M-IO open type tracked vehicle, had been killed by a sniper. O'Brien made his way to the M-IO, got in, and used its radio to direct his three remaining tanks.

By this means, the officer from Waterbury, Connecticut, commanded his platoon as it met a strong enemy counterattack launched with Mark IV tanks. It was during this action that the 2nd Platoon destroyed two of Nazi vehicles. The Tank Destroyer in which O'Brien had mounted knocked out a third.

This counter-attack was turned back, and the 120th Infantry went on to beat the enemy off Hill 551.

The next day, the enemy tried to take back the hill. The 1st and 3rd Platoons of Baker Company which were just about to jump-off toward another objective, slipped and slid back over the roads to meet the threat and stopped it.

Direct fire harried the progress south of other companies. A 3rd Platoon Dog Company light tank was penetrated, its whole crew of four killed.

And still the anti-tank mines, which the enemy had made full use of, caused difficulties These mines had been placed in great quantities on all roads or anything that could be considered a road. Behind such mine fields the Germans were using each mountain village as a strong point. Although several enemy battalion command posts had been overrun since the start of the attack, no mine field charts were to be found anywhere — indicating that the troublesome mines had been put down at random. Many of these mines were dug up from the ground beneath undisturbed snow, so (since the first snow had fallen December 26th) it became evident that the enemy's plan was to stop the American attack by strong defense positions in the hills from which he had such excellent observation. Whatever the enemy's plan, his positions were being overcome, one by one.

Recht fell in a 20-minute attack on January 17th with two platoons of Charlie Company advancing. But then snow prevented the tanks from going on further, although resistance seemed to be collapsing beyond Recht. The snow drifts had become so deep in the fields that all vehicle movement had to be kept to the roads — and these routes were seldom usable unless they had been swept first for mines and then by snowplows to remove the drifts.

A Charlie Company tank had to be rescued by the T2 recovery vehicle in an unusual situation. The Sherman had hung itself up on a wrecked airplane engine outside of Recht. The engine had been hidden in the snow.

Dog Companies light tanks were being used in sweeps through woods to clean out isolated groups of Germans. There were a number of instances when these tanks also served as rescue vehicles to bring back wounded infantrymen on their rear decks.

The enemy was now known to be pulling out everything of importance he had in the salient — and he was pulling it out through St. Vith. The roads of his retreat were choked not only with snow but with German tanks, trucks, cars, horse-drawn sleighs. Big American guns had the escape route under shellfire, and clear skies gave the air corps another chance to give his exodus close attention. The air wings reported catching columns lined up bumper to bumper, and they claimed on one day to have knocked out not less than 1,000 vehicles.

St. Vith remained a tantalizing objective to the south. Blocking the way, mostly, was the snow and the mines . . . From Recht to St. Vith were only six miles. But they were six of the toughest, most gruelling miles that could be stretched over sharply angled land . . . . defended by an enemy who was determined to man his guns to the bitter end.

On January 20th, Baker Company entertained two guests — British war correspondents — who sat in the assistant driver's seats of two of the Shermans in order to find out what life in the Ardennes with the tankers was like.

The representative of the press who happened to draw a 3rd Platoon tank merely got very cold and saw no action, as mines were not cleared and the platoon had to remain in a waiting position. The newspaperman who went with the 1st Platoon, however, had something to write home about. The Sherman jounced him over an ice-rutted route south toward Neder Emmels. On the way it encountered enemy tanks, self-propelled guns, artillery, rockets, bazookas, mortars, and a variety of small arms fire. As the correspondent peered out of his periscope, he quite forgot his freezing hands and feet. He saw how the platoon knocked out two of the self-propelled guns, caused the enemy tanks to retreat, and how it moved in with friendly troops to occupy the strong point in the builtup area of Neder Emmels.

Also pushing south on January 20th was Able and Charlie Companies — the latter was able to grind the tracks of its tanks through drifts to a position overlooking Sart-Les-St. Vith, three miles from St. Vith itself.

Charlie Company moved out at 8 the next morning and took Sart-Les-St. Vith two hours later. Four horse-drawn wagons were knocked out as the tanks entered with the 117th Infantry, and these efforts were climaxed with the bagging of a Mark IV tank. In cleaning out positions around this town, another Mark IV was flushed out of some woods and destroyed. A few minutes later, still a third was knocked out. The 1st Platoon lost one Sherman when it was hit and burned. The crew got out safely.

Able Company now passed beyond the southern positions of Charlie Company on January 22nd, pushing about one mile further to occupy Hinderhausen and Kapelle. In this operation, the Battalion lost the services of one of its most valued leaders, Able

Company's commander, Captain David Korrison, whose leg was shattered by a shell burst. Able Company also counted two enlisted men killed in action and five wounded. All casualties were suffered after two of the tanks had been penetrated by direct fire after being stopped in a mine field. All of the crews evacuated the tanks safely, but an incoming barrage of artillery cut them down before they could reach the cover of nearby buildings.

Baker Company was in a holding position when at 9 o'clock that morning the Germans tried another counter-attack with three Mark IV tanks supported by infantry. Lieutenant Raymond Staffilena planned a stratagem with the 823rd Tank Destroyers in which the TDs were to fire through the woods in the general direction of the counter-attack while two tanks revved their engines to make the enemy think an attack was starting from the west. Meanwhile, as this was going on, Staffilena took three of his tanks around to the east and attacked the enemy flank. Two of the Mark IVs withdrew and escaped, but Sergeant Ishmel Ferry, commanding his tank, blasted the third enemy tank at 150 yards, killing the enemy driver and gunner. The counter-attack was completely broken up.

Charlie Company sent a platoon into Neundorf, south of Hinderhausen and two miles southwest of St. Vith. Another platoon tried to reach this objective to help in its capture but couldn't make it over the route selected. Another route was then taken and the platoon joined in a defensive position at Neundorf. On the way, one of the Shermans was hit by a shell burst. The tank commander in the turret, Staff Sergeant Alexander Oski, a veteran of the Battalion's fighting, was killed.

On January 23rd, the assault gun platoon was straffed by a British Spitfire fighter plane in the afternoon and was subjected to a fierce artillery barrage in its gun position that night — the worst artillery, the men said, since Mortain. The tanks were jounced around, but (no one being outside them) crews escaped injury.

That same afternoon, Baker Company, fighting around Neder Emmels and neighboring Ober Emmels, captured intact four self-propelled guns mounted on Mark IV chassis. The 3rd Platoon overran a barn which contained the crews of the self-propelled guns. They were taken before the Germans knew what it was all about.

In all, Baker Company had a very good day on January 23rd. In addition to the four captured guns, Sergeant Earnest Kirksey spotted another Mark IV self-propelled gun at 400 yards and destroyed it. While Kirksey was taking care of this matter, another Sherman sighted a Nazi partner assault gun and knocked it out. Even as this was going on, Lieutenant Jean Hansen, 3rd Platoon leader, called a target on a Mark IV tank and put it out of action with three rounds of armorpiercing shells followed by one high explosive round. For good measure, the company later put four armored-piercing shells into another Mark IV but listed it only as a probable, as no one was observed to leave the enemy vehicle after it was hit, and the tank may have been abandoned before the company spotted it.

On the flanks of St. Vith at the 23rd of January, *Verify* units held down defensive positions. That night the Seventh Armored Division, which had been biding its time,

stormed down into completely ruined St. Vith and captured the town, after two attacks, to put up a sign "You are now entering St. Vith by courtesy of the Seventh Armored Division."

The 30th Division, which had done all the hard grinding, was used to things like that by this time. The important thing was that St. Vith was taken, the "Belgian Bulge" erased, the Ardennes campaign, which had been so nearly an American defeat, was an American victory.

"Another brilliant phase of your campaigning on the Western Front has been successfully accomplished," wrote Major General Hobbs to his 30th Division troops on January 24th. He then summed up their story:

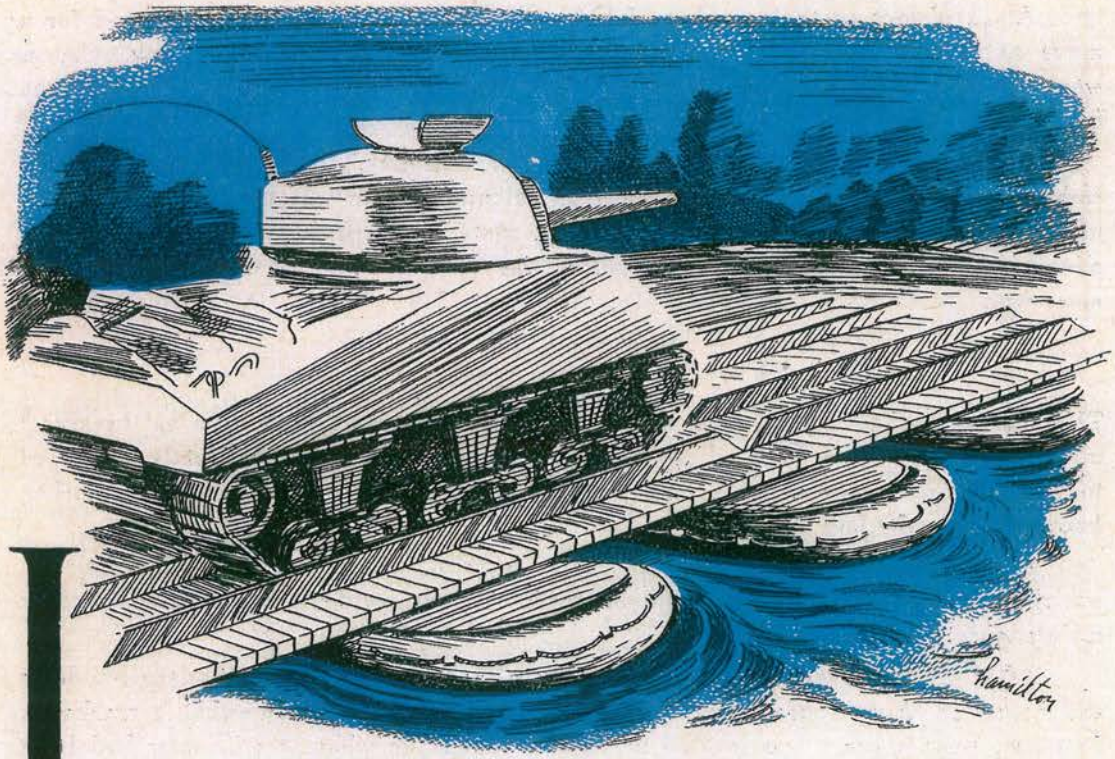
"The operations from 16 December to the present date (which include the taking and holding of Malmedy, Stavelot, Stoumont, La Gleize, Thirimont and the hill to the southwest thereof, Ligneuville, Pont, Bellevaux, the famous crossroads at Road Block No. 2, Recht, Obr Emmels, Ndr Emmels, Ndr Emmelser Heide, Rodt, Hinderhausen, Neundorf, Krembach and Weisten) represent a display of courage, fortitude, and endurance that will remain forever as a glorious part of the work of your division, of your unit, and of yourselves as individuals . . ."

These were warm words. The weather continued bitter cold and icy. On January 28th the Battalion was pulled out of the line for a rest period in division reserve at two very battered Belgian villages named Hebronval and Ottre.

It didn't matter that the two places were war ruined, with the usual half-houses and the not so usual number of dead cows, horses and assorted livestock that had managed to get killed in the streets. What mattered was that there was an opportunity to get out of the tanks, to eat hot meals, to sleep — even to shave.

# PART SIX

# END OF THE ENEMY



# I . . . IT'S DONE WITH BRIDGES - - - AND GUTS

i.

IN an area where the remaining houses more closely resembled barns than living quarters, the Battalion remained resting in division reserve in Belgium from January 28th to February 3rd. The inevitable tank training classes began again. Men patched and policed up their quarters. Stoves retrieved from battered homes were set up and made barren rooms at least warm if not cheerful. A movie theater was set up in the Hebronval town cafe — which had a roof that leaked. Shower trucks went to Spa.

On the day that ushered in February 1945, the intense cold with its ice and snow suddenly gave way to a thaw and drizzling rain. The hard-packed snow quickly began to melt and disappear from the fields, exposing the cadavers of unsuspected men and animals along with the litter of helmets, guns, gas masks and other such things that mark the passage of an already forgotten battle. The hard surface of the country roads once more appeared.

And once more, with the vanished snow revealing new ugliness of their surroundings, the men policed their areas, recovering the profusion of American equipment, from telephone wire to anti-tank mines, that had been left scattered behind by other units.

At 11 o'clock in the morning of February 2nd, all companies were alerted for a move to come at any time that day, or night, or early the next morning. Orders went out to remove or cover all "743" markings on the vehicles. Radio silence was to be in effect. The march was to be made in the utmost secrecy.

An Army orientation film, "Your Job in Germany," had been shown at the Hebronval cafe that morning. This time, an orientation film was timely. By 6:30 that night, the companies had overlay maps of the route of march they were to take. Then all men knew for certain. The Battalion was moving back to Germany — back to more war.

ii.

THE march was back to the Aachen area. The kitchen crews served up a hot breakfast in the darkness before dawn. Units were on the road headed north shortly afterward to travel 60 miles through Stavelot, Verviers, Eupen, and Aachen to reach suburban Laurensberg in the late afternoon.

Shortly after the march began, it started to rain. When the march ended, the sun was shining brightly. The long jump was made without accidents and with only minor maintenance troubles.

After the medieval conditions of the Ottre area in Belgium, the modern buildings and houses in Laurensburg, just northwest of Aachen, seemed somewhat remarkable. Battalion Headquarters was located in a factory building where textile dyes had been manufactured. It was unscathed by bombs that had devastated Aachen, had lights, a good heating plant, plumbing that worked, and afforded the luxury of executive offices with mahogany desks.

The Battalion remained in division reserve. The Aachen area was used to assemble the 30th Division for the next operation planned to bridge the troublesome Roer River and drive to the Rhine.

Extreme steps were taken to guard security when the Battalion went into bivouac. All vehicles were hidden from aerial view, either by placing them under cover, driving them into garages or other buildings, or stretching camouflage nets to conceal each tank or halftrack. The 30th Division men had covered their distinguishing shoulder patches on their uniforms. The location of the Division in the Aachen area was considered top secret — the enemy was supposed to think "Old Hickory" was in Belgium getting ready to crack the unpierced section of the Siegfried Line in the Eifel hills, and not back ready to take part in the battle of the Cologne Plain. So it caused some concern when "Arnhem Mary", the Nazi propagandist who, like "Axis Sally," broadcast in English over the German radio: "Okay, 30th Division — you can put back on those shoulder patches. We know you're at Aachen . . . ."

The "secret" assembly stayed around Aachen for a week, during which time the men grew reaccustomed to the blazing lights of trucks and peeps on the roads at night. Aachen was now a communications zone where blackout driving was relaxed.

On the night of February 8th, just before midnight, *Verify* moved back to a combat zone — a march through rain and darkness that took its men through the flatlands to familiar war ground near the Roer River. The tanks closed into the town of Rohe.

Rohe was a small town just east of much bombed Eschweiler. Located not far from the Reichsautobahn — one of the double-laned "superhighways" — Rohe, like most of the towns before Cologne, stood in ruins, scarcely habitable. All civilians had been evacuated. War had turned the insides of their houses out. The streets were strewn with broken furniture, bits of stoves and kitchen ranges, masses of wet, unsightly bedding. To camouflage a tank here, it was merely necessary to pull part of a former dwelling over it, perhaps tossing part of a kitchen table on the turret to complete the effect.

It was not intended a stay would be made in rubbled Rohe very long. Plans were set to bridge the Roer, smash on across the Cologne Plain, beat the Germans west of the Rhine. Tank platoon leaders on February 9th made a reconnaissance of the roads to be used in the approach to the Roer, A meeting of all officers was held in the early afternoon where final plans of the proposed attack were given.

That night, the plans were delayed 24 hours — and then called off indefinitely.

At the source of the Roer River to the south was a system of dams that could control the flow of the river and thus became a military asset to the enemy. By suddenly releasing the tremendous pressure of water by blowing these dams, the Germans could create a furious flash flood that would sweep away combat bridges, smother roads and fields, and drown out an attack for days, possibly weeks. To get this flood over with, the air corps had been trying since early in December to blast the dams with bombs. Some bombs did strike the structures but did no more than crack them. The Ardennes counter-offensive interrupted operations, but now in February attention was once more being given the problem of the Roer and the flood. It was decided to let the infantry do the job. American First Army troops went about the grim business of pushing through deep forests to get to the water control site. But even as they fought slowly toward their mission's objective, the enemy on February 8th blew the sluices of one large dam. There was no flash flood. The lower Roer flooded slowly, effectively, until the excess could drain off. The normally narrow little river now swept by at better than 10 miles an hour, and crossings that were 50 feet wide became as much as 300 feet wide. On February 10th, the river was still rising . . .

So down came orders postponing D-Day indefinitely. The tankers heard the news, then took another look at the shattered remains of Rohe about them. It looked like it would be their home for awhile. And they set about the now familiar routine of fixing up battered buildings to make Rohe somewhat livable.

A school house became the movie theater. Shower trucks shuttled back and forth to a big shower room in a Kohlscheid German coal mine where a quartermaster outfit provided fresh clothes. The program of tank training was put into operation again. The Red Cross "doughnut wagon" rolled around for visits. And best of all, during this period of waiting, the Battalion began to receive new tanks mounting the high-powered 76 mm gun. A new version of the Sherman also arrived with a new suspension

system. Because this suspension system of bogie wheels and tracks resembled the type used by German tanks, the new Sherman was run around to the infantry regiments to show them what it looked like — and not to shoot at it.

Church services were held regularly. The line companies vied with one another in figuring out new ways of increasing their armor protection with systems of wire, concrete-filled ammo boxes, and sandbags.

By February 19th the flood waters of the Roer began to recede. Action was anticipated within the next few days. Tanks and men were ready. Meanwhile there were a few precious passes — to Paris, and to Valkenberg's 3-day rest camp in Holland. Happily, a half dozen veterans went back to their homes in the States on the Army's new furlough plan.

Things had been quiet enough in Rohe. It came in for no attention by enemy artillery. Even the night-prowling Luftwaffe did not bother with the place. By the 22nd of February, the dams at the Roer's source were in First Army's hands and the natural flood had abated until the river was flowing along its natural banks, though still swiftly. The Germans nervously had been watching our preparations. On the 22nd, there was much enemy aerial activity over the Division area. Flares garishly lit up Rohe. Demolition and personnel bombs exploded in nearby fields — but none where units of the Battalion were located.

During the 22nd, all companies were given a complete briefing on the coming operations. The tank crews spent the remainder of the time getting all equipment ready for the combat move.

The attack across the Roer was all set to go.

iii.

IT sounded as if Jove had gotten up in the middle of the night in a towering rage and begun to hurl thunderbolts around. It was the artillery assembled on the 30th Division front coming to life at 2:45 in the morning of February 23rd — and it was one of the greatest preparatory barrages ever released, the way British General Montgomery liked to do it.

Along the Division's 25-mile front of river, 246 guns went into action — one for every 32 yards of front.

The roar of the batteries sounded like a constant roll. It shook the tankers awake in Rohe. To some it sounded like strings of bombs dropping. The night sky was bright with the flashes of the artillery. It kept up for hours. The long weeks of build-up behind the Allied lines was now being translated into unleashed power.

Bridging the Roer was strictly an infantry show. It was the job of the foot soldier to get his teetering arrangements of duckboards and rope across, for the engineers to put across the pontoons and steel treads over which the tanks, and guns, and trucks — and ambulances — would follow to back up the man with the rifle. It could not be done with mirrors. It had to be done with bridges — and guts.

All through the day of the 23rd, the infantry went about their job. Rifle squads jogged across duckboards to the Roer's east bank. Some never made the other side. The rest sloshed through the muddy bogs made by the recent flood. Other infantry teams followed with machine guns, mortars. They secured the bridgehead, mopping up a sector of farmsteads where German infantry had been dazed almost into unconsciousness by the terrific artillery barrages. The German artillery was answering back. It rained shells on the unsung heroes who struggled in the muddy, frigid river to lash pontoons and strips of steel into a bridge.

The bridging operation was an engineer's headache. Actually it wasn't so much a river crossing as it was a crossing of a wide, boggy swamp with a current of six miles an hour.

"When this war is over," said an engineer staff officer, "I'm going to explore the rivers of Germany to see if there could possibly be a worse crossing site in the whole country."

But the very unsuitableness of the site had one great advantage — it fooled the German defenses. The enemy did not expect an attack to be made at a place which afforded such meager access and egress roads. Many of the enemy who weren't surprised on that front were pulverized by the artillery fire or driven away from their guns.

On the night of the 23rd, after engineers completed their work on a bridge strong enough to carry the weight of tanks, the come ahead signal was sent to the companies waiting in Rohe. At 10 o'clock, the Reconnaissance platoon went on up ahead to make contact with the infantry and arrange for guides to direct tank units. Members of the recon party crossed the Roer in an assault boat and reconnoitered the east bank bogs. Other men of the platoon waited on the Autobahn near Eschweiler to meet a British squadron of "Scorpion" tanks. These were medium tanks equipped with mine-destroying flails of great links of chain which whipped the ground before them. The British were assigned to work with the Battalion.

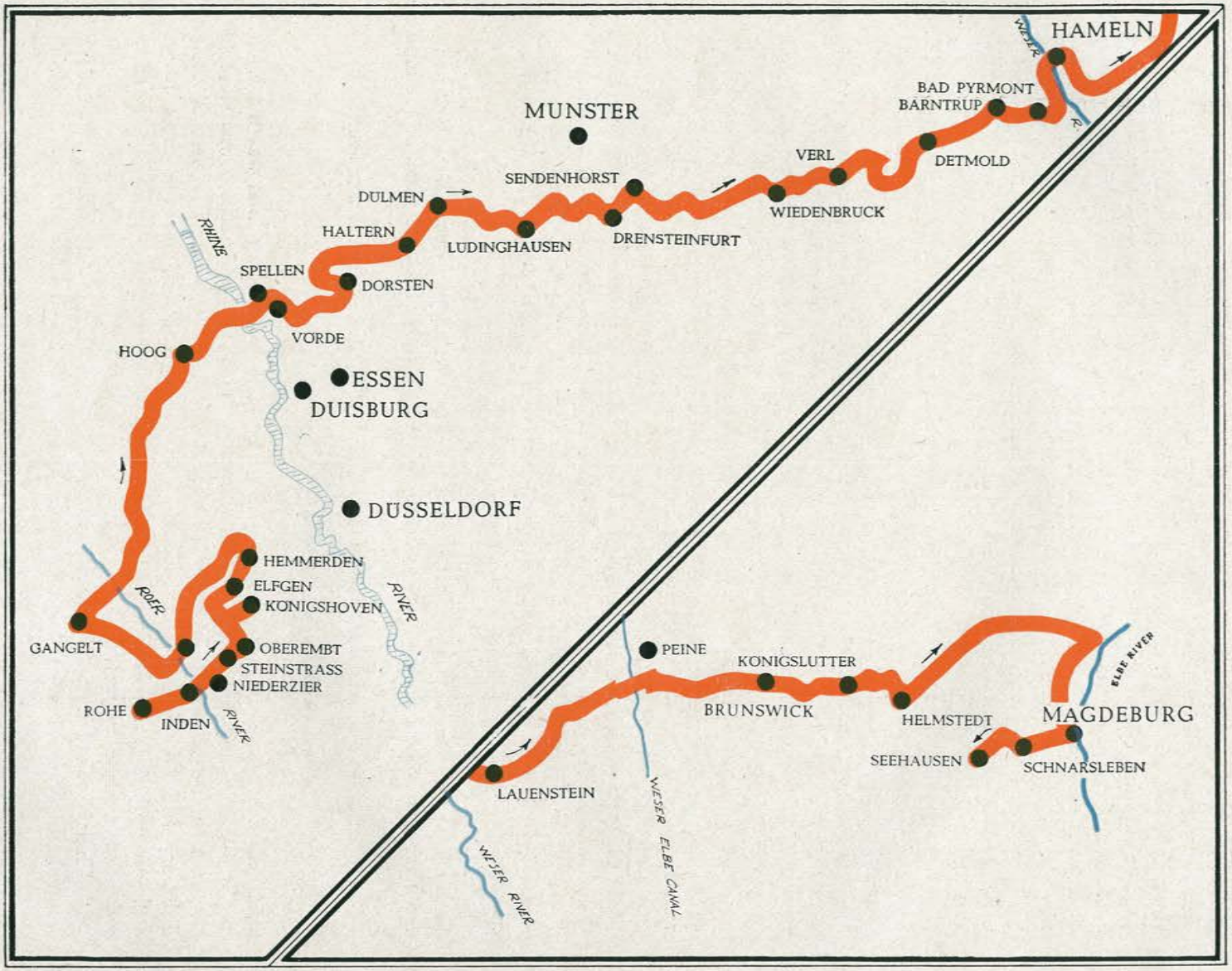
At 1 o'clock in the morning, February 24th, the combat elements of *Verify* were lined up on the road west of Schophoven at the Roer, waiting to cross. Within an hour, the Roer was behind the Shermans. A few dead-tired bridge-builders stood in the mud and watched the tanks cross the treadway.

"Okay, Doc," shouted one to a tanker, "now let's get the gawdam war over . . ."

iv.

BEFORE the tanks went across the treadway above the muddy bog that was the Roer, the 30th Division infantry regiments had gone ahead to mop up three towns close to the east bank — Hambach, Krauthausen and Niederzier. So in the darkness of early February 24th, Able, Baker and Charlie companies advanced through these towns without opposition. By daylight, the tanks were in defensive position with the infantry units they were to support.

Things looked fine. The Roer had been a big hurdle. It had been successfully jumped. Intelligence officers said that the attack had smashed the German 363rd In-


HAMELN
WESER R.
BAD PYRMONT
BARNTRUP
DETMOLD
VERL
WIEDENBRUCK
MUNSTER
SENDENHORST
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LUDINGHAUSEN
HALTERN
RHINE
SPELLEN
DORSTEN
VORDE
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DUISBURG
DUSSELDORF
HEMMERDEN
ELFGEN
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GANGELT
OBEREMBT
STEINSTRASS
NIEDERZIER
ROHE
INDEN
RIVER
PEINE
KONIGSLUTTER
BRUNSWICK
HELMSTEDT
ELBE RIVER
MAGDEBURG
SEEHAUSEN
SCHNARSLEBEN
LAUENSTEIN
WESER ELBE CANAL
WESER RIVER

fantry Division. The Roer line had been broken. Now it was to be exploited through modern infantry attacks. But it was not to be a foolhardy headlong rush ahead. The German system of defense had largely broken down to a series of strong points around the built-up areas. Each town had its garrison and its orders to fight to the finish — orders from Hitler himself. To take these towns with a minimum number of casualties to American troops who would have to cross flat open ground to get to the houses, it was decided to use night attacks.

Thus through the day of February 24th, the tanks waited with the infantry units for night to fall. At 6 o'clock, they moved out for the town of Steinstrass. This town lay northeast. The Roer attack, having penetrated the enemy's defenses straight through to the east, was now changing direction and forcing the Germans to retreat across their own lines of communication. This was all part of the grand strategy for the American Ninth Army — to make its main effort in an attack east across the Roer in the general direction of Cologne, then to wheel north along the west bank of the little Erft River, driving toward the Canadian First Army which was driving on the extreme north across the Maas. The British Second Army, between the Canadians and the Americans, was biding its time, ready to drive from its front along the Maas if the other two armies trapped anything in the Cologne Plain pocket now forming.

The war was now moving into high gear . . . but it wasn't going to be a walk-away. The assault on Steinstrass soon showed the kind of fighting to expect.

The plan to take Steinstrass was to mount up doughs on tanks and attempt to barrel down the road into the town. This was a gamble for exploitation. Another more cautious plan was prepared in case the dash failed. The dash was stopped by a German road block supported by tanks and anti-tank guns, 1000 yards from where it had started.

While Able Company was out on one flank, Baker Company formed the spearhead of the Steinstrass task force with 117th Infantry doughs on the rear decks of the Shermans. Six of the 823rd Tank Destroyers and four British flail tanks reinforced the spearhead. Down the road it went — until it hit the road block.

There was violent action. Elements of the German 9th Panzer Division turned up. Baker Company gunners accounted for one 75 mm anti-tank gun, two 40 mm anti-aircraft guns, a 20 mm anti-aircraft gun, and a German halftrack around the road block. An attempt was made to skirt the block and the tanks ran straight into a minefield. Three were stopped. The crews of these tanks and the six infantrymen who rode on each vehicle abandoned the Shermans there when two Mark Vs began whistling shells at them.

The 9th Panzer tanks were spotted moving from west to east in the night some 600 yards to the front. The remaining two tanks in Baker Company's mined-out 3rd Platoon took the enemy under fire. The British flail tanks tried to beat a path through the mine-field. The leading vehicle was put of action by a direct fire hit out of the darkness — possibly from one of the enemy tanks seen earlier. Tank commanders strained their eyes trying to locate the source of the direct fire that was hurling shell after shell down the black corridor between the road block and a stand of woods — the deep Grosse Forest.

The mine fields and the road block outside of Steinstrass with the German Mark Vs roaming around in the blackness was too strong a defense for the task force to overcome that night. The attack was called off to wait for daylight. The tanks dispersed into the woods for the night.

In the morning, the attack was resumed. Infantry engineers removed the road block, sweeping a path through an estimated 2,000 mines laid in that one area. Direct fire, however, still came down the corridor through which the road led. The infantry troops attacked through the woods. Baker Company had to reach Steinstrass by another route.

Meanwhile Able Company received orders at 10 in the morning to move north through the woods and assemble with "F" Company of the 117th Infantry. Steinstrass at this point was but 400 yards away from the assembly point at the edge of the heavily booby-trapped woods. At 11:45, Division artillery was laid down. Then out moved the 1st Platoon led by Lieutenant Orlyn Folkestad. The tanks pressed east toward Steinstrass on the highway. Two hundred yards up this road, the platoon began receiving direct fire from some point to the north. Two Shermans were knocked out, one being Lieutenant Folkestad's. He jumped from the turret uninjured, gave first aid to his wounded crewmen, then summoned medics. Casualties were two men killed, two men listed as missing in action, and five men wounded.

The tanks gave fire support from the woods and the infantry worked their way into Steinstrass at last. Just before dark, friendly artillery laid down smoke in the 400 yards between the woods and the town, and Able Company moved up. It then went on with the infantry to take Lich, the next town northward, in a night attack. The town fell in about an hour.

During the night of the 25—26th, there was a dim moon. In the darkness of the early morning hours, Able and Charlie Companies worked together to take another town, Oberembt. The Able Company platoon encountered little difficulty. Led by Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Robert C. Jones, the five tanks charged through small arms and rifle grenades, cleared half of Oberembt, and were set up in defensive positions about two hours after the jump-off. Charlie Company had more trouble.

To begin with, Charlie Company tipped two of its Shermans into a giant bomb crater seen too late on the road in the darkness. The T2 and two medium tanks were at work pulling the Shermans out of the crater when a German direct fire weapon caught them. The T2 and one of the helping tanks went up in flames. The company commander, Captain Walter D. Macht, was evacuated with a broken leg. Several crewmen were treated for burns.

Charlie Company went into Oberembt, cleared half the town and began a wait for the platoon of Able Company which had not yet put in its appearance. Charlie tanks prowled on through Oberembt and started out the other side of town when it again ran into trouble. Direct fire lashed out from enemy guns in the dark once more. Another Sherman burned. The crew got out with their lives — with singed faces and hands.

The following night of the 26—27th, Baker Company moved up to join Charlie Company in Oberembt and together the two companies rolled out on a night attack on the neighboring towns of Kirch and Troisdorf. The attack by Charlie units on Kirch went smoothly and the town fell quickly. The Baker attack was marred by an unfortunate tragedy.

The squadron of British flail tanks operated with Baker Company for the Troisdorf assault. The plan of the attack called for the Shermans to approach Troisdorf on one road, the flail tanks on a second parallel route. About 1,000 yards outside the town, Baker halted its column to call for a pre-arranged artillery concentration. As the tanks waited in the wan moonlight, the noise of tank movement was noticed on the left. No one but the enemy was known to be in that direction. A warning was passed to the rest of the column. It immediately deployed, training its guns toward the sounds of movement.

Under the uncertain half-light, the strange silhouettes of armored vehicles appeared. Baker Company opened up. Four vehicles were knocked out. They were British flail tanks.

Later investigation disclosed that the British vehicles had taken a wrong turn and gotten off the course agreed in the pre-arranged plan of attack. A tactical tragedy...

Night attacks, as long as there was some moonlight "so a man can see where he's going," were generally popular with tankmen fighting on terrain that was flat, level, and devoid of natural cover across many long stretches of fields. With the moon allowing enough light to give at least a measure of visibility so that the movements of men and vehicles could be co-ordinated, casualties were kept to a minimum on the table-like battleground — though after an episode like that of the British flail tanks, the night attack theory might seem academic.

Able Company moved out of Oberembt for Putz as soon as Baker and Charlie Companies had secured Kirch and Troisdorf. Able Company took Putz without vehicle loss. The infantry was pinned down for a time by enemy small arms fire. Then the tanks deployed and covered all sides with machine gun bursts. Under the cover of this fire the doughboys went in and took. During the moonlight fighting of two nights, five villages had been taken with a minimum loss to infantry and tankers.

By contrast, daylight fighting was proving more costly. Baker Company was given the mission of attacking at 10:30 in the morning of the 27th toward the town of Hohenholz to guard the flanks of the infantry at Konigshoven. Up to within 50 yards of Hohenholz, everything went without a hitch. The infantry had just dismounted from the tanks to deploy when a Mark V suddenly broke into action from a wooded area nearby. A Baker Company tank immediately burned. Return fire knocked out the Mark V.

Hohenholz was then taken. One hour earlier, Charlie Company had started out for enemy-held Konigshoven. Along with Charlie Company went one platoon of Baker Company. There were four Mark V tanks waiting unseen outside Konigshoven. They allowed the Shermans to approach to 200 yards, and then let go. Two more Baker Company tanks went up in flame. In all, four Shermans were hit there, three of which

burned. Charlie Company knocked out two of the Mark Vs on entering the town. The Battalion counted in this one day's fighting seven tanks lost, four men killed, and seven wounded. It had gained three towns, destroyed three Mark V tanks.

With the taking of Konigshoven, the 30th Division's part in the Cologne Plain offensive was finished. Once again it was the snorting, high-speed armored divisions which went ahead to clinch the strategy of higher headquarters.

The Battalion went into holding positions. And still Baker Company had ill war luck. In its defense position at the eastern edge of Konigshoven, a Baker Company Sherman commanded by Sergeant Holland sighted an enemy tank rolling toward the town at 7 o'clock an the morning, the last day of February. Sergeant Holland's gunner got off two shots before the German tank replied. The German round penetrated the Sherman and it burned.

This action was a bitter exclamation point at the end of a fighting phase . . . almost (for victory was in the wind now — all could feel it) at the enemy's end.

Still ahead was the Rhine. And men asked: If the Roer gave us so much trouble, what of the Rhine?

That answer was coming up.

# II . . . . . WATCH ON THE RHINE

i.

THE next operation for units attached to the 30th Division was the crossing of the Rhine River. To perfect its part in spearheading, with the 79th Division, this climax of all river crossings, the 30th Division was secretly drawn back into Holland on March 6th to stage full-dress rehearsals over the Meuse.

The 743rd Tank Battalion drew back also, but remained on the German side of the border at Gangelt, northwest of Geilenkirchen.

It was a three hour road march back across the Roer toward Holland. There was one tragic incident. In mid-march, a Baker Company tank was forced to swerve sharply to avoid hitting a passing truck. T/5 Roy Hall, assistant driver in the tank, was leaning out of his compartment to watch the side of the road for the driver when a hatch of the turret caught on a tree. This swung the heavy barrel of the tank gun around swiftly to

crush Hall, a veteran in combat with the Battalion from D-Day on Omaha Beach through the French, Belgian, Dutch and German campaigning. He was killed instantly.

Like all the German towns in the Rhineland, Gangelt was the worse for war. Its houses were windowless and shelltorn. The town had been evacuated of all civilians and they had left behind them the usual mess of junk, paper, sheets, pillows, broken furniture. The afternoon of arrival was immediately spent in cleaning up the Battalion area and organizing the living quarters.

Battalion headquarters was set up in the town hall, a fairly modern building of three stories. It afforded the staff officers and administrative sections once more the luxury of "private" offices and desks. These desks were discovered after the trash and litter had been cleared away from the rooms.

During the two weeks that the Battalion remained at Gangelt, a return was made to semigarrison life. The customary maintenance of vehicles continued as part of the day's work, and tank training classes with special tests on a flame-throwing device, but there was time for recreation. The usual shower trucks were arranged. A barn-like hall became the movie theater. There were passes to Holland. And on the town's main street, a barber shop appeared, manned by company barbers. Shave, haircut, shampoo — one dollar . . .

Captain John C. McCoy's extra-ordinarily reliable maintenance crews got busy with their vital jobs of fixing engines, repairing parts — doing the 101 things necessary to keep combat vehicles rolling. It was the remarkable efficiency of the maintenance section that made it "the best in the ETO" — an opinion held by many, from a private on the line in a tank crew to a colonel back at ordnance shops. These men of maintenance contributed a little realized but a very important and a very large share in winning the war.

The impressive list of awards to officers and men of the Battalion was growing. On March 14th, General Hobbs visited Gangelt during the afternoon to present decorations for past combat actions. Staff Sergeant Anthony A. Tempesta, Able Company tank commander, received the Distinguished Service Cross — the 13th received in the Battalion since D-Day. Staff Sergeant Frederick R. Morey, Baker Company tank commander, was given the Oak Leaf Cluster to his Silver Star. Signal Corps photographers clicked off pictures as the General went on to present eight Silver Stars, 25 Bronze Stars, and a Cluster to the Bronze Star.

Until March 19th, the Battalion rested, trained, and waited for what now was felt would be the last big operation of the war — the crossing of the Rhine . . . The move up to the big river to assemble for the attack was anticipated on the 19th. The move order came on the 21st.

The march to Hoog, a farmstead area near the Rhine's west bank, was one of 55 miles, most of it made at night.

The farming region a few miles west of the Rhine River across from the industrial Ruhr was lush green land of rich soil. Spring had come to the prosperous, placid fields. The sun was bright and warm. The woodlands that fringed the pastures were emerald

again. As the Battalion waited for orders, the men got out under the sun. Games of baseball started up. German cows were milked. German wild rabbits were shot. Fresh laundered clothes flapped in the sunshine. It was the first good weather found since entering Germany. The men made the most of it.

Overhead, night and day, the unchallenged Allied bombers made their journies to and from the flak-filled skies over the Ruhr Valley. The tempo of approaching victory, of the enemy's end, was increasing. At the upper Rhine the Americans found a bridge intact — the Remagen bridge. The first vanguard of Americans were across the Rhine. More were coming. But there weren't any more bridges left intact. Not even the Remagen. One too many shells hit it, and it toppled into the water.

On March 23rd, the Battalion's assault guns were in position and registered in their 105s on the enemy across the river. All units were alerted, Another H-hour, another D-Day was coming up — 2 o'clock in the morning, March 24th. All companies were given final briefing on the assault.

Back on the tanks went the white-lettered unit identification of the 743rd Tank Battalion. The days of secrecy were over. The Allied Armies were about to move high, wide and handsome.

During the day of March 23rd, huge flights of planes continued to drone over on missions just on the other side of the Rhine. But they did not drop bombs this day . . . they dropped paratroopers.

ii.

CHARLIE Company of the 736th Tank Battalion was attached to the 743rd Tank Battalion for the Rhine River crossing. This company of tankers had been specially trained and equipped with the amphibeous "DD" tanks such as those the Battalion used at Omaha Beach. There were 17 tanks in the company. This would be their first combat.

The artillery preparation before the attack was terrific. It was the greatest of its kind fired in the war in Western Europe. The assault gun platoon's five guns alone (its sixth gun was out of action) fired 2,021 rounds in two hours between 1 and 3 o'clock the morning of March 24th.

At 2 o'clock, the 30th Division doughboys jumped-off from the Rhine's west bank for the east, three regiments abreast. First elements crossed in storm boats. An hour later, the "DD" tanks rolled into the river. All 17 tanks were successful in getting across. They were on the east bank of the Rhine with the 117th Infantry Regiment in the bridgehead sector between Wesel and Dusseldorf. The tanks at once pushed in toward Spellen and then inland eastward until held up by a railroad underpass which was blocked and mined.

Able and Charlie Companies' orthodox Shermans floated across the Rhine by daylight in the morning on Bailey rafts — sections of steel bridging lashed to pontoons. One raft got out of control in mid-river, drifted with the current and crashed into the long pontoon bridge being rushed by combat engineers. The raft and its tank then sank. The crew got wet.

Once across, Able and Charlie assembled in platoons and began to help clean out the splotchy resistance at the east bank. The Shermans came up on line to advance inland with the "DD" tanks.

Baker and Dog Companies remained at the west bank "sweating out" some means of crossing. Priority was being given to artillery. The assault gun tanks rolled up to the completed pontoon bridge that night and was stopped by the bridge police. "Gotta hold those tanks, bud," said the MP to Staff Sergeant William Lindquist who was then in charge of the platoon.

"These aren't tanks," said Lindquist.

The MP took another look at the assault gun — a Sherman mounting the 105 mm howitzer. "You look like tanks to me," the MP decided. "Only artillery is going across this bridge now."

"Well, what do you think we are if we're not artillery?" countered Lindquist. He then explained the facts of life as related to indirect fire, 105 mm howitzers, and was just getting warmed up on how assault gun shooting was co-ordinated with Division's guns when the MP gave up.

"Okay . . Get them tanks — I mean artillery — out of here," he said, surrendering the bridge.

The assault guns were the first tanks to cross by this means.

The Battalion was operating on the land, in the water, and in the air that day. The aerial activity was done by Major Clarence Benjamin, who acted as observer in an L-4 plane — a jaunty little sky peep monoplane normally used by artillery for spotting their work. Major Benjamin made three flights during the day observing the progress of the tank units. He was in touch with the Battalion by radio.

The Rhine River crossing was one of the most carefully planned and heavily supported jumps since the D-Day operations to invade northern France. It was accomplished with a force and a fury that impressed even the most veteran soldier, private to general.

With paratroopers already fighting in advance of the crossings, with infantry, artillery, and tanks across, a breakthrough was hoped for. Another task force of spearheading tanks with doughboys mounted on top was put together.

Down from the Canadian front rushed the German 116th Panzer Division with its Panthers, Tigers and Tiger Royals. The German tank division was thrown directly in the 743rd Tank Battalion's path.

The breakthrough was not yet. The Sherman tanks and the American infantry had to fight for their lives as they jabbed, clawed and bit for the opening that would let the waiting armored divisions through.

iii.

THE task force that was meant to sweep east was actually formed and on its way at the close of March 25th when it ran headlong into the 116th Panzer Division.

During the morning, Baker and Dog Companies had bridged across the Rhine and gone immediately into extensive fighting to exterminate enemy troops in small towns and thick, surrounding woods in the bridgehead site. At the end of the day, Baker, Charlie and Dog Companies were pulled together, the assault guns were attached, and with the 2nd Battalion of the 117th Infantry, this task force was set to begin a night sweep through to Dorsten.

The Panzers changed all that with a sudden counter-attack. The task force idea was cancelled. Instead of a grand sweep, it was necessary to push ahead into the German armor on a cautious, limited objective basis.

East from the Rhine, the land built up gradually in a series of rolling ridges interspaced with level stretches of fields sprinkled with forests and with towns that were little more than farming communities. In this terrain, 15 miles from the Rhine, the enemy put up one of his desperate, determined defenses. Here he put up the sort of grim fight that had been expected at the banks fo the Rhine itself. For the next three days through March 28th, the Battalion slugged it out, pressing along the east-west course of the deep little Lippe Canal toward Dorsten.

It was wet, dismal fighting — the fighting in mud over wet fields with the dogged purpose of boring a hole through the enemy lines so that the armored divisions, now crossed over and waiting at the east bank of the Rhine, could be shaken loose.

Phase line by phase line, field by field, the enemy's defense stand was weakened. In those bleak, deadly operations, the enemy was able to take the last heavy casualties of the Battalion. On March 26th, Lieutenant Clifton Fitzgibbons was killed in his Charlie Company tank with Corporal Aubrey S. Haley. The following day, Able Company lost one of its most capable tank commanders, Staff Sergeant Anthony Tempesta, holder of the Distinguished Service Cross. Tempesta was killed with four other men in action where two Sherman tanks were knocked out by enemy armor.

The progress of the fighting during those three days was slow, dark, and seeming indecisive to the men doing the slogging work. It was the darkness before dawn . . .

On the 29th of March, the Battalion held down defense positions. The Eighth Armored Division passed through to take over the attack. Behind the Eighth waited still more armored might — the Second Armored Division.

This was to be the victory punch.

# III

## RACE TOWARD BERLIN

i.

FOR more than a month, Russia had been pushing her own gigantic offensive against Germany. In Italy, an American and a British Army pinned down thousands of German troops the Wehrmacht desperately needed elsewhere. And on the Western Front no less that eight Allied armies were advancing. The Reich was ringed. Adolf Hitler's vaunted fortress — his Festung Europa — was in all as sorry a shambles as any of his war-wrecked cities.

As March turned into April, Russian troops stood at the Oder and within 60 miles of the heart and target of Festung Europa — Berlin. Americans were 250 miles from the Unter den Linden. But on April 1st, Easter Sunday, in an assembly area in a former slave labor camp, the Battalion officers received a new series of campaign maps. The last map contained Berlin.

Orders had already gone out and been followed: lighten all loads. Carry nothing but essential equipment and supplies. Reduce everything to a minimum so that gas — and more gas — could be carried in its place.

And, on Easter Sunday, the Battalion knew that the big breakthrough had come at last — that the Second Armored was racing ahead against little or no opposition — that the 30th and the 83rd Infantry Divisions were being mounted into trucks and would head east — toward Berlin.

The Battalion knew its job. It would follow with the infantry in the wake of the Second Armored's rush, secure the Armored's flanks, guard its supply lines, and take care of any resistance that might be by-passed or missed as the advance tanks barrelled ahead.

The German army was crumbling to pieces. The fight at long last had been knocked out of most of it. Prisoners by the bewildering thousands were giving up.

To those who for so long had been fighting the German through every village, every hillock, every house, the sudden surge that now lifted the war into a race was an astonishing experience.

The moves were to be 20, 30, 40 miles a day — day after day.

"Think we'll get to Berlin before the Russians?" was a catch question of early April. To which the answer always was: "What can stop us?"

ii.

WELL, the first stop was a high ridge rising up from the Rhine Valley across the path of the Second Armored. On the maps the spot could be identified by the town of Detmold. The ridge line ran north and south, and on it was a Nazi armored center referred to quickly by GI tankers as the "Fort Knox" of Germany. On the summit of the highest hilltop stood a large statue which commemorated the fact that the ancient Romans had been stopped here.

So were the modern Americans — but not for long.

On April 3rd, the Second Armored ran into the resistance along the ridge line. It deployed to do some scrapping. Baker Company moved up and took over the positions of some Second Armored elements which pulled back for maintenance. Two infantry companies with the Baker tanks immediately went on the attack to improve the defense positions. On April 4th, Baker, Charlie and Dog Companies went into action to clean out the German holdouts along the ridge. There was some shooting — some American doughboys died where ancient Romans had been stopped — but it was all over by the end of the day. The "Fort Knox" of Germany and the town of Detmold were cleared. The Second Armored pushed on to the Wesel with engineers to put combat bridges across.

The war went screwball. Lieutenant Robert C. Jones took his lone tank into a village and was met by a uniformed flunkie who turned over an entire German garrison of 500 German soldiers all prepared for surrender — lined up at attention, guns piled in one corner, equipment sorted and piled neatly in another. Headquarters Company went to bivouac in a town outside Detmold and found a German captain paying them a call — he wanted to see his wife who had been living in one of the houses the company

had just taken over. On the roads, anything could be expected. Passing the many abandoned Tiger tanks in the Nazi armored center at Detmold was strange enough, but strangest of all was the vast, oddly-assorted armies of slave laborers, war refugees, released war prisoners — thousands of them, representing 15 nationalities of such contrast as Belgian and Mongolian.

There was a scarcely sane happiness in the faces of all these people as they trudged westward. They were walking westward because that was the quickest way out of Germany. They were wearing uniforms, some of them, and sometimes the coat of one army and the pants of another.

The women waved, the men often saluted, and they didn't seem to mind the clouds of dust thrown over them by the speeding American tanks and trucks. There weren't many young. The men and women carried their worldly possessions on their backs, or in small bundles under their arms, or they pushed and pulled small carts loaded to ten times capacity. They stopped and they cheered and they waved and saluted the vehicles that went hurtling by them — vehicles wearing the big white star of the American Army and perhaps they cheered because this was the symbol to them of all the things American stood for and meant, things bound up in a word like freedom.

The two-way armies passed one another on the road: one, with the tanks, the fighters for freedom; the other, with the bundles and the carts and the pathetically brave little handmade flags of their nations, those who had been freed. It was a strange, moving experience — passing these people who, at least for this moment, were happy in their fresh freedom — passing them, and leaving them behind in the dust.

Through heavy rain showers on April 6th, the Second Armored pushed its bridgehead across the Weser River and kept right on rolling. Charlie Company participated in the 30th Division's attack on the town of Bad Pyrmont — nearly every house in this place had been turned into an Jerry hospital for wounded German soldiers. The town fell without difficulty. Then somenow the rumor got started that all the German prisoners (there were supposed to be many "SS" men among them) were to make a break from their hospital beds during the night. The rumor was taken very seriously. Guards were doubled and all units alerted. It was all just a rumor. The Nazis stayed in bed.

Perhaps it was the fluttering bed sheets and pillow cases that best symbolized the race through Germany in April. Such white flags of surrender were flown from every house, every building, every steeple, and even from chicken coops — bits of cloth that signalled: "Please don't shoot — We give up! Save our happy homes!"

So anxious to save their villages were the town burghers that in one instance a mayor came peddling on a bicycle out of his community to meet the advance tanks. Very carefully and very obviously he was waving a big white flag as he rode.

After the first hundred miles, the men grew accustomed to seeing groups of German soldiers who had apparently said "The hell with the war!" and thrown down their guns and walked into the American lines. Somebody had told them to keep walking until

they came to a PW cage. And so they were passed, just strolling along, walking out of the war . . .

It was a shock at first, but the tankers also got used to having the German townspeople themselves — the enemy — wave at them as they passed. More often, of course, the civilians merely stared with sullen looks as if they found hard to believe this could be happening to Germany. But there were those who for reasons known to themselves waved. The tankers did not wave back.

Jenever juice was an appropriate part of the general out of this world picture. A Nazi supply depot was overrun. In the depot were hundreds of cases of brown earthen bottles labeled Jenever juice. This seemed to be a peculiar gin brew that soon got such appropriate names as "buzz bomb juice," "white lightning," and "denatured dynamite," to list the printable ones. The companies rationed two bottles to each man. A story claims that the Medic's peep ran out of gas crossing the Weser but kept going to Brunswick on one bottle of Jenever juice. The story has never been verified but there are many who are convinced of its truth. Certainly everything was possible on this march . . .

But there was a serious side to it, this great sweep. Compared to the normal fighting known in France and up to the Rhine, this was a swift and usually silent war. Cities and towns that before would have been turned into bitterly defended fortresses, rivers that could be expected to be held for weeks, high ridges that ordinarily would have been the scene of bloody attacks and counterattacks — most of these slipped neatly into the background.

Yet here and there were splotches of resistance. The Battalion fanned out with the infantry to screen the areas pierced by the armored spearhead. Every so often a hornet's nest would be stirred up. Dog Company stirred up one just after getting over the Weser in some hills and woods outside a small village. A sniper picked off one tank gunner outside his turret.

War, as ever, was still a dangerous business.

iii.

UNDER a white flag of truce, General Hobbs sent in a demand for unconditional surrender to General Karl Veith, commander of the German garrison holding the by-passed city of Brunswick. The ultimatum was rejected. A short battle followed. Tanks went in shooting up the streets and road blocks in this large built-up area of factories, rail yards, large city squares. General Veith managed to hold things up for a day. He was captured by Old Hickorymen as he tried to flee east. Infantry squads prowled the many city blocks, quashed the last signs of resistance. The march could move on. It was April 12th. While the 30th Division and the Battalion had maneuvered about Brunswick, the Second Armored had been losing no time going straight ahead, making for the Elbe. The flying columns of trucks, tanks and infantry now took out after the spearhead.

The war became incredible again. A Baker Company tank commanded by Staff Sergeant Fawcett achieved a high place in the annals of tank fighting when his Sherman burst upon an enemy airfield. A Nazi fighter plane was scooting down the air-strip on a take-off escape. The machine guns of the tank opened up. The German plane never got off the field. It crashed at the end of the runway.

And it was during this phase of the race toward Berlin that again the hardships, the ugliness, the sacrifices of the past many months seemed revealingly to be worthwhile. For now coming back westward along the roads were our own men — until short minutes before, prisoners of the Germans. Their prison camps had been overrun: they were on their way home.

Why they were walking back isn't quite clear: perhaps they just wanted to get as far away in as short a time as they could from the barbed wire stockades that had confined them so long. But walking back along the roads they were, walking west, where soon they would be riding — straight to their families.

"By God!" exclaimed one rescued American enlisted man happily as he reached into the cab of a temporarily halted *Verify* truck and shook hands with an officer. "I never thought I'd be so glad to see a lieutenant!"

The sight of the Americans was best of all, of course, but there were others — hundreds of British, thousands of French, Belgian, Dutch, Russian and more.

"Hi, mates!" yelled an excited British Tommy grinning ear to ear as the column passed him. "We've been waiting five years for you! Roll those wheels! Give'm bloody hell!"

It was fine seeing the liberated civilians, those thousands of them, and knowing you had a part in freeing them. But seeing your own soldiers, seeing, them on their way home, cheering them and they cheering you, throwing your last pack of cigarettes to them because you wanted them to have the very first crack at luxuries you could give them— that was best of all . . .

iv.

THERE was another sidelight to the death of fascism in Europe. Only a few of the Battalion saw it. Those who did will never forget it.

A few miles northwest of Magdeburg there was a railroad siding in wooded ravine not far from the Elbe River. Major Clarence Benjamin in a peep was leading a small task force of two light tanks from Dog Company in a routine job of patrolling. The unit came upon some 200 shabby looking civilians by the side of the road. There was something immediately apparent about each one of these people, men and women, which arrested the attention. Each one of them was skeleton thin with starvation, a sickness in their faces and the way in which they stood — and there was something else. At the sight of Americans they began laughing in joy — if it could be called laughing. It was an outpouring of pure, near-hysterical relief.

The tankers soon found out why. The reason was found at the railroad siding.

There they came upon a long string of grimy, ancient boxcars standing silent on the tracks. On the banks by the tracks, as if to get some pitiful comfort from the thin April sun, a multitude of people in all shades of misery spread themselves in a sorry, despairing tableaux. As the American uniforms were sighted, a great stir went through this strange camp. Many rushed toward the Major's peep and the two light tanks.

Bit by bit, as the Major found some who spoke English, the story came out.

This had been — and was — a horror train. In those freight cars had been shipped 2500 people, jam-packed in like sardines, and they were people who had two things in common, one with the other: they were prisoners of the German State and they were Jews.

These 2500 wretched people, starved, beaten, ill, some dying, were political prisoners who had until a few days before been held at a concentration camp near Hannover. When the Allied armies smashed through beyond the Rhine and began slicing into central Germany, the tragic 2500 had been loaded into old railroad cars — as many as 68 in one filthy boxcar — and brought in a torturous journey to this railroad siding by the Elbe. They were to be taken still deeper into Germany beyond the Elbe when German trainmen got into an argument about the route and the cars had been shunted onto the siding. Here the tide of the Ninth Army's rush had found them.

They found it hard to believe that they were really in friendly hands once more: they were fearful that the Germans would return. They had been guarded by a large force of SS troopers, most of whom had disappeared in the night. Major Benjamin, knowing there were many German Army stragglers still in the area, left one of the light tanks there with its accompanying doughboys as a protective guard. The Major then returned to Division headquarters to report the plight of these people.

For 24 hours, the crew of the tank remained on watch as their charges streamed about the vehicle, crying and laughing their thanks of rescue, and those that could told stories of slavery oppression, torture, imprisonment, and death. To hear their stories, to see before them the results of inhumane treatment lifted still another corner of the cover which, on being removed, exposed the full cruel spirit of Nazism which permitted such things to be. And this was but one of the many such stories being brought to light as Allied soldiers ripped into the secrets of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich.

The train needed some badly needed food that night. More, the promise of plentiful food the next day was given to them. The commanding officer of the 823rd Tank Destroyer Battalion was seeing to it that such food would be available. He had ordered German farmers of the surrounding towns to stay up all night, if necessary, to get food to these people. Other Americans concerned themselves with locating living quarters to get the concentration camp victims away from the evil-smelling freight cars before more of them died and were covered by a blanket or just left lying in their last sleep beside the railroad tracks.

v.

VERIFY was not going to Berlin. This was known April 14th as the Elbe River became a "no advance" line for the Americans who already had one bridgehead across. The

battle of pursuit was finished. Russian Allies were taking Berlin: they were sweeping below Berlin as well, advancing toward the Elbe for a historic junction of the East-West fronts. Meanwhile, the Battalion drew up at the Elbe's west bank. The tanks occupied road block positions and did some firing across the river: mainly to keep German soldiers from swimming or boating from the east bank to the west. The Germans were showing a marked desire to fall into American hands rather than Russian — even if they had to swim.

The Battalion was to have one more sharp fight with the enemy it had been fighting for 11 long months. This was the battle of Magdeburg.

# IV

## • • • CEASE FIRE - - - SECURE GUNS

i.

MAGDEBURG, one of Germany's principal cities and a center of its synthetic oil industry, decided to reject the 30th Infantry's ultimatum of surrender and defend its riverside position. The first attack to take it was planned for April 16th. Advance reconnaissance, however, showed that the Germans really meant to fight for this city, defending it in depth, and showed no signs of giving up after a token show of resistance. It was decided to delay the attack until the air corps had its chance to soften the defenses a bit with an air strike.

The planes flew over the city during the late morning of April 17th. There was heavy ground haze, so the planes held their bombs until their return in mid-afternoon.

Each line company of the Battalion took part in the last big attack. The assault gun platoon put down preparatory fire for the infantry-tank jump-off a 3 o'clock. The mortar platoon lay down a screen of smoke to hide the movements of tanks and infantry south of the city.

Able Company moved into the outskirts of Magdeburg encountering nothing more serious than fire from riflemen and snipers. Baker and Charlie Companies, with one platoon of Dog Company, ran into sharper fighting in their sections of the battle line.

All three platoons of Baker Company moved up into position before Magdeburg by using secondary roads. It was later found that if they had used the main roads (as they almost did) they would have been under fire from two 88 mm guns and road blocks. The 1st and 2nd Platoons moved into the streets at the outskirts of the city without meeting heavy opposition, but the 3rd Platoon advanced under the caromb and crash of enemy artillery fire — the first experienced in many days since the Rhine fighting.

At one point, the 3rd Platoon was stopped in its advance by a stone wall. The 'dozer came up and bucked a passage through the wall, permitting the Shermans to break into the street. In the street, the platoon found it was without infantry protection. Lieutenant Carol Hibnes, the platoon leader, started to get out of his turret with the purpose of dismounting and looking for the doughboys. A sniper's bullet struck him in the back and he fell wounded beside his tank. The medics attached to Baker Company evacuated the wounded lieutenant to the rear.

The infantry doughs, who had been having their own troubles with snipers, at last reached the tanks and together went on to their individual objective within Magdeburg. The tanks made frequent use of their 75 mm cannon and machine gun fire as the houses were cleared, street by street.

Charlie Company changed its plan of attack at the last minute when it was discovered that its supporting fire was crashing in on Dog Company's position. It crawled into Magdeburg, moving each of its three platoons parallel along different streets.

By the time darkness fell, the tanks and the doughs had overcome most of the important defense positions the Germans had set up — their original defense had been set to defend the city from a Russian attack from the east. A larger part of Magdeburg was under control. Strong defense positions were set up within the city limits for the night. Just before the fighting stopped, the Battalion suffered its final battle casualties.

Lieutenant Bernard Fruhwirth, tank commander and platoon leader of Charlie Company's 2nd Platoon, was directing his tank into a defensive position at a street corner when the turret of his tank was struck by a panzerfaust — the German's version of a bazooka on a stick. The armor-piercing rocket penetrated the cast steel directly beside the gunner, who was Corporal Richard C. Davis, killing him. Lieutenant Fruhwirth was alive when he was lifted from the turret, but died shortly afterward in the hospital. The third man in the turret, Pfc. Robert Andrews, the loader, escaped with wounds.

The next day, April 18th, saw the Battalion's final action. With dawn, the mission of taking Magdeburg was resumed. Block by block, the infantry moved from house to house. When a house became too stubborn, the tanks whaled in with a round of two of armor-piercing shells to smash open a hole, and then follow it with a blast of high explosive.

Able Company reached the center of Magdeburg and overran a Luger ordnance repair factory. When the fighting ended and the rest of Magdeburg fell by late afternoon, tank crewmen ran about the factory assembling Luger pistols from the gun parts.

Occasionally road blocks held up the progress of the companies. Machine guns behind the blocks pinned down the infantry. Time after time the Shermans risked possible anti-tank fire to smash down the road obstacles.

As the tanks pushed on down the maze of streets, maneuvering around giant bomb craters, the German resistance grew less and less. Prisoners were being taken by the hundreds, including high-ranking officers. The white flag was out again. It was over . . . the end of the line for *Verify*.

It was the 18th of April, 1945, and the 743rd Bank Battalion had fired its last shell in the battle of Magdeburg . . . the battle of Europe. It had ceased fire. It had secure its guns. And now it waited for the end of the very end — the end of the Germany, the final surrender . . .

ii.

WHILE everyone waited to meet the Russians, *Verify* was handed a new task — occupational government. The Battalion had as its assigned area a sprawling section of farmland west of Magdeburg. Its complex task was to patrol the 15 towns, large and small, in this area, reestablish order, dissolve the local Nazi party organization, apprehend SS men, war criminals and ordinary soldiers in civilian clothing. It was to nip attempts at sabotage, silence the whimperings of the Werewolf. It was to locate food and housing for an expected influx of many thousands of Poles and Russians — freed slave laborers being routed homeward to their governments.

The men received Battalion Campaign Maps as souvenirs to send back home — pictorial maps in four colors illustrating and explaining the fighting that the Battalion had done in Europe. From the time the Battalion pushed off across the Roer River until it reached Magdeburg, in all the many, many moves one enlisted man could be seen lugging along a large drawing board. He was Pfc. Norman E. Hamilton, in civilian life a Chicago artist. His first job when joining the Battalion during the Siegfried fighting had been to drive the command peep of Able Company's Captain Korrison. As Christmas approached, Hamilton designed a distinctive Battalion Christmas card, and his talents as an artist took him from behind the wheel of the peep after the Ardennes campaign and placed him behind the drawing board again. There he planned, designed and drew under combat conditions the four-color illustrated maps which brought a verbal commendation from General Hobbs. It is Hamilton's work that illustrates the pages of this history — 21 drawings done in three days of intensive work before he tranferred out of the Battalion.

The duties of occupation proved enormous and varied. They brought problems and decisions far afield indeed from those problems in the past months of combat. One fine April night a murder case was dumped in the laps of the Battalion's military government

staff — two Poles got into a knife fight over a girl. During an afternoon, some Hitler Youth rowdies tried to set fire to a tank by throwing matches. Neighbors came in to accuse one another of being thieves, saboteurs, Nazi Party members. Germans, all Germans, swarmed in wanting passes: here to get bread; there to bury a mother or an uncle or an aunt; somewhere else to see if the factory job was still there — or the factory.

The tanks and the halftracks roared and squeaked down the bumpy roads through the area on patrol day and night — and somehow the civilians in the Battalion's zone did not seem to want to make any trouble for a tank or a tankman. The Battalion slipped from the problems of war to the problems of peace easily enough. Though of the two, the problems of war often seemed much simpler, much more cleancut and defined than the intrigues, the pettiness, the emotional ways that went with everyday civilian conduct.

On May 5th, the 30th Division at last made contact with the Russians. There was a fitting ceremony in Magdeburg, attended by generals and assorted ranks. The Battalion was too far west of the scene to observe the formalities of the linking. From what it could hear, the informal linkups elsewhere between Yank and Tovarich were more fun. All the stories about vodka were recounted all over again. The Battalion companies, men and officers alike, received another liquor ration from captured enemy depots. Some wondered what their vodka-drinking friends would think of Jenever juice . . .

It was while *Verify* was shining its shoes and pressing its ODs (life was back to semi-garrison again) and telling Germans what they could or couldn't do that, almost incidentally, the war in Europe came to an official, anti-climactic end. General Eisenhower, on May 7th, announced the cease fire order to all troops. "Nazis Quit!" shouted Stars and Stripes, Army newspaper, in its biggest headline type. But the troops did not feel the news was so sensational. They had seen this end coming for so long. The official V-E Day was announced as May 9th. The people back home danced in the streets. The fighting man just took it easy, thankful to God that he was still alive.

If the war had suddenly ended on, say, the breakthrough near St. Lo, or after the German defeat at Mortain, or after the Seine had been crossed, or even after the Siegfried had been cracked, there might then have been the jubilation in the ranks of fighting men that marked the end of the First World War in France. Earlier there would have been the lift of surprise — a sudden confirmation of what every man hoped. The war had gone on and on — old faces went from the Battalion, some forever, and new faces arrived and some were soon gone again. There was the bitter bleakness of the Ardennes battling, when the final victory seemed so far away. But then the massiveness of American arms and equipment and men began to tell. Those who listened to the giant drumming of the guns as the second Roer offensive burst into full fury, those who watched as thousands of huge bi-motored planes flew over the blue sky above the Rhine to drop fighting divisions of men upon the enemy, those who heard the tremendous drone of Allied bombers winging through the high heavens night after night and day after

day — there could be no doubt to the outcome, only the doubt that this man or that man would be still whole, still living, to see the finale. And he saw the finale on the roads as, at reckless speed, he plunged toward Berlin, passing the remarkable lines of freed nationals, of released prisoners of war, of dispirited Germans who had given up rather than obey the hopeless desperation of Nazi leaders who ordered them to fight on. He saw it confirmed when his Russian ally met him at the Elbe . . . What else could the war do but end? The only surprise was that the end was so long in coming — for too many too late in coming. But that was the past. That was the irretrievable past where the mine had exploded on Omaha Beach, where the machine gun slugs had snapped in the Normandy hedges, where the shell had burst on the bank of the Würm, where the bomb had rocked the earth near the Roer, where the nebelwerfer rocket had screamed into an Ardennes snowbank . . . . That was the past where flares had hissed suddenly in the night and enemy engines were somewhere behind those flares, above them, and a man's hand was ready to release the noise of death . . . That was the past when war was smell, and fear, and hurt, and aching tiredness . . . and only small, passing elations, like a letter from home.

Let the people who didn't know dance in the streets. For the combat man in Germany on May 9th, the past was too recent. There was too much to remember.

The men of *Verify* had been in the thick of it since the opening gun on June 6th, 1944. It had been "Move out, Verify!" for nearly a year. The butchers, the bakers, the shoe clerks, the salesman and the schoolboy were old soldiers. They thought now, like soldiers.

They heard the announcement of victory and took it for granted. They asked: What next? They asked: *Where* next?

And they waited for the orders to move out again . . .

iii.

THE war ended . . . but to this history is added an epilogue — the final note in the history of an American Army unit.

On V-E Day, May 8th, the Battalion moved from the Magdeburg area, a zone being taken over for awhile by the British, to take up new occupation duties further south in the Hartz hills — a quaint old town named Quedlinburg. The place was scarcely scratched by the war. There were modern, well-appointed homes in a wealthy residential section next to a beautiful park. Officers and men lived in comfortable circumstances as they carried on the diverse duties of military government. An indoor modern swimming pool was located from an advertisement in a chamber of commerce folder which boasted of the advantages to be found in Quedlinburg. The men of the 743, after the long stress of combat, were ready to relax and enjoy all the advantages.

During this time, the men went "point happy." The Army announced a critical interim score of 85 points necessary in its re-deployment system to get out of uniform. A small — very small — initial quota of high-point men left the Battalion to go home and become civilians again.

Most of the men fell below 85 points, and low-pointers began to talk about the future status of the Battalion, where it would go next, and what their chances were of staying with it . . .

The British now came into Quedlinburg at the end of May, so off moved *Verify* once more, this time 100 miles southward to the outskirts of Plauen near Czechozlovakia, In this mountainous, sparcely settled country of woods and sheepherders, large areas were still "no man's land" — being occupied by German soldiers who had not yet gotten around to the formality of surrendering. The zone given the Battalion was kept under thorough and systematic patrol.

As June progressed and word was heard that by the end of the month all units would know what future was ahead of them, the speculation in the 743 increased. The talk centered around whether the Battalion would find itself perhaps catagoried in Class 1, which meant occupation of Germany, or perhaps in Class 2-A, which meant direct to the Pacific, or 2-B, the Pacific by way of the States — or 2-C, which was "strategic reserve" in the States.

In mid-June, the Battalion Commander broke the news — the 743 had been placed in Class 4 — to be returned to the States . . . and de-activated. The 743rd Tank Battalion would cease to exist. It was one of several veteran tank battalion to be disbanded.

There was slim possibility that the Army would change the classification in the time between the announcement and the time the unit reached America again, but the men thought this about it: the 743rd had stood up to its work, whatever it had been called upon to do.

Now the job was done. There were other Americans doing another job on places with such names as Okinawa, Iwo Jima, Honshu, Kyushu . . . . And some men of *Verify* would move out again — this time with other units.

# PART SEVEN

# »BY THEIR NAMES - - -«

# WE KEEP THE FAITH

## KILLED IN ACTION OR DIED OF WOUNDS

THESE are the names of the Battalion's dead — killed in the violent fight for their country's purpose during the time the 743 was in action, from D-Day in France to V-E Day in Germany. These are the officers and these are the men who did not remain with us, the living, to see the victory they helped so much to bring.

"We Keep The Faith . . ." It is our Battalion motto.

This is the list of those for whom we keep it.

### OFFICERS

Capt. Charles W. Ehmke
Capt. Ned S. Elder
1st Lt. Robert K. Buffington
1st Lt. Clifton Fitzgibbons
1st Lt. Frederick F. Fleming
1st Lt. Bernard W. Fruhwirth
1st Lt. Frank X. McWilliams
1st Lt. Donald F. Turner
2nd Lt. Gilbert Allis
2nd Lt. Clifford H. Disbrow
2nd Lt. Winthrope N. Hastings
2nd Lt. Robert M. Hodgson
2nd Lt. Thomas J. Johnston
2nd Lt. Gordon R. McLachlen
2nd Lt. George Middendorf
2nd Lt. Herbert A. Poe
2nd Lt. Mihiel Sturbitz
2nd Lt. Donald H. Ticknor
2nd Lt. Carl M. Wamser
2nd Lt. Lambert V. Wieser

### COMPANY "A"

S/Sgt. Joseph G. Lucido
S/Sgt. Anthony A. Tempesta
Sgt. William J. Bowling
Sgt. Reuben L. Padgett
Sgt. Roy E. Wallman
Tec. 4 Howard L. Bell
Tec. 4 S. T. C. Cook
Tec. 4 Richard W. Haigh
Tec. 4 Anthony J. Heisler
Tec. 4 Roy L. Linkenhoker
Tec. 4 Epifanio Valdez, Jr.
Cpl. Harry J. Born
Cpl. Earl R. Krogstad
Cpl. Clyde F. Mann
Cpl. Russell J. Moser
Cpl. Miloy J. Nelson
Cpl. Wilson O. Wanner
Tec. 5 Norman K. Carter
Tec. 5 Ambrose G. Stedl
Pfc. Roland A. Bolduc
Pfc. Julius M. Helder
Pfc. John D. King
Pfc. Hugh J. Lafferty
Pfc. Louis Lucido
Pfc. Raymond E. Naughton
Pfc. Theron E. Stamey
Pfc. James J. Tesmond
Pfc. Dorsey E. Tipton
Pfc. Gene White
Pvt. William S. Adams
Pvt. Howard F. Clarkson
Pvt. John J. Curran, Jr.
Pvt. Frederick E. Gilson
Pvt. William J. Klosterman, Jr.
Pvt. Austin E. Luce
Pvt. Norman B. Lusk
Pvt. Kenneth E. Miller
Pvt. Glenn A. Parlier
Pvt. Albert K. Redington

## COMPANY "B"

S/Sgt. John L. Benton
S/Sgt. Leo M. Heinen
Sgt. George J. Grimm
Sgt. Ross L. Kendle
Sgt. Jasper E. Leonard
Sgt. Waino E. Lento
Sgt. Donald E. Russ
Sgt. Arnold B. Stene
Sgt. Russell Walker
Tec. 4 Charles E. Deaver
Tec. 4 Luther C. Lockey
Tec. 4 Amos W. LaPort
Tec. 4 James M. Rogers
Tec. 4 Herbert L. Ulrich
Cpl. Joseph Barres
Cpl. Leonard J. Giverson
Cpl. William D. Riffel
Cpl. Forrest P. Thornburg
Cpl. Chester L. Wigesland
Tec. 5 Roy W. Hall
Pfc. Andrew W. Adkins
Pfc. Austin C. Chestnut
Pfc. Harold R. Heilman
Pfc. Floyd D. Hildebrand
Pfc. Ralph A. John
Pfc. Alphonse T. Lischwe
Pfc. Alvin W. Lund
Pfc. Philip L. Robinson
Pvt. Reginald K. Alexander
Pvt. Henry T. Annunzio
Pvt. Francisco Dominguez
Pvt. Daniel V. Dowling
Pvt. Edward J. Kmets
Pvt. David R. Lebeson
Pvt. Willard H. Norris
Pvt. Joseph J. Pierce

## COMPANY "C"

S/Sgt. Arnold M. Amburgey
S/Sgt. Gerard B. Petersen
S/Sgt. Alexander P. Oski
Sgt. Theodore A. Geske
Sgt. Melvin E. Gilmore
Sgt. Walter Grosfield
Sgt. Earle E. Lafferty
Sgt. Ernest L. Nichols
Sgt. Herman A. Schmidt
Sgt. William R. Stout
Tec. 4 Marvin E. Bales
Tec. 4 George Fenner
Tec. 4 Ronald J. Merkley
Tec. 4 Wallace C. Zeckzer
Cpl. John M. Coppock
Cpl. Richard E. Davis
Cpl. John J. Gorel
Cpl. Aubrey S. Haley
Cpl. Arlis E. Johnston
Tec. 5 Leo F. Beers
Tec. 5 Francis D. Wolf
Pfc. Frank A. Ashley, Jr.
Pfc. William M. Fanning
Pfc. Edward B. Jankowski
Pfc. Clifton R. Keith
Pfc. Stanford J. Pleskus
Pfc. George W. M. Pratt
Pfc. Robert W. Reynolds
Pfc. Robert J. RoLinson
Pfc. Wilbur R. Ward
Pvt. John J. Champa
Pvt. Amos J. Gatlin, Jr.
Pvt. William H. Greffin
Pvt. Joseph K. Kowalczyk
Pvt. Carl E. Nielsen
Pvt. Alvin R. Standerfer
Pvt. Paul D. Botticello
Pvt. Leonard B. Keeler

## COMPANY "D"

S/Sgt. William J. Callahan
Sgt. Frank E. Hall
Tec. 4 Carl R. Kolb
Tec. 4 Blair W. Williams
Cpl. Charles A. Johnson
Tec. 5 Orville D. Jones
Tec. 5 James E. Sheppard
Tec. 5 Donald L. Smith
Pfc. Russel C. Aikens
Pfc. Marvin K. Boller
Pfc. John C. Hutchinson
Pfc. Arthur R. Van Liew

Pvt. Charles E. Close
Pvt. James P. Greene, Jr.
Pvt. Floyd F. Hardin
Pvt. Robert E. Hurley
Pvt. Oscar L. Young

## SERVICE COMPANY

M/Sgt. Stanley A. Way
T/Sgt. Eugene S. Brown
Tec. 4 Warren L. Hill
Tec. 4 Everette L. Myers
Tec. 4 Rudolph Olson
Tec. 5 Hubert M. Jackson
Tec. 5 Albert Schneider
Pfc. Norman T. Dieckmann
Pfc. Donald W. Knight
Pfc. Abe S. Zipkin

## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

S/Sgt. Dayle L. Selvidge
Tec. 5 Harold Haraldsen

## MISSING IN ACTION

### COMPANY "A"

Sgt. Tommy R. Crawford
Cpl. Thomas H. Sweeney
Pvt. Joseph P. Byrne
Pvt. Blonde F. Neal
Pvt. Floyd J. Richardson
Pvt. Carl C. Trovall

### COMPANY "B"

Tec. 4 Victor J. Rassier
Pvt. Aaron Goldstein

### COMPANY "C"

Pvt. LeRoy L. Pierce

# IN THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS

THESE are the 743's Battle Honors. It makes a long list. The 743 with its men is a highly decorated Battalion — and it, and they, earned every bit of medal and ribbon the Generals pinned to the combat jackets of the tankers. These medals are the tokens of furious days in battle. And something more . . .

There is a phrase used over and over in the award citations given by the Army. It names the recipient of the award and then goes on: "his action reflects great credit upon himself and his unit, and is *in the highest traditions of the Armed Forces.*"

It's a phrase — but not just another stock phrase. For these traditions date back to Concord Bridge, to Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Belleaux Wood, and to Bataan, Corregidor, Faid Pass, Salerno, Omaha Beach . . . It is a tradition of courage: courage to face death for a free man's belief — courage to do an ugly but necessary job — courage that in the world's most violent war went so very far in bringing a quicker end to a dangerous enemy.

For so many in this list, the medal and the honor is a testimonial to a memory — for their awards were made posthumously. Now here the brave stand with the brave who have fallen. All ranks are here listed as of the time of the award and are not necessarily the highest ranks the individuals held in European Theater of Operations.

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

Lieutenant Colonel John S. Upham
Major Vodra C. Philips
Captain Ned S. Elder
Captain Harry F. Hansen
Captain Henry W. Jones
Captain Alfred H. Williams, Jr.
1st Lieutenant Harold R. Beavers
2nd Lieutenant Floyd M. Jenkins
Staff Sergeant John L. Benton
Staff Sergeant Melvin H. Bieber
Staff Sergeant Gerard B. Peterson
Staff Sergeant Anthony A. Tempesta
Sergeant Earnest L. Kirksey

## SILVER STAR

Lieutenant Colonel William D. Duncan
Captain Ernest I. Aas
Captain Leland M. Evans
Captain Harry F. Hansen
Captain David W. Korrison
Captain Joseph J. Ondre
Captain Carl F. Tarlowski
1st Lieutenant Clifton Fitzgibbons
1st Lieutenant Bernard W. Fruhwirth
1st Lieutenant Peter B. Henderson
1st Lieutenant Walter D. Macht
1st Lieutenant John J. O'Brien
1st Lieutenant Jean M. Ubbes
2nd Lieutenant Theodore B. Adkinson
2nd Lieutenant Gilbert Allis
2nd Lieutenant David P. Elles
2nd Lieutenant Orlyn H. Folkestad
2nd Lieutenant Millard A. Glantz
2nd Lieutenant Thomas C. Johnston
2nd Lieutenant Robert C. Jones
2nd Lieutenant Clyde S. Thornell
2nd Lieutenant Lambert V. Wieser

Tec Sgt Bernard S. Leviton
S/Sgt Kermit W. Biertz
S/Sgt John S. DuQuoin
S/Sgt Russell M. Lipps
S/Sgt Paul T. Jackson
S/Sgt Donald L. Mason
S/Sgt Richard D. McCracken
S/Sgt Frederick R. Morey
S/Sgt Paul L. Patterson
S/Sgt Alexander P. Oski
S/Sgt Alvin R. Tisland
S/Sgt William H. Williams
Sgt Harold D. Adams
Sgt Jacob Altergott
Pfc John P. Douglass
Pfc R. B. Kelley
Pfc George M. Lanser
Pfc Fred G. Smith
Pfc Chester Sobkiewicz
Pfc Roger A. Wilson
Pvt Gilchrist C. Booth
Sgt Jean M. Blanchette
Sgt Cecil L. Davis
Sgt John J. Doane
Sgt Harold M. Gibbs
Sgt George J. Grimm
Sgt George L. Geisler, Jr.
Sgt Clarence A. Rasmusson
Sgt Donald E. Russ
Sgt Norman E. Willson
Tec 4 S. T. C. Cook
Tec 4 Dale S. Copper
Tec 4 John C. Franklin
Tec 4 Ardis R. Honsowetz
Tec 4 John Lukins
Tec 4 Perry W. Reams
Tec 4 Henry J. Schiks
Tec 4 Herbert L. Ulrich
Cpl Hardy Boullion
Cpl Richard E. Davis
Cpl Wayne W. Fawcett
Cpl Arthur S. Graves
Cpl Raymond W. Locke
Cpl John M. Stadnik
Cpl Alvis S. Thompson
Cpl James C. West
Tec 5 Frank J. Allegretti
Tec 5 Sammie J. Coil
Tec 5 Joseph Kaufman
Tec 5 Joseph P. Pokorny
Tec 5 Guy R. Robertson
Tec 5 Frederick M. Rose
Tec 5 John E. Smithson
Tec 5 Einar Sorensen
Tec 5 John F. Taylor
Tec 5 Arthur R. Thomas
Pfc Hildric Corbin
Pvt Anthony J. Parento
Pvt John B. Patterson
Pvt Jim A. Pearce
Pvt Irvin H. Reddish
Pvt Russell Schober
Pvt Roger L. Wells

## OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO THE SILVER STAR

1st Lieutenant Orlyn H. Folkestad
1st Lieutenant Clyde S. Thornell
2nd Lieutenant Theodore B. Adkinson
2nd Lieutenant Robert C. Jones
2nd Lieutenant Lambert V. Wieser
S/Sgt. Frederick R. Morey
Sgt. Norman E. Willson

## SECOND OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO THE SILVER STAR

2nd Lieutenant Lambert V. Wieser

## BRONZE STAR

Lieutenant Colonel William D. Duncan
Major Clarence L. Benjamin
Major Vodra C. Philips
Captain Lloyd J. Adkins
Captain Eugene N. Allen
Captain Richard Bulkan
Captain Kenneth R. Cowan
Captain Harry F. Hansen
Captain Henry W. Jones
Captain John C. McCoy

Captain Edward D. Miller
Captain Jean M. Ubbes
Captain Alfred H. Williams, Jr.
1st Lieutenant Joseph A. Couri
1st Lieutenant George F. Dieser
1st Lieutenant James C. Fleming
1st Lieutenant Millard A. Glantz
1st Lieutenant Peter L. Henderson
1st Lieutenant Floyd M. Jenkins
1st Lieutenant Walter D. Macht
1st Lieutenant Joel S. Matteson
1st Lieutenant Leonard J. Mimoni
1st Lieutenant Floyd Mitchell, Jr.
1st Lieutenant Raymond G. Staffilena
2nd Lieutenant Thomas C. Alderson
2nd Lieutenant Harlan J. Amundsen
2nd Lieutenant Thomas I. Lucci
2nd Lieutenant Clyde S. Thornell
2nd Lieutenant Alton L. Westman
WOJG Leon Russell
1st Sgt. Gordon K. Thompson
Tec./Sgt. George H. Abbott
Tec./Sgt. Marion B. Beckham, Jr.
Tec./Sgt. Richard M. Grant, Jr.
Tec./Sgt. Ronald I. Hyland
Tec./Sgt. Myron H. Ronnberg
Tec./Sgt. Joseph J. Schreiner
S/Sgt. Robert K. Bee
S/Sgt. John Calaganis
S/Sgt. Mario A. Cavanna
S/Sgt. Wayne W. Fawcett
S/Sgt. George S. Green
S/Sgt. William L. Horvath
S/Sgt. Erving Hyatt
S/Sgt. Paul T. Jackson
S/Sgt. Peter Jula
S/Sgt. William L. Lindquist
S/Sgt. Elmo H. McGinnis
S/Sgt. William D. Morton
S/Sgt. Albert B. Odle
S/Sgt. Gregg N. Pouliot
S/Sgt. Edgar S. Silver
S/Sgt. Vernon D. Skaggs
S/Sgt. John W. Wiley
Tec. 3 Richard M. Grant, Jr.
Sgt. Jacob Altergott
Sgt. Wayne H. Bartholomew
Sgt. Marlyn H. Bartsch
Sgt. Frank Bartuska
Sgt. Herbert H. Beireis
Sgt. Robert D. Bennett
Sgt. Daniel M. Commerford
Sgt. Raymond W. Courtney
Sgt. Cecil L. Davis
Sgt. Francis M. Dorer
Sgt. Ishmael M. Ferry
Sgt. Marshall E. Fields
Sgt. Frank N. Harper
Sgt. Martin C. Hug
Sgt. LaVern R. Hughes
Sgt. Tony R. Jagers
Sgt. Francis A. Jamell
Sgt. Gene W. Johnson
Sgt. Jack L. Jordan
Sgt. Perry R. Kelly
Sgt. Bernard M. Lardy
Sgt. Jasper E. Leonard
Sgt. George L. Miller
Sgt. Sylvester Parker
Sgt. Herbert C. Ringheim
Sgt. Howard W. Roszell
Sgt. Elno M. Schacher
Sgt. Henry J. Schicks
Sgt. Herman A. Schmidt
Sgt. Leslie L. Soland
Sgt. Arnold B. Stene
Sgt. Waldo P. Wennerberg
Sgt. Cleo R. Wisman
Tec. 4 James S. Anderson
Tec. 4 Howard L. Bell
Tec. 4 Robert W. Braun
Tec. 4 Clarence W. Carlson
Tec. 4 Richard E. Delfs
Tec. 4 Gerhardt H. Eichmann
Tec. 4 Everett O. Ford, Jr.
Tec. 4 William R. Frink
Tec. 4 John H. Froberg
Tec. 4 Warren L. Hill
Tec. 4 Ralph E. Hilleran
Tec. 4 Ardis R. Honsowetz
Tec. 4 Willie Johnson
Tec. 4 Frank O. Lancaster
Tec. 4 Gillard L. Larson
Tec. 4 William C. Luckett
Tec. 4 John Lukins
Tec. 4 Theodore F. Manus
Tec. 4 Albert E. Marquardt
Tec. 4 Leroy B. Meyer
Tec. 4 John T. Miller
Tec. 4 Everett L. Myers
Tec. 4 Rudolph Olson
Tec. 4 John B. Patterson

Tec. 4 William A. Paulhamus
Tec. 4 Leonard Peterson
Tec. 4 Clarence A. Rasmusson
Tec. 4 Victor J. Rasier
Tec. 4 Perry W. Reams
Tec. 4 Keith E. Reed
Tec. 4 Raymond L. Shively
Tec. 4 Carroll E. Shay
Tec. 4 Weyman P. Simpson
Tec. 4 Robert W. Stelter
Tec. 4 Epifanio Valdez, Jr.
Cpl. Ralph H. Backes
Cpl. Ivan A. Barkus
Cpl. Harry J. Born
Cpl. Ashley L. Camp, Jr.
Cpl. Gordon W. Chandler
Cpl. Paul A. Colley
Cpl. Melvin R. Compton
Cpl. Stanley A. Dare
Cpl. William G. Green
Cpl. Merlin D. Harris
Cpl. Robert K. Jay
Cpl. Robert C. Jarvis
Cpl. Lawrence A. Kassa
Cpl. Robert P. Leen
Cpl. William Van Leuven
Cpl. Willard R. Lizzotte
Cpl. Marion J. McCaulley
Cpl. William L. Nassau
Cpl. Murry M. Orr
Cpl. Edward P. Paul
Cpl. George J. Pechmann
Cpl. William I. Piatt
Cpl. John W. Restad
Cpl. Charles L. Reynolds
Cpl. Norman W. Roylance
Cpl. Chester Sobkiewicz
Cpl. Delmar L. Terrill
Cpl. Clarence L. Thorne
Cpl. Richard Varela
Cpl. William J. Wilburn
Cpl. James C. Winn
Cpl. Arthur V. Wood
Cpl. Myron E. Wright
Tec. 5 Robert M. Blosser
Tec. 5 Sammie J. Coil
Tec. 5 James E. Ferguson
Tec. 5 Myron J. Fisher
Tec. 5 Water H. Hauser
Tec. 5 John D. Hoover
Tec. 5 Jerrell J. Johnson
Tec. 5 John C. Lehnen
Tec. 5 Frank J. Luce
Tec. 5 Leonard D. Lutts
Tec. 5 Garner F. McElroy
Tec. 5 Elmer V. Pearson
Tec. 5 Franklin J. Pehle
Tec. 5 Paul J. Phillips
Tec. 5 Joseph P. Pokorny
Tec. 5 James A. Pomeroy
Tec. 5 Heimo H. Poykko
Tec. 5 Emrose E. Price
Tec. 5 Guy R. Robertson
Tec. 5 Einar Sorensen
Tec. 5 Arthur R. Thomas
Tec. 5 Herbert L. Wilson
Pfc. Robert D. Anderson
Pfc. Robert G. Andrews
Pfc. William C. Beckett
Pfc. Felix F. Bradley
Pfc. John P. Douglas
Pfc. John Fox, Jr.
Pfc. Frank Gaboardi
Pfc. Eugene Hardin
Pfc. Ralf R. Hemke
Pfc. Myer J. Hirsh
Pfc. Francis H. Hughes
Pfc. Winford E. Mabie
Pfc. Robert A. Mitchem
Pfc. Raymond O. Mullen
Pfc. Urho I. Nelson
Pfc. Joe V. Nemec
Pfc. Sam J. Nole, Jr.
Pfc. Charles M. Noonan
Pfc. Harold H. Plasky
Pfc. Frank J. Roy
Pfc. Fidus G. Simpson
Pfc. Clarence L. Thorne
Pfc. Gordon S. Thomas
Pfc. Gerhardt M. Umlauf
Pfc. Leonard G. Urbansky
Pfc. Marion E. Wilkinson
Pfc. Daniel W. Wisnoskie
Pvt. Joseph M. Banner
Pvt. Clifton C. Barker
Pvt. William M. Codner
Pvt. Eastman R. Cook
Pvt. Lester A. Esmonde
Pvt. Julius Goldworm
Pvt. Aaron Goldstein
Pvt. Joseph J. Gorman
Pvt. Julius M. Helder

Pvt. Lee R. Martin
Pvt. George Preble
Pvt. Curtis M. Smith
Pvt. Harold E. Southwick
Pvt. Nicholas J. Yandoli
Pvt. Frank B. Wieczorek

## OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO THE BRONZE STAR

Lieutenant Colonel William D. Duncan
Major Clarence L. Benjamin
Major Vodra C. Philips
Captain John C. McCoy
Captain Edward D. Miller
Tec./Sgt. George H. Abbott
S/Sgt. Albert B. Odle
Sgt. Paul A. Colley
Sgt. Cecil L. Davis
Sgt. Henry J. Schicks
Sgt. Waldo P. Wennerberg
Tec. 4 John T. Miller
Cpl. Robert C. Jarvis
Cpl. Robert P. Leen
Cpl. Edward P. Paul
Cpl. Richard Varela
Pfc. Eastman R. Cook
Pfc. Gerhardt M. Umlauf

## SECOND OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO THE BRONZE STAR

Lieutenant Colonel William D. Duncan
Cpl. Clarence L. Thorne

## FOREIGN AWARDS TO MEN IN 743rd TANK BATTALION

## BRITISH MILITARY MEDAL

Tec. 4 Gerhardt H. Eichmann
Tec. 5 Jerald J. Nibel

## FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE

(With Palm)

Lieutenant Colonel William D. Duncan
Captain Harry F. Hansen
Sergeant Harold D. Adams

(As these pages went to press — in Germany — there were some awards still pending. The impressive list of the Battalion's Battle Honors would be more so as new names were added.)

# BATTALION ROSTER

HERE is the roster — the names of the Battalion (as complete as the Personnel Section could make it) of the men who served with the Battalion during combat. The list is exclusive of these who were killed or are missing in action. The Men are listed under the company in which they last served. The officers are listed as a group.

## THE OFFICERS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lt Col | John S. Upham | 4736 Oakwood Avenue, Los Angeles, California |
| Lt Col | William D. Duncan | 1609 South Duluth Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota |
| Major | Clarence L. Benjamin | 4311 Rettig Avenue, Oakland, California |
| Major | Vodra C. Philips | 407 Mulberry Street, Fayette, Missouri |
| Capt | Ernest I. Aas | 918 Cavour Avenue, Fergus Falls, Minnesota |
| Capt | Lloyd J. Adkins | Brooklyn, Iowa |
| Capt | Eugene N. Allen | 8855 30th South West, Seattle, Washington |
| Capt | Richard Bulkan | 2218 Walton Street, Chicago, Illinois |
| Capt | Kenneth R. Cowan | 471 Woodlawn Street, Glencoe, Illinois |
| Capt | Robert S. Derby | 5544 Brandon Street, Seattle, Washington |
| Capt | George F. Dieser | 1979 9th Avenue, San Francisco, California |
| Capt | Leland M. Evans | 450 N Baldwin Avenue, Sierra Madre, Los Angeles, California |
| Capt | George J. Ganer | 37 "B" Street, Roslindale, Massachusetts |
| Capt | Harry F. Hansen | 4402 Frederick Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland |
| Capt | Peter L. Henderson | RFD 2, Adairsville, Georgia |
| Capt | Henry W. Jones | 97 S 3rd West Street, Cedar City, Utah |
| Capt | David W. Korrison | 525 Fair Street, Lodi, Wisconsin |
| Capt | Joel S. Matteson | Interlaken, New York |
| Capt | Walter D. Macht | 1119 Dyre Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Capt | John C. McCoy | Hover, Washington |
| Capt | Edward D. Miller | 1225 Longwood Avenue, Los Angeles, California |
| Capt | Joseph J. Ondre | 119 Montclair Avenue, Newark, New Jersey |
| Capt | Robert C. Speers | 1416 Hollywood Avenue, Salt Lake, Utah |
| Capt | Carl F. Tarlowski | 627 N Olden Avenue, Trenton, New Jersey |
| Capt | Clyde S. Thornell | Salina, Utah |
| Capt | Jean M. Ubbes | 1604 Reed Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan |
| Capt | Alfred H. Williams | 88 Weissinger-Gaulbert, Louisville, Kentucky |
| 1st Lt | Theodore B. Adkinson | 1505 N Main Street, Santa Ana, California |
| 1st Lt | Thomas C. Alderson | Box 644, Riverbank, California |
| 1st Lt | Raleigh M. Allen | Applegate, Oregon |
| 1st Lt | Theodore A. Baumeister | Barnes General Hospital, Vancouver, Washington |
| 1st Lt | Harold R. Beavers | Pilgrim Martin, Kentucky |
| 1st Lt | Joseph A. Couri | 1101 South Jefferson, Peoria, Illinois |
| 1st Lt | James C. Fleming | 2711 Arbor Avenue, Houston, Texas |
| 1st Lt | Orlyn H. Folkestad | Box 337, Clinton, Minnesota |
| 1st Lt | Alfred E. Gaines | 23 Pearl Street, Rouse's Point, New York |
| 1st Lt | Millard A. Glantz | 10 S 3rd Avenue, Marshalltown, Iowa |
| 1st Lt | Jean F. Hansen | 7804 Lowe Street, Chicago, Illinois |
| 1st Lt | Constantine E. Hastalis | 131-18 135th Street, New York, New York |
| 1st Lt | Daniel E. Hayes | PO Box 42, Anthony, Kansas |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st Lt | John D. Hess | 1209 Astor St., Chicago, Illinois |
| 1st Lt | Robert B. C. Howell | RR 3, Plain View, Texas |
| 1st Lt | Floyd M. Jenkins | Jamaica, Iowa |
| 1st Lt | Raymond G. Keating | 3609 Springdale Avenue, Baldo, Maryland |
| 1st Lt | Arthur J. Larson | c/o Pell City Hardware Company, Pell City, Alabama |
| 1st Lt | Thomas I. Lucci | 9811 Bessemer Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio |
| 1st Lt | Carl W. Lundy | 3615 Fisher Street, Fort Smith, Arkansas |
| 1st Lt | Denis J. Maloney * | |
| 1st Lt | Leonard J. Mimoni | 403 W 40th Street, New York City, New York |
| 1st Lt | Floyd Mitchell | 208 S Washington Street, Tullahoma, Tennessee |
| 1st Lt | John J. O'Brien | 184 N Main Street, Waterbury, Connecticut |
| 1st Lt | John L. Shanafelt | 620 Olympic Place, Seattle, Washington |
| 1st Lt | David T. Sheppard | Route 1, Bridgeton, New Jersey |
| 1st Lt | Raymond G. Staffilena | 1941 Marianna Street, Wellsburg, West Virginia |
| 1st Lt | Ernest W. Spitznagle | 406 W Minnesota Avenue, Gilbert, Minnesota |
| 1st Lt | Alton L. Westman | 304 1st Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| 2nd Lt | Harlan J. Amundson | 1718 Minor Avenue, Seattle, Washington |
| 2nd Lt | Solomon Aronoff * | |
| 2nd Lt | William M. Barglebaugh | 1958 N Normandie Avenue, Los Angeles, California |
| 2nd Lt | Marion B. Beckham | Star Route 2, Clovis, California |
| 2nd Lt | Melvin H. Bieber | 215 E 2d Street, Waterloo, Iowa |
| 2nd Lt | William H. Bohle | 312 S 4th Avenue, Maywood, Illinois |
| 2nd Lt | Steve Carter | Norwichton, Connecticut |
| 2nd Lt | John J. Doane | 2091 Friendly Street, Eugene, Oregon |
| 2nd Lt | George L. Geisler, Jr. | 80 East Tulane Road, Columbus, Ohio |
| 2nd Lt | George C. Gross | 4167 Kansas Street, San Diego, California |
| 2nd Lt | Donald S. Hale | 74 Beechwood Road, Summit Union, New Jersey |
| 2nd Lt | Joseph C. Hall * | |
| 2nd Lt | Sigmund R. Herschbach * | |
| 2nd Lt | Carroll E. Hibnes | Box 641, Hardin, Montana |
| 2nd Lt | Robert F. Howe | 914 E 4th Street, Spencer, Iowa |
| 2nd Lt | Donald E. Hunter * | |
| 2nd Lt | Robert C. Jones | 928 Park Avenue, Hamilton, Ohio |
| 2nd Lt | Herman H. Landy | 520 S Winebiddle Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| 2nd Lt | Paul J. Longheier | 16 State Avenue, Massilon, Ohio |
| 2nd Lt | Donald L. Mason | Anselmo, Nebraska |
| 2nd Lt | Elmer D. McCay | 735 Willow Glen Way, Son Jose, California |
| 2nd Lt | Herbert W. Oliver | 3016 S Pennsylvania Street, Indianapolis, Indiana |
| 2nd Lt | Clinton H. Poovey | 204 S Elm Street, Statesville, North Carolina |
| 2nd Lt | Herbert R. Riske * | |
| 2nd Lt | James P. Ross * | |
| 2nd Lt | George E. Scott | 3235 63d SW, Seattle, Washington |
| 2nd Lt | Francis J. Sweeney | 214 Cambridge Street, Fall River, Massachusetts |
| 2nd Lt | Philip W. Tone | 412 Ashland Avenue, Park Ridge, Illinois |
| 2nd Lt | Carrol S. Walsh | 561 Park Avenue, Albany, New York |
| 2nd Lt | Vinton L. Woodward | Ticonic, Iowa |
| WOJG | Leon Russell | Route 2, Box 5, Piggott, Arkansas |

* No record of address. Although there are 87 officers listed here as those who, exclusive of the dead, served in combat with the Battalion, the actual Battalion T/O officer strength is only 39. The brief time some of the officers served with the 743 made it sometimes impossible for the S-1 section to maintain permanent records on them.

# THE MEN

## HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st/Sgt | Clarence H. Beckmann | Rosalie, Nebraska |
| M/Sgt | Russell V. Rowe | 250 Maiden Lane Grass Valley, California |
| T/Sgt | James G. David | 2916 Fischer, Detroit, Michigan |
| T/Sgt | Frank Gartner | 443 So Catalina St., Los Angeles, California |
| T/Sgt | Donald W. Hollister | 174 Merick Road, Baldwin, New York |
| T/Sgt | Ronald I. Hyland | 4105—32nd Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn. |
| S/Sgt | William C. Arons | 723 Woodlawn, St. Paul, Minn. |
| S/Sgt | Kermit W. Biertz | 5642 Division St. Chicago, Ill. |
| S/Sgt | George S. Green | 30 Spring St. Rockville, Conn. |
| S/Sgt | William E. Haglund | 30025th Ave W. Hibbing, Minn. |
| S/Sgt | Lorence Jessen | Exira, Iowa |
| S/Sgt | Peter Jula | 309 2nd St. SW Chisholm, Minn. |
| S/Sgt | William J. Lindquist, Jr. | RFD 2 Joplin, Missouri |
| S/Sgt | Willie L. McFall | Rt. 1 Savannah, Tenn. |
| S/Sgt | Clarence A. Smith | Bode, Iowa |
| Sgt | Herbert M. Beireis | RFD 4 Kent, Washington |
| Sgt | Jean M. Blanchette | 308 Willow St. Woonsocket, R. I. |
| Sgt | Raymond W. Courtney | Indianola, Iowa |
| Sgt | James P. Donaldson | 415 E 6th St., Kansas City, Missouri |
| Sgt | Leslie L. Feeser | RFD 1 Gresham, Nebraska |
| Sgt | Wallace J. Hale | 1107 W. A. St., Iron Mountain, Mich. |
| Sgt | Maynard J. Jacobson | Ada, Minn. |
| Sgt | Francis A. Jamell | Marshalltown, Iowa |
| Sgt | Bernard M. Lardy | 615 5th Ave, No St. Cloud, Minn. |
| Sgt | George H. Paras | Waterloo, Iowa |
| Sgt | Herbert C. Ringheim | 1190 Arkwright St., St. Paul, Minn. |
| Sgt | Anthony J. Sauter | 2519 Fremont St., Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Sgt | Thomas M. Steele | 312 F. St. SE, Auburn, Washington |
| Sgt | Harry Wilson | General Delivery, Strunk, Ky. |
| Sgt | Cleo R. Wisman | 306 Waldheim Bldg., 11th & Main St. K. C., Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Edward E. Bacon | Route 2, Plano, Texas |
| Tec 4 | Carryll A. Banta | Forest Lake, Minn. |
| Tec 4 | Clayton R. Deaver | Ranceuerte, W. Va. |
| Tec 4 | John J. Dwyer | 1851 N. Columbus St., Ottawa Ill. |
| Tec 4 | Roy Haman | 529 S Pacific Cape, Cape Girardeau, Mo. |
| Tec 4 | Harry Harding | 1502 Tacoma Ave, Tacoma, Washington |
| Tec 4 | Joseph P. LoMonaco | 1041 East 93rd St., Brooklyn, N. Y. |
| Tec 4 | Otto E. Mason | 1318 West St., Des Moines, Iowa |
| Cpl | John T. Miller | RR 1, Franklin, Missouri |
| Cpl | Merle V. Schade | Manning, Iowa |
| Cpl | Henry J. Schouten | Orange City, Iowa |
| Cpl | George H. Tanner | Crescent Mills, Calif. |
| Cpl | Ivan A. Barkus | Enumclaw, Washington |
| Cpl | Arthur S. Graves | 432 S. Midler Ave, Syracuse, N. Y. |
| Cpl | Leslie H. Hagman | 310 East 31st St., Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Cpl | Frank G. Hardin | Rt. 1 Clifton, Tenn. |
| Cpl | Merlin D. Harris | Colfax, Illinois |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cpl | Carl G. Lewis | 2733 40th Ave S., Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Cpl | Frank J. Miele | 4 Ann St., Waterbury, Conn. |
| Cpl | Thomas J. Moore | 546 E. 145th St., Bronx, New York |
| Cpl | Michael Nazarko | 23 Vliet St. Cohoes, New York |
| Cpl | Arthur G. Peterson | c/o Ordean Halverson, Twin Valley, Minn. |
| Cpl | Robert Peterson | 308 Indiana Ave Norfolk, Nebr. |
| Cpl | William Riemer | 225 Hewes Street, Brooklyn, N. Y. |
| Tec 4 | Delmar L. Terril | Salem, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Robert W. Tighe | 5119 S. 18th St., Omaha, Nebr. |
| Tec 4 | William W. Van Leuven | 4 Hickery St. Ellenville, N. Y. |
| Tec 4 | Robert W. Vogel | 204 Walnut St., Butler, Indiana |
| Tec 5 | Jerry J. Boccia | 501 West 170th St., New York City, N. Y. |
| Tec 5 | George T. Canfield | 1717 Mountain Blvd., Oakland, Calif. |
| Tec 5 | Woodrow L. Casey | c/o Conley's Cafe Chisholm, Minn. |
| Tec 5 | Willard J. Casteel | R 1 Lake Lynn, Pa. |
| Tec 5 | Russell Chimerinski | 81 E. Poplar St., W. Nanticoke, Pa. |
| Tec 5 | Sammie J. Coil | R. R. 1 Jeffersonville, Ohio |
| Tec 5 | Perl J. Creason | Gorin, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Edmund E. Dulek | 310 High Forest, Winona, Minn. |
| Tec 5 | Elmer J. Duncan | R. F. D. 1, La Russell, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Joe Gembala, Jr. | Loup City, Nebr. |
| Tec 5 | Virgil C. Hicks | Route 3 Russell Cave Pike, Lexington, Kentucky |
| Tec 5 | Raymond Hopkins | R. R. 3 Campbell, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Milton M. Hrbek | Verdigre, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Alex Karter | 608 W 18th, New York, New York |
| Tec 5 | Allen L. Lyon | Union, No. Dakota |
| Tec 5 | Walter B. Moore | 410 533rd St., Mt. Rainier, Maryland |
| Tec 5 | Gamon Monroe | Route 1, Bloomfield, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Frank J. Mottola | 306 Beech St., Vandergrift, Pa. |
| Tec 5 | Vincent A. Narducci | 28 North St., Milford, Mass. |
| Tec 5 | Elmer J. Nissen | Hamlin, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | John D. Nordmeyer | Rt. 4 York, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Richard B. Pembrook | 819—16th Ave, So. Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Tec 5 | Paul H. Phillips | Star Rt. Paris, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Elmer Raaen | Erskine, (Polk) Minn. |
| Tec 5 | Frederick M. Rose | Hornick, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | John A. Rose | 853 Messer Ave, S. S. St. Paul, Minn. |
| Tec 5 | Walter G. Schesvold | 2829 Columbus Ave, So Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Tec 5 | Addison R. Smith | 2525 Morgan St., Sioux City, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | William A. Stillwell | Rt 2 Box 2880 Del Paso Heights, Calif. |
| Tec 5 | Arthur R. Thomas | 1015 East 25th St. Kansas City, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Allen W. Thompson | c/o J. A. Beiber, 1309 9th St. Marion, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Israel Wachtel | 1255 Brock Avenue, Ellenville, N. Y. |
| Tec 5 | Samuel L. Warren | RFD 1, Bertrand Missouri |
| Pfc | Maurice W. Allen | 805 Central Ave, Lafayette, Indiana |
| Pfc | Gilbert H. Amiot | 506 Markeley Ave, S. Thief River Falls, Minn. |
| Pfc | Daniel M. Barnett | 2920 East Derbyshire Rd., Cleveland Heights, Ohio |
| Pfc | John G. Bobkowski | 89 Harbor Rd., Port Washington, N. Y. |
| Pfc | Ralph B. Bonney | 1446 G. St. Salida, Colo. |
| Pfc | Carl F. Bubela | RFD Northville, New York |
| Pfc | Harry Breitman | 208 E. 7th St. New York, N. Y. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pfc | Raymond E. Connard | Lewistown, Montana |
| Pfc | George H. Carter | Route 1, Parma, Missouri |
| Pfc | John A. Denning, Sr. | 90 Weber Ave, Orlando, Florida |
| Pfc | John P. Douglass | 834 Briar Ave Washington C. H., Ohio |
| Pfc | Joel B. Dykstra | Hull, Iowa |
| Pfc | Harry G. Fritz | 2338 Annapolis Rd., Baltimore, Maryland |
| Pfc | Frank G. Gaboardi | 114 Osborne St., Danbury, Conn. |
| Pfc | Robert C. Gay | E 805 33rd Ave, Spokane, Wash. |
| Pfc | George M. Geary | Maple Lake, (Wright) Minn. |
| Pfc | Robert F. Green | Castle Shannan, Pa. |
| Pfc | Edmund C. Grall | 534 So 25th St., Manitowoe, Wisconsin |
| Pfc | Norman E. Hamilton | 2812 Aldrich Ave, So. Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Pfc | Kermit A. Haugen | Hazel Run, Minn. |
| Pfc | Frank B. Hawkins | 240 Madison St., Monte Vista, Colorado |
| Pfc | Ernest J. Hicks | Rt. 1, Queen City, Texas |
| Pfc | Clarence A. Larson | Ortonville, Minn. |
| Pfc | Lloyd P. Larson | Box 671 Holt, Minn. |
| Pfc | Elmer W. Lindgren | Rt. 2 Box 2, Karlstad, Minn. |
| Pfc | Kurt J. Loewenthel | 2105-A North 8th St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin |
| Pfc | Merle H. Looney | Box 697, Nyssa, Oregon |
| Pfc | Leroy W. Mitchell | 251 West King St., St. Paul, Minn. |
| Pfc | Elmer R. Mortensen | Burtum, Minn. |
| Pfc | Henry J. Morton, Jr. | 807 S 4th S. St. Charles, Ill. |
| Pfc | Karl R. Mory | 4234 39th Ave., So. Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Pfc | Robert G. Nichols | 655 E. Ada Ave., Muskegon, Mich. |
| Pfc | Sam J. Nole, Jr. | 7 Jones St., New Rochelle, N. Y. |
| Pfc | Leroy M. Nordin | Burtrum, Minn. |
| Pfc | Algernon Norseworthy | 32 Villa Ave, Everett, Mass. |
| Pfc | George W. Olvader | Brunswick, Missouri |
| Pfc | Edwin A. Olson, Jr. | 2419 St. Joseph Ave, St. Joseph, Missouri |
| Pfc | Rueben J. Olson | 126 Riverside Ave, Ada, Minn. |
| Pfc | Frank B. Orrico | 144 N. 21st Ave, Melrose Park, Ill. |
| Pfc | Kurt O. Peterson | 4th St. R. F. D. 1, Lemont, Ill. |
| Pfc | Marshall Reed | Rt 5 Box 149, Texarkana, Texas |
| Pfc | Marvin C. Rhodes | 215—17th St. S. E., Washington, D. C. |
| Pfc | Anthony W. Robinson III | 103 Chestnut Ave, Narberth, Pa. |
| Pfc | Edward A. Romanowskie | 709 W. Chestnut St., Shamokin, Pa. |
| Pfc | Edward S. Sadowski | 701 S. Harrison St., Wilmington, Del. |
| Pfc | Harold C. Scherer | 1532 E. 32nd St., Anderson, Ind. |
| Pfc | Allan B. Schmidt | 443 E. 15th St., Alton, Ill. |
| Pfc | Paul H. Seames, Jr. | 70 Union St., Lapeer, Mich. |
| Pfc | Harry L. Shepps, Jr. | 9 Bank Court Stroudsburg, Pa. |
| Pfc | William D. Smith | Canfield Road Convent, New Jersey |
| Pfc | John W. Sherman | 128 Pleasant St. Fairhaven, Mass. |
| Pfc | George W. Strong | 4606 Moorland Ave., Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Pfc | George C. Stukenberg | Albers, Ill. |
| Pfc | Julius Takacs | 783 Brewster St., Bridgeport, Conn. |
| Pfc | Verle L. Todd | 979 Person, Memphis, Tenn. |
| Pfc | Olaf G. Vang | Route 1, Deerwood Minn. |
| Pfc | George Vocana | 10464 S. E. Harold, Portland, Oregon |
| Pfc | John B. Wahler | 3300 Wheeler Rd., S. E. Washington, D. C. |

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|---|---|---|
| Pfc | Verlin D. Walker | 339 North Ferry St. Ottumwa, Iowa |
| Pfc | George W. Walters | No Belleau Wood Drive, Glenville, Conn. |
| Pfc | Ray C. Welch | 5402 Pacific Ave, Tacoma, Washington |
| Pfc | Raymond G. Wells | 44 East Main St., Canisteo, New York |
| Pfc | Stuart R. Zimmerley, Jr. | 1004 15th East St., Salt Lake City, Utah |
| Pvt | Earle R. Amundson | 4253—40th Ave, So. Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Pvt | Edwin J. Deason | 328—17th St., Denver, Colorado |
| Pvt | Guido J. Farace | 388 St. Marks Ave., Brooklyn, N. Y. |
| Pvt | Norbert J. Jochman | 1111 Oviott St., Kaukauna, Wisconsin |
| Pvt | Chester L. Johnson | Hoffman, Minn. |
| Pvt | Vincent B. Lombardo | 282 Wilson Ave, Brooklyn, N. Y. |
| Pvt | Clifford F. Osborne | 520 Schutz St., Lebanon, Ill. |
| Pvt | Harvy P. Rosch | 3918 Vincint Ave, N. Minneapolis, Minn. |
| Pvt | Fred G. Spilker | 4504 Arsenal St., St. Louis, Missouri |
| Pvt | Edward R. Troller | 110 S 7th, St. Allentown, Pa. |

## COMPANY "A"

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1/Sgt | Gordon K. Thompson | 102 North Gold Street, Centralia, Washington |
| T/Sgt | Joseph J. Schreiner | 755 Oakdale Avenue, So. St. Paul, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | John S. DuQuoin | 4504 Arsenal St., St. Louis, Missouri |
| S/Sgt | Harold M. Gibbs | RFD, Brooks, Maine |
| S/Sgt | Walter L. Kanach | Lake Road Box 57, Geneva, Ohio |
| S/Sgt | Eldon C. Laster | 3305 Brayton Avenue, Long Beach, California |
| S/Sgt | William D. Morton | Cerro Gordo, Illinois |
| S/Sgt | Elmo H. McGinnis | Rt. 1, Mooresburg, Tennessee |
| S/Sgt | Albert B. Odle | Friendship, Ohio |
| S/Sgt | Paul J. Pemberton | 1240 Ravenna Avenue, Wilmington, California |
| S/Sgt | Clarence A. Rasmusson | 608 Knight Ave., N., Thief River Falls, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | Charles B. Wardrobe | 17 Lamb Street, Attleboro, Mass. |
| Sgt | John E. Boeckholt | Bancroft, Iowa |
| Sgt | Thomas Carlson | Rt. 2, Meridian, Texas |
| Sgt | Earl Dhanse | Rt. 4, McDonald, Pennsylvania |
| Sgt | Harry L. Fagan | Clarksdale, Missouri |
| Sgt | Vernon A. Gentz | New England, North Dakota |
| Sgt | Edwin D. Goodridge | 80 Lawrence Street, Fitchburg, Mass. |
| Sgt | Jack D. Hembree | 404 Anderson Street, Milan, Tennessee |
| Sgt | George K. Hetherton | Waterloo, Iowa |
| Sgt | James R. Jensen | Wyndmere, North Dakota |
| Sgt | George A. Johnson | 4117 20th Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Perry R. Kelly | 1718 Minor Avenue, Seattle, Washington |
| Sgt | Harold E. Kolschefske | Coffee Creek, Montana |
| Sgt | Peter P. Lappas | 6096 Sunny Avenue, Flushing, Michigan |
| Sgt | Herbert A. Maasch | New York Mills, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Harold G. Mayo | 429 E. Minnehaha Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Walter F. Ostenson | Route 1, Barrett, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Richard L. Ralph | 25 Townsand Avenue, Newburgh, New York |
| Sgt | Henry J. Schiks | 325 A Central Avenue, Faribault, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Alvis B. Thompson | P. O. Box 216, Sprague River, Oregon |
| Sgt | Ora D. Weikel, Jr. | 528 Tyler Street, Williamsburg, Virginia |
| Sgt | Henry A. Welch | Bennett, North Carolina |

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|---|---|---|
| Sgt | Norman E. Willson | 1106 SE 13th Avenue, Portland, Oregon |
| Tec 4 | James S. Anderson | Medina, Texas |
| Tec 4 | Robert W. Braun | Rt. 1, South St. Paul, Minn. |
| Tec 4 | Clarence W. Cain | Millville, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Lynn D. Camp | Rt. 1, Kerkhoven, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | William R. Frink | 312-7th Avenue West, Duluth, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | George T. Geahos | 616 W. North Avenue, Chicago, Illinois |
| Tec 4 | Willie J. Helgeland | Rt. 4, Thief River Falls, Minn. |
| Tec 4 | Thelmer B. Johnson | North Star Rt., Middle River, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Peter T. Koenig, Jr. | Bismark, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Adam P. LeCompte | 486 Avenue "A", West Wego, Louisiana |
| Tec 4 | William C. Luckett | Rt. 2, Mt. Pleasant, Tennessee |
| Tec 4 | Peter Mark | Superior Hotel, Reedley, California |
| Tec 4 | William S. Murray | 4735 Interborough Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 4 | Raymond H. Niebuhr | 909 2nd Avenue South, St. James, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Domingo Rossi | Rt. 5, Box 501, Watsonville, California |
| Tec 4 | Russell E. Schober | Route 20, Box 46, Indianapolis, Indiana |
| Tec 4 | Wheeler Smith | Keavy, Kentucky |
| Tec 4 | John J. Soter | 4810 East Hoffman Street, Baltimore 5, Maryland |
| Tec 4 | Edward H. Symons | 133 Cypress Street, San Luis Obispo, California |
| Tec 4 | Joseph D. Syslo | RFD 2, Cedar Rapids, Nebraska |
| Tec 4 | Ardie R. Williamson | Rt. 1, Pollok, Texas |
| Cpl | William C. Beckett | 3252 W. 46th Street, Cleveland, Ohio |
| Cpl | Charles L. Brown | Rt. 5, Salem, Indiana |
| Cpl | Dale C. Christensen | 1133 North Clarkson, Fremont, Nebraska |
| Cpl | Kenneth S. Conover | 107 Bellaire Street, Dayton, Ohio |
| Cpl | Ira L. Cooper | Autryville, North Carolina |
| Cpl | Alva E. Dixon | 934 Garfield Avenue, Lancaster, Ohio |
| Cpl | Paul J. Dooley | 311 East Howell Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia |
| Cpl | Myron E. Esposite | 2716 Utilis Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio |
| Cpl | Harold E. Jenkins | RFD 1, Jamaica, Iowa |
| Cpl | Theodore J. Katra | 343 West Union Street, Nanticoke, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | John Krist | Junedale, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Raymond W. Locke | 3913 Oglethorpe Street, Hyattsville, Maryland |
| Cpl | Edward J. Meisinger | 1701 East 36th Avenue, Denver, Colorado |
| Cpl | Alfred A. Mislak | 522 S. Bethel Street, Baltimore, Maryland |
| Cpl | John Onak | 1017 Solfisburg Avenue, Aurora, Illinois |
| Cpl | George J. Pechmann | 1579 E. Maryland, St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Cpl | William I. Piatt | 109 Bacon Street, Jermyn, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Stephen P. Pozniakas | 6 West Street, Mechanicville, New York |
| Cpl | Henry L. Prejean | Route 1, Bow 102a, Scott, Louisiana |
| Cpl | Joseph S. Rachwal | 1421 W. Jerome Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Charles L. Reynolds | 206 Vermont St., Holton, Kansas |
| Cpl | Alfred A. Skibinski | 274 Brinkman Street, Buffalo, New York |
| Cpl | Thomas S. Snyder | 1261 Battery Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland |
| Cpl | Chester Sobkiewicz | 8150 Dongan Avenue, Elmhurst, New York |
| Cpl | Percy C. Sullivan | 1265 Osage Avenue, Kansas City, Kansas |
| Cpl | Lucas E. Valdez | Mora, New Mexico |
| Cpl | Richard Varela | 395 Henry Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Cpl | Robert L. Waddell | 530 Strathmore Road, Brookline, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Ernest E. Walenga | 421 W. Fifth Street, Flint, Michigan |

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|---|---|---|
| Cpl | Charles M. Warner | Vermillion, Kansas |
| Cpl | William J. Wilburn | Rt. 1, Austin, Arkansas |
| Tec 5 | Richard W. Bartley | 247 E. Center, Decatur, Illinois |
| Tec 5 | George A. Beasley | RFD 1, Alto Pass, Illinois |
| Tec 5 | Alvin Brudelie | 5th Street, North, St. James, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Henry Carew | 3054 Dennison Avenue, San Pedro, California |
| Tec 5 | Elroy J. Fournia | Rt. 2, Dundee, Michigan |
| Tec 5 | Laurence J. Flanagan | 909 Mercer Blvd., Omaha, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | William E. Gast, Jr. | 130 South Ann Street, Lancaster, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Clois Hall | Rt. 1, Camden, Tennessee |
| Tec 5 | Walter H. Hauser | 87 Washington Street, Faust, New York |
| Tec 5 | George R. Loos | 328 Kenmont Avenue, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Wilho B. Mattson | Rt. 1, Box 305, Embarrass, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Albert Moore | 321 Perry Avenue, Greenville, South Carolina |
| Tec 5 | William D. McCoy | Elmwood, Illinois |
| Tec 5 | Jerald J. Nibel | 2606 Lafayette, Waterloo, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Hubert H. Pennington | Route 2, Wilburton, Oklahoma |
| Tec 5 | John E. Smithson | 416 W. South Street, Mayfield, Kentucky |
| Tec 5 | George S. Sparrow | 652 Washington Street, Dorchester, Mass. |
| Tec 5 | John F. Taylor | 32 Columbia Court, Bridgeport, Conn. |
| Tec 5 | Allen J. Toftness | 712 2nd St. North, Montevideo, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Henry C. Tucker, Jr. | 711 S. Lake Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota |
| Pfc | Lawrence D. Agostino | 2409 3rd Avenue, Watervliet, Albany, New York |
| Pfc | Ralph T. Aicher | 824 Wolfe Avenue, Easton, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Robert D. Anderson | 2125 7th Avenue E., Hibbing, Minnesota |
| Pfc | John H. Baumgartner | 6233 Aspen Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio |
| Pfc | Andrew F. Bermudez | 80 Poplar Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Pfc | Robert J. Beswick | RFD 1, Morrison, Illinois |
| Pfc | Walter L. Bonk | 404 S. Shamokin Street, Shamokin, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | James J. Buckner | Rt. 1, Box 108, Barnardsville, North Carolina |
| Pfc | Frank H. Charlton | 3175 Spring Garden Street, Riverside, California |
| Pfc | Arnold H. Chinn | 376 Baldwin Avenue, Jersey City, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Carmen G. DeMeglio | 127 So. Essex Avenue, Orange, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Vernon J. Enderle | Rt. 1, Watkins, Minnesota |
| Pfc | Robert E. Feger | 208 N. Madison Street, Rome, New York |
| Pfc | Joseph F. Gaskill | 53 Salem Street, Hillsdale, Michigan |
| Pfc | Francis E. George | 502 Wallace Street, York, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Martin Gerlach, Jr. | Paul, Idaho |
| Pfc | Edgar D. Gregory | 701 Roosevelt Avenue, Dunkirk, New York |
| Pfc | Joseph P. Haddad | 47 Catherine Street, Bridgeport, Conn. |
| Pfc | Clayton W. Hambruch | 5005 Arabia Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland |
| Pfc | Eugene Hardin | Rt. 1, c/o E. E. Altom, Bald Knob, Arkansas |
| Pfc | James W. Haynie | 5255 St. Charles Avenue Baltimore, Maryland |
| Pfc | Orval D. Hills | 1410 W. 5th, Coffeyville, Kansas |
| Pfc | Warwick H. Jenkins, III | 214 Broad Street, Sumter, South Carolina |
| Pfc | John A. Kantack | Greenleaf, Kansas |
| Pfc | Julius D. Kemp | 1254 14th Pl. S. W. Birmingham, Alabama |
| Pfc | Jerry Kratochvil | 4008 East 27th Street, Newburgh Heights, Ohio |
| Pfc | Anthony C. Laspina | 2101 47th Avenue, San Francisco, California |
| Pfc | Albert P. Lavorin | 9909 Bandera Street, Los Angeles, California |
| Pfc | Charles J. Leveque | 17610 12 Mile Road, Roseville, Michigan |

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|---|---|---|
| Pfc | George W. Lockwood | 29 Rose Avenue, Oneonta, New York |
| Pfc | Frank J. Marino | 84—30 164th Street, Jamaica, New York |
| Pfc | Reyes Martinez | 140 Alta Vista, San Antonio, Texas |
| Pfc | Albert J. Martin | Box 43, Yorba Linda, California |
| Pfc | Henry Mathistad | RFD 2, Butterfield, Minnesota |
| Pfc | Vito J. Messa | 1157 71st Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Pfc | Robert A. Mitchem | Rt. 2, McCook, Nebraska |
| Pfc | Jack Monte | 1901 So. 9th Street, Ironton, Ohio |
| Pfc | Avis Mott | Rt. 1, Box 591, Orange, Texas |
| Pfc | Curtis W. McMichael | Soperton, Georgia |
| Pfc | Charles M. Noonan | 1640 N. 61st Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Walter L. Norman | Union Avenue, Box 594, Bloomingdale, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Jim A. Pearce | 225 N. Sixth Street, Griffin, Georgia |
| Pfc | James E. Powell | Flatwoods, Kentucky |
| Pfc | John A. Roncevich | Dockton, Washington |
| Pfc | Frank J. Roy | 5022a Lindenwood, St. Louis, Missouri |
| Pfc | Robert D. Schneider | 3828 Rainbow, Kansas City, Kansas |
| Pfc | Glen D. Scott | Stanfield, Oregon |
| Pfc | Gordon C. Steen | 728 Medary Avenue, Brookings, South Dakota |
| Pfc | Robert Stein | 122 Shurtleff Street, Chelsea, Mass. |
| Pfc | Mike J. Still | Govan, South Carolina |
| Pfc | Laurel B. Strait | 227 Dratz Street, Muskegon, Michigan |
| Pfc | Donald C. Thomas | 50 Erie Street, Lancaster, New York |
| Pfc | Richard T. Threadgould | Main Street, South Lancaster, Mass. |
| Pfc | Achille J. Vicoli | 2035 S. 17th Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Robert J. Wertheimer | 131 W. 93rd Street, New York, New York |
| Pfc | Daniel W. Wisnoskie | Helfenstein, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Gilbert E. Woodward | 16647 31st Avenue, South Seattle, Washington |
| Pfc | Stanley J. Wysocki | 131 Clark Place, Elizabeth, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Nicholas J. Yandoli | 1645 Pacific Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Pvt | Charles T. Bell | 19 Hobbard Place, Brooklyn, New York |
| Pvt | George W. Davison | 125 East 120th Street, New York, New York |
| Pvt | George Dorka, Jr. | 237 Windemere Avenue, Highland Park, Michigan |
| Pvt | Auddie W. Henderson | 518 Wild Street, Fallon, Nevada |
| Pvt | Carl F. Jurgens | Robbins, Tennessee |
| Pvt | Robert King | 5558 Maxwell, Detroit, Michigan |
| Pvt | James G. Kirkham | 133—37 Dennis Street, Springfield L. I., New York |
| Pvt | Milton H. Lerner | 1859 E. 4th Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Pvt | Charles T. Murray | 526 S. Lehieh Street, Baltimore, Maryland |
| Pvt | Clinton L. Nodtvedt | Kensett, Iowa |
| Pvt | Anthony J. Parento | 1721 Blavis Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Harlan A. Pontious | 2504 Augusta Rd., Greenville, South Carolina |
| Pvt | Cicil D. Price | 315 N. 21st Omaha, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Edmund D. Rozmus | Box 45, Primrose, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Arthur J. Sheridan | 1703 East 3rd Street, Duluth, Minnesota |
| Pvt | Vernon Weaver | Rt. 1, Waubun, Minnesota |
| Pvt | Rodger L. Wells | Route 4, Pennettsville, South Carolina |
| Pvt | Herbert L. Wilson | 221 Desmond Street, Sayre, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Joseph M. Zuniga | 2221 S. 2nd Street, St. Louis, Missouri |

## COMPANY "B"

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1/Sgt | Herschel A. Fetty | Laurel, Indiana |
| T/Sgt | George H. Abbott | 815 "D" Street, Central City, Nebraska |
| S/Sgt | Maurice H. Anderson | 1391 West 64th Street, Cleveland, Ohio |
| S/Sgt | Wayne W. Fawcett | 702 North 2nd Street, Garden City, Kansas |
| S/Sgt | Charlie W. Holland | Route 3, Hamburg, Arkansas |
| S/Sgt | William L. Horvath | 914 Calvert Street, South Bend, Indiana |
| S/Sgt | Erving Hyatt | 4527 Lewis Place, St. Louis, Missouri |
| S/Sgt | Norman E. Kopp | Route 1, Murdock, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | Russell M. Lipps | Ronceverte, West Virginia |
| S/Sgt | Frederick R. Morey | Route 1, Box 40, Le Grand, California |
| S/Sgt | Francis L. Roeser | Paynesville, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | Elno M. Schacher | RFD 3, Columbus, Nebraska |
| Sgt. | Marlyn H. Bartsch | Route 1, Granton, Wisconsin |
| Sgt. | Wayne H. Bartholomew | Route 1, Marceline, Missouri |
| Sgt. | Robert W. Bennett | Gnadenhutten, Ohio |
| Sgt. | Alton S. Berg | Climax, Minnesota |
| Sgt. | Arthur F. Cross | 9 Enoch Street, East Rutherford, N. J. |
| Sgt. | J. M. Donaghey, Jr. | Box 632, Hamlin, Texas |
| Sgt. | Edward E. Eulas | 317 Elm Street, Kearny, New Jersey |
| Sgt. | Ishmael M. Ferry | 722 Florida Street, San Antonio, Texas |
| Sgt. | Everett O. Ford, Jr. | 347 Laura Street, Wichita, Kansas |
| Sgt. | Martin C. Hug | 72—19 67th Place, Glendale, Long Island, New York |
| Sgt. | LaVern R. Hughes | Stickney, South Dakota |
| Sgt. | Jack L. Jordan | 3121 N. Monroe Street, Spokane, Washington |
| Sgt. | Earnest L. Kirksey | General Delivery, Salisbury, North Carolina |
| Sgt. | William C. McKitrick | Box 247, Navarre, Ohio |
| Sgt. | Willie T. Poglajen | RFD 1, Harviell, Missouri |
| Sgt. | Howard W. Roszell | 307 Harrison, Topeka, Kansas |
| Sgt. | Leslie L. Soland | Route 3, Bemidji, Minnesota |
| Sgt. | William G. Sowell | 4993 Tulare Street, Fresno, California |
| Sgt. | Arthur V. Wood | Cedar Rapids, Iowa |
| Tec 4 | Dale S. Copper | RFD 6, New Castle, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 4 | Cabell Blackstock, Jr. | Long Island, Virginia |
| Tec 4 | James D. Fowler | 327 North 4th Street, Fredonia, Kansas |
| Tec 4 | James R. Freeman | Route 2, Marietta, Georgia |
| Tec 4 | Knut M. Homme | RFD 1, Oklee, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Harold H. Jones | RFD 3, Maryville, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Kenneth L. Jones | 740 E. 62nd, Chicago, Illinois |
| Tec 4 | Willie Johnson | 207 Pitt Street, So., St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | William T. Johnston, Jr. | Frankville, Alabama |
| Tec 4 | R. B. Kelley | Route 1, Brinson, Georgia |
| Tec 4 | Emil L. Moses | RFD 2, Wing, North Dakota |
| Tec 4 | Frank O. Lancaster | Lacona, Iowa |
| Tec 4 | Edward D. Lee | 302 West Delaware, Nowata, Oklahoma |
| Tec 4 | Norman S. Orlaska | 1431 S. 2nd Street, West Allis, Wisconsin |
| Tec 4 | Arvid R. Overstreet | RFD 2, Pierce City, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Elmer V. Pearson | 21 W. Poplar Street, Walla Walla, Washington |
| Tec 4 | Nicholas Revo | 31 Hillburn St., Hays P. O., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 4 | Carroll E. Shay | Pine Island, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Peter J. Staley | New Brunswick, New Jersey |

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|---|---|---|
| Tec 4 | Archie T. Topham | Box 768, Lander, Wyoming |
| Tec 4 | Miles E. Walker | Fallentimber, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Frank F. Booher | RFD 2, Three Springs, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Ashley L. Camp, Jr. | Munford, Alabama |
| Cpl | Paul A. Colley | Route 2, Box 7, Covington, Virginia |
| Cpl | Melvin R. Compton | Route 1, Martinsville, Virginia |
| Cpl | Stanley A. Dare | Box 28, Star Route, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Lawrence DeGidio | Cumberland, Wisconsin |
| Cpl | Harold C. Forsberg | 48 Pleasant Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts |
| Cpl | Francis L. Gardner | 1010 — 20th Avenue, Columbus 3, Ohio |
| Cpl | Ernest T. Gradin | 715 — 5th Avenue, East Duluth, Minnesota |
| Cpl | William C. Green | 1403 E. 6th Street, Fairbury, Nebraska |
| Cpl | Gordon D. Hamit | Holly, Colorado |
| Cpl | Carl S. Hearrington | 1108 E. Main Street, Danville, Illinois |
| Cpl | Robert E. Hegland | 9410 Marlowe Avenue, Overland, Missouri |
| Cpl | Ralf R. Hemke | 1028 N. 21st Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin |
| Cpl | Frank Hladek, Jr. | RFD 2, Collyer, Kansas |
| Cpl | Robert C. Jarvis | 248 — 94th Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Cpl | Jerome T. Latimer | 6400 S. Harvard Avenue, Chicago, Illinois |
| Cpl | Richard F. Lepore | 889 Broadway, Chelsea, Massachusetts |
| Cpl | Winfield M. Levashuaskas | 455 North Street, Minersville, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Willard R. Lizzotte | 20 LaSalle Street, Waterville, Maine |
| Cpl | Francis D. Maloney, Jr. | 385 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elmira, New York |
| Cpl | James H. Murray | c/o Emil Anderson, Badger, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Henry J. Okonoski | 143 Guernsey Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Cpl | Murry M. Orr | RFD 1, Neodesha, Kansas |
| Cpl | Loren H. Pitts | Madella, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Earl R. Taylor | Florence Sta. Route 2, Omaha, Nebraska |
| Cpl | Clarence L. Thorne | RFD 1, Odell, Illinois |
| Cpl | Artie J. Wood | General Delivery, Kansas, Oklahoma |
| Cpl | Myron E. Wright | Greenwood, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Frank F. Allegretti | 1633 — 42nd Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Tec 5 | Robert P. Anderson | 840 Valley View Dr., San Bernardino, California |
| Tec 5 | Robert J. Bobay | 202½ S. Walker, Bronson, Michigan |
| Tec 5 | Charles G. Chambers | Belle Plaine, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Orval A. Durm | Route 4, Winchester, Tennessee |
| Tec 5 | Michael J. Ferro | 12 Cardinal Place, Stamford, Connecticut |
| Tec 5 | George A. Fenn, Jr. | 46 Granby Street, Springfield, Massachusetts |
| Tec 5 | Robert J. Fersch | 39 Raritan Avenue, Paterson, New Jersey |
| Tec 5 | Myron J. Fisher | Route 2, Stewart (Renville), Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Norman W. Harp | 2213 Belling Avenue, Louisville, Kentucky |
| Tec 5 | Ronald G. Huxman | Arnold, Kansas |
| Tec 5 | Lloyd A. Jacobson | 3108 Minnesota, St. Louis, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Jerrell J. Johnson | Route 3, Dardanelle, Arkansas |
| Tec 5 | Joseph Kaufman | 128 No. Main Street, Spring Valley, New York |
| Tec 5 | John C. Lehnen | 1625 George Avenue, Fort Smith, Arkansas |
| Tec 5 | Frank J. Luce | 2112 Madison, Lexington, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Robert M. McEachern | 507 S. "G" Street, Wellington, Kansas |
| Tec 5 | John G. McGonagle | RR 4, Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Oren E. Nordhagen | Route 1, Thief River Falls, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Dewey T. Pierce, Jr. | 1121 No. Main Street, Cape Gerardeau, Missouri |

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|---|---|---|
| Tec 5 | George C. Robbins | Montezuma, North Carolina |
| Tec 5 | Donald B. Singhoff | 6919 Grace Avenue, North College Hill, Ohio |
| Tec 5 | Henry M. Stancyk | Route 3, Argyle, Minnesota |
| Pfc | King D. Adams | 2146 Kindle Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio |
| Pfc | Drennan S. Anderson | Gail Route, Big Spring, Texas |
| Pfc | George C. Anen | 2254 W. Addison Street, Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | Henry M. Baillie | 906 N. Austin Blvd., Oak Park, Illinois |
| Pfc | Ancil R. Baisden | Banco, West Virginia |
| Pfc | Joseph Baptista, Jr. | 74 Plain Street, Taunton, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | Elmer Bardwell | Pineville, Louisiana |
| Pfc | Frank E. Baum | 1220 James Street, Carthage, Missouri |
| Pfc | Gilchrist C. Booth | 239 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah |
| Pfc | Felix F. Bradley | Clearfield, Iowa |
| Pfc | Wilton C. Bryan | 1129 S. 20th Street, Phoenix, Arizona |
| Pfc | Donald J. Canzonetta | 188 Dickey NW, Warren, Ohio |
| Pfc | Alfred F. Crawford | 9231 — 246th Street, Bellerose, Long Island, N. Y. |
| Pfc | Raymond W. Connors | 4855 Union, Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | Hildrie Corbin | Route 1, Nunez, Georgia |
| Pfc | Hastings L. Cushman | 802 Marion Street, Aiken, South Carolina |
| Pfc | Paul J. Devine | RR 1, Box 246, E. St. Louis, Illinois |
| Pfc | Lester A. Esmonde | 5606 White Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio |
| Pfc | Robert M. Gallup | 1334 N. College, Grand Rapids, Michigan |
| Pfc | Richard P. Gaun, Jr. | 355 So. Warren Street, Trenton, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Laverne C. Hancock | 403 Lincoln, Mankato, Kansas |
| Pfc | Russell E. Handlon | 1702 S. Belmont Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana |
| Pfc | Kenneth R. Heverly | 418 W. Walnut Street, Lock Haven, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Cecil J. J. Hinojosa | 1420 St. Louis Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri |
| Pfc | Francis H. Hughes | 561 Clinton Avenue, Newark, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Olaf A. Johnson | 2027 W. 76th Street, Los Angeles, California |
| Pfc | Philip Kenn | 85 Myrtle Street, Boston, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | John L. Kozjek | RR 1, Pitsburg, Kansas |
| Pfc | Chester A. Lawrence | Deerfield, Missouri |
| Pfc | Walter E. Lundquist | 1326 So. 1st Street, Arcadia, California |
| Pfc | Earl D. Marshall | RR 2, South Haven, Michigan |
| Pfc | Harry J. Minarik | 2044-A N. 13th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin |
| Pfc | Francis W. Mitchell | Route 1, Blossburg, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Kenneth C. Moose | 437 Fourth Street, Washtenaw, Michigan |
| Pfc | Herbert A. McKenzie | 1112 E. Main Street, Lancaster, Ohio |
| Pfc | Larry L. Parks | 934 Western Avenue, Northside Pittsburg, Pa. |
| Pfc | Lucian E. Peterson | Callender, Iowa |
| Pfc | Donald L. Pokarth | 420 N. 14th Street, La Crosse, Wisconsin |
| Pfc | James F. Pratt | 14 Floyd Street, Waukon, Iowa |
| Pfc | George Preble | Route 1, Norman, Oklahoma |
| Pfc | Joseph H. Ryder | 83 Smith Street, West Haven, Connecticut |
| Pfc | Chester S. Slowikowski | 2335 S. Whipple Street, Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | Daniel R. Stalnaker | Adah, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Emil D. Toutant | 10114 Orangelawn, Detroit, Michigan |
| Pfc | Leonard G. Urbansky | Box 147, Fite Station, McKeesport, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Roger A. Wilson | Chewelan, Washington |
| Pvt | Bruce B. Axtell | 1711 S. 10th Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota |
| Pvt | Lester Cadwell, Jr. | Casnovia, Michigan |

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|---|---|---|
| Pvt | Elliott R. Carter | Route 1, Dry Fork, Virginia |
| Pvt | Kenneth E. Clemmens | 44 Greenwood Avenue, Columbus, Ohio |
| Pvt | James E. Kurtz | 49 Woodland Avenue, Lewiston, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Walter L. Jennings | General Delivery, Pascagoula, Mississippi |
| Pvt | Urban G. Keilman | 143—156th Street, Calumet City, Illinois |
| Pvt | William L. Lease | 383 Ann Street, Newburgh Orange, New York |
| Pvt | John Matiska | 535 Wales Avenue, Bronx, New York |
| Pvt | Arthur A. Mooney | 5616 So. Racine Avenue, Chicago, Illinois |
| Pvt | Richard L. McDowell | Route 1, Box 530, El Paso, Texas |
| Pvt | Raymond J. McMichael | Anthony, Kansas |
| Pvt | August H. Passarella, Jr. | 1304 N. 19th Avenue, Melrose Park, Illinois |
| Pvt | Chester T. Pavlak | 8 High Street, Torrington, Connecticut |
| Pvt | Wilbert E. Peterson | Kimball, Minnesota |
| Pvt | William S. Poltorak | High Street, Housatonic, Massachusetts |
| Pvt | James L. Reedy | Usk, Washington |
| Pvt | Ismael Sepulveda | 846 Hewitt Place, Bronx, New York |
| Pvt | Ike G. Slafka | Route 1, Reagan, Texas |
| Pvt | Arthur E. Saice | Mahnomen, Minnesota |
| Pvt | Edison E. Soper | 223 High Street, Bradford, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Loren W. Tully | 919 — 11th Street, Racine, Wisconsin |
| Pvt | William A. Whidden | 334 N. W. 22nd Street, Miami, Florida |
| Pvt | William H. Williams | Berea, Kentucky |
| Pvt | Sidney Witzer | 8666 — 21st Avenue, Brooklyn, New York |

## COMPANY "C"

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1/Sgt | Monte C. Carpenter | 158 So. "J" St., Dinuba, California |
| 1/Sgt | Bernard S. Leviton | 714 Elwood Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| 1/Sgt | Kenneth Satterthwaite | Muscatine, Iowa |
| T/Sgt | Ralph H. Meierotto | Dassel, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | Raymond G. Davis | Gray, Iowa |
| S/Sgt | Percy N. Gordon | RFD 2, Ethel, Mississippi |
| S/Sgt | Paul T. Jackson | McFall, Missouri |
| S/Sgt | Richard D. McCracken | 532 Riehl Street, Waterloo, Iowa |
| S/Sgt | Paul L. Patterson | 114 5th Street, Peoria, Illinois |
| S/Sgt | Edgar S. Silver | 6333 Glenwood, Chicago, Illinois |
| S/Sgt | Vernon D. Skaggs | RFD 1, Clarkson, Kentucky |
| S/Sgt | Alvin R. Tisland | Nebish, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Harold D. Adams | 15 Worcester Square, Boston, Massachusetts |
| Sgt | James P. Archer | 210 Hampton Street, Bridgeton, New Jersey |
| Sgt | Frank Bartuska | Conway, North Dakota |
| Sgt | Robert D. Bennett | 111 L & N Ave., Lewisburg, Tennessee |
| Sgt | Gerald M. Bolt | 1218 Hobbs Street, Sac City, Iowa |
| Sgt | George R. Clendenen | Racine, West Virginia |
| Sgt | Daniel M. Commerford | RFD 2, Farmerville, Illinois |
| Sgt | Cecil L. Davis | 501 So. 19th Street, Herrin, Illinois |
| Sgt | Francis M. Dorer | 5235 Chester Ave., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Sgt | Edward S. Golembiewski | 82 Ivy Street, New Haven, Connecticut |
| Sgt | Frank N. Harper | 33 So. Edgehill, Indianapolis, Indiana |
| Sgt | Robert Hercy | Box 28 RFD 1, Orafino, Nebraska |
| Sgt | Tony R. Jaegers | 1301 E. Elm Street, Jefferson City, Missouri |

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|---|---|---|
| Sgt | Gene W. Johnson | RFD 2, Eskridge, Kansas |
| Sgt | George L. Miller | 427 W. Main Street, Rogersville, Tennessee |
| Sgt | Carrol W. Olson | RFD 3, Elbow Lake, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Sylvester Parker | RFD 2, Sharon, Tennessee |
| Sgt | John R. Sechman | New Berlin, Pennsylvania |
| Sgt | Waldo P. Wennerberg | Star Route, Kerkhoven, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Anthony J. Abromowich | 280 Atlantic Ave., N. Cohasset, Massachusetts |
| Tec 4 | Ross W. Bradshaw | 515 Whitall Street, St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Glenn C. Brundige | 3269 Wadsworth, Wheatridge, Colorado |
| Tec 4 | Ralph E. Bryant | RFD 2, Seymour, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Richard E. Delfs | Hawthorne, Nevada |
| Tec 4 | Boyd M. Glidewell | Cherokee, Iowa |
| Tec 4 | Lawrence L. Koglin | 1923 Montgomery, St. Louis, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Wilson Lester | Keyrock, West Virginia |
| Tec 4 | John Lukins | Box 87, RFD 1, Bemidji, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Theodore F. Manus | 4433 Belleview, Kansas City, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Lawrence R. McCoy | RFD 4, Des Moines, Iowa |
| Tec 4 | LeRoy B. Meyer | RFD 1, Shelocta, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 4 | Roy L. Parker | Star Route, Lonoke, Arkansas |
| Tec 4 | Johnny E. Parsons | Kettle, West Virginia |
| Tec 4 | John B. Patterson | 907 E. 7th Street, Hutchinson, Kansas |
| Tec 4 | Perry W. Reams | RFD 5, Centralia, Missouri |
| Tec 4 | Keith E. Reed | Greenfield, Iowa |
| Tec 4 | John W. Seifert | 2531 Grand Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Meredith D. Shaw | Dorrance, Kansas |
| Tec 4 | Weyman P. Simpson | RFD 1, Hartsfield, Georgia |
| Tec 4 | Robert W. Stelter | Wood Lake, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Elmer J. Waltzing | Belmond, Iowa |
| Tec 4 | Webster M. White | 15 Haynesworth Street, Greenville, South Carolina |
| Cpl | Merle D. Albright | 1207 Hamilton Avenue, Tyrone, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Ralph H. Backes | RFD 2, Lindsey, Nebraska |
| Cpl | Hardy Boullion | Mount Belview, Texas |
| Cpl | Gordon W. Chandler | 130 North "O" Street, Lake Worth, Florida |
| Cpl | Eston G. Collins | Morganton, Georgia |
| Cpl | Clifford A. Dahlen | 3117 Harriet Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Charles C. Gentile | 945 87th Avenue No., Duluth, Minnesota |
| Cpl | William E. Haarstick | 607 North Second Street, Mankato, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Lawrence A. Kassa | 501 Tindalph Ave., Thief River Falls, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Robert P. Leen | 401 E. 145th Street, Bronx, New York |
| Cpl | Marion J. McCaulley | 923 13th Ave., Seattle, Washington |
| Cpl | William L. Nassau III | Swedesford Road, Paoli, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Edward P. Paul | 9626 Ewing Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Cpl | Horace C. Pepper | South "B" Street, Easley, South Carolina |
| Cpl | William P. T. Preston, Jr. | 895 Park Avenue, New York, New York |
| Cpl | John W. Restad | P. O. Box 141, Billings, Montana |
| Cpl | Norman W. Roylance | Horseneck Road, So. Westport, Massachusetts |
| Cpl | Walter S. Rycek | 4815 Comly Street, Philadelphia, Pa. |
| Cpl | Gordon L. Sordahl | 504 N. Main Street, Viroqua, Wisconsin |
| Cpl | John M. Stadnik | 3816 Ivy Street, E. Chicago, Indiana |
| Cpl | Lyle E. Steinke | RFD 1, Zimmerman, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Ralph M. Stolp | RFD 2, Chewelah, Washington |

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|---|---|---|
| Cpl | Darrell A. Watson | 118 Roosevelt, Flat River, Missouri |
| Cpl | James C. West | Box 116, Adairsville, Georgia |
| Cpl | Harlan Whitcomb | RFD 2, Pelham Road, Amherst, Massachusetts |
| Cpl | Robert B. Williamson | 107 Williamson Drive, Bryan, Texas |
| Cpl | James H. Winn | Presho, South Dakota |
| Tec 5 | Gelon L. Barnes, Jr. | 515 W. Central, Orlando, Florida |
| Tec 5 | Eugene F. Burgess | 3129 Golden Ave., Long Beach, California |
| Tec 5 | Leonard L. Crandall | Yulan, New York |
| Tec 5 | Roy K. David | Box 273 RFD 1, Coleman, Wisconsin |
| Tec 5 | Floyd E. Garee | 755 VanKirk Street, Clairton, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Ralph Gassman | 2106 Gilpin Street, Denver, Colorado |
| Tec 5 | Joseph W. Gray | Box 73, Valier, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Arnold M. Green | Box 136, Bridgeton, Rhode Island |
| Tec 5 | Peter Haverlock | 2022 Hoyt Ave., Everett, Washington |
| Tec 5 | Clyde E. Hogue | Diagonal, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Tony N. Klipfel | RFD 1, Portageville, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Leonard D. Lutts | General Delivery, Pauls Valley, Oklahoma |
| Tec 5 | Harry A. Newton | Syosset, New York |
| Tec 5 | Peter L. Nistler | RFD 1, Eden Valley, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Henry Marcantonio | 405 Cumberland Street, Westfield, New Jersey |
| Tec 5 | O. L. Parker | RFD 2, Dyersburg, Tennessee |
| Tec 5 | Joseph F. Patias | 2634 N. Front Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Clay L. Patrick | 918 E. 3rd Street, Sedalia, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Emrose E. Price | 5977 Ridge Ave., St. Louis, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | William A. Paulhamus | 5 W. Broad Street, Mountoursville, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Guy R. Robertson | Poteau, Oklahoma |
| Tec 5 | James A. Robertson, Jr. | RFD 2, Mayville, New York |
| Tec 5 | William J. Stouffer | RFD 2, Lowellville, Ohio |
| Tec 5 | Elmer C. F. Uden | RFD 3, Juniata, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Clarence M. Voakes | 4861 Avery, Detroit, Michigan |
| Tec 5 | Patrick C. Ward | 4720 Saratoga Street, Omaha, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Walter J. Waligorski | 1708 Hall Street, E. St. Louis, Illinois |
| Pfc | Robert G. Andrews | 126 Clare Ave., Hyde Park, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | Frank L. Ario | 709½ No. Front Street, Mankato, Minnesota |
| Pfc | Zavel Averbach | 2815 Thomas Street, Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | Ned B. Bethers | Heber City, Utah |
| Pfc | Robert R. Burich | 1952 South "M" Street, Tacoma, Washington |
| Pfc | David S. Crabb | 409 Mumford Street, Schenectady, New York |
| Pfc | Wilbur C. Edens | 3 Jarret Street, Charleston, West Virginia |
| Pfc | Chester S. Durbin | Bland, Missouri |
| Pfc | Albert J. Epelley | 1106½ Montgomery Street, St. Louis, Mo. |
| Pfc | Alvin E. Fryxell | 3705 S. Ainsworth, Tacoma, Washington |
| Pfc | William L. Garland | 1603 Green Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Charles L. Gentry | Elkin, North Carolina |
| Pfc | Jesse E. Harris | 407 Gargan Ave., Houston, Texas |
| Pfc | Truman H. Haught | 524 Market Street, Fairmont, West Virginia |
| Pfc | Roy G. Johnson | 502 4th Street, Bemidji, Minnesota |
| Pfc | Ambrose T. Killeen | 56 Dalton Ave., Pittsfield, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | Kenneth P. Kinion | Batavia, Iowa |
| Pfc | George M. Lanser | RFD 1, Belgium, Wisconsin |
| Pfc | Leon E. Larson | 4151 Nokomis Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota |

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|---|---|---|
| Pfc | Winford E. Mabie | St. Johns, Michigan |
| Pfc | Thomas E. Mason | 856 4th Ave., Durango, Colorado |
| Pfc | Willard W. Meyer | 8456 So. San Pedro St., Los Angeles, California |
| Pfc | Dominick Miceli | 92 Neptune Ave., Jersey City, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Edward H. Phipps | 1008 So. 8th Street, St. Louis, Missouri |
| Pfc | Howard L. Rasmussen | 845 Burr Street, St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Pfc | Joseph C. Raikes | General Delivery, Seneca, Illinois |
| Pfc | Harold Rosenberg | 303 Sheridan Blvd., Mt. Vernon, New York |
| Pfc | Fidus G. Simpson, Jr. | 942 Starling Ave., Martinsville, Virginia |
| Pfc | Clyde E. Standridge | Lynch, Kentucky |
| Pfc | Herman H. Scrivner | Burns, Oregon |
| Pfc | Archibald H. Staniek | 640 Butler Street, Etna, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Lawrence H. Taylor | Philip, South Dakota |
| Pfc | Gordon S. Thomas | RFD 1, Opp, Alabama |
| Pfc | George W. Trunick | 112 Stevenson Ave., Louisville, Kentucky |
| Pfc | Chester Underhill | 241 So. Millvale Ave., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Norman W. Warner | 8525 So. 78th Ave., Oak Lawn, Illinois |
| Pfc | Marion E. Wilkinson | Eldora, Iowa |
| Pfc | Paul P. Zubko | 5 Helena Ave., Essex, Maryland |
| Pvt | Jacob Altergott | 615 E. 8th Street, Scottsbluff, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Carl A. Arnett | Hendricks, Kentucky |
| Pvt | Joseph C. N. Baron | 96½ Towle Street, Nashua, New Hampshire |
| Pvt | Lenzy A. Barrington | RFD 1, Bloomburg, Texas |
| Pvt | John C. Beaseley | 2404 Bell Ave., Columbus, Mississippi |
| Pvt | John W. Buchanan | 1312 Montie Road, Lincoln Park, Michigan |
| Pvt | Lee R. Christensen | Irwin Hotel, Omaha, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Robert H. DeWitt | 4 Exchange Street, Avoca, New York |
| Pvt | Marshall E. Fields | 857 Market Street, Huntington, Indiana |
| Pvt | Robert B. Golding | Box 200 RFD 12, Phoenix, Arizona |
| Pvt | Joseph J. Gorman | 8032 S. Union Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pvt | Aubrey M. Gulledge | RFD 1, Goggans, Georgia |
| Pvt | Clarence R. Hadlow | RFD 1, Chanute, Kansas |
| Pvt | John H. Hislop | 903 Eagle Ave., New York, New York |
| Pvt | Knute Kvam | Bradish, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Lee R. Martin | 1838 Exchange, Wichita, Kansas |
| Pvt | Gleason N. McAdoo | 309 Summer Street, Martin, Tennessee |
| Pvt | William Melnick | 1129 So. Long Ave., Hillside, New Jersey |
| Pvt | Luke M. Miglionico | 12405 Fairview Court, Cleveland, Ohio |
| Pvt | William A. Mihelich | 1218 Bohmen, Pueblo, Colorado |
| Pvt | Frederick F. Nielsen | RFD 1, Sebeka, Minnesota |
| Pvt | Emmanuelle W. Patton | RFD 2, Yankton, South Dakota |
| Pvt | Arthur A. Perruzzi | 229 Madison Ave., Paterson, New Jersey |
| Pvt | Thomas C. Polyzois | 3306 Cass Street, Omaha, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Irvin H. Reddish | Roca, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Ellis E. Ripley | Yakima, Washington |
| Pvt | Paul N. Reynolds | 815 E. 10th Street, Tucson, Arizona |
| Pvt | Kenneth C. Rickel | 1076 Gorman Ave., W. St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Pvt | Anthony J. Sabatino | 111 Bloomfield Ave., Newark, New Jersey |
| Pvt | Joseph F. Schalter, Jr. | 14420 Eastwood, Detroit, Michigan |
| Pvt | Aulton J. Schubert | RFD 4, Caldwell, Texas |
| Pvt | Curtis M. Smith | Cameron, Wisconsin |

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|---|---|---|
| Pvt | Fred G. Smith | 965 Collington Ave., Baltimore, Maryland |
| Pvt | Eugene N. Stanley | RFD 2, Neosho, Missouri |
| Pvt | Marshall E. Templeton | 1117 E. 9th Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee |
| Pvt | Herbert Tepper | 3051 Brighton 3 Street, Brooklyn, New York |
| Pvt | James H. Waldron | 520 Market Street, Muncy, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Kurt A. Walther, Jr. | 5452 Gravois Street, St. Louis, Missouri |
| Pvt | Frank B. Wieczorek | 309 Newberry Street, York, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Robert J. Williams | 14 Taft Street, Dorchester, Massachusetts |

## COMPANY "D"

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1st Sgt | John Calaganis | 34—18 Crescent St., Long Island City, New York |
| T/Sgt | Jergen Bestland | Antelope, Montana |
| T/Sgt | William D. Carter | 1960 Galena St., Denver 8, Colorado |
| S/Sgt | Paul Bardon | 347 West Chalmers Ave., Youngstown, Ohio |
| S/Sgt | Robert L. Baker | 4804 Delmar Blvd., St. Louis, Mo. |
| S/Sgt | Mario A. Cavanna | Omega Mine, Washington, California |
| S/Sgt | Joseph Crick | 907 W. Wilcox St., Chicago, Illinois |
| S/Sgt | Robert C. Dobson | 721 East 17th St., Winfield, Kansas |
| S/Sgt | Clifford C. Horstmann | Walton, Nebraska |
| S/Sgt | Sephen P. Kleman | Rt. 2, Johnstown, Pennsylvania |
| S/Sgt | Russell L. Miller | RFD 1, W. Alexander, Pennsylvania |
| S/Sgt | Frank J. Williams | Hub Hotel, N. Ayers St., Harvard, Illinois |
| Sgt | James Bempkins | 282 E. South St., Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania |
| Sgt | Clifford Bondurant | R 1, Hartsburg, Mo. |
| Sgt | Samuel Cantor | 115 Glenmore Ave., Brooklyn, New York |
| Sgt | Frank Ciarcinski | 123 41st St., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania |
| Sgt | Charles J. Croley | 1105 Bluff St., Wichita Falls, Texas |
| Sgt | Kenneth M. Herman | 2302 Felix, St. Joseph, Mo. |
| Sgt | Frank B. Fox | Box 1216, Winterhaven, Florida |
| Sgt | Ray W. Howell | 138 Rector St., Perth Amboy, New Jersey |
| Sgt | Arnold Mullins | Beefhide, Kentucky |
| Sgt | Edward O. Nystrom | 1317 14th Ave., East Hibbing, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Edmond Rourman | 2737 1/4 Pomeroy, Los Angeles, California |
| Sgt | George F. Thompson | 367 75th St., Bklyn Kings, New York, N. Y. |
| Sgt | George T. Trott | 300 South Payson St., Baltimore 23, Maryland |
| Sgt | Walter C. Warren | Rt 1, Globe, Arizona |
| Tec 4 | Charles A. Danna, Jr. | 2515 Dumaine Street, New Orleans, Louisiana |
| Tec 4 | Gerhardt H. Eichmann | RR 1, Winfred, South Dakota |
| Tec 4 | John H. Froberg | Lindstrom, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Silas V. Hofland | Rt. 6, Montevideo, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | William J. Johnston | 48 Washington St., Waterbury, Connecticut |
| Tec 4 | Arnold T. Josephson | Rt. 1, Arena, North Dakota |
| Tec 4 | Alfred F. Klasen | Wilton, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Clarence H. Kollmorgen | 4701 Lakeview, Detroit, Michigan |
| Tec 4 | Gillard L. Larson | 205 So. 66th Ave. West, Duluth, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Stephen T. O'Hedy | 22 Nelson St., New Haven, Connecticut |
| Tec 4 | Erwin A. Raguse | Beardsley, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Philip A. Schultz | Cook Hill, Wallingford, Connecticut |
| Tec 4 | Nealy Q. Schumaker | 533 N. 16th, Murphysboro, Illinois |
| Tec 4 | Leo F. Traska | 1117a St. Louis Ave., St. Louis, Missouri |

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|---|---|---|
| Tec 4 | Stanley R. Walewski | 108 W Blaine St., McAdoo, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 4 | Selmer J. Wold | Rt. 5, Box 116, Thief River Falls, Minnesota |
| Cpl | Raymond Bidwell | 1708 Linden St., Scranton, Pennsylvania |
| Cpl | Donald R. Clemetson | Howard, South Dakota |
| Cpl | Zygmunt V. Dobkowski | 1420 E. 33rd St., Cleveland, Ohio |
| Cpl | Jack B. Potter | 1220 S. Water, Wichita, Kansas |
| Cpl | Rodney H. Schultz | The Plains, Ohio |
| Cpl | Harry A. Scopinich | 3200 Wisteria Ave., Baltimore, Maryland |
| Cpl | Stanley J. Sowa | 3444 So. Western Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Cpl | Rupert K. Whitener | 7725 Olive St., RD, University City, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | Burton J. Austin | 12 Pierce St., Dover, New Hampshire |
| Tec 5 | Wesley W. Carr | 712 Chestnut St., Delanio, New York, N. Y. |
| Tec 5 | George B. Cerul | 207 Lakeview Ave., Syracuse, New York |
| Tec 5 | Leonard R. Dixon | 118 Windermere Rd., Lockport, New York |
| Tec 5 | Albert S. Dezendorf | Rt. 3, Baton Rouge, Louisiana |
| Tec 5 | William L. Franks | Box 569, Galley St., Dawson, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | George R. Griest, Jr. | 8th St., Philipsburg, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Melvin W. Griggs | Marshalltown, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Norman R. Heinzman | RFD 2, Friend, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Myer J. Hirsh | 4302 N. Franklin St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | John F. King | 23 Wendell Place, Glenbrook, Connecticut |
| Tec 5 | Bruce M. Leyda | 105 Bridge St., Minerva, Ohio |
| Tec 5 | Paul W. Morgenstern | 703 West Hildreth, Kirksville, Missouri |
| Tec 5 | George H. Oliphant | 416 Elizabeth St., Delmar, Maryland |
| Tec 5 | Heimo H. Poykko | 228 Columbia Street, Reedley, California |
| Tec 5 | Howard L. Rhodus | 403 South Main St., Normal, Illinois |
| Tec 5 | Robert R. Sullivan | General Delivery, Blanchard, Oklahoma |
| Tec 5 | Merton R. Stenzel | Odessa, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Orville S. Towler | 1202 Herr Ave., Louisville, Kentucky |
| Tec 5 | Dallis R. Twaddle | 132 S. 12th, Quincy, Illinois |
| Tec 5 | Paul Warner | Exira, Iowa |
| Pfc | Lewis B. Adams | Charley, Kentucky |
| Pfc | William A. Albin | 36 Henry St., Uxbridge, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | Jay Anderson | RFD 1, Rocky Comfort, Missouri |
| Pfc | Henry R. Arpin | 4 Sawtell Place, Lowell, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | Frank A. Ater | Rt. 1, Clarksburg, Ohio |
| Pfc | Walter A. Balnes | 5201 S. California Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | Robert L. Barnett | Rt. 5, Lancaster St., Talladega, Alabama |
| Pfc | Raymond E. Clifford | 110 Church St., Fall River, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | John V. Corley | Edgefield, South Carolina |
| Pfc | Vaughn H. Duffin | 816 Washington St., Salt Lake City, Utah |
| Pfc | Gerard F. Duplessis | 206 St. Barnabe St., Woonsocket, R. I. |
| Pfc | Fred R. Eggert | 10731 Hull Ave., Cleveland, Ohio |
| Pfc | Joseph P. Fendrick | 406 Hancock St., Ithaca, New York |
| Pfc | Glenn S. Frantz | 1323 N. George St., York, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | James R. Ferguson | 1253 Montclair, Detroit, Michigan |
| Pfc | Leo L. Freedberg | 1846 S. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | Gerald P. Gahl | 2806 Monroe St., Omaha, Nebraska |
| Pfc | Roland E. Hall, Jr. | 1505 N. Monroe St., Baltimore, Maryland |
| Pfc | Robert L. Hansen | 2901 Jackson St., Omaha, Nebraska |
| Pfc | Lendell A. Hatcher | Rt. 7, Seviervile, Tennessee |

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|---|---|---|
| Pfc | Ralph W. Hays | 208 Patterson Ave., Butler, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Hart C. Heise | 4906 W. Monroe St., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | Edgar F. Herbst, Jr. | 442 Houston Street, Jasper, Texas |
| Pfc | Ralph G. Howe | Box 604, Enid, Oklahoma |
| Pfc | Edward H. Krakowski | 3040 Lowe Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | George A. Lovelace | General Delivery, Clio, Michigan |
| Pfc | Roscoe G. Low | 507 Chiquita Road, Santa Barbara, California |
| Pfc | Dewey K. Mayberry | Elkin, North Carolina |
| Pfc | Edward W. Mecum | Bodines, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Herman E. Moore | General Delivery, Belleville, Arkansas |
| Pfc | Jack H. Paton | RR 2, Geuda Springs, Kansas |
| Pfc | Roy H. Phillips | 639 N. Lincoln Ave., Scranton, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Aloysius G. Schulte | Mankato, Minnesota |
| Pfc | James M. Scheuber, Jr. | 1223 W. Olive, Eldorado, Kansas |
| Pfc | Irving J. Shulman | 904 South Main St., College Park, Georgia |
| Pfc | Stephen P. Smith, Jr. | 70 S. Lane Ave., Youngstown, Ohio |
| Pfc | Charles R. Stanley | 5822 Walsh St., St. Louis, Missouri |
| Pfc | Bynum E. Usrey | 649 N. Watson St., Sullivan, Indiana |
| Pfc | Joseph J. Vadney | 5 Sykes Place, Providence, Rhode Island |
| Pfc | Harry A. Wallinder | 820 N. Broadway, Lonbard, Illinois |
| Pfc | Joseph Wandzala | 2517 N. 5th St., Milwaukee, Wisconsin |
| Pfc | Orville J. Wetterau | Edgar, Wisconsin |
| Pvt | William P. Barrett | 4330 N. Oakley, Chicago, Illinois |
| Pvt | Adrian W. Blount | Moorefield, Kentucky |
| Pvt | Robert F. Bryant | New Richmond, West Virginia |
| Pvt | Joe W. Coker | Sumter, South Carolina |
| Pvt | John R. Fischer | 106 N. Mead St., Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Julius J. Goldworm | 3017 Ocean Parkway, Brooklyn, New York |
| Pvt | Frank C. Grasso | Box 449, Old Quarterfield Rd., Glen Burnie, Maryland |
| Pvt | George V. Haggh | 4748 Deming Place, Chicago, Illinois |
| Pvt | Howard G. Mochel | 352 W. Leafland, Decatur, Illinois |
| Pvt | Ralph W. Mickelson | 4251 W. Keef Ave., Milwaukee, Wisconsin |
| Pvt | Paul H. O'Neill | 5916 S. Hermitage Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pvt | Paul E. Peura | 400 Kennilworth Ave., Warren, Ohio |
| Pvt | Arthur D. Rammel | RR 1, Friendship, Wisconsin |
| Pvt | Melvin L. Ratcliff | Waterloo, Iowa |
| Pvt | Albert V. Rieffer | 904 N. 2nd St., St. Charles, Missouri |
| Pvt | Charles Skurja | Box 203, Slickville, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Robert E. Smith | 456 Walnut St., Columbia, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Roy E. Snyder | Rt. 1, Wadena, Minnesota |
| Pvt | Charles E. Todd | 229 S. Barker Ave., Evansville, Indiana |
| Pvt | Ira T. Van Eaton | 210 South Missouri, Roswell, New Mexico |
| Pvt | Curtis D. Warnick | 125 E. Kenorvis St., Chickasaw, Alabama |
| Pvt | John H. Wells | 300 Chestnut St., Corbin, Kentucky |
| Pvt | James H. Wilson | 538 Fulton St., Waverly, New York |
| Pvt | Leonard M. Wodarczyk | 1440 Margaret St., St. Paul, Minnesota |

## SERVICE COMPANY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1/Sgt | Lloyd A. Hagglund | Box 413, Dassel, Minnesota |
| M/Sgt | Britton E. Fry | Wynne, Arkansas |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| M/Sgt | Howard P. Vargason | Aurora, Iowa |
| T/Sgt | Robert K. Bee | RFD 1, Homer, New York |
| T/Sgt | Joseph J. Petrocy | 201 Monroe St., Middletown, Ohio |
| T/Sgt | Myron H. Ronnberg | Loomis, Nebraska |
| S/Sgt | Hubert M. Curtis | RFD 2, Decaturville, Tennessee |
| S/Sgt | Charles A. Davenport | 832 Jefferson, Hebron, Nebraska |
| S/Sgt | Albert E. Marquardt | Johnson, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | Oliver P. Nielsen | St. Paul, Nebraska |
| S/Sgt | Frank P. Pickartz | 706 24th Ave. N., St. Cloud, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | Gregg N. Pouliot | Red Lake Falls, Minnesota |
| S/Sgt | Melvin E. Rosen | Wausa, Nebraska |
| Sgt | Leo W. Ahsenmacher | Annandale, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Robert V. Elleraas | Ada, Minnesota |
| Sgt | Roy L. Morgan | 342 S. Brighton, Kansas City, Mo. |
| Sgt | John W. Ovind | 1612 1st Ave. N., Grand Forks, North Dakota |
| Tec 4 | Ross A. Branscum | 73 Mulberry St., Cincinnati, Ohio |
| Tec 4 | Walter C. Braun | RFD 1, Regal, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Clarence E. Brettin | Renville, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Clarence W. Carlson | RFD 1, Underwood, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | John G. Colliflower | RFD 1, Bertrand, Mo. |
| Tec 4 | Otto B. Faaborg | RFD 2, Dannebrog, Nebraska |
| Tec 4 | William J. Fisher, Jr. | RFD 1, Henderson, Kentucky |
| Tec 4 | John C. Franklin | 834 Stannage Ave., Albany, California |
| Tec 4 | Carl W. Freeland | Wvatt, West Virginia |
| Tec 4 | Ralph E. Hilleren | RFD 2, Benson, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Orville P. Jensen | RFD 1, Fergus Falls, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Burnett J. Johnson | RFD 4, Owatonna, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Chester E. Johnson | Ellendale, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Clarence C. Kucera | Verdigre, Nebraska |
| Tec 4 | Karl F. Nelson | Box 215, Atwood, Kansas |
| Tec 4 | Omar E. Skallerud | RFD 4, Montevideo, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Frederick C. Tirrell | St. Petersburg, Florida |
| Tec 4 | Clarence E. Huff | Sexton, Iowa |
| Tec 4 | William H. Pitsenberger | 115½ Pattie Ave., Wichita, Kansas |
| Cpl | George H. Cook | 914 W. Third Ave., Flint, Michigan |
| Cpl | Robert W. Moilanen | Brocket, North Dakota |
| Cpl | James Near | 5588 Fairview Ave., Detroit, Michigan |
| Tec 5 | Theodore S. Barnas | Tarnov, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Coy H. Branch | 216 Elizabeth St., Durham, North Carolina |
| Tec 5 | Walter R. Carlson | 89 Eglehart, St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | John V. Cronan | 3135 O St., Sacramento, California |
| Tec 5 | Russell L. Dietze | 399 E. Pine St., Marengo, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Earnest H. Gannon | Giltner, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Bernard Glick | 25 Park Vale Ave., Allston, Massachusetts |
| Tec 5 | Peta A. Goedert | Lexington, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Robert C. Goodrich | RFD 2, Pt. Townsend, Washington |
| Tec 5 | Norman W. Hansen | Kimballton, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Edward Himlan | 1410 Amsterdam Ave., New York, New York |
| Tec 5 | Dennis S. Holtberg | Ashby, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | John D. Hoover | No. Redwood, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Daniel M. Jackson | 324 N. Pearl St., Macomb, Illinois |

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|---|---|---|
| Tec 5 | William P. Jaspers | 1829 Overlook Ave., Youngstown, Ohio |
| Tec 5 | Clifford J. Jensen | 301 9th St. So., Virginia, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Kenneth F. Kelsay | Fortuna, Mo. |
| Tec 5 | Ludwig Lamprecht | 300 7th St. S. W., Chisholm, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | John D. Landt, Sr. | Silver Springs, Florida |
| Tec 5 | Gust M. Malovrh | 119 Indiana Ave., Gilbert, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Alex McAdams | Romayor, Texas |
| Tec 5 | Garner F. McElroy | RFD 2, Erin, Tennessee |
| Tec 5 | Arvid S. Ostlie | RFD 4, Montevideo, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Franklin J. Pehle | Box 132, Grove City, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Void H. Pettig | New Truxton, Mo. |
| Tec 5 | Joseph P. Pokorny | Mahnomen, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Russell C. Price | 1211½ Grant St., Charleston, West Virginia |
| Tec 5 | Houston E. Rayborn | RFD 2, Brantley, Alabama |
| Tec 5 | Junior G. Sarver | RFD 3, Caledonia, Michigan |
| Tec 5 | Wilburn R. Smith | RFD 4, Jacksonville, Texas |
| Tec 5 | Einar Sorensen | St. Edward, Nebraska |
| Tec 5 | Grant D. Strahle, Sr. | RFD 2, Jasonville, Indiana |
| Tec 5 | Everett J. Tichenor | 3415 S. E. Division, Portland, Oregon |
| Tec 5 | Albert J. Volk | RFD 1, Madison Lake, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | John V. Yadon | Box 552, Seiling, Oklahoma |
| Tec 5 | John B. Yocum | Box 51, New Richland, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Andrew Zustiak | 1922 6th St. So., Minneapolis, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Clinton O. Woods | 708 Holcomb, Springdale, Arkansas |
| Pfc | Thurman J. Adkins | RFD 1, Meta, Mo. |
| Pfc | Sam Alexander | 1005 4th St., Breckenridge, Texas |
| Pfc | Massey C. Atkins | |
| Pfc | Woodrow R. Atkinson | 2149 N. W. Hoyt St., Portland, Oregon |
| Pfc | Joseph A. Bedolla | 1391 Todd Rd., Santa Rosa, California |
| Pfc | Bud R. Bracht | Chaffee, North Dakota |
| Pfc | James D. Burinda | 211 Fortune, Detroit, Michigan |
| Pfc | William M. Codner | 1507½ Sixth St., New Orleans, Louisiana |
| Pfc | Thomas J. Collins | 27 Jackson St., Port Carbon, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Anthony J. Contsantino | 218 E. 124th St., New York, New York |
| Pfc | John G. Dickinson | Red Lake, Minnesota |
| Pfc | Richard P. Fitzgerald | 157 Oakley Rd., Belmont, Massachusetts |
| Pfc | John Fox, Jr. | Behn Rd., Westfalls, N. Y. |
| Pfc | Charles E. P. Franz | 1229 N. Broadway, Baltimore, Maryland |
| Pfc | James W. Golden | 148 Division St., Montevideo, Minnesota |
| Pfc | William A. Henderson | 914 Marshall Ave., New Castle, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Henry Hoffman | RFD 3, Box 101-A, Madera, California |
| Pfc | Robert L. Johnson | 1231 Second St. N. E., Rochester, Minnesota |
| Pfc | John W. Jones | |
| Pfc | Arthur C. Klauss | 18160 Toepfer Rd., East Detroit, Michigan |
| Pfc | Edward S. Liscinsky | 6914 180th St., Flushing, N. Y. |
| Pfc | Theodore Loucks | 1608 Margaret Ave., Altoona, Pennsylvania |
| Pfc | Charles M. Martin | Eutawville, South Carolina |
| Pfc | Tom J. Marple | RFD 9, Springfield, Mo. |
| Pfc | Raymond O. Mullen | South Webster, Ohio |
| Pfc | Omer H. McNabb | RFD 1, Richardson Rd., Independence, Kentucky |
| Pfc | Urho I. Nelson | Mt. Iron, Minnesota |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Pfc | Joe V. Nemec | Box 409, Robstown, Texas |
| Pfc | Paul J. Oberting | RFD 1, Lawrenceburg, Indiana |
| Pfc | Joseph F. Palush | 47 Butler St., Franklin, New Jersey |
| Pfc | Harold H. Plasky | 1627 N. Elston Ave., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pfc | J. D. Rice | RFD 3, Woodruff, South Carolina |
| Pfc | Eugene L. Shedlock | 539 W. 179 St., New York, New York |
| Pfc | Robert W. Simko | 98 Long Hill Ave., Shelton, Connecticut |
| Pfc | Harold E. Southwick | 2340 Forney St., Los Angeles, California |
| Pfc | George Wieland | Smithfield, Nebraska |
| Pvt | Clifton C. Barker | Box 806, Madera, California |
| Pvt | Frank Bobick | 61 Butler St., Uniontown, Pennsylvania |
| Pvt | Allie Burton | Catlettsburg, Kentucky |
| Pvt | Walter Broughton | 24 S. Honore St., Chicago, Illinois |
| Pvt | Roy H. Gorum | Delight, Arkansas |

## MEDICAL DETACHMENT

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| T/Sgt | Edward I. Fast | Second Avenue, Waitsburg, Washington |
| S/Sgt | John W. Wiley | Seneca, Nebraska |
| Tec 3 | Richard M. Grant, Jr. | 905 N. Perry, Junction City, Kansas |
| Tec 3 | Leonard Peterson | 687 East Cottage Ave., St. Paul, Minnesota |
| Tec 4 | Ardis R. Honsowetz | Route 3, Portland, Michigan |
| Cpl | Robert K. Jay | Waterloo, Iowa |
| Tec 5 | Robert M. Blosser | Gans, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Joseph A. Bonczek | 1822 Luverne, Scranton, Pennsylvania |
| Tec 5 | Johnnie Evancho | Brookside, Alabama |
| Tec 5 | James E. Ferguson | Eskridge, Kansas |
| Tec 5 | George E. Hicks | 101 Hobbs St., Athens, Alabama |
| Tec 5 | James A. Pomeroy | 918½ E. 8th St., Winona, Minnesota |
| Tec 5 | Raymond L. Shiveley | National Apartments, Falls City, Nebraska |
| Pfc | Eastman R. Cook | 411 Monroe St., Boonton, New York |
| Pfc | Jerold K. Fraser | Route 3, Hiawatha, Kansas |
| Pfc | William J. Gibson | 2902 Bond Ave., East St. Louis, Illinois |
| Pfc | Walter M. Martin | Route 2, Roseville, California |
| Pfc | Walter A. McPhee | 40 Sheldon Terrace, New Haven, Connecticut |
| Pfc | Joseph M. Sanner | 228 N. 5th St., Harbor Beach, Michigan |
| Pfc | Gerhard M. Umlauf | Klickitat, Washington |
| Pvt | Thurman S. Parsons | Route 3, New Market, Tennessee |