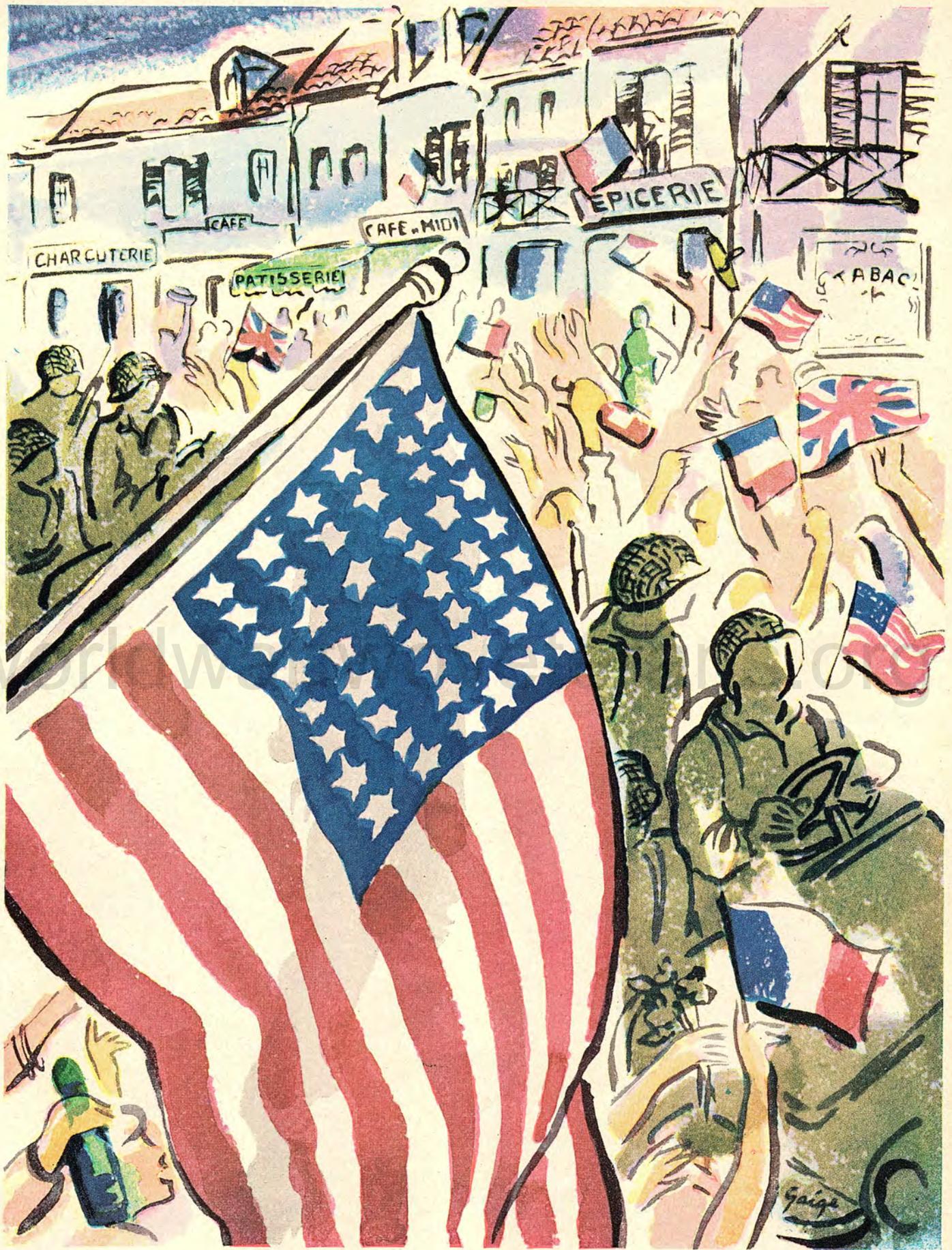


VIII
SOUTHERN FRANCE

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From the Riviera to the Vosges in Thirty Days

TROOP LIST—Operation "Anvil" Third Infantry Division (Reinf)

Organization for Combat

1. *Hq & Hq Co, 3d Inf Div*
 - Naval Combat Int Team
 - Air Support Control Party
 - Order of Battle Personnel
 - CIC Personnel
 - Securité Militaire
 - OSS Personnel
 - Photo Interpreters
 - Civil Affairs Personnel
 - IPW Det
2. *7th Infantry*
 - Co A, 756th Tk Bn
 - Co A, 601st TD Bn
 - Co A, 3d Chem Bn
 - Co A, 10th Engr Bn (Initially)
 - Co A, 3d Med Bn
 - 10th FA Bn (Initially)
 - Naval Shore Fire Control Party
 - Det 6617th Mine Clr Co (Gapping Team)
 - Det 3d Sig Co
 - IPW Team
3. *15th Infantry*
 - Co B, 756th Tk Bn
 - Co B, 601st TD Bn
 - Co B, 3d Chem Bn
 - Co B, 10th Engr Bn (Initially)
 - Co B, 3d Med Bn
 - 39th FA Bn (Initially)
 - Naval Shore Fire Control Party
 - Det 6617th Mine Clr Co (Gapping Team)
 - Det 3d Sig Co
 - IPW Team
4. *30th Infantry*
 - Co C, 3d Chem Bn
 - Co C, 3d Med Bn
 - Det 3d Sig Co
 - IPW Team
5. *3d Division Artillery*
 - 9th FA Bn
 - 41st FA Bn
 - 441st AAA AW Bn
 - 634th FA Bn (155mm How)
 - 69th Armd FA Bn
 - 36th FA Bn (155mm Gun)
 - Det 2d FA Obsn Bn
6. *3d Rcn Troop*
 - Naval Gunfire Liaison
 - Naval Shore Fire Control Parties
7. *Troop C (Reinf) 117th Cav Rcn Sq (Mczd)*
8. *756th Tank Bn (-Cos A & B)*
9. *601st TD Bn (-Cos A & B)*
10. *3d Chemical Bn (-Cos A, B & C)*
 - Det 6th Chem Dep Co
 - Det 11th Chem Maint Co
11. *3d Signal Co (-Dets)*
 - Det 163d Sig Photo Co
 - Det D-1 SIAA 3151st Rcn Sq (Mczd)
12. *10th Engr Bn (-Cos A & B)*
 - 2nd Bn, 343d Engr GS Regt
 - Det Treadway Bridge Co (378th Engr Bn) (Sep)
13. *703d Ord Co*
14. *Hq & Hq Det 43rd Ord Bn*
 - 14th Ord (MM) Co
 - 3432d Ord (MM) Co
 - 64th Ord Ammo Co
 - 143d Ord Bomb Disp Sq
 - Det 261st Ord (MM) Co (AA)
 - Det 87th Ord (Hv M) Tk Co
15. *3d Med Bn (-Cos A, B & C)*
 - 10th Fd Hosp (-Hosp Unit) (-12 Nurses)
 - 6703d Blood Transfusion Unit (Fwd Dist Sec)
 - Det 2d Aux Surg Group (-12 Nurses)
 - 5 Gen Surg Teams (Nos 2, 3, 10, 12, 21)
 - 1 Thoracic Team (No. 1)
 - 1 Neuro Team (No. 2)
 - 1 Orthopedic Team (No. 1)
 - 1 Maxille Facial Team (No. 1)
 - 1 Dental Prosthetic Team
16. *95th Evac Hosp (- 24 Nurses)*
17. *3d QM Co*
 - 1st Plat, 46th QM GR Co
 - 379th Rpl Co (600 Repl)
18. *Beach Group*
 - 36th Engr (c) Regt
 - 1st Naval Beach Bn
 - 72d Sig Co (Spec)
 - Det 207th Sig Rep Co + Det 177th Sig Rep Co
 - Hq & Hq Det 52d Med Bn

376th Med Coll Co
 377th Med Coll Co
 378th Med Coll Co
 682d Med Clr Co
 616th Med Clr Co (—1 Plat)
 1 Sec 377th PW Esct Gd Co
 Det Boat Guards
 157th MP PW Det
 706th MP PW Det
 790th MP PW Det
 Co A, 759th MP Bn
 1st Plat 21st Cml Decon Co (Smoke Troops)
 Det 63d Cml Dep Co
 3d Plat 450th Engr Dep Co
 Hq & Hq Det, 530th QM Bn
 4133d QM Sv Co
 4134th QM Sv Co
 4135th QM Sv Co
 4136th QM Sv Co
 3277th QM Sv Co
 3357th QM Trk Co

3634th QM Trk Co
 Det 6690th Regulating Co
 Hq & Hq Det, 52d QM Bn (Mbl)
 3333d QM Trk Co (DUKW)
 3334th QM Trk Co (DUKW)
 3335th QM Trk Co (DUKW)
 3336th QM Trk Co (DUKW)
 3353d QM Trk Co (DUKW) (Personnel Only)
 3355th QM Trk Co (DUKW) (Personnel Only)
 1 Sec 3856th QM Gas Sup Co
 Plat 93d QM Rhd Co
 332d Air Force Sv Gp (Beach Detail)
 111th RAF Beach Sec (Beach Unit)
 69th Ord Ammo Co
 3407th Ord M Auto Maint Co (DUKW)
 Det 77th Ord Dep Co
 Det 977th Ord Dep Co
 19. *Navy Troops*
 • 16 Combat Demolition Units

THE end of the tortuous trail was not yet in sight, but the beginning of the end was.

Men of the 3d Infantry Division, doubly heartened by the victorious conclusion of the push on Rome and the successful amphibious invasion of France's Normandy coast, began to see where that trail had been leading all this time.

Sometimes it had seemed there was no pattern to its crazy wanderings. There was no end—not even a remembered beginning, lost in too many endless days and sleepless nights—just the awful, eternal middle. Shells, mountain peaks, destroyed villages, and mud were the only milestones to mark the journey.

Men of the 3d, and its brother divisions in the Mediterranean Theater, for a long time bore most of the United States' ground effort in the European war. Sometimes they took staggering casualties. They froze, sweated, and cursed, by turn. They fought, died, and wept without tears for dead comrades. They looked for hope when often there seemed nothing for which to hope. About the only thing left to them was faith, which was equally divided—faith in God and faith in the fighting qualities of the men on either flank.

The men who lived like rats in the ruins of Cassino and dodged death day and night were hard put to it to see the grand scale of a strategical map. The soldiers who smashed across the Rapido River, to get smashed right back, could not with a casual wave of the hand say, "Well, we took a bit of a reverse today." The men who carefully kept even the tops of their helmets from showing over the parapets of Anzio foxholes were in no

position to predict the end of the war by "Oh, say, Christmas."

But the beginning of the end suddenly materialized. The tentative start, gradually evolved into full-scale warfare, now fitted neatly into a single picture which could be viewed from one perspective. That France, and eventually Germany, had been the ultimate objectives, everyone had known. It was the method of getting to those objectives that had sometime been obscured for the fighting soldiers.

When, with the invasion convoy in mid-journey, it was announced that the destination was Southern France, the pattern was now complete.

Africa, Sicily, Southern Italy, Anzio . . . it had taken the 3d Infantry Division a long time to get there.

It is interesting to note how strongly events in the Mediterranean Theater exercised influence over the planned invasion of Southern France.

In Vice Admiral H. K. Hewitt's report as Naval Commander, Western Task Force, on the Invasion of Southern France, there is to be found the following:

The preliminary directive* received from Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, on December 28, 1943, embodied the following mission:

Task

To establish the army firmly ashore;

To continue to maintain and support the army over

*Section 1.3, Invasion of Southern France, Report of Naval Commander, Western Task Force.

beaches until all need for maintenance over beaches had ceased.

Purpose

To support the invasion of Northern France.

As a basis for planning, the preliminary directive gave the following points:

- (1) Preparation for the invasion of Northern France was in progress and it was expected to take place during the first suitable day in May, 1944;
- (2) Decision had been made that a beachhead would be established on the south coast of France in conjunction with the invasion of Northern France for the purpose of supporting it;
- (3) Composition of the army forces for the invasion of Southern France had not been decided but would probably consist of ten divisions: three or four US divisions, and the balance French divisions.

The date *December 28, 1943*, is especially important to members of the 3d Infantry Division. It clearly indicates how far ahead Allied leaders had laid definite plans. At a time when the 3d was nearly ready to jump off on the Anzio operation, plans were being formulated for an operation which was to place United States troops on the shores of Southern France, a program actually not put into effect until August 15, 1944, nearly eight months later.

In line with this, the selection of Army forces for the operations is discussed in Admiral Hewitt's report.*

The question of the identity of the military forces to be made available for the operations was of great concern to the naval planners inasmuch as three major problems depended on the final assignments. In the first place, it was desired that the assault divisions each be thoroughly trained in amphibious assault with the naval attack forces until the army and navy elements were firmly welded into a finished amphibious attack unit. Secondly, the broad problem of mounting and transporting the assault and follow-up forces required considerable planning, assignment of ships, and construction in the many mounting ports. This problem was jointly considered by the Movements and Transportation Section of AFHQ, Service of Supply, North African Theater of Operations (SOS NATOUSA), the G-4 section of the Seventh Army, and the Eighth Fleet planning and logistics sections. Lastly, after having the assault divisions assigned, it was necessary for these commands to work out their tactical assault plans with respect to definite assault beaches.

During the early period of planning, since the two or possibly three US infantry divisions having the necessary qualifications were found only in the US Fifth Army, it was necessary to remove them from the Italian front. This withdrawal from the Allied Armies in Italy (AAI) raised the problem of where the divisions should be moved for training, refitting and mounting. Originally, it was proposed to

train the two US infantry divisions, the 3rd and the 45th, in the Salerno area, beginning as soon as the Pisa-Rimini line was established. In order to meet the original invasion date, May 1944, promulgated in the preliminary directive issued by the Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, on 28 December, it was imperative that these two infantry divisions be withdrawn from combat sometime in April. At the same time, the 85th US Infantry Division was training in North Africa in the Oran area.

French divisions at this time had not yet been nominated, but they also would have to be withdrawn from the front, trained, refitted, and mounted. It was considered that training in the Salerno area might congest the port of Naples. Therefore Sicily and the "heel" ports were considered as suitable places for refitting some of the French divisions.

Because of the distance the 85th Division would have to travel from Oran to the assault area, it was determined that that movement should be a ship-to-shore assault from combat-loaded personnel and cargo ships. The 3d and 45th Divisions would then make the assault on a shore-to-shore basis in craft, probably staging in Ajaccio.

Army operations in Italy, south of the Pisa-Rimini line, were not stabilized in time to meet the requirements for an operation in May. Consequently, craft and ships assigned for the invasion of Southern France were withdrawn for the invasion of Northern France. By the middle of June, the 3d and 45th Divisions were released from the Italian front and, instead of the 85th Division, the 36th US Infantry Division was withdrawn from the Italian front for participation in the invasion of Southern France.

While the amphibious operation against the Riviera coast was to be the fourth major landing against a hostile shore by the 3d Infantry Division, and the sixth for 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, the operation was by no means a purely routine performance. There were several important ways in which it differed from past operations.

In the past, certain elements of surprise had been major features of the success of our landings. In this case, the Normandy landing had been carried out two months previously, giving the enemy access to information on all our latest techniques and equipment. The enemy could reasonably assume that we had employed all our major new tricks in the all-important Normandy landing and had no surprises in store. In that event we had to depend solely on the surprises of time and place.

For the first time in its experience, the Division was faced with a daylight landing. This called for changes in many of the plans which had previously been successfully employed in night landings.

There was clear evidence that the enemy had constructed offshore obstacles along the Division's beaches, which had never been encountered on any previous operation.

The tremendous concentration of shipping in the Naples area preceding our attack, and the shifting of

*Section 1.4, Invasion of Southern France, report of Naval Commander, Western Task Force.

the bulk of our air strength to Corsica, combined with the limited area of coast upon which we were likely to land, minimized our chance for obtaining surprise. Added to this problem was the tremendous difficulty of maintaining security on the Italian mainland, where the majority of the planning and mounting was done.

(Practice landings had been made in Nisida harbor, within full view of hundreds of Italian bathers. Full-scale assaults had been mounted at Mondragone and Formia. For days on end quantities of material had flowed into the holds and onto decks of ships through the docks at Naples, Nisida, Pozzuoli, and Baia.)

All these factors, weighed together, meant only one thing—that we could not depend on surprising the enemy with small, scattered landings, but would have to plan on stunning him with all the firepower and concentrated mass of men and material that we could direct against a small number of closely grouped beaches. The naval gunfire and air support plans were coordinated with the Division's own attack plan to achieve this effect, and this in turn fitted into the Corps scheme of maneuver, which contemplated putting more infantry battalions ashore at H-hour than were put ashore in the Normandy landing.

Stated simply, the Division's mission in Southern France was to land on beaches in the vicinity of St. Tropez and Cavalaire, some 30 miles east of Toulon, clear the enemy from the beaches and from adjacent high ground, and advance rapidly inland, preparatory to assisting in Seventh Army's attack to the west against the ports of Toulon and Marseille. Clearing of St. Tropez peninsula, maintaining contact with the 45th Infantry Division on the right and with French troops on the left, were among subsidiary initial missions.

Since it was part of the Division's mission to advance inland and seize high ground in the vicinity of Cogolin at the head of the gulf of St. Tropez, it was decided to land two battalions of the 15th Infantry initially on Yellow Beach (lying between Cap de St. Tropez and Cap Camarat, on the east side of the St. Tropez peninsula) and two battalions of the 7th Infantry on Red Beach (Gulf of Cavalaire), using the 30th Infantry to land on Red Beach after it had been cleared, with a mission of exploiting to the north and seizing objectives deep in the enemy's rear to the west, north and northeast of Cogolin. The 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments were organized as combat teams, with artillery battalions, TD, tank, chemical and medical companies, mine-gapping and signal detachments attached, while the 30th Infantry had only chemical and medical companies and a signal detachment with it.

"A soldier named Patelli stood up on the crowded deck. 'Take it from me,' he said, 'the first wave onto the beach is the best one to be in. Why, you gotta choice on

the first wave! If you don't like the pillbox on the right you just move over and take the pillbox on the left. But if you gotta come in later you get no choice. You gotta take the pillbox that the first wave passed!'

"The soldiers around him grinned and kept on playing cards. A little later when someone said, 'Okay, you jokers, take your last look at Italy!', only a few of the men looked up. Even when a small radio was tuned in to 'Axis Sally,' the Nazi propagandist, and she boasted that the Germans knew all about the coming invasion of Southern France, the soldiers kept on playing cards or talking quietly. Finally, the ship's chaplain couldn't stand it any longer. 'This bunch of men is awfully unexcited,' he complained. 'I just had a normal crowd at services this morning. On the way across the Channel from England almost *everybody* turned out.'

"These men were different. They were 3d Division men. . . .'*

On the evening of August 12, a long convoy of LSTs stretched almost as far as the eye could see over a choppy sea, off the port of Naples. The sky, darkening from its midday brightness, was faultlessly blue.

A few soldiers, lining the afterdecks of each LST, stared toward the last ship in the convoy. A small speck, distinguishable as some sort of craft, was rapidly approaching. It drew closer and the soldiers could make it out to be a speedy launch. One figure was prominent in the forepart. He stood erect, disdaining to maintain his balance by a handhold.

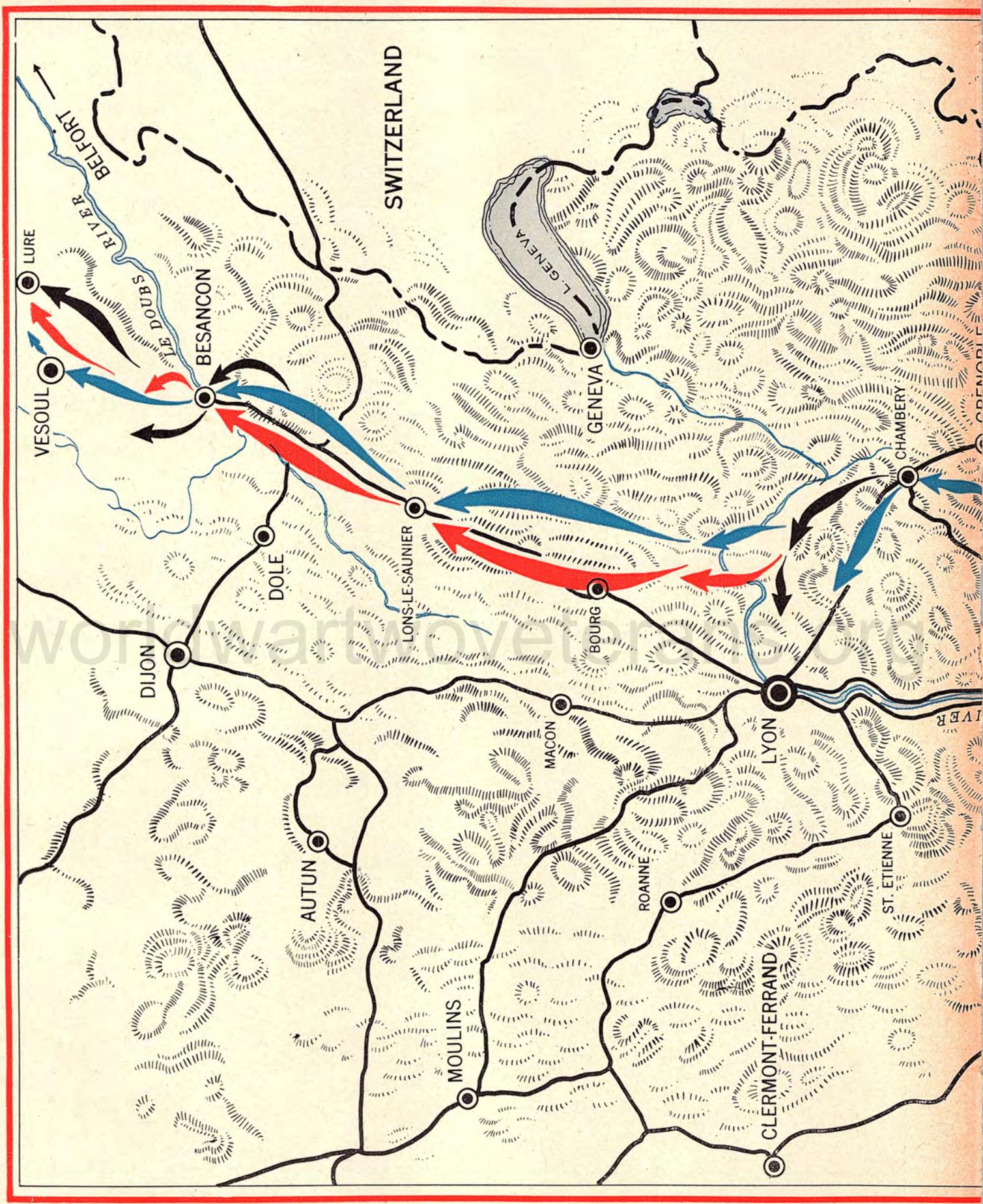
As the boat approached to within a few hundred yards of each LST, a few soldiers stared unbelievably. Then the cry went up: "It's Churchill!" The cry was taken up and echoed throughout the ship. Soldiers and sailors crowded to that side of the vessel.

The short, stubby figure stood straight. His thinning white hair blew awry. As the launch drew nearly abreast, he waved. Then the doughty little warrior raised his right hand to form with two fingers the V-for-Victory sign—the symbol of hope and determination which, two years and more before, he had raised and flaunted at the power of the then mighty German war machine. The United States soldiers cheered and waved back.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in Italy to confer with Italian Minister Bonomi, had been unable to resist seeing off the invasion convoy, and to wish God-speed and a quick, successful victory to the United States troops. It was a favorable omen.

Admiral Hewitt on August 9 had promulgated D-Day as August 15, and H-hour as 0800. The assault troops of the 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments debarked at Ajaccio, Corsica, for the planned staging, then once again

*Will Lang, *Life*, Oct. 2, 1944.



SWITZERLAND

LURE
VESOUL

BESANCON

GENEVA

CHAMBERY

DOLE

LONS-LE-SAUNIER

BOURG

DIJON

MACON

LYON

AUTUN

ST. ETIENNE

MOULINS

CLERMONT-FERRAND

BELFORT

DOUBS RIVER

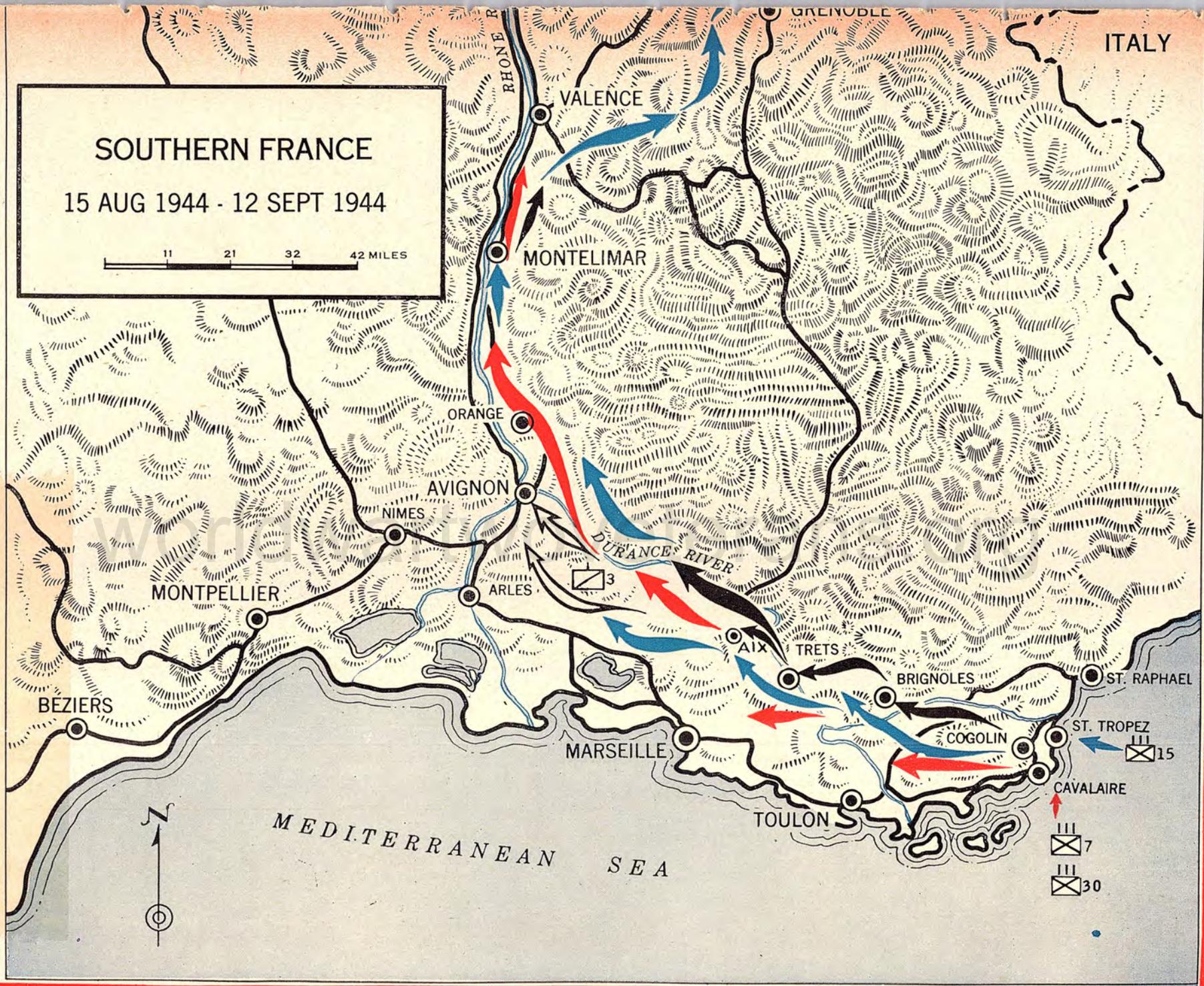
L. GENEVA

SAONE RIVER

SOUTHERN FRANCE

15 AUG 1944 - 12 SEPT 1944

11 21 32 42 MILES





A British LCT turns toward shore and prepares for the run in.

Commanders aboard the ships, awakened early, ate without much interest, and speedily turned to last-minute discussion of plans. Details, settled long before, once again cropped up for attention and reminder. Broad outlines of maneuver were reviewed. Mental estimates of time, space, and distance were checked against the opinions of others.

Soon the queues of half-asleep soldiers would move past the cans of coffee and pans of food, the men holding out messgear as they went. The jolt of a portion of food dropped into a meat can would signal the individual to move along to the next pan and waiting mess attendant, and then down the slippery, food-splattered iron steps to the messroom.

In the supporting naval warships, gunnery officers checked the fire plans. Elsewhere, last-minute inspections of guns, ammunition, and fire tables were in process.

And in dugouts and fire emplacements ashore, a weird conglomeration of Russians, Turcomans, Poles and Slavs, their numbers spiked with a few German officers and NCOs effected reliefs, walked patrols, and turned their eyes to a still-darkened sea. There was an attitude of expectation among them. There had been stepped-up air assaults over the previous week. Many civilians had left the coastal regions between August 12-14, stating frankly that they expected an Allied landing at any hour. German radio announcements had been broadcast to the effect that an Allied invasion fleet had left Corsica for France on August 14. A rumor circulated among German soldiers and French civilians to the effect that Allied leaflets had been dropped over the St. Tropez area warning the civilian population to leave the coastal regions.

"Let the Americans come," many of the defenders probably thought. "We are foreigners to the German army. If we escape with our lives, we have nothing to lose—perhaps much to gain." But at the same time they fingered the triggers of the German machine guns and rifles, and made ready to shoot if today should prove to be the day of invasion.

It can be stated unequivocally that the D-day landings on the shores of southern France by the 3d Infantry Division were the most successful ever undertaken by the Division in its entire history in the Mediterranean Theater. Even the landings at Nettuno, smooth as they were, did not compare with those of August 15 in smoothness of execution.

Scattered resistance on the beaches was quickly overcome. The specially-trained, reinforced, Battle Patrols which landed on the flanks of both beaches speedily smashed enemy resistance with only one of them, that of the 7th Infantry, encountering strong opposition. Mission of this Battle Patrol was: to proceed about 2000 yards west from its landing point to the town of Cavalaire-sur-Mer and to clean out the town and the entire peninsula on which it is situated. The peninsula overlooks the entire beach where a major portion of the landings were scheduled to be made. It was the enemy's only available position for interfering with landing operations by flanking fire; it also furnished an excellent position for directing observed artillery fire, for which the enemy was utilizing it.

"As we started inland from the water . . . I suddenly noticed a wire just above my head," said S/Sgt. Herman F. Nevers, leader of the 1st squad. "I looked back and . . . saw . . . a hanging mine explode and tear the platoon leader into small pieces. The force of the explosion blew S/Sgt. James P. Connor about ten feet and knocked him flat to the ground. Sergeant Connor received a fragmentation wound on the left side of the neck . . . The commanding officer of the battle patrol told him to go back for aid, but Sergeant Connor refused to go."

As the squad neared a bridge a German jumped up. Connor shot him. The patrol came under a severe mortar barrage. Connor urged them forward and the group became disorganized, some of the men following another platoon, leaving only about twenty men.

At about this time a sniper shot Sergeant Connor, wounding him in the left shoulder, the bullet penetrating to his back.

Said Nevers, "I said to him, 'For Christ's sake, Connor, stop and get medical attention for yourself!'"

"He replied, saying, 'No, they can hit me but they can't stop me. I'll go until I can't go any farther.' Then he said, 'Nevers, get out there on the right flank and



A soldier holds taut a line on which his comrades of the 3d Medical Battalion support themselves as they make their way toward the shore.

get those men rolling! We've got to clean out these snipers before we can advance farther!

"Sergeant Connor told the men, 'If there's only one of us left, we've got to get to that point (the objective) and clean it up, so the guys coming in after us can get in safely with no fire on them.'"

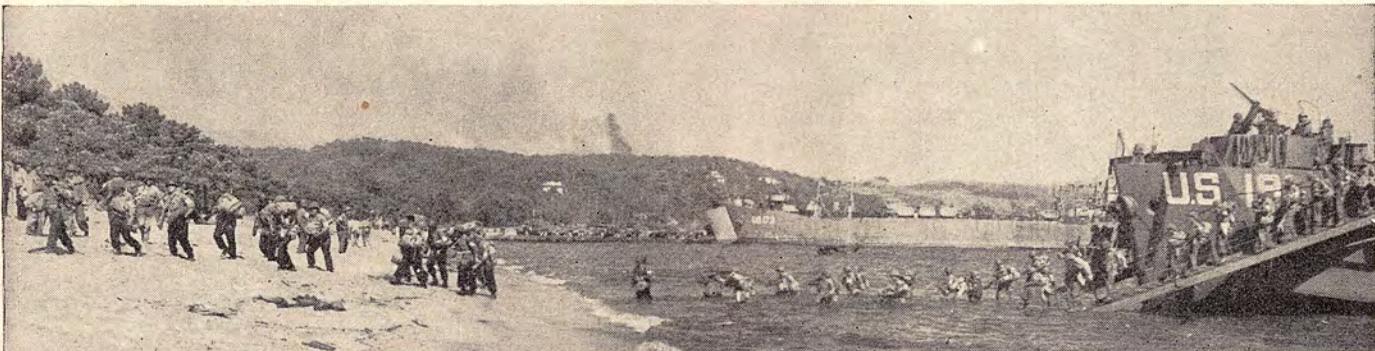
The platoon started forward again. Connor was in the lead again. A German rose from a hole not more than thirty feet to Sergeant Connor's front and shot him in the leg. Nevers fired over Connor as he fell, killing the German.

"Sergeant Connor called me over and told me to give him a hand to help him on his feet so he could go on with the fight. I helped him up but he couldn't stand on his leg and fell down again. I wanted to give

him first aid, but he wouldn't even let me look at the wound, saying there wasn't time. He told me to take the rest of the men, about fifteen now, and to carry on, and that he hoped he would see me sometime. Sergeant Connor told me that even if I had to get down and dig the bastards out with my bare hands to go ahead and dig them out . . ."

Then, according to Sgt. Edward G. Collins, the group started out to carry out Connor's instructions. Too many men started around the right flank and Connor called some of them back and sent them around to the left. In carrying out his orders the platoon cleaned out the entire area, killing three or four of the enemy and capturing approximately forty more.

Said 1st Lt. William K. Dieleman, Battle Patrol com-



3d Infantry Division troops debark from LVTs onto the beaches of Southern France on D-Day.



General "Iron Mike" O'Daniel discusses unloading with the commanding officer of the 36th Engineers' shore party on the beaches of Southern France on D-Day.

mander, "But for the outstanding example set by Sergeant Connor in the face of tremendous odds in fire power and men, the critically important mission of the whole Battle Patrol might have been delayed for a considerable time, or might even have failed entirely."

Major John R. Darrah, Special Troops surgeon, examined the area of wounds received by Sergeant Connor, two months later, and testified that the second wound must have caused him excruciating pain at the slightest movement.

Sergeant Connor received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The 3d Reconnaissance Troop Battle Patrol, upon landing, found twenty prisoners awaiting the pleasure of their captors. The fire delivered by BARs and rifles of the Battle Patrol, shooting from their landing craft, had converted them to the Allied cause before any United States soldier set foot in Southern France. Within a short time 115 more were added and by 1030 the Battle Patrol had returned to 3d Reconnaissance Troop control, having completely accomplished its mission.

The 7th Infantry landed with 3d Battalion on the left, 2d Battalion on the right. There were concrete tetrahedra offshore, and mines and wire on the beach

and inland for distances up to 500 yards, yet little resistance was encountered. The naval rocket barrage which had immediately preceded the assault had apparently had good effect, as a dense, even, pattern of bursts was observed inshore, and the first prisoners taken were well shaken up. Shortly after landing, 2d Battalion, moving up the road toward La Croix, received mortar and small-arms fire from the right, and this fire continued sporadically for about two hours with little effect. By 1045, 2d Battalion had passed through La Croix and was on its way north to its objective on the high ground astride the road west of Gassin, and by 1430 had reached the objective and contacted 30th Infantry.

The 3d Battalion had very light opposition also, and reached its first two objectives by 1345.

Both assault battalions of the 15th Infantry—3d on the right and 1st on the left—hit Yellow Beach at 0800, reduced all beach defenses within forty minutes, and moved inland to their objectives on high ground 3000 to 5000 yards back from the beach. These objectives were occupied about noon against little enemy opposition.

Leading elements of the 30th Infantry landed behind 7th Infantry on Red Beach at H-plus-80 minutes and struck rapidly inland. Overtaking a battalion of



A tank destroyer of the 3d Division's 601st TD Battalion is guided down the ramp toward the shore by a crew member.

the 7th Infantry, the 30th moved through and took objective W, and proceeded to objective D. By 1400 2d Battalion was east of the road north of La Croix, and 3d Battalion was moving toward Cogolin, which Company K reached and entered at 1415.

Landing at H-hour in support of each assault regiment were a smoke detail from the 3d Chemical Battalion (attached), four DD tanks (tanks made amphibious by canvas flotation aprons) from the 756th Tank Battalion, and on Yellow Beach four tank destroyers from the 601st TD Battalion.

By noon almost all units were on the Division's initial beachhead line.

During the afternoon 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, passed through 3d Battalion on its objective and advanced to Highway 98 east of La Mole and turned west on the highway. The 2d Battalion, relieved by 30th Infantry on its objective, followed 1st Battalion. 1st Battalion was assembled, and moved west along the coast road, meeting no resistance until about 2300 when it encountered a strongpoint of six or eight machine guns, three AT guns, and several riflemen, covering a wire-and-mine roadblock. This strongpoint was still under attack at noon of the following day.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, swung north through 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, and attacked St. Tropez, reducing the last resistance there and taking nearly 100 PWs by 1945. The entire regiment then assembled and moved west through Cogolin behind the 30th Infantry.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, followed 3d Battalion, 30th, through Cogolin. Company G contacted 15th Infantry at 1500 and at 1640 the regimental Battle Patrol contacted 15th Infantry Battle Patrol on the peninsula between Red and Yellow Beaches. The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, entered Grimaud at 1710 against little but sniper resistance, with a reinforced platoon protecting its flank. The 3d Battalion rode on tanks west from Cogolin to Grimaud at 1755. The first enemy contacted by 3d Battalion was about one and one-half miles east of Collobrières at 2240.

This resistance was overcome and 3d Battalion had closed in Collobrières by 0300 August 16.

By 0435 1st Battalion had passed through La Garde



Dead 3d Division comrades are laid on stretchers along the beach.



A shallow water mine is exploded near shore by the 3d Division Engineers while unloading is proceeding.

Freinet and was in Les Mayons reducing resistance, and taking twenty-two prisoners.

An hour after that time the reinforced platoon from 1st Battalion, on flank-protection duty, was relieved by elements of the 45th Division.

By noon of August 16, D-plus-one, leading elements of the 3d Infantry Division were twenty miles inland.

Its gains were surprising, and gratifying, in comparison with its former landing operations below Nettuno.

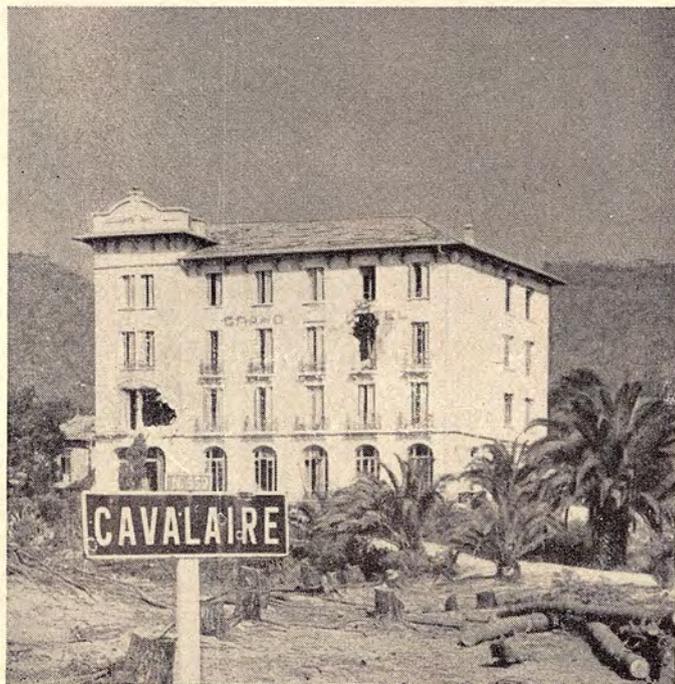
In retrospect, here is what had happened:

A harassed German High Command was even then stretching its forces nearly to the breaking point between the long Russian front and the fluid battlefield which all of France from the Seine River to the Brittany Peninsula had become on the west. It was

like a man trying to keep two determined intruders from entering a stolen house which he had taken for his home, and running back and forth alternately attempting to hold two doors shut. Suddenly he hears noises which sound like a third party about to come in through the cellar. He is powerless to do anything about this new threat.

From subsequent interrogation it was learned that the enemy had expected the main landing effort to be made in the vicinity of Toulon and Marseille. He knew that we must have in short order at least one good port through which to pour supplies to keep the advance continuous. The bulk of the enemy's force, therefore, was disposed farther west, and was in no position to intervene until after we were well ashore. But even then it was too late. The provisional airborne division, under Brig. Gen. Robert T. Frederick, which landed in the vicinity of Le Muy; the rapid advances inland of all three United States divisions; the harassment of naval gunfire along the coast; the disrupting of the enemy's lines of communications and movement of enemy reserves by well-organized and well-armed French resistance groups; the bombing "strangle"—all these prevented the enemy from making the ghost of a showing of countermeasure or even offering effective resistance.

The enemy high command issued one amazing statement about three days following the landings. "No counterattack will be launched against the invasion forces," said the enemy in an intercepted radio broad-



The Grand Hotel at Cavalaire-sur-Mer near where 3d Division troops landed.



Aid-men of the shore party tend to the wounds of a 3d Division soldier on the beach awaiting evacuation.

cast, "until they have driven inland far enough so as to be out of effective range of the support of their own naval gunfire." In effect, this was equivalent to a flat admission of German impotence.

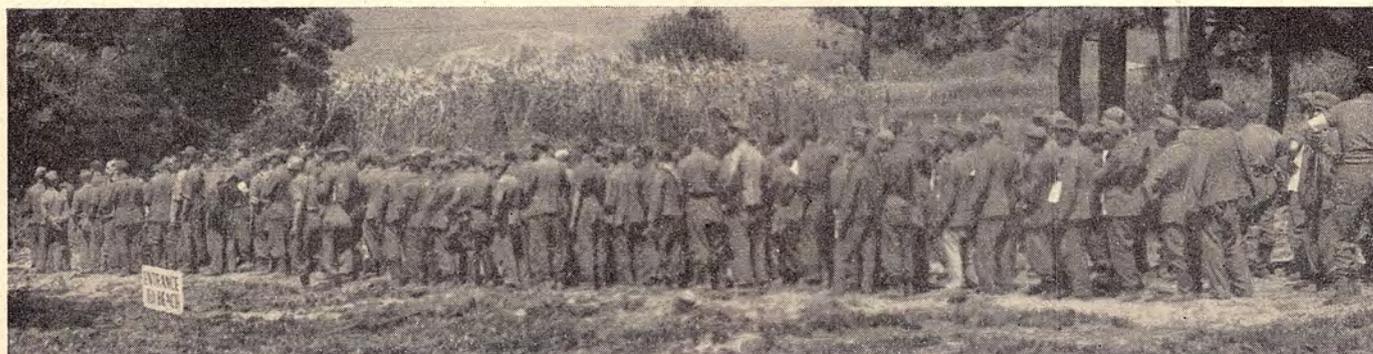
"We broke a very thin crust," said one high-ranking United States officer "and behind the crust there was nothing that could stop us."

So, with scarcely a pause, the 3d Infantry Division prepared to make its longest advance in the shortest length of time that it had ever made—or ever would make—in Europe. There was no warning such as, "I want you to be in Palermo in five days." Movement and attack orders were, for the most part, to be issued verbally by the VI Corps commander, Maj. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott, to General O'Daniel; General O'Daniel's orders were usually issued the same way to

his regimental commanders. The confirming orders, on paper, would be sent along later, but right now it was "to hell with written orders, let's get going." The enemy had been maneuvered back on his heels, and every man in VI Corps, weary though he might be, could not help but sense that keeping the enemy off-balance was a sure way to keep casualties to the bare minimum. The Division moved west against only scattered, unorganized resistance.

Improvisation paid dividends. It was found that an entire infantry battalion could be completely loaded on transportation within a regiment, including tanks, TDs, jeeps, and other assorted vehicles without having recourse to non-organic vehicles.

It was a common sight to see a whole rifle battalion moving down a road—doughboys draped over the



A conglomeration of eastern nationalities and a few German soldiers are herded together as prisoners of war at the beach entrance.



Wounded comrades of the 3d Division are carried along the beach by aid-men to the evacuation area.

3-inch guns of tank destroyers, clinging to the slippery-sided tanks of the 756th, or loaded sixes-and-sevens to trailer-hauling jeeps.

Of the 1627 prisoners taken on D-day, the overwhelming majority were from the 242nd Infantry Division, with a few hundred more from fortress and coast defense battalions, and miscellaneous numbers of them from labor, naval, air and signal organizations.

Company G, 30th Infantry, with armor, occupied Carnoules, southeast of Gonfaron, by 0530 August 16 while 2d Battalion attacked and occupied Gonfaron by 1400. Company K, 30th Infantry, captured Pierrefeu by 1819, August 16, against self-propelled and small-arms fire—the westernmost advance of the 30th. The company took thirty-five prisoners.

The leading battalions, 1st and 3d, of the 7th Infantry, overcame enemy strongpoints. By noon of August 17 our front lines ran generally from Cuers-Carnoules-Gonfaron-Le Luc, inclusive. Tanks and tank destroyers were being used with infantry to patrol and clear roads linking battalion sectors. Towns captured in twenty-four hours included Le Lavandou, Bormes, Leoube, Pierrefeu, Pignans, Carnoules, Puget Ville, Rocbaron, and Flassans.

At 1350 August 17, 2d Battalion of the 7th Infantry forward elements received small-arms fire from a road junction on the approaches to La Londe. Intense artillery and machine-gun fire also delayed the battalion's advance. The battalion engaged the enemy in an all-night fire fight, during which forty to fifty Germans were killed. Patrols into La Londe during the morning of August 18 reported the town clear.

It was in this fight that S/Sgt. Stanley Bender of Company E particularly distinguished himself. The three bridges which spanned the Maravennes River just beyond the town had to be taken intact, otherwise the

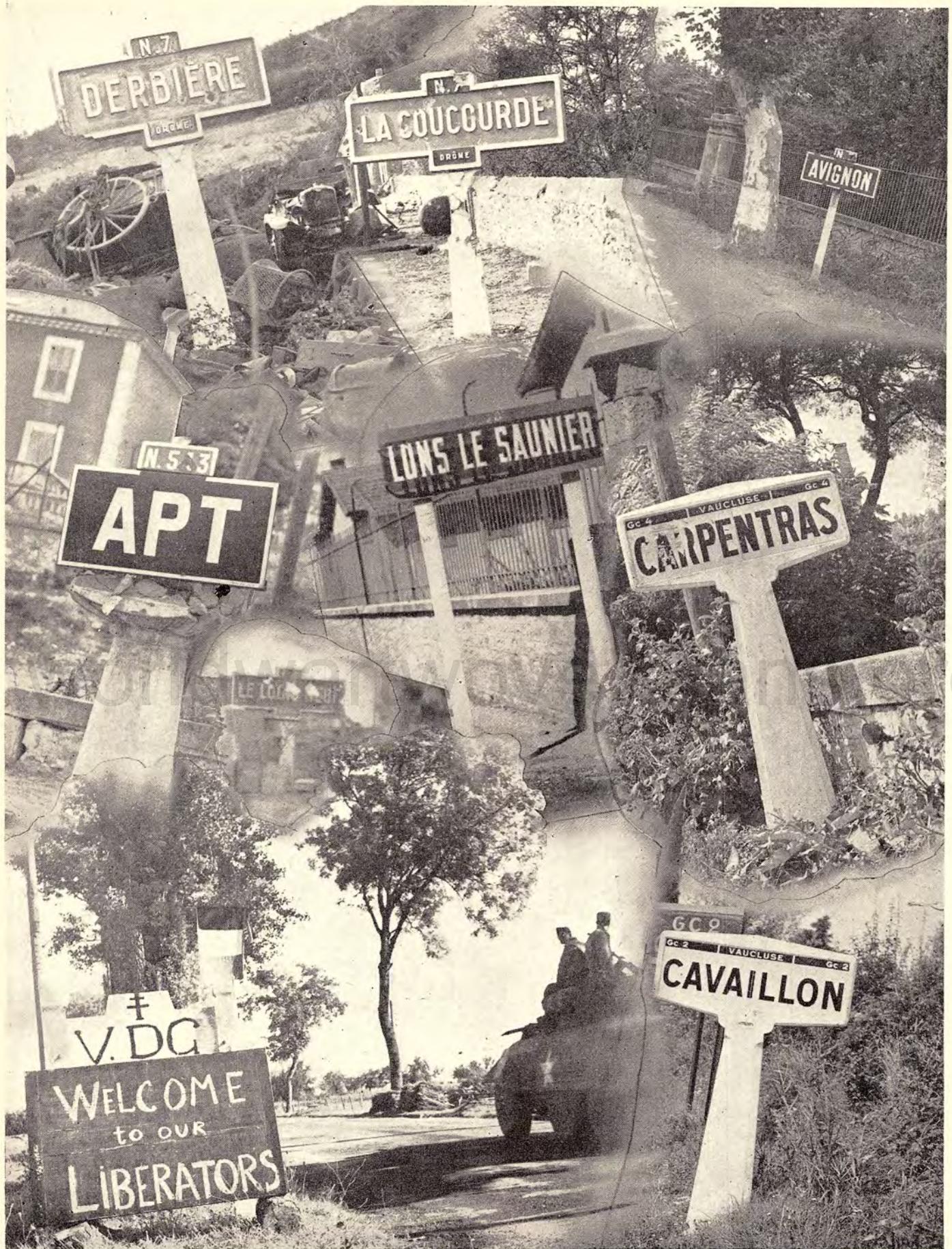
advance would have been slowed for hours, when every minute counted in pursuing the retreating Germans.

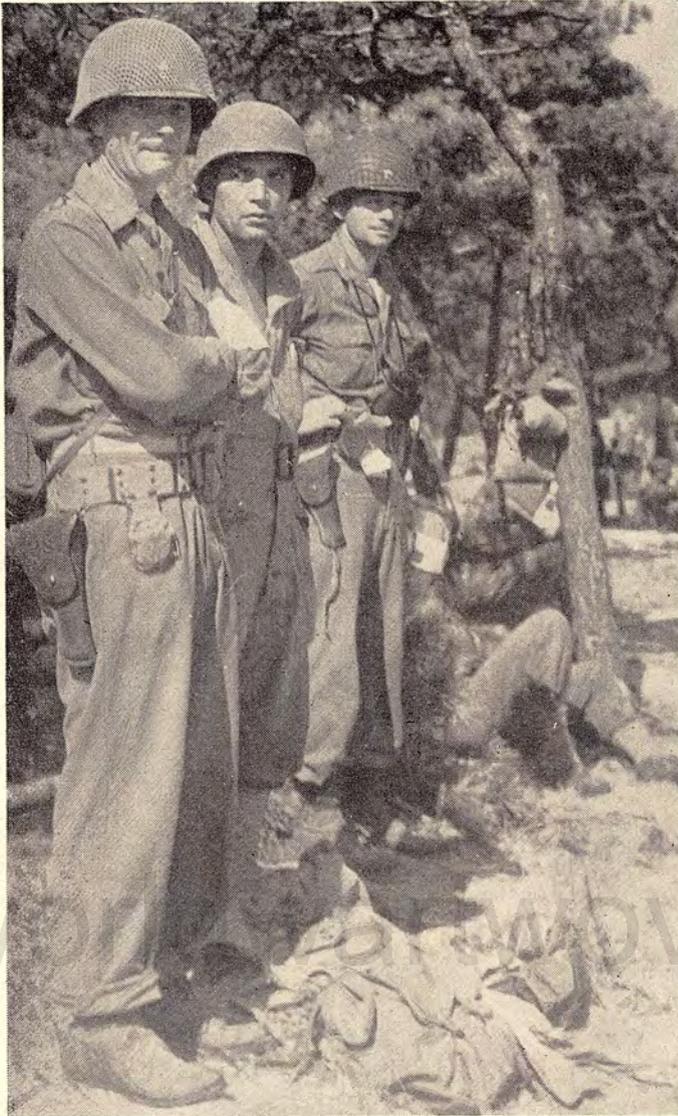
Said 1st Lt. George H. Franklin, "At about 1400 hours, just as we were about to round the last bend in the road . . . We were stopped by a Frenchman who advised us that there was a roadblock about 200 yards beyond us and that the town was full of enemy troops. We instantly dismounted from four M-10 TDs and three M-4 tanks and went into a squad column on either side of the road and then went cross-country in an effort to surprise the enemy."

After going only a short distance the company was fired upon by machine guns and small arms from well-concealed positions to the left. At the same time an enemy antitank gun opened fire and destroyed one of the tanks which had left the road and was advancing with the infantry. All remaining TDs and tanks moved into firing position from where they attempted to engage the antitank guns.

"We all took cover as rapidly as possible," said S/Sgt. Edward C. Havrila. ". . . I saw that . . . Sergeant Bender . . . hadn't taken cover with the rest of us. The crazy guy was standing up on top of the knocked-out tank, in full view of the kraut, shading his eyes and looking around trying to pick out the source of the enemy fire. Bullets were bouncing off that tank right beside him, but he nevertheless stayed right there until he found the kraut position . . ."

When Bender located the position he jumped to the ground and ran to a ditch in which two squads had taken cover. He ordered them to engage the enemy while he took his squad forward in an effort to destroy the strongpoint. Then, without waiting for instructions or orders, Sergeant Bender ran forward, motioning for his squad to follow. The intrepid squad leader reached the ditch under machine-gun fire which





General Shepard, Assistant Division Commander, supervises activities along the beaches at Cavalaire-sur-Mer in Southern France.

wounded four of his men. The enemy tried to throw grenades into the ditch, but Bender did not move until his squad had joined him. Said Sgt. Forest M. Law: "The next time I saw Sergeant Bender he was in the act of crawling from the ditch at a point between seventy-five and one hundred and fifty yards beyond the Kraut strongpoint. He was all alone and was making no effort to conceal himself. Walking erect . . . he made a fine target and one of the kraut machine gunners picked up his gun and turned it around in an effort to get him. However Sergeant Bender continued his wide end sweep in a rapid walk. He was too far away for me to see his facial expression, but his manner looked as calm and unperturbed as a soldier on pass."

Bender walked the entire forty to fifty yards, directly up to a gunner who, during Bender's entire "stroll,"

had had a clear field of fire. Bender shot the man with his tommy gun.

Following this, he walked another twenty-five yards to the second machine-gun emplacement and killed the gunner and his assistant. He called his squad out of the ditch and walked another thirty-five yards to kill an enemy rifleman who was in the act of firing. The squad joined him in the slaughter.

As a result of Sergeant Bender's actions, and the inspiration they caused, all bridges over the Maravennes were taken intact, a roadblock was destroyed, and the dominating high ground was seized. Sergeant Bender was later awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

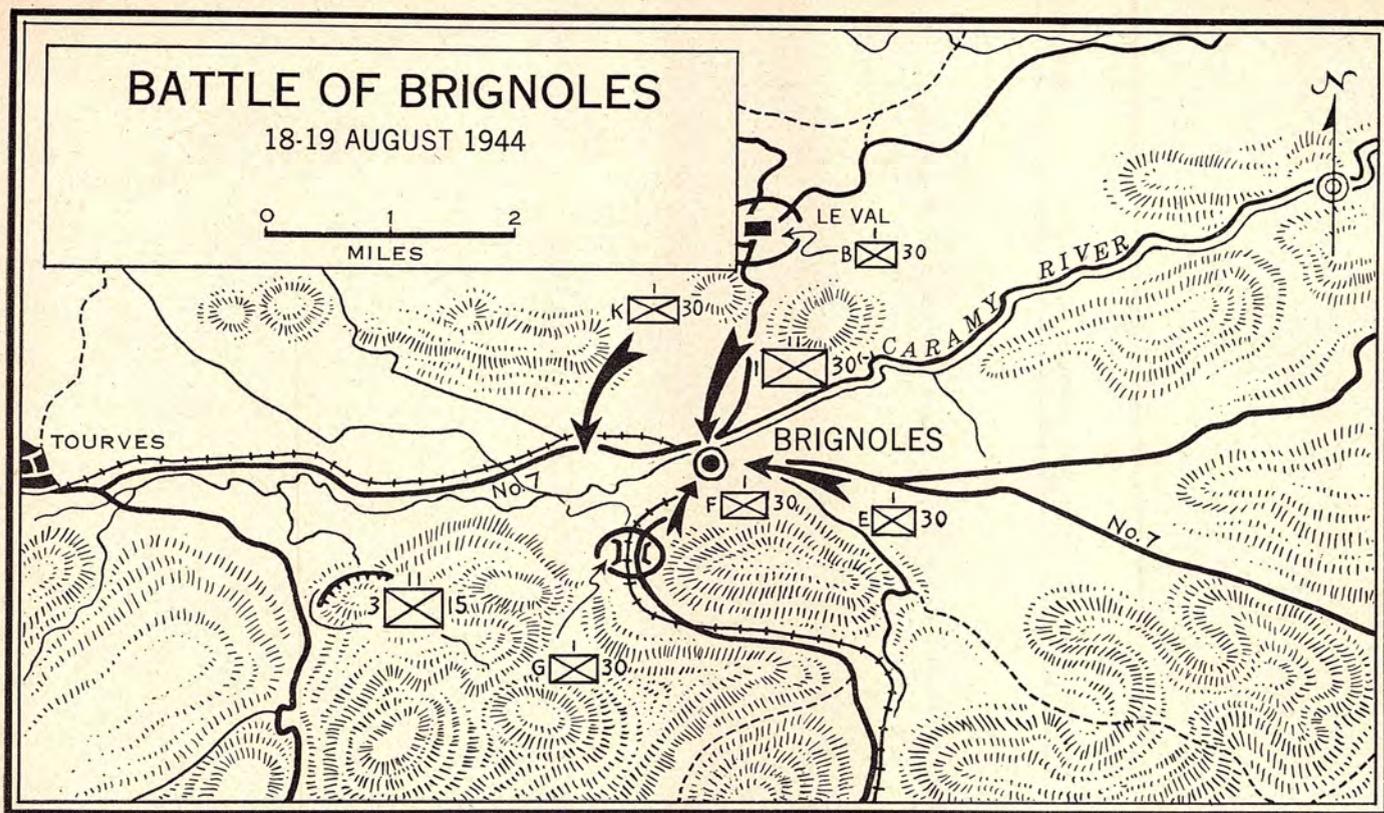
The 15th Infantry regrouped during the period of 2d Battalion, 7th's action, and pushed west along the Besse-Forcalqueiret road, clearing out the hills south of the road. Opposition was light for the most part and the regiment moved swiftly. At 1900 3d Battalion pushed through St. Anastasie and across the high ground west of Besse. At the same time, 2d Battalion began a truck shuttle movement toward the regimental zone of advance after being relieved by 7th Infantry at Pierrefeu. The 3d Battalion was held up for a short period at Anastasie by about fifty enemy, but these were soon forced to withdraw. At 2100 1st Battalion was south of Forcalqueiret and 2d Battalion was east of the same town.

The 30th Infantry, led by 2d Battalion, under the command of Maj. Frederick R. Armstrong, reached the vicinity of Brignoles, where it was delayed by enemy opposition from 1840 August 17, until the morning of the 18th. The enemy brought up his 1st Company, 757th Regiment, 338th Infantry Division, and other units totalling two battalions in strength, to hold the town. The forces occupied a position west of the town, covering a 300-meter front, protected by sharp terrain on both sides. At 1825 a patrol from the 3d Reconnaissance Troop was stopped by the enemy on Highway 7 with 3d Battalion about 1000 yards behind.

The 2d Battalion, which had taken Flassans by 1200, August 17, was on its way to Brignoles two hours later. Although the 30th did not know it, the capture of Brignoles was to be the regiment's first big fight in southern France.

Plan of the attack was to move astride the Flassan-Brignoles road with 1st Battalion on the right on a flanking mission, and 2d Battalion on the left. H-hour was set for 0600 August 18.

The attack got away as planned and Company B swung north to Le Val to protect the regiment's right flank, as Company G moved west from Besse to the high ground dominating Le Celle, protecting the 30th's left flank. The attack moved forward against stubborn resistance. During August 18 Company F got around



south of the town and cut the road to the west. Company E drove to the center of Brignoles by 1900. The 1st Battalion ran into heavy resistance just north of the city.

During the night of August 18-19 3d Battalion was committed in an envelopment to the north to cut the road west of town and continue toward Bras, as 1st Battalion (minus Company B at Le Val) and 2d Battalion (minus Company G at La Celle) worked into the town.

The attack began again at 0600, August 19. Lt. Col. Allen F. Bacon's 1st Battalion, spearheaded by Company A, came in from the north, while Company E drove from the west and Company F from the southwest, to meet in the center of the town. This, coupled with the wide 3d Battalion flanking attack, broke enemy resistance and the town was completely cleared by 1030. The 3d Battalion continued toward Bras.

Elements of the 338th Infantry Division were now being counted through the cages, although the bulk of opposition, such as it was, was still being provided by 242nd Infantry Division, in addition to dozens of "spare parts" organizations, such as handfuls from the 189th Reserve Division and 244th Infantry Division.

Between noon of August 19 and noon August 20 the Division advanced nearly thirty miles, moving both on foot and by motor. Towns liberated during the 24-hour period were, besides Brignoles: Meounes, Gareoult, Neoules, La Roquebrussane, Camps, La Celle, and Le Val.

A Task Force consisting of Company C, 15th Infantry, plus four tanks, two TDs, and three trucks moved from Mazauges. The 1st Battalion followed the Task Force; then on August 20, continued the advance toward Auriel. No resistance was encountered. From Tourves, 2d Battalion, 15th, continued the advance toward Trets, which was found clear, and on the morning of the 20th the battalion continued the advance toward Gardanne. The 3d Battalion had taken Tourves early in the afternoon of the 19th after a 45-minute attack, and Company L pushed on toward St. Maximin. The battalion occupied La Defenos and terrain in the vicinity. On the morning of the 20th 3d Battalion moved by truck to Trets, thence southwest toward Peynier.

The 30th Infantry reorganized in the vicinity of Brignoles following its fight there and moved out with 1st Battalion in the lead. By 1430, August 19 1st Battalion had gone beyond La Censies. The 2d Battalion was on high ground to the south of 1st Battalion and 3d Battalion was on high ground to the south of Bras. At 1900 3d Battalion left St. Maximin for Ollières on foot and arrived there prior to midnight. Shortly thereafter it moved out for Pourcieux. The 2d Battalion remained in reserve near Brignoles until 0400, when it moved out along Highway 7. At noon 30th Infantry had still encountered no opposition.

During the same period (August 19-20) 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, remained in defensive positions near Pierrefeu, except for Company B, which outposted

Cuers. Company A was relieved by units of the 1st French Division at 1405. By 0800 1st Battalion had begun shuttling toward La Celle, and upon arriving there prepared to move by vehicle to the regimental assembly area. The 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, moved to a defensive position in the vicinity of Meounes and Forcalqueiret during the night of August 19-20. By noon, August 20, French troops were relieving the 2d Battalion. The 3d Battalion was completely relieved by French troops by 1405 August 19 and moved first to assembly near St. Honoré, then by vehicle to the vicinity of La Celle.

Summary of localities liberated again read like a Michelin guidebook to the area: Masaugnes, Tourves, Rougiers, Seillons, Ollières, Pourcieux, St. Zacharie, Pourrierers, Trets, Peynier, Rousset, and Puyloubier.

The move against the most important town in the vicinity, Aix-en-Provence, began on the afternoon of August 20.

The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, met opposition as it moved into position east of Aix. At 2215 Company G was astride Highway 7 leading into town while the entire 2d Battalion was engaged in a firefight with the enemy until 0130, when the fire died down. During the night the regiment established blocks to the west and south of town. The 3d Battalion, meanwhile, was driving west north of Highway 7, and reached the outskirts of Aix before being fired on about dark of August 20. From this position, 1st Battalion swung north, then west, cutting across four to five "hub" roads leading into Aix, fifteen kilometers to the north of the city, in the dark, fighting bicycle-mounted Germans who came in from the north. The 1st Battalion then established blocks on roads, placing themselves to the northwest of Aix. The 3d Battalion established blocks to the north of their zone of attack.

By dawn 1st Battalion, which had moved farthest, so as to be on 3d Battalion's right as it faced south, was ready to attack, and had a strong block at Celoney, astride Highway 7 (7th and 15th were not far enough west to establish these blocks as planned).

By daylight 3d Battalion, too, was poised to attack, having swung northwest inside 1st Battalion.

The coordinated attack got away at 0600. The 2d Battalion provided a base of fire as 1st Battalion attacked from the northwest and 3d Battalion pushed in from the north. Bulk of the attached armor was with 3d Battalion.

Just as the attack commenced 1st Battalion was attacked by enemy infantry with strong armor support down Highway 7 from vicinity of Celoney. The entire battalion was ordered to block to the northwest and deal with this threat while 3d Battalion continued with

its mission of clearing the city. Aix-en-Provence was completely free of enemy by 1000, August 21.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, began a shuttling movement toward Chateauneuf following the fall of Aix-en-Provence.

The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, had overcome opposition in front of Auriel, and by 0200, August 21, entered and cleared the town. The 2d Battalion, advancing toward Gardanne, met resistance. Company G moved against it and by 1515 had a patrol into the town. The battalion was generally held up, however, by an enemy pocket estimated to be from 400 to 600 men in strength. The battalion moved out at daylight, August 21, attacked approximately 1500 yards, and had the town by 1000.

Towns liberated were Aix-en-Provence, Gardannes, Chateauneuf, Vaubenargues, St. Mare, and Le Lollonet.

Following its capture of Aix and Gardannes, the two most important towns in the area, the Division conducted vigorous patrolling up to ten miles to the west, northwest, and southwest and established a series of roadblocks in the three directions. Reconnaissance elements entered Berre and patrolled to the lake near it.

The broad scheme of maneuver, in which 3d Infantry Division drove to the west, might be explained at this time. Originally, rather than make a direct assault by sea on the highly fortified area of Toulon-Marseille, VI Corps had chosen to land farther to the east. Early seizure of both of them was necessary, however, to gain a port before October's unfavorable weather set in, making maintenance over the beaches extremely difficult.

Toulon had to be reduced because the port there, in addition to being strongly fortified with big guns which could seriously interfere with shipping bound for Marseille, was a warship and submarine base whose possession by the enemy would enable him to send out damaging naval units against unprotected convoys; or, tie up and hinder our supply lines by forcing the Navy to convoy every LST and Liberty ship which sailed from Naples to Marseille. Marseille was the needed port since, in peacetime, it had handled the largest amount of tonnage of any harbor city on the Mediterranean.

French units which began landing over Red and Yellow beaches on D-plus-one relieved our elements along the coast—that is, 7th Infantry—narrowing the Division's then 20-mile frontage. The 3d Division then continued the rapid advance to the west, flanking from the north both Toulon and Marseille while French units undertook the task of cleaning them out.

By this time, therefore, all roads leading north and northwest from the city had been blocked.

Over August 22-23 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, was

sent by truck to the vicinity of Lambesc, then moved northwest of the town and set up a defense along the highway. A motorized patrol was sent into Pelissane and found the town clear of enemy. The 3d Battalion left for La Roque and relieved elements of 180th Infantry (45th Division), going into position on the road about 1000 yards east of the town. A roadblock was set up in the town.

The 15th Infantry's 1st Battalion remained in defensive positions around Gardannes and to the south and southwest. The 2d Battalion continued its blocking role also, with the CP at La Fare. At 0910, August 23, the battalion moved to its final phase line, which included Gignac, Marignane, and Martigues. An L Company patrol investigated the airport north of Marignane and found mines on the field marked with flags.

The 30th Infantry sent out a motorized patrol shortly after noon on August 22, to Lançon, which came from the south through La Fare and reported no enemy. The 3d Battalion began a motor movement toward Salon at 2030, and by 0515 had set up roadblocks in that vicinity. The 2d Battalion remained in reserve and 1st Battalion stayed in position with roadblocks covering all approaches.

Towns liberated during the period were Marignane, St. Victoret, Vitrelles, Rognac, Coudoux, La Fare, Cornillon-Confoux, Lançon, St. Cannat, Labarben, Palissanee, Salon, Vernegues, Alleins, Mullemort, and Charleval.

The swing north to parallel the Rhone River was about to begin, together with the most rapid phase of Division's most rapid advance in Europe. The German 19th Army was now almost completely disorganized. Up until noon of August 23 the Division had taken 4165 prisoners. Elsewhere in the VI Corps zone the German commander of the coastal defense area had been captured, along with most of his staff, and this early disruption of enemy communications left the 19th Army with no choice but to begin its rapid backpedalling toward Germany.

A major factor aiding the speed and success of our movement was the activity of the French resistance groups. Four years of Nazi subjugation had left many ardent French patriots with a strong urge to take to the "underground," a word loosely used in connection with resistance activities—that is to say, to go into hiding from the German Gestapo. At the time of our landing there were about seventeen of these groups which had attained a high degree of organization by consolidating, selecting common leaders, and formulating strict rules of conduct. Any man who wished to be a member of the F.F.I. (*Forces Francaise D'Interieure*—the common, but by no means only, name for the resistance groups) had to renounce completely his ties with home

and family and devote his time and energies toward aiding in the liberation of France.

Strict rules of conduct did not mean that a man would be put on extra duty in the kitchen for failure to keep his shirt buttoned or his cap straight on his head, but it did mean that his comrades would put him to death if he lost his rifle. Weapons, seized from ambushed German *Wehrmacht* units, or dropped by parachute from British bombers, were bought with blood, and were too precious to waste through carelessness. Other governing restrictions were equally as severe, although, with typical Gallic logic, applied only to things having mainly to do with life and death.

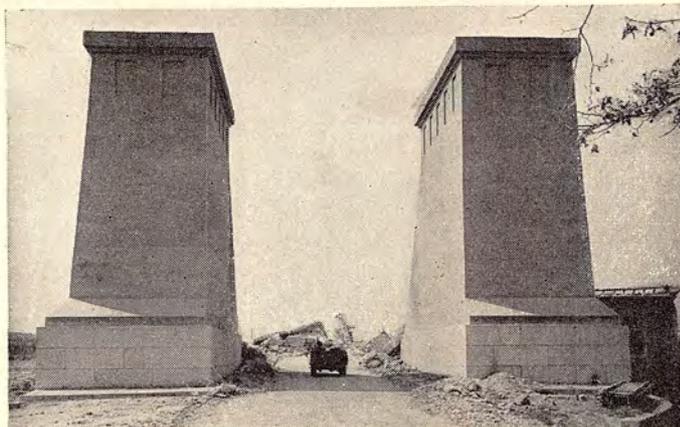
The motivating spirit was patriotism and a burning desire for freedom. The harsh conditions of service were entirely in keeping with the ascetic singleness of purpose which had dictated the groups' formation.

In certain cities, notably Grenoble, Avignon, and Lyons, and in scores of lesser localities, the F.F.I. swung into decisive action with the landings in southern France. Sometimes under the leadership of United States or British members of the O.S.S. (Office of Strategic Services), more often led by Frenchmen, whole towns were seized and held to await our coming. In addition to this sabotage activities were coordinated with our movements. If the Air Force failed to destroy a bridge, that bridge might be demolished anyway—from the ground and with hand-laid demolitions. Speeding convoys of enemy reserves ran into mysteriously laid roadblocks, and ambush. Small, isolated German pockets were sometimes wiped out to the last man, and lone enemy soldiers, if they escaped retribution at the hands of the patriots, surrendered to the first United States soldier to present himself, in preference to being the quarry in a relentless manhunt.

It is true there were a few summer patriots in the ranks of the F.F.I. These were the heroes who put on white armbands after the Germans had been cleared out, and some of them were the leading spirits in the head-shaving parties which accompanied each liberation of new territory. But these persons were in a very small minority. Most of the patriots fought behind the lines, and rendered us valuable assistance in our clean sweep from the Riviera coast north up the Rhone Valley.

Beginning on August 23 our reconnaissance elements patrolled up to fifteen miles in front of the Division, reaching Arles on the Rhone River as a move was begun to the northern banks of the Durance River.

The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, relieved 7th Infantry, which was in position with its 1st Battalion near Aliens and Mallemont, 2d Battalion in Division reserve at St. Cannat, and 3d Battalion located between La Roque and Charleval. The 7th Infantry, in turn be-



Pont du Cavaillon, the immensity of whose pillars is here indicated, was demolished by the enemy.

gan a relief of the 157th Infantry (45th Division) north of the Durance River. Goums began relieving 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, on the Division left flank, and 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, was assembled in the vicinity of St. Cannat as Division reserve.

At 1710, August 23, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, moved north to Lamonen against no resistance, and had reached its objective by 2130.

The move across the Durance River continued. The 15th Infantry moved during the night of August 24-25, following relief by units of the 1st French Armored Division. 30th Infantry commenced its move on the morning of the 25th. The 7th Infantry, meanwhile continued patrolling the terrain to its front and, upon finding it unoccupied, moving forward. By 1000 2d Battalion had a patrol into Cavaillon, and during the morning of August 25 reconnaissance elements passed through the battalion to patrol the road northwest toward Avignon, which was later entered by elements of the 3d Reconnaissance Troop.

Moves of the Division had now begun to resemble the pattern left on an ice rink by the skates of busy

hockey players as successive objectives were reached, found unoccupied, and new ones assigned.

7th Infantry sent a motorized patrol on August 25th from Segonce to Montlaux, Cruix, Stetienne, and to Ongles without making contact with the enemy. The 2d Battalion sent a patrol into Caumont and picked up two straggler prisoners. The 3d Battalion sent Company L (less one platoon) to Sault, and from there to Vaison. The platoon set up a roadblock at a road junction 1000 yards north of Montbrun. Remainder of the battalion remained in Division reserve near Apt. The 1st Battalion moved through Pernes and occupied the town of Orange. It remained there until all elements of the 15th Infantry had passed through it, meanwhile contacting the French to the south.

The 15th Infantry moved from its assembly area in the vicinity of Apt by motor to another in the vicinity of Carpentras. At 0500, August 26, the regiment advanced to the northwest with 1st Battalion on the left and 3d Battalion on the right, making no contact with the enemy.

The 30th Infantry, after moving by truck from Salon to Vaison, was given the mission of clearing out the area northwest of Vaison and south of the Aigue River. The regimental I & R platoon had occupied Vaison before dark of August 25 after reconnoitering north out of Sault. The 1st Battalion trucked from Salon to an assembly area near Apt. The 2d Battalion followed the 1st, then moved by motor to Carpentras, from which point it moved to clear the area south of the Aigue River and northwest of Vaison. The 1st Battalion moved abreast, clearing between the river and the Mirabel-Vaison road.

The 1st platoon of the 3d Reconnaissance Troop contacted elements of the 36th Infantry Division in Nyons at 1350, August 25. The 2d Platoon had entered Carpentras unopposed at 1715. The 3d platoon captured sixty-one prisoners in the vicinity of Orange at 1035, August 26.



This rubber ponton bridge over the Durance River near Mirabeau was built by the 3d Division's 10th Engineer Battalion.

The Division was now moving into positions preparatory to launching an attack northwest toward Montelimar.

The 7th Infantry advanced north along Highway 7, paralleling the Rhone, to Bourg St. Andeol, 1st and 2d Battalions abreast. At Bourg the regiment was passed through by 15th Infantry, which reached Donzere after a terrific battle at a bridge 1000 yards south of the town. Several AT guns and a strong force of infantry with artillery support had to be overcome at this point. The battle lasted seven hours. On the morning of the 27th the regiment continued along Highway 7 toward Montelimar. Company L encountered enemy resistance from approximately thirty enemy on the regiment's right, armed with one machine gun and some rifles, besides an antitank gun. The enemy withdrew after a short fight. The 30th Infantry finished the job of clearing south of the Aigue River, and from Vaison to Mirabel, and continued the attack on the morning of the 27th between 15th Infantry and the 36th Infantry Division. Toward noon screening reconnaissance elements encountered an enemy strongpoint in the vicinity of Grignan. The 1st Battalion, between 1400 and 1430 of the previous day, had been bombed and strafed by four planes identified as P-47s. The 2d Battalion started at 0700, August 27, reached Valreas at 0900 and continued along its zone of advance. The 3d platoon, 3d Reconnaissance Troop, after engaging in a fight which netted eighty-five PWs, entered Bollene.

During this period one of Mauldin's characters ruefully remarked something to the effect that, "We try like hell to catch the enemy and when we catch him we try like hell to get him on the run." It was at Montelimar that the 3d Division once more caught

him. By the time the brief battle was over, a considerable weight of enemy materiel and more than a thousand prisoners were prevented from making any further progress in their headlong rush backward.

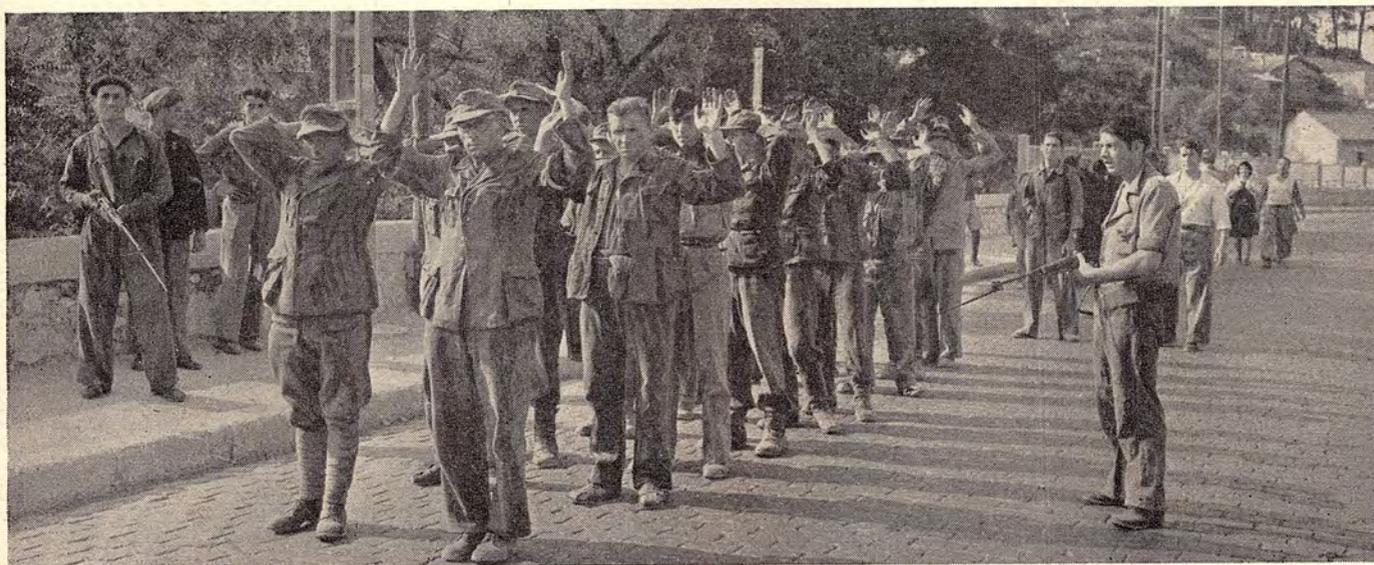
The 15th Infantry continued to advance north along Highway 7 on the approaches to the town. On August 27, the 1st Battalion, moving on the regimental left flank, had first encountered enemy resistance in the vicinity of Donzere. The 3d Battalion advanced on the right flank, with Company L first meeting enemy opposition. The 2d Battalion, in reserve, followed 3d Battalion.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, had moved to the 30th Infantry sector at 1915, August 27, passing through Begude-de-Mazenc en route, which placed it east of Montelimar.

The 30th Infantry on August 27 had cleared the enemy out of strongpoints and rear-guard localities along the Nyons-Montelimar road and west to Grignan. The 2d Battalion, after cleaning out Grignan, moved to Salles-en-Bois during the night. At 0800 the battalion moved out in two columns to rejoin at Rochefort, where it ran into some small-arms opposition.

A coordinated attack at 0800 found 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, on the right side of the road leading west into Montelimar, with 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, on the left, and 1st Battalion, 30th, echeloned to the left rear. The 3d Battalion, 7th, encountered continuous rear-guard resistance, but 3d Battalion, 30th, met none until 1030, when it was fired on from the vicinity of La Batic Rollande. The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, advanced behind 3d Battalion, while 2d Battalion remained in Division reserve near Grillon.

The 1st Battalion 15th Infantry drove relentlessly for-



Members of the F.F.I. guard German prisoners captured by French Army forces in the city of Marseille.



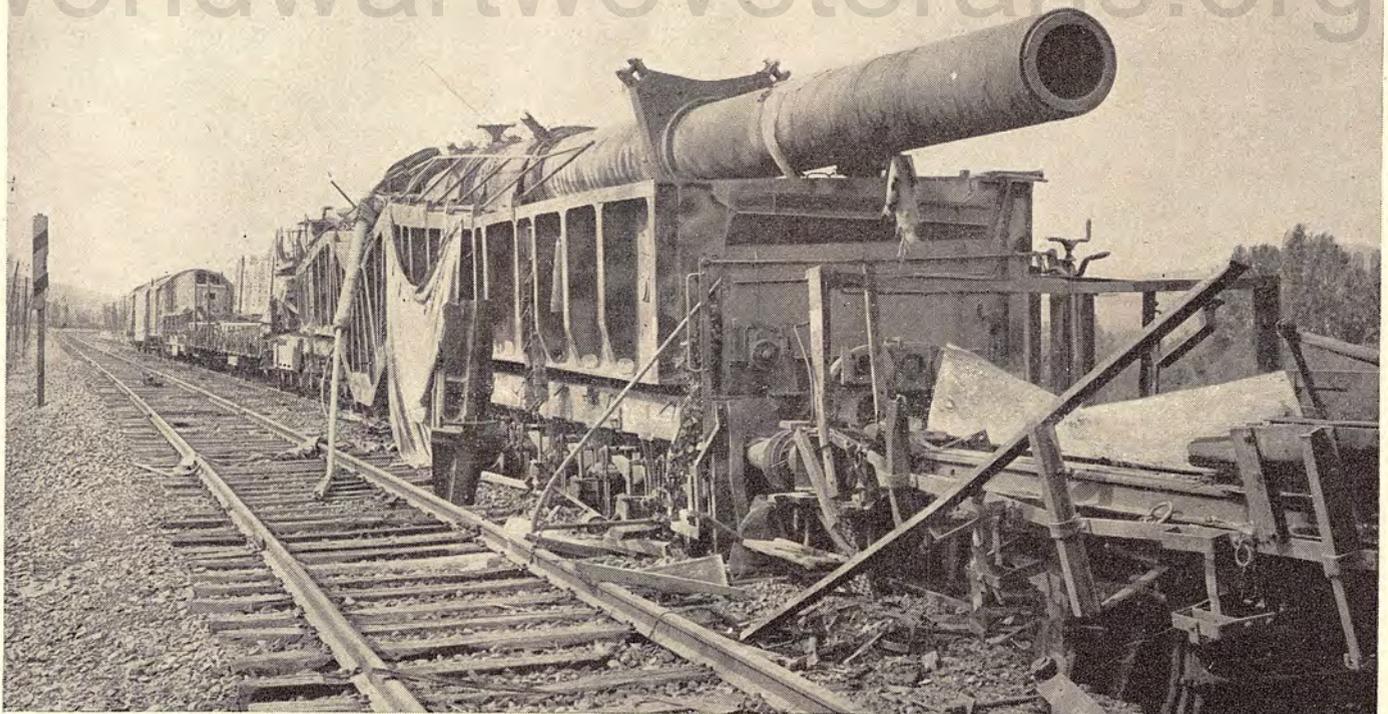
Part of an enemy truck convoy which was partly destroyed south of Montelimar. The chief scene of destruction was north of the town.

ward into the enemy resistance. The enemy force now trapped in the Montelimar area resorted to violent and incessant counterattacks to break out of the cordon. The 1st Battalion drove forward and smashed every German counterattack against it, repulsing at one time the attack of an entire regiment of infantry. It pounded the enemy force with concentrations of artillery and mortar fire.

The 15th Infantry pressed its attack during the afternoon of the 28th. The 1st Battalion encircled the town

and attacked with Company A from the east, Company C from the northeast, and Company B from the north. The 2d Battalion attacked from the southeast, squeezing out 3d Battalion, which then reverted to regimental reserve. The town was entered at 1430 by Company F, supported by Company G. During the afternoon and night the 1st and 2d Battalions continued to clear the town of enemy snipers, drawing enemy small-arms, sniper, and artillery fire—the last from an enemy gun located right in town. All roads

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One of the two 380mm German railway guns abandoned by the enemy in the battle of Montelimar. There were also four 280mm guns abandoned.

leading into the city were blocked, and the area between it and the Rhone River cleared. Elements of the 3d Battalion screened to the southeast. Company C repulsed an enemy counterattack of estimated company strength from the north at 2030. The job of cleaning out Montelimar was finally completed by 1145, August 29.

During this three-day action, the 1st Battalion took 804 prisoners, killed and wounded 485 enemy, captured or destroyed at least 500 vehicles and an estimated 1,000 horses. For this action the 1st Battalion was awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, had continued its attack along the south side of the east-west road into Montelimar. At 1255, August 28, the battalion moved southwest through Portes-en-Valdane, then proceeded to La Touche, where it engaged the enemy in a fire-fight at Hill 304. Here, forty-one prisoners were taken after a fifteen to twenty minute fight. At 1255 3d Battalion was located on the outskirts of Puygeron and 2d Battalion was advancing toward Rochefort, which was entered by Company G by 1415.

The 7th Infantry continued attacking west and northwest, and entered Montelimar shortly before noon, August 29, as well as contacting elements of the 36th Division and occupying the important hill mass generally northeast of the town. The 3d Battalion was the unit which took La Batie Rollande; the 2d Battalion moved during the night of August 28-29 to Cardineau from which it launched its attack to the west and northwest at 0600.

The small river east of Montelimar was crossed during the morning of August 29 by 3d and 1st Battalions, 7th Infantry, and 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry.

Following clearance of the town itself, 7th and 30th Infantry Regiments took up the advance north along Highway 7, with 30th Infantry on the right.

Attacking on the left of the Division zone, 7th Infantry assaulted north along Highway 7 and the high ground to the immediate east of the highway. There was no organized resistance, but 2d Battalion met considerable sniper fire while clearing the hills, and Flakwagon, mortar, and small-arms fire from a column of enemy vehicles which was halted along the road. The 2d Battalion relieved 3d Battalion, 143d Infantry on high ground north of the town at 1300, August 29. At the same time 3d Battalion was moving north of the 2d, with 1st Battalion following to the right rear.

A Division Artillery forward observer with 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, 1st Lt. Robert W. Metz, first spotted a huge enemy convoy moving up Highway 7 north of Montelimar. What he saw made him call for all the artillery that could be brought to bear. This was practically all of the Division's organic gunfire, plus guns



This stretch of road north of Montelimar lined with about 1,000 dead horses was "an avenue of stench."

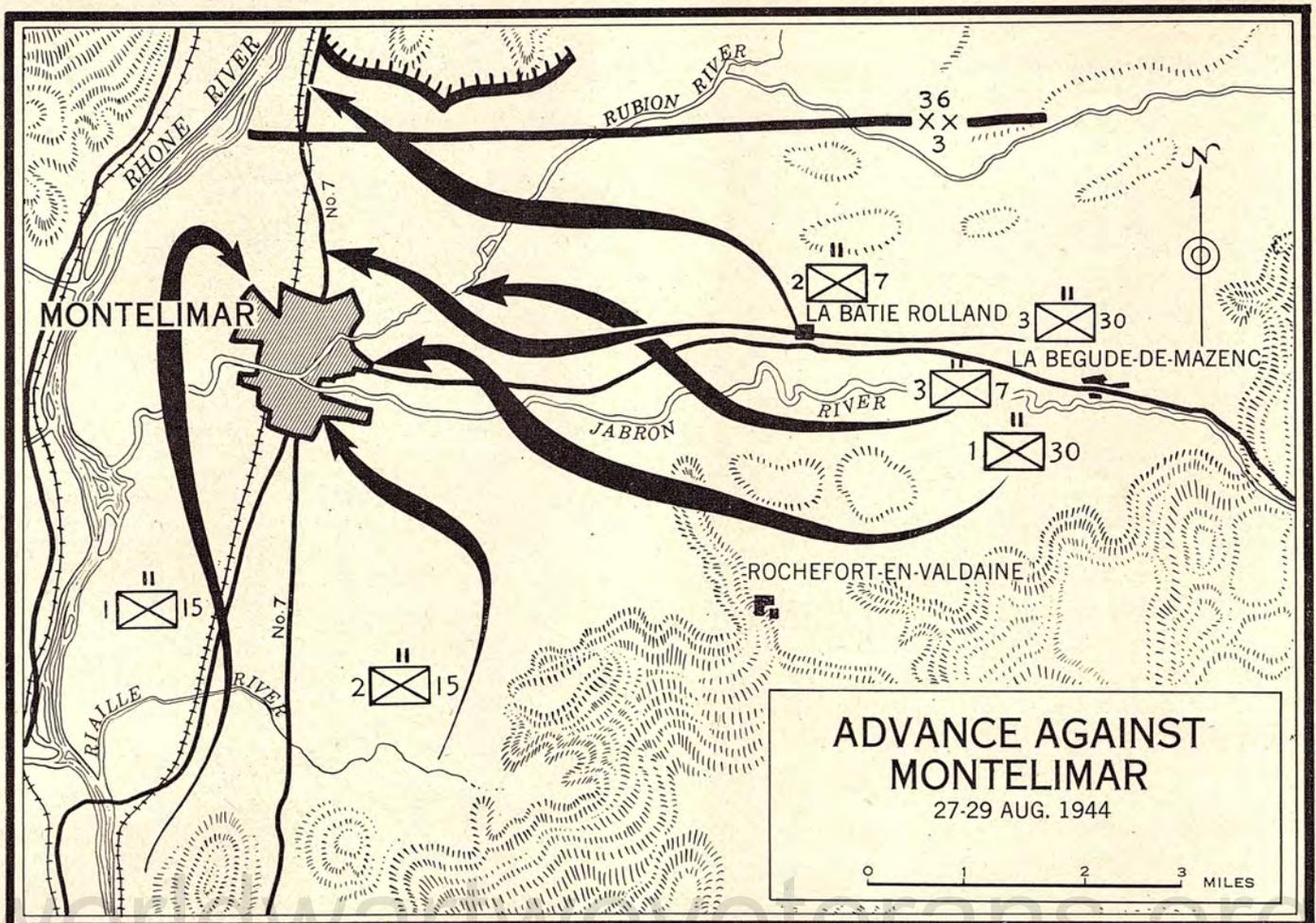
of the attached 69th Armored FA Battalion. The 2d Battalion observed fire on the enemy convoy; then directed additional artillery fire on a train pulling a railroad gun, stopping the train and wrecking three or four boxcars. 2d Battalion occupied the west slope of a ridge; 3d Battalion was in position directly south, and 1st Battalion put a platoon on a hill to the east to prevent enemy from infiltrating to the rear of the regiment's leading elements.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, then started to move to the right of 2d Battalion, with its objective to cut the enemy column. This move commenced at 1700, and the battalion advanced without opposition to be on its objective by 2100. The 1st and 2d Battalions contacted each other on the highway at 0330, August 30, and at 0600 continued the attack to the north with 1st Battalion on the right and 2d Battalion on the left. All objectives were reached at 1130.

The 30th Infantry, meanwhile, had advanced abreast of 7th Infantry, over the hills north to make contact with elements of the 36th Infantry Division. Task Force Butler (Elements of VI Corps) was contacted at 1130, August 29. Then, under orders to send a battalion to protect the left flank of the 7th Infantry from infiltration, 2d Battalion was moved by motor from Sauzet to Marsanne, then advanced by foot and was on its objective before dawn of August 30. Before noon Company G had occupied Mirmande.

In 7th Infantry's initial advance the enemy, under the mistaken impression that the road had been cut north of Montelimar by the 36th Infantry Division, surrendered in large numbers, although many of them organized small pockets which had to be cleaned out.

Outstanding feature about the area north of Montelimar, however, was the enemy motor convoy. It stretched from the northern outskirts of town for approximately 14 kilometers. It was composed of all sorts of vehicles, from German heavy cargo trucks to numerous requisitioned French sedans—about 2000 vehicles in all. For the most part traffic had been double-banked—



in some places triple-banked—with vehicles facing both north and south.

The drivers and personnel had, for the most part, abandoned their vehicles and made for the Rhone River.

The 36th Division artillery had also taken the convoy under fire, and friendly fighter-bombers took several swipes at it, as well. As 3d Infantry Division troops advanced through the debacle they saw almost unbelievable carnage. An estimated 1000 horses were pulling carts, or trailing behind motor vehicles, tied by ropes. Many of them had been taken from the French. When the shells came down, most of them were killed. A few, some with entrails dragging or otherwise wounded, had to be put out of the way with merciful bullets. Some were unharmed, and nosed incuriously about the bodies of their dead fellows, or grazed peacefully in the pastures next to the road.

Smashed, fire-blackened trucks, halftracks, and sedans—some still burning or smouldering—clogged the road. The bodies of dead Germans, many of them also fire-blackened, lay among the ruins, or alongside the road where they had been cut down by artillery while trying to make good their escapes.

On the railroad which paralleled the highway at a distance of several hundred yards sat six giant railway

guns. Four of them were the familiar 280mm monsters, sisters to the "Anzio Express." Two of them were gigantic 380mm pieces. All had been left standing, intact. Along the entire length of the scene of destruction an outrageous odor of burned and burning wood, scorched metal, stinking dead and singed flesh and clothing assailed the nostrils. Even the "avenues of smells" along some of the roads on the Anzio Beachhead in late April and early May, with their dead sheep and cattle, had not been such an affront to the nose.

Enemy materiel captured or destroyed also included 20 75mm AT guns, 12 88mm AA guns, and 8 or 10 self-propelled guns. Prisoner total for the three days was over 1000. As it had been all the way up from the coast the enemy order of battle, as indicated by units of PWs, was still a miscellaneous assortment from 338th Infantry Division, 198th Infantry Division, 189th Reserve Division, with the recent addition of 11th *Panzer* Division, 716th Infantry Division, 148th Reserve Division, and 244th Infantry Division. There were also other elements, too numerous to mention.

The Battle of Montelimar had been costly for the German 19th Army.

Thus far nothing had been said regarding the reception of American troops by the French populace.

Veterans of Africa, Sicily, and Italy suddenly found themselves in a country in which sincere friendship and joy at liberation was expressed so vividly as to leave no doubts regarding the feelings which prompted these emotions. It was the wholehearted, warm conveyance of gladness of a proud, individualistic race once again made free.

After nearly two years of association with Italians, Sicilians, and Arabs, the genuineness displayed by Frenchmen high and low was like fresh air in a cave. Always it was tonic to morale.

When a Frenchman offered a soldier his bottle of wine there was a slight deference in his manner, but there was also apparent pride and happiness at being able to do something for his liberators. It was as if he said "Here, m'sieu, it is about all I can offer you. I cannot give you strength when you face the enemy, although I wish I could. I cannot sustain you when you falter on the long march. That, too, I wish I could do. I can but offer you this wine, and with it try to convey the feeling of gratitude which I and my countrymen have for you." This attitude, throughout, could not but help give most soldiers some realization of why they were fighting. Freedom must be a wonderful thing. Here were those who had once had and lost it, once again to have it restored to them. The sight of their happiness was a thing to behold.

Since elements of the 45th Infantry Division had patrolled as far northeast as Voiron and found no enemy there, the 3d Infantry Division prepared itself for an administrative move of over ninety miles.

Intelligence from the F.F.I. (which proved very accurate) at this time was as follows "Civilians report that the enemy has pulled the bulk of his infantry out of Lyon, and that the city contains only scattered rear guard armored units. Many enemy troops were withdrawn west of the Rhone. Two civilian reports indicate the enemy is building up his forces along the Loue and Doubs Rivers, sixty miles north of Bourg. All bridges across the Doubs are guarded, and Frenchmen are not permitted to cross to the north (probably because F.F.I. forces are stronger in the south). The enemy is reported to have sizable garrisons in Dijon, Dole, Besançon, and Belfort. The last three towns are on the Doubs River and lie in the enemy's apparent escape corridor to Mühlhaus (Mulhouse)."*

The 15th Infantry's 3d Battalion moved out at 1915, August 31, to relieve the 45th Division roadblock at St. Etienne and to screen the road net to Bourgoin. The 2d Battalion relieved 179th Infantry (45th Division) at Bourgoin, and 1st Battalion left its assembly area, but remained in regimental reserve.

The 30th Infantry entrucked and moved by motor to an assembly area northwest of Voiron. All units had closed in by 0035, September 1. At 1130 the regiment began a move by motor to the vicinity of Cremieu, preparatory to moving west on Division order.

The 7th Infantry remained, guarding the smashed motor column until shortly after noon, September 1, when the regiment entrucked and moved first to an assembly area near Trepts, then re-entrucked and moved to a new area east of Leyment, where it closed in by 2400.

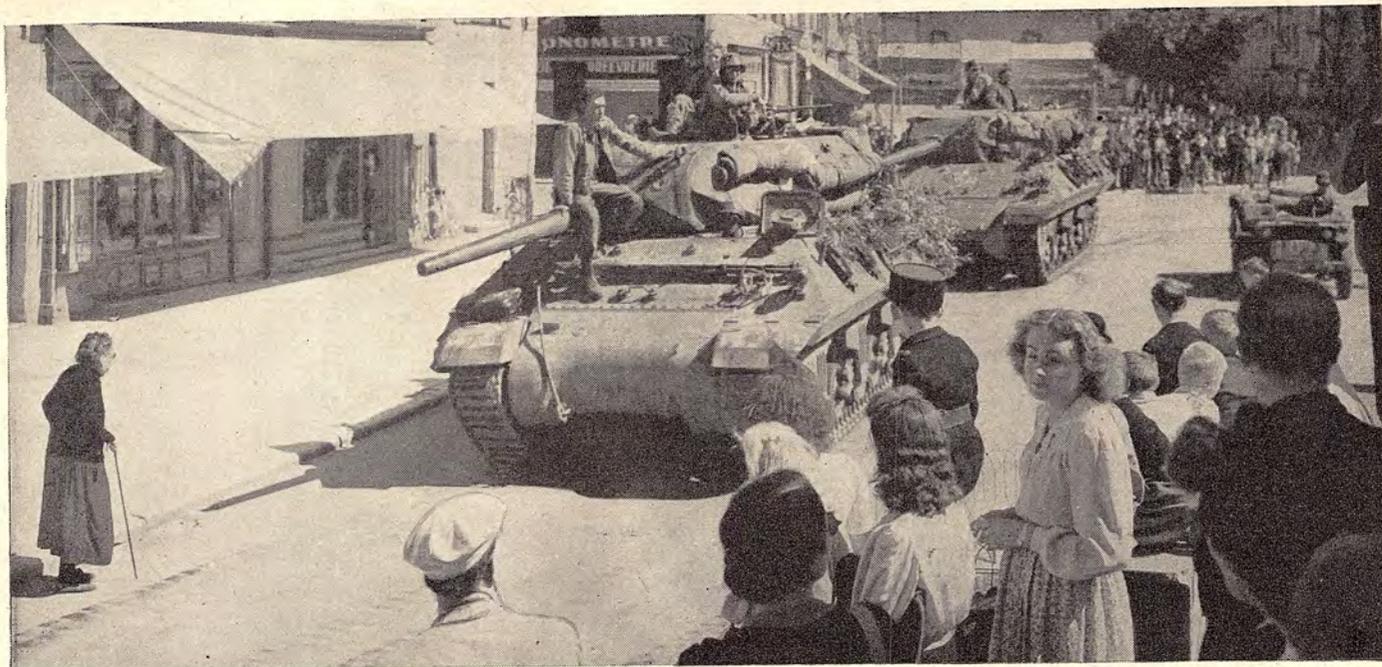
The 15th Infantry, 3d Battalion leading, commenced moving at 1930 to an assembly area near Lagnieu. Company I rode on tank destroyers. 1st Battalion followed and 2d Battalion commenced its move during the morning of September 2.

Meanwhile 30th Infantry already had swung back into action. The 3d Battalion engaged the enemy in a firefight at Pont de Churuy, killing seven enemy and taking two prisoners. At Janneyrieas, while 3d platoon, 3d Reconnaissance Troop engaged the enemy, Company L flanked the enemy position and captured ninety-nine prisoners, an AT gun, and three trucks. The fight lasted until about 2100, September 1. 3d Battalion protected a front from Loyettes through Charvieu, with a strong outpost at Colombier. Contact was made with the 143d Infantry in Catzian at 2100. The 2d Battalion, at 0600, moved out from regimental reserve to relieve 3d Battalion, 179th Infantry, on the regimental right flank.

The 1st platoon, 3d Reconnaissance Troop, after outposting Cote La Andre, moved out on the morning of September 2 to investigate the roads southwest of that town, and was recalled at 0700 to reconnoiter the road northwest of Amberieu to Chalamon, Villers, Striver, and Chatallon, during which reconnaissance it encountered some light enemy resistance.

During September 2-3, 15th and 7th Infantry Regiments remained in assembly areas with reinforcing trucks, prepared to move out on Division order. The 30th Infantry assembled during the same period. The 7th Infantry sent patrols to the north during the night but failed to make contact with the enemy. A patrol from 30th Infantry went north on a main highway through Neuville-sur-Ain and contacted a platoon of the 3d Reconnaissance Troop and a unit of 180th Infantry. The patrol continued north and found the bridge across the Suran River blown; continued on to Villereversure, Simandre-sur-Suran and Treffort, and was told by the F.F.I. that Cruislat was also clear of enemy. A patrol from Company I crossed the bridge at Villereversure, and failed to make enemy contact. Another patrol went northwest on the road to Charlamonte with the same results. The 1st platoon, 3d Recon,

*3d Infantry Division G-2 Periodic Reports No. 17, 2 Sept., 1944.



Tank destroyers of the 601st TD Battalion move through Lons-le-Saunier in pursuit of the retreating enemy.

continued on its mission of September 2. It was held up at a bridge across the Ain River. The Division Battle Patrol outflanked the resistance by crossing the river south of the bridge; and took and held the town of Gevrieu across the river.

The enemy apparently was still rapidly withdrawing. The 3d Infantry Division once again entrucked and conducted a march of over seventy-five miles to contact the enemy.

At 1345, September 3, 7th Infantry led the move. The march objective was north of Lons-le-Saunier. The 3d Battalion closed into position at 2300, September 3, 1st Battalion at 0050, and 2d Battalion at 0055, all without incident and without the slightest contact with the enemy. Upon arrival the regimental Battle Patrol conducted reconnaissance to the north and northeast from Poligny to investigate reports of enemy, but failed to make contact.

15th Infantry moved in order 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions, crossing its initial point near Lagnieu at 2200, and closing into its new area northeast of Lons-le-Saunier at 0615. It advanced from St. Denis to Amberieu to Poncin; thence to Granges through Arinthod, Orgelet and from there to its area. During the morning of September 4, 1st Battalion established roadblocks of company strength near Montrond and on the road between Vers and Les Pasquier. The 2d Battalion put in roadblocks east of Equieuvillon and south of Champagne on Highway 6.

The 30th Infantry remained in assembly area south of Lagnieu until 1045, September 4, when it entrucked for its area in the vicinity of Lons-le-Saunier. The regiment closed in at about noon of that day.

The 3d Reconnaissance Troop preceded the advance of 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments on their march to Lons-le-Saunier, making no contact with the enemy.

The Division continued its attack to the northeast. The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, moved from a defensive position near Arley at 1845, September 4, to the vicinity of Arbois. Vigorous patrols maintained contact with the Battle Patrol at Mont-sous-Vaudrey. The 2d Battalion moved to the vicinity of Arbois, with one company going to Mouchard. At 2100 2d Battalion, reinforced, moved by vehicle to Argue, southwest of Besançon, arriving there at 0100, September 5. The battalion detrucked and began an attack toward Besançon at 0530. Company F encountered resistance at a bridge near Beure. Company E, at 0830, moved in a southeast direction to within 200 yards of Highway 73 near St. Ferjeux and fired on an enemy truck convoy. The battalion continued to fight during the September 5-6 period to secure bridges and destroy enemy motor movement along the highway southwest and south of Besançon. The 3d Battalion remained in position protecting the regiment's left flank.

The objective was now Besançon. A key communication and road net center, as well as an important industrial city of approximately 80,000 persons in peacetime, Besançon is divided by the Doubs River, with the industrial and most valuable section situated in the loop south of the river. This loop has a bottleneck opening, solidly guarded by a huge Vauban-designed fort, La Citadelle, which in turn is supported by four minor forts—Fort Tosey on the southwest, Fort des Trois Chatels on the southeast, and two other forts at a high elevation across the river: Fort Bregille on the

northeast and Fort Chaudanne on the west. These forts were built in the 17th Century. La Citadelle alone took six years to complete (1667-1673). Its aspect is formidable to an attacker, presenting extremely thick walls surrounded by moats, and being situated on high ground which commands all avenues of approach.

The 15th Infantry moved from its position near Champagnole on the afternoon of September 4, 3d Battalion moving to a position south of Besançon. Company I attacked to a position south of Beure, with Company K farther south and Company L at Quingey. The 2d Battalion was disposed along the Ornans-Besançon road, and 1st Battalion remained in regimental reserve near Mouchard.

The 30th Infantry made no contact during the period.

The 1st platoon of the 3d Recon moved ahead of 15th Infantry en route to Besançon and by noon, September 5, was standing by for 15th Infantry on the main routes south of Besançon. The 2d platoon was attached to 7th Infantry, and reconnoitered in front of that regiment south of Besançon. At Sanitorium de la Tileroy the platoon reported a large concentration of troops and a large convoy on the main highway. An air mission was requested, granted, and good results were reported. At 1600 many Germans were reported in the town, and an enemy roadblock one-half mile south of town was also reported. The platoon screened to the west while the artillery dug in and commenced firing at the roadblock. The 3d platoon, 3d Recon, screened before 7th Infantry northwest of Poligny and reported enemy in Mont-sous-Vaudrey. An F.F.I. patrol reported 700 enemy in the town. This platoon, too, spotted an enemy convoy leaving town and called down a successful air mission on it. The platoon was moving toward Dole when recalled to the Troop CP for another mission in the vicinity of Besançon.

At 1900 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, arrived at Mouchard. The 2d Battalion was deployed south and west of Besançon in the vicinity of Beure, engaged in cleaning out enemy on the high ground and along the Doubs River, and firing into Besançon. The Battalion relieved 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry at Mouchard, to patrol to the Division front and left flank. The 2d Battalion, attached to 15th Infantry, reached a position 800 yards south of a key ridge, receiving considerable enemy fire. At 2400 Company E was north of Beure with the other two rifle companies adjacent. These positions were held during the night. On the morning of September 6 the battalion was relieved by 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry.

The Division was continuing its attack to occupy all high ground on three sides of Besançon. The 15th Infantry continued its northerly assault. The 30th Infantry advanced on the Division right boundary, neu-

tralizing enemy roadblocks southeast of Besançon. The 1st and 3d Battalions moved to the north by motor, starting at 1025, to cut the roads to the north and northeast and to enter the town from those directions. The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, followed to the rear of, and assisted, the 15th Infantry.

Company B, 15th Infantry, attacked and captured Fort Fontain during the afternoon of September 5, and Company A seized adjacent high ground, while Company C remained in battalion reserve in the vicinity of Fontain. The 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, attached to the 15th Infantry, captured high ground to the northwest with Company G leading. Shortly after 0800 2d Battalion reverted to 7th Infantry control.

The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, cleared the ridge between Companies A and C and sent reconnaissance patrols to Besançon. The battalion was ordered to block the two roads in its sector leading south and southeast from the city. The 2d Battalion was attached to 30th Infantry on the right. At 2300 Company E was having a fight with a Mark VI tank and an unknown number of infantry, and drawing some self-propelled fire. Company G blocked the highway in the vicinity of Tarcenay. The 30th Infantry continued moving on the right flank against slight opposition. At 1950, September 6, 1st Battalion was located south of Salins and 2d Battalion was at Mouchard. The two battalions closed out of these positions by 0115. By 0830 2d Battalion was located north of Tarcenay and 3d Battalion was in the vicinity of Mamirolle. The 3d Battalion then passed to regimental reserve at Lachevelotte, and 2d Battalion's leading elements were at Morre, advancing from the southeast on Besançon.

Explanation of the action was described in the G-2 report*: "To protect his escape route along Highway 73 through Besançon the enemy occupied the high ridge south of the Doubs River. The high ground was held by infantry, occasionally supported by tank fire and artillery. Most of the bridges across the Doubs were

*3d Infantry Division G-2 Report No. 21, 6 Sept., 1944.



La Citadelle, a Vauban-constructed fortress, situated at the loop in the Doubs River at Besançon.



Soldiers of the 3d Division move through Larnod-Dorines for the assault on Besançon.

blown and roadblocks established on the north side of the river. Our troops began to flank the city from the west during daylight, September 5, and the enemy was driven off or withdrew from the advantageous terrain during the night 5-6 September. Roadblocks southeast of Besançon, active during the afternoon of 5 September, offered but little resistance to our attacks during the evening."

Again: "Almost continual fire was received from enemy units occupying the high ground south of Besançon. Most of the enemy positions consisted of small enemy detachments who put up stiff resistance to our attack during afternoon and evening of 5 September, but who pulled out or were overrun during the night of 5-6 September. . . . On the left of the Division sector the enemy occupied positions north of important bridges across the Doubs River after having blown the bridges. He had positions at Belmont, Orchamps, and Dole. The latter bridge was not blown, probably because the enemy was still using that route as an axis of withdrawal."

During the night of September 6-7 the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, forward CP came under attack by a platoon of German infantrymen who, supported by 20mm Flak guns and machine guns, had infiltrated between the assault companies and the Battalion CP, virtually surrounding the latter. The Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Lloyd B. Ramsey, and his S-3, being present in the CP, were in danger of being captured. Said Col. Ramsey: "Also, a rupture of communications with the assault companies, which were then meeting strong resistance, might easily have been disastrous."

The platoon advanced to within fifteen yards of the house in which the CP was situated. It occupied an old railroad draw, paralleling the wall which the CP's defenders were using for cover, and fired at everything within sight. It raked the doors and windows.

"Through all this fire," said Radio Operator Pvt.

James P. Soblensky, "there was one man who just sat there calmly observing out into the darkness, taking pot shots at every kraut he saw. It was T/5 Robert D. Maxwell, one of the wire corporals. He was the coolest customer I've ever seen. Tracer bullets were just barely clearing his head, yet he didn't seem to notice it."

The Germans worked their way to within about ten yards and began throwing grenades. There was a chicken-wire extension over the wall, which saved those inside. The grenades struck it, bounced to the other side, and exploded harmlessly.

Maxwell continued calmly to take aim and fire his .45. Most of the rest of the men had "taken off," despite Maxwell's urging them to stay. One man who did stay was killed a few minutes later.

Said Wire Chief T/4 Cyril F. McCall: "The Battalion Commander saw that he would be unable to hold the CP with the small force available and ordered that it be moved to another location. While the evacuation was begun under cover of our fire, the enemy intensified his attack in a determined effort to overwhelm our position."

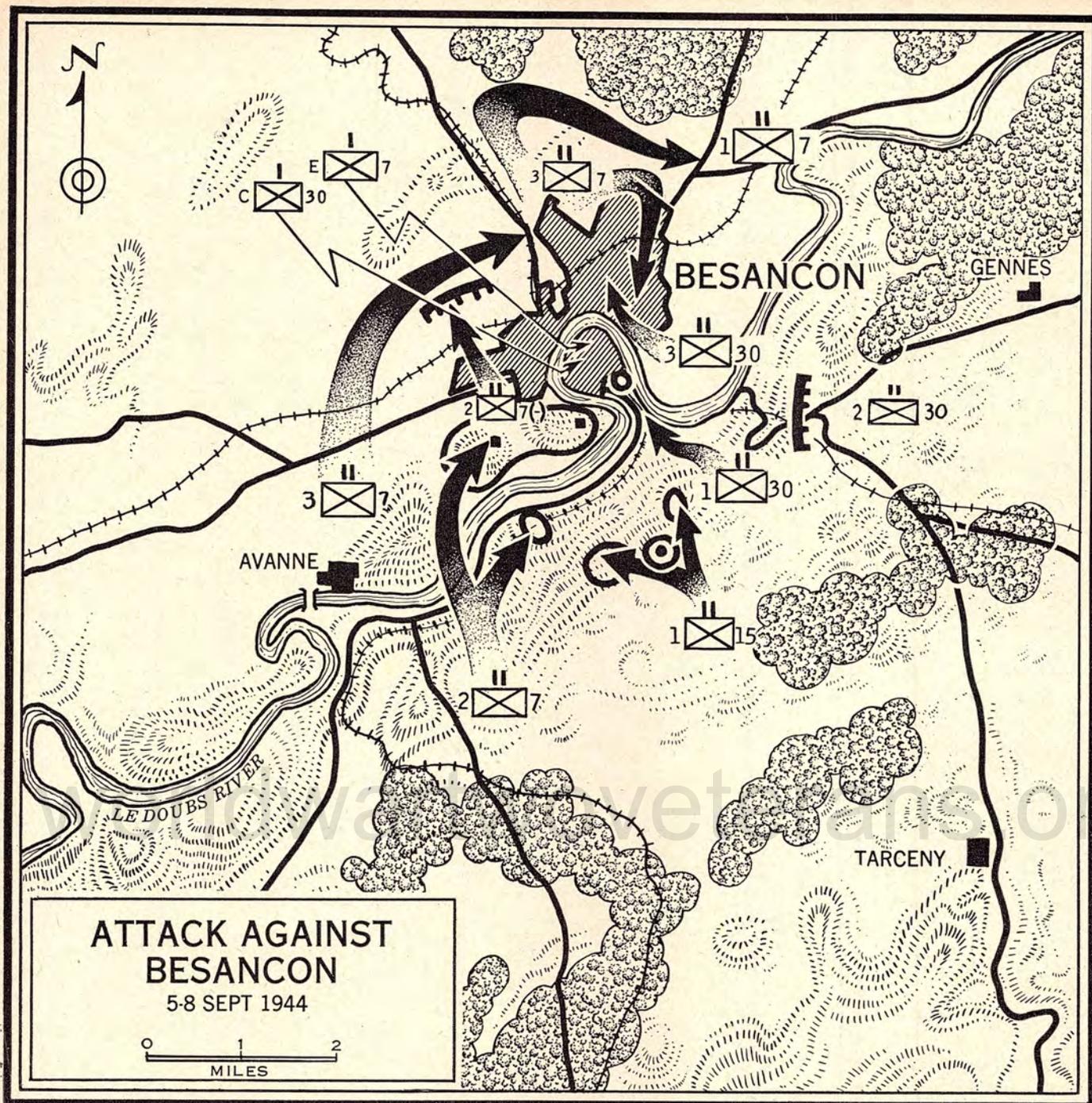
Suddenly a grenade came over the wall and landed in the group's midst. Maxwell, clutching a blanket to his body, dove upon it without a second's hesitation. An instant later there was an explosion. "I lay still for a few seconds," said Wireman Pfc. James P. Joyce, "partially stunned by the concussion; then I realized that I wasn't hurt. T/5 Maxwell had deliberately drawn the full force of the explosion on himself in order to protect us and make it possible for us to continue at our posts and fight."

Colonel Ramsey summed up: "T/5 Maxwell's zeal in the maintenance of military communications, his instantaneous acceptance of dangers which no soldier is obligated to incur, and his lofty sacrifice of self in behalf of his fellow soldiers made possible the orderly withdrawal of the CP personnel, contributed in high degree to the eventual capture of Besançon, and are a continuing inspiration to the officers and men of the 3d Battalion."

Maxwell was severely wounded in the face and his right foot was permanently maimed, but he lived to be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The enemy indicated his strong desire to hold the city and to prevent our forces from crossing the Doubs River by moving into Besançon elements of the 159th Reserve Division which had been diverted from their route of withdrawal. Lengthy fire fights with small arms, machine guns, and mortars took place in front of each of the forts and bunkers on the south and east of town. On the north side of the city scattered self-propelled and tank fire opposed the 7th Infantry.

At 1400 September 7, 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry,



crossed the line of departure and attacked east. Enemy action consisted of scattered strongpoints supported by machine-gun and artillery fire. The battalion halted overnight and protected the regiment on its north flank. The 3d Battalion continued its attack and by 1530 reached la Baraque. At 2315 3d Battalion again advanced against enemy small-arms and mortar fire, until security patrols reported no enemy to the front. At 2100 contact was established with 2d Battalion. The 3d Battalion pulled out of Besançon and at 0930 the next morning attacked an enemy convoy, destroying ten vehicles.

The 30th Infantry, meanwhile, had been divided into

two groups. 1st Battalion was assigned the difficult mission of neutralizing the formidable Citadelle and of clearing the southern section of Besançon, which was situated in the loop of the river, and 3d Battalion was to cross the Doubs at Avanne, circle completely behind the city and come in from the northeast.

At 0030, 1st Battalion, commanded by Captain Christopher W. Chaney, jumped off to clear the Doubs loop. On reaching the Chapelle des Bois, contact was made with 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, and the advance continued northwest toward the Besançon goose-egg. The battalion came under fire at 0338.

As Companies C and B continuing in column reached



Infantrymen of the 3d Division rest beside a railroad near the town of Larnod, after having been relieved.

the high ground south of the Citadelle, they came under more fire from two hitherto unknown forts guarding the right and left approaches to the Citadelle.

Aided by tanks of Company C, 756th, under 1st Lt. Rex Metcalfe, Company C, 30th, battled for four hours against fanatical *Hitlerjugend* inductees and took the fort on the west side of the neck with fifty-three prisoners. While Company B attacked by fire, Company A was moved in, and after a stiff fight, took the east guard fort and about twenty-five prisoners. In a coordinated attack, using all weapons of the battalion, and even employing the direct fire of a 9th FA Battalion 155mm howitzer at a range of about 500 yards, Captain Chaney maneuvered his battalion into a final assault on the Citadelle. While Company C moved around to the northwest and rear of the fort, Company A assaulted frontally, and with the aid of close mortar fire support forced the surrender of the fort by 1830.

Troops which entered the Citadelle to handle the more than 200 prisoners (which included one battalion CO and two company CO's) reported that the massive walls had been barely more than chipped by the high explosive 155 shells, but the terrific muzzle blast combined with the terrifying sound of shell bursts had been too much for the defenders' nerves. Seventeen casualties, most of them wounded, were taken from the fort. All of these had been wounded by mortar fire.

By 2205 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, had closed on its objective, the Doubs River loop, from the south.

For its outstanding performance of duty in action

during the period September 6-7 at Besançon, the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

During the fight for, and capture of, the Citadelle, 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, had been relieved by Company F at 1420 and moved out on trucks via the Avanne bridge to a position northeast of Besançon to join in the coordinated attack on the city. The attack was launched at 2005 that night. By 2130 Company L had met resistance near the city's railroad station. Company K was moved to assist Company L, and at daylight was in contact with the enemy while Company L was engaged in clearing enemy from the city. Both companies continued to work on this strong pocket of enemy resistance throughout the day of September 8 while Company I moved to establish a roadblock. By 1220 resistance was broken and over 100 prisoners taken. By 1645 the battalion was assembled and moved to a regimental assembly area, where it closed in at 1900 and prepared to push to the north.

The 2d Battalion had been in reserve during most of the fight. At 0810 that morning the battalion crossed the Doubs River Bailey bridge into the city and at 1050 was held up by continuing fighting within the city. Company F held the high ground overlooking the city and was committed to assist 3d Battalion in its street-fighting assignment. Company F took 196 prisoners in this work and in the later afternoon moved to the regimental assembly area, closing there with the rest of 2d Battalion at 1900.

Cost to the enemy in the Battle of Besançon had been about 653 prisoners, not including wounded (and taken prisoner), and killed. Numbered among the latter was a Brig. Gen. Schmidt, who was killed at a roadblock of Company A, 7th Infantry, on the afternoon of September 6. His orderly, who was taken prisoner, said that the general was 56 years old, had fought in Russia, and had been commanding an artillery school at Autun from April 26, 1943, to September 2, 1944. He supposedly had been en route to take command of a division (probably the 159th) in the Besançon area when the four cars in his party took the wrong road and the general stopped an M-1 bullet.

Following the axis of two main roads to the north, the Division continued its attack in the direction of Vesoul. The 7th Infantry advanced to the northeast to Rigney, then turned west toward Rioz. It moved against slight resistance until enemy were encountered at Traitie Fontaine. The 2d Battalion led this advance, followed by 3d Battalion.

The 15th Infantry continued to advance north toward Rioz against strong resistance in the form of organized defenses as well as a number of by-passed pockets of enemy forces. The 1st Battalion reached Tallenay without resistance. After fighting all through the night of September 8-9 Company F captured Ecole and Company E captured Miserey-Salines. By noon, September 9, Company G had reached a point just south of the Ornan River. The 3d Battalion continued its advance against strong resistance to the vicinity of Chatillon-le-Duc. By 1005, September 9 Companies I and L were abreast near Devecey, continuing the attack.

In Besançon, 30th Infantry made a thorough sweep of the town until, by 1400, September 8, it had been determined that the last enemy soldier was rounded up. The regiment moved out during the night of September 8-9. The 1st Battalion encountered considerable resistance during the morning of September 9, but overcame it. The 3d Battalion followed the 1st Battalion.

At 2000, September 9, Company G moved to the northeast side of Rioz and was 2000 yards from its outskirts. Three hours later the company was 800 yards from a road north of the town and 500 yards from the town itself. During the fight it captured prisoners from the 634th Guard Regiment which had been moved into the sector to assist in the disengagement of elements of the 198th and 338th Divisions and to reinforce the positions. The 2d Battalion did not enter Rioz in force, but early in the morning of September 10 contacted elements of 15th Infantry in town. The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, sent a platoon of Company I to Loulans, then reinforced the position with the entire company. Remainder of the battalion was located in the vicinity of Cirey during the night, then assembled at Loulans, and at noon, September 10, was moving northeast against light resistance. The 1st Battalion was located at Regney, with Companies A and C on the outskirts of Vandeland to screen the Division's right flank. The 2d Battalion assembled in the vicinity of Cirey and at 1000 crossed the line of departure moving northeast.

The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, moved by truck to Neuville-de-Cromary, then moved by foot to Sorans-



FFI in Besançon stand guard over several German prisoners, whom they apparently ferreted out somewhere in the city.



This bridge spanned the Doubs River. While it was being repaired the Infantrymen made use of ladders to move across the gap on their way north from Besançon.

les-Breury on September 9. On the morning of the 10th the battalion resumed the attack toward Vesoul, moving out at 0700. At 1015 Company A encountered an estimated platoon of enemy, reinforced by a tank and SP gun, but soon took care of the trouble. The 2d Battalion moved against a series of enemy roadblocks near Voray, and at 1545, September 9, was at Sorans-les-Breury after destroying three strong roadblocks and capturing three 88mm guns. The battalion moved on toward Rioz, aided in clearing the town, and set up roadblocks. The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, moved by truck through Traitie Fontaine and assisted 2d Battalion in clearing Rioz, and also set up roadblocks.

The 30th Infantry was originally on the Division's left flank in contact with the 36th Division. One company of the 1st Battalion crossed the Ornan River between Cussey and Boulot to protect the crossing of the rest of the battalions. Company B forded the river and at 2000, September 9, was on the outskirts of the Boulot. The 3d Battalion, at 1940, had a platoon in Bussieres, and 2d Battalion closed in an area near

Voray on the north side of the Ornan River. At 0600, 3d Battalion led the regiment in a move to the north. Company K headed the battalion, moving to the left of Voray. The 2d Battalion pushed through Rioz on trucks while 3d Battalion moved cross-country to Boulot on the Division left flank. At 1115 3d Battalion was moving north against scattered small-arms and machine-gun fire.

Enemy rear guard and delaying forces south of Vesoul made our advance difficult during September 10-11. The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, advancing toward Vesoul, was held up by strong enemy resistance in Quenoche, encountering small-arms, machine-gun, antitank, Flakwagon, tank, and artillery fire. By 1500, September 10, the battalion was on the outskirts of the town, and by 1900 the town of Quenoche was in our hands, although some mopping-up remained to be done. The 2d Battalion, following the first, was on the left flank at 1335. The battalion moved to Hyet and contacted the enemy. By 2000 Hyet was completely in our hands and the battalion moved north to Pen-

nesieres. On the morning of September 11, 2d Battalion continued the advance through Courboux without resistance, while 1st Battalion advanced until it received enemy Flakwagon fire, which it eliminated.

The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, detrucked northwest of Rioz and advanced toward Tresilly over the September 10-11 period. Slight opposition was encountered and at 1730 artillery fire was directed on enemy personnel and vehicles. The 1st and 2d Battalions continued to advance against slight resistance.

At 0600, September 11, 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, attacked north toward Filain. The battalion encountered enemy resistance toward noon and engaged in a fire fight southwest of Vy-le-Aubertans. The 2d Battalion, during the afternoon of September 10, had encountered strong enemy resistance south of Aubertans. The resistance was overcome during the night of September 10-11 and at 0630 Company G moved out toward Authoison against heavy machine-gun fire. Toward noon, however, the battalion was advancing without opposition.

During the same 24-hour period 3d Battalion overcame strong enemy resistance at Ormemans to encounter an enemy strongpoint at Roche-sur-Linotte at about 2000. At 0730 the battalion attacked north, encountered strong resistance, and pushed on into it.

The objectives of Vesoul and the road nets east of the city were being stubbornly defended.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, advanced through Filain, while 2d Battalion left Authoison, and 3d Battalion engaged in a fire fight outside Dampierre. The 7th Infantry finally occupied Hills 418 and 405 after attacking through the Bois de Dampierre.

The 30th Infantry advanced northeast toward Presle, meeting strong enemy resistance all the way. The wooded, hilly terrain necessarily made advances slow.

The 3d Battalion moved by motor from its assembly area near Mariox to its line of departure for the attack on Presle. At 2000 the battalion, having cleared out machine-gun and rifle outpost positions on the way, prepared to attack Presle at daylight September 12.

During September 12 the attack on Presle was continued by 3d Battalion. Because of the dogged resistance and heavy enemy fire it became necessary to commit the 1st and 2d Battalions on a flanking movement to encircle the town.

The 3d Battalion jumped off at daylight as planned, but was immediately met with fire from three sides, and the attack was halted. A combat group of infantry, tanks, and TDs was sent to clear the enemy from a ridge on the left flank. This was accomplished, but heavy fire from Presle as well as observed artillery fire



After the battle was over, citizens of Besançon crowded the streets to watch the remaining elements of the 3d Division pass through on their way North.

from Mt. Jesus, and machine-gun and sniper fire from the Bois de Petit Pas continued to halt the attack. Company I moved to Thieffrans at 2130.

The 1st Battalion was committed at 1715 with the mission of outflanking and cutting off the determined enemy from the north. The battalion entrucked and advance elements met and fired on about seventy-five enemy at a cross road. At 2000, the balance of the battalion jumped off in the attack on Esprels. The battalion moved forward without opposition but met many unmanned roadblocks which the 10th Engineers cleared to permit the advance of attached armor.

The 2d Battalion was committed at 1645, September 12. Company E was sent by truck with the mission of clearing the roadblock on the main highway by attacking it from the rear. The balance of the battalion moved down the main highway through Dampierre to assault Presle via Trevey. Trevey was occupied by 2010.

In face of pressure exerted by this three-battalion attack, the enemy withdrew on September 13. Presle, Vallerois-le-Bois, Les Patey, Chassey-les-Montboxon, and Esprels were all occupied.

The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry was committed on the regiment's left flank, by-passing 2d Battalion, and advancing to the southern outskirts of Vesoul. By noon of September 12 it was in the first few buildings there. The 1st Battalion advanced against constant enemy resistance with a mission of advancing north and flanking the town from the east. The 2d Battalion advanced through La Demie with a mission of blocking a road in that vicinity.

Vesoul finally fell during the afternoon of September 12 to elements of the 15th Infantry and two battalions of the 36th Division.

Two heroic actions especially marked the September 12-13 period.

Second Lt. Raymond Zussman of Company A, 756th Tank Battalion, was a platoon leader. As his tank and another of his platoon were approaching Noroy-le-Bourg at about 1900, they were in front of 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry. The intercommunication system was out between tanks and throughout the subsequent action Lieutenant Zussman directed the tank from outside, either verbally or by signals.

Zussman went forward on foot to reconnoiter the highway. He disappeared from sight; there was the sound of small-arms fire and the lieutenant reappeared, to motion the tank to the highway. Several infantrymen proceeded forward with the group.

After directing the tank through a boobytrapped roadblock, the group was fired upon by an enemy machine gun and some riflemen about forty yards to the right front. Lieutenant Zussman stood on the right of the tank, directing fire on the enemy positions, and

in a matter of seconds three of the enemy were killed and eight had surrendered. After collecting these prisoners, Zussman again directed fire, this time on a German *Volkswagen* at a road junction; three more enemy were killed and seven or eight surrendered.

Lieutenant Zussman then obtained a tommy gun, being out of carbine ammunition, and started toward town, across a field paralleling the road to town. The tank followed. Again he was fired upon. Again he returned under intense fire to direct the tank in neutralizing the opposition. Standing up straight he pointed out the enemy, and within a few minutes twenty more had surrendered.

"Lieutenant Zussman had the infantrymen collect these prisoners while he went ahead alone to investigate some houses on our side of the road about fifty yards in front of us," said Cpl. Theodore Coller, a crew member of the tank.

Added Pvt. Calvin E. Eaton: ". . . I saw Lieutenant Zussman approach the back of the house, running and firing his tommy gun en route. A few wild small-arms shots were taken at him, and as he neared the far corner several hand grenades were thrown in his direction but he was unharmed and beckoned us forward. He directed our fire through a back door of the house and into a small shed nearby, and twelve more Jerries who were in and around the house hastily surrendered."

Reconnoitering for a route for the tank out to the highway, a storm of fire and a grenade came Zussman's way. He returned fire and the enemy ceased. He called the tank up again; by the time the tank had neared the house he had gone to the front again, and by the time the tank had rounded the corner, Lieutenant Zussman had returned with fifteen more prisoners.

He directed the tank's fire on a house across the road, toward which a number of the enemy were scurrying in an attempt to escape. At least two or three were killed and several wounded.

The miniature armored force continued down the main street of Noroy, Zussman still leading. A wagon started across an intersection to the front; the tank fired on it and killed eight or ten enemy. "Lieutenant Zussman figured the intersection might be zeroed in for antitank fire, so he had us wait while he went around the corner to investigate," said T/5 Espiridion Guillen. "We heard Lieutenant Zussman repeatedly yelling, '*Hände hoch! Hände hoch!*' and heard frequent bursts from his tommy gun. In a few minutes he stepped out in the intersection where we could see him, and a string of about thirty prisoners filed around the corner and were taken into custody by the infantrymen. Lieutenant Zussman said he routed them out of a basement."

As night fell, Zussman again went forward alone to a truck. There was another hand-grenade explosion,

but when the smoke cleared away he returned with another prisoner.

The results of his actions were seventeen enemy killed, ninety-two captured, and two antitank guns, one 20mm Flak gun, two machine guns, and two trucks captured.

Lieutenant Zussman was killed in a subsequent action, but was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Another officer, 1st Lt. John J. Tominac, of Company I, 15th Infantry, also especially distinguished himself during this same time.

The 3d Battalion, having captured the hill mass south of Saulx-de-Vesoul, drove down the hillsides toward the city in the face of stubborn resistance. Forces in the hills north of Saulx-de-Vesoul hammered the German positions with artillery, mortar and machine-gun fire. In this operation the other forces were the anvil, the 3d Battalion, the hammer.

As Tominac's platoon neared a bend in the road down which they were proceeding, an enemy machine gun opened fire, raking the highway with bursts of knee-high fire.

Lieutenant Tominac sized up the situation and shouted back to bring up tank support. Within a matter of minutes an M-4 came up and halted just ahead of the platoon's leading elements.

Under heavy fire Tominac ran forward ten yards to direct fire on the enemy machine-gun nest, as two squads of his platoon worked their way forward into firing positions on the road, protected from the enemy by the tank's hull.

A second enemy machine-gun nest remained, following the neutralization of the first. Working his left squad to within fifty yards of the weapon, Tominac halted the men and rushed headlong into the weapon, firing his tommy gun. He killed the three men manning it.

This action alerted the main enemy defensive force. The occupants of this position were about 200 yards to the left front. Tominac led a squad against the enemy strongpoint. Although the area was swept by infantry fire of every type, Tominac rushed back and forth from one squad to the other, supervising and directing the one he led personally, and one which he had directed to clean out any enemy who might be in a group of nearby houses.

He and his men overran the hostile strongpoint, killing about thirty of the enemy. The squad resumed the advance. After proceeding a few yards, Tominac spotted a concealed 77mm self-propelled gun in a "V" intersection of the road, about 200 yards to the front.

He ordered his men to halt, and went ahead, alone and on foot, followed by the tank. The SP opened fire

on the tank and neutralized it. The tank caught fire and the crew bailed out.

Driverless and burning, it began to roll down the road toward the German position. Tominac ran and jumped on it; stood boldly upright, silhouetted against the sky, grasping the M-4's .50-caliber machine gun. As he opened fire on the 77's crew, a rain of bullets from hostile machine guns, machine pistols and snipers ricocheted off the turret and hull of the tank, with the 77 also still firing at it.

Tominac fired burst after burst at the SP gun and the infantry foxholes around it. After raking the area with fire he jumped down from the steadily accelerating tank.

Joined by S/Sgt. John B. Shirley, one of his squad leaders, it was noted that Tominac was painfully wounded in the shoulder. Shirley took out his pen knife and removed a dollar-sized fragment from the shoulder. At about the same time the tank crashed in the midst of a group of German gun pits, bursting into flames as its gasoline and ammunition exploded.

Again Tominac led his men forward. The enemy had been forced to abandon his roadblock. The SP gun withdrew into Saulx-de-Vesoul. Refusing medical aid, Lieutenant Tominac sent Shirley's squad to clean out a group of houses in the city, while he led the remainder of the platoon against a strongly-fortified group of buildings which contained about a company of Germans. Despite his painful wound, he took his men to within pointblank range of a wall which surrounded the buildings from which the enemy was firing. Hurling hand grenades into the enemy's midst and simultaneously deploying a portion of his force around to the rear of the buildings, Tominac compelled thirty-one enemy soldiers and one officer to surrender, captured at least half a dozen enemy vehicles, together with machine guns and a quantity of other materiel.

At the cost of only four casualties, he had led his men in overcoming four successive enemy strongpoints, killing at least thirty of the enemy, taking thirty-two prisoners and capturing the platoon's sector of Saulx-de-Vesoul. For this he later received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

By straight-line distance it is more than 400 miles from Cavalaire and St. Tropez to Vesoul. The American VI Corps, advancing not in a straight line, but tacking first to the west, then north, then northeast, back to the northwest, finally, north and northeast, as the tactical situation required, had covered the distance in less than a month—truly an amazing feat. In a war of movement, this accomplishment stood out as an example of speed and mobility. The 3d Infantry Division had played a prominent part in making that feat possible.

French forces, coming up from the rear, reinforced and emphasized the rapid cleavage, but the spearhead was always VI Corps.

There were immediate and telling results of the avalanche which rolled north from the Riviera beaches. Somewhere south of the Loire River, in western France, 20,000 enemy soldiers surrendered to a United States platoon. Four United States correspondents drove a jeep through supposedly enemy-infested territory, from south to north, and did not encounter a single German soldier. Isolated enemy pockets were swiftly wiped out by avenging F.F.I. bands. When French forces joined those of Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army near Dijon in early September, all of Central and Western France, with the exception of a few western ports, was automatically freed. Instead of a slow slugging-match to liberate France the United States armies were now free to concentrate on the western approaches to Germany. The ultimate end of the war in Europe was probably speeded many months. And in the zone of VI Corps the German 19th Army received a blow from which it never recovered.

Probably the outstanding difficulty of the rapid move had been the ever-present bugaboo of supply, magnified many times over. Even the most optimistic planners had not foreseen moving so far, so fast.

Initially, while preinvasion beach reconnaissance had indicated that Red Beach at St. Tropez would be excellent for beaching craft, only one section was good enough to beach LCIs, and this was so heavily protected with underwater mines that it could not be used until H-plus-8 hours. These unexpected difficulties would have been extremely serious had more than slight resistance been met by the infantry, as supporting tanks and artillery were not ashore and assembled until late on D-day and the Beach Group reacted slowly to changes occasioned by the difficulties. However, late on D-day the Group became better organized, and by H-plus-20 hours all small craft except the five supply LCTs were completely discharged.

Unloading of the ocean-type ships lagged far behind schedule, primarily because all Liberty ships arrived at the transport area behind schedule. Due in the transport area at noon of D-day, seven of the ten Liberties arrived at noon of D-plus-one and the other three not until the forenoon of D-plus-two.

While the delay in unloading caused considerable difficulty due to lack of transportation, its most serious implication was the almost complete lack of supply. Through unforeseen difficulties, a critical gasoline shortage existed by H-plus-30 hours when supply LCTs were finally beached.

Normally Army supply bases keep within twenty miles of Division rear. Initially Division transportation was used exclusively to move supplies from the beaches to supply dumps, reaching a round trip of 400 miles before Army was able to establish forward dumps at St. Maximin. This relief was short-lived, as Division was called upon to furnish forty trucks to Corps for special missions, and 3d Infantry Division began a 150-mile move from Aix to Montelimar, which again eventually put Army dumps 150 miles behind the troops. That the supply problem was whipped is a credit to the men who worked 24-hour days for days on end to keep the supplies flowing.

Some measure of what it takes to make a move of the proportions of VI Corps' move north is furnished by a look at the wire summaries of the Division Signal Officer. During the sixteen days from August 15 to 31, alone, 2207 miles of wire were laid, and only 190 recovered. Communications, at that, were often solely by radio.

The 3d Infantry Division continued its push, and found itself at the approaches to the Vosges Mountains. It was still mid-Autumn—on the calendar—but the cold winds already had begun to blow, and the weather had turned rainy. It seemed only a short time ago that the Anzio sun came out to stay and ended the long, cold, wet Italian winter. Now the seasons had once more rolled around, and with the annual change came winter fighting in France's Vosges Mountains.

The Vosges Mountains had never been crossed by a military force opposed by an enemy. That solid fact stood out as the divisions of VI Corps set out to commence the fight. Miles ahead lay the Rhine River and the frontier of Germany.

TABLE OF CASUALTIES*

Southern France

(Aug. 15, 1944 through Sept. 14, 1944)

<i>KIA</i>	<i>WIA</i>	<i>MIA</i>	<i>Total Battle Casualties</i>	<i>Non-Battle Casualties</i>
218	1072	401	1691	1583
Reinforcements and hospital return-to-unit personnel				
	<i>Reinf</i>		<i>Hosp</i>	<i>RTUs</i>
<i>Off</i>		<i>EM</i>	<i>Off</i>	<i>EM</i>
16		307	17	967

KNOWN ENEMY CASUALTIES

<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Captured</i>
330	1005	9003

*These figures were provided by the A C of S, G-1, 3d Infantry Division.

IX
THROUGH THE VOSGES

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The Summer War Gives Way to Bitter Combat in the Forests of France's "Impassable" Mountains

DENSE clouds hang between the mountains of the lower Vosges. The roads glisten with rain and the wind sweeps cold over the plains. The soldiers who bathed for a long time in the warming sun of the Riviera coast freeze in the unaccustomed climate. The shelter halves over their shoulders are wet because they had no chance to dry them out at any of the roadside farmhouses. There has hardly been a pause during the arduous march of the last two or three weeks, during those disengaging movements which brought so much grief in its various phases.

"Now the Army which used to stand guard in the sunny south, many hundreds of miles away, stands at the frontier of the Reich and the thunder of the guns already echoes in the peaceful dales and the villages beyond.

"The conversation of the soldiers these days centers around the question: 'When shall we hold a definite line again?' They talk about it frankly without false hopes, without defeatism, with the clear perception and the straight opinion of soldiers who see things as they are and will not be influenced by the black prophets who are present in any situation, who form their own honest opinions which it is their right to do. For whoever has experienced the ordeal of the withdrawal through the Rhone Valley, the withdrawal which often turned into a veritable hell, has proved that he knows no fear and no despair. . . ."

Those words were written by the enemy.

The 3d Infantry Division, without perceptible pause, found itself in its second winter campaign. There seemed to be no dividing line. One week we were racing through Southern and Central France in the middle of a temperate Autumn; the next, fighting in difficult, wooded terrain in rain and cold. The local inhabitants, as local inhabitants will the world over, said, "This is very unusual weather for this time of year," whatever that means.

During September enemy action passed through three definite phases. First phase was his rapid withdrawal, leaving only small, disorganized forces to attempt delaying action. As this phase reached its climax he turned and attempted the stand at Besançon. Our troops attacked Besançon September 6, and two days later all enemy resistance in the city ceased.

From Besançon to the Moselle River the enemy put up definite resistance, although in the main it was delaying action, and each day's fighting usually ended with the enemy's falling back to prepared posi-

tions in the rear. There was a gradual build-up of enemy artillery during this phase. The first counter-attack was launched September 15 at Longeville, east of Lure. As the enemy fell back toward the Moselle River his daily withdrawals became shorter and his positions gave an indication of considerable work prior to occupation. As artillery fire increased, so did the employment of mines, boobytraps and log roadblocks.

The Division was about to enter this final phase, which was to prevail until the crossing of the Meurthe River. On the high ground east of the Moselle River the enemy finally occupied a definite line of resistance, ceased his withdrawals and held on tenaciously, counterattacking when overrun. He resorted to jungle tactics in the heavily-wooded terrain between the Moselle and Mosellette Rivers and frequently infiltrated behind our lines, ambushing supply trains. When the Moselle River line was taken, the enemy occupied a second, definite, well-organized position northeast of St. Amé and in the vicinity of Cleurie. Here the enemy resisted fiercely, counterattacking and infiltrating to retake ground lost to our attacks and bringing in both reinforcements and replacements.

The granite massif of the Vosges rises steeply from the Plain of Alsace, lies northeast-southwest, and blocks easy entrance to the Rhine Valley from the west. The Vosges consist of low, generally rounded mountains from 1000 to 4000 feet in height, arranged in parallel ridges which individually tend more to the northeast than does the range as a whole.

This is an area of forested mountains forming the southern part of the Vosges chain which lies along the Franco-German frontier and reaches from Belfort in the south to Kaiserslautern in the north. The Saverne Gap divides the High Vosges from its northern extension, the Low Vosges. To the south, the High Vosges terminate abruptly in a series of summits towering above the Belfort Gap.

Average height of the Vosges eastern ridge line is about 3000 feet, but many summits rise about 4000 feet, with elevation increasing southward where the highest point is the Grand Ballon (over 4600), lying northeast of Belfort. The Hohneck, the highest point on the main watershed, rises 4400 feet just north of Grand Ballon. The long ridge lines are usually flat topped, fairly level, and carry stretches of moor, coarse pasture, and peat bog, as well as large amounts of rock debris. Many granite tors rise above the level surface. The ground drops sharply to the east but slopes more gradually to the west, falling in a series of plateaus toward the Lorraine Plain.

**Die Wacht*, German Nineteenth Army Newspaper "On the Threshold of the Reich," September 13, 1944.

A feature of the Vosges is its number of valleys. Main valleys stand at right angles to the main ridges and tend to lie northwest on the western side and east or east-northeast on the eastern side. Tributary valleys parallel the ridges, lead far into the range, and terminate in a series of headstreams on the slopes of the main ridges. Valley bottoms within the Vosges itself are sometimes poorly drained and long narrow lakes and swampland areas often result.

In autumn, the evergreens are in sharp contrast with the changing colors of the deciduous trees and the yellow and brown of the stubble fields.

In winter, the reds of the sandstone rocks and some of the granite become more noticeable after the forest leaves have fallen. Forests remain green at higher levels, but on the lower slopes browns and russets predominate.

The road net in the Vosges is somewhat constricted by terrain. Main routes often bottleneck in narrow village streets. Sharp turns and steep gradients are common in the Vosges and very winding roads are found in the lake areas near Belfort. Secondary and local roads tend to be narrow and sometimes muddy. In wet weather, they are generally unsuited to military traffic. They are often bordered by ditches or embankments and the crown on old cobbled roads is often so great that vehicles are required to travel at reduced speeds.

Above moderate heights, winters, particularly in the Vosges, may be long and hard, with drastic and sudden changes in temperatures. At all seasons bad weather is more persistent over the mountains than in areas 300-400 miles north because there is a decided tendency for "fronts" to slow up as they approach the Alps barrier; frequently a "front" becomes stationary along the line of the Alps, creating a broad belt of rain and cloud over the foothills which lasts for a day or two.

The 3d Infantry Division was on the western foothill approaches to the Vosges Mountains when Vesoul fell on September 12.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, which was one element of the forces which took the town, did not pause but continued through, and by 1645 September 12 was on Hill 349, a dominating feature northeast of the town in the direction of Velleminfroy. Movement of the Division at this time was pivoting to the northeast on 30th Infantry, the hub of which was generally at the town of Valleriois le Bois.

Shortly after noon September 12, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, moved to Hill 360, with two companies occupying the position at 1325. Company A, leading, encountered enemy machine-gun and small-arms fire at 1446, but outflanked the enemy and was near Quincy at 1640 with roadblocks to the southeast, northeast and northwest. At 1720 1st Battalion was prepared to con-

tinue the advance to the north, and at 1930 moved out, shortly to encounter small-arms fire. The 1st Battalion continued to advance during the night and at 0345 reported the town of Calmoultier clear of enemy.

The 30th Infantry, which attacked initially in a north and northeast direction on the Division's right flank, later moved to the southeast toward Esprels, maintaining contact with the 45th Infantry Division. Shortly after noon of September 12, 3d Battalion captured thirty-six enlisted enemy soldiers and one officer, obtaining information on other enemy locations that aided in a successful advance. During the afternoon of September 12, 1st Battalion went to Dampierre, flanked to the left, then began a movement to the southeast against Hill 309. Late in the night of September 12-13, 1st Battalion began encountering enemy opposition, plus log barriers placed at intervals of twenty-five yards along the road to slow 1st Battalion's armor. Despite this, the advance continued.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, moved from Hill 349, which it had captured previously, and continued to advance against scattered enemy opposition through Comberjon to Moncey. Moncey was cleared at 0645 September 13 and the battalion moved on through Colombe toward Velleminfroy, toward noon meeting about a platoon of enemy armed with small arms and machine guns.

During the same period the 7th Infantry, in the center of the Division sector, occupied high ground past Noroy-le-Bourg, which it cleaned out en route. The 3d Battalion performed this task during the night of September 12-13, taking 100 to 150 prisoners and killing and wounding an unknown number. At 1830 2d Battalion had been ordered into Division reserve, and 1st and 3d Battalion had advanced toward Hill 452 past Noroy-le-Bourg. By 2030 the 1st Battalion had captured the hill, with 3d Battalion almost directly to the north. At 1000 September 13, 3d Battalion attacked toward Hill 410 and Montjustin. Company C attacked from Hill 459 at 1030 and pushed toward Hill 430. There was scattered, unorganized small-arms and machine-gun fire in opposition to the morning attacks of 1st and 3d Battalions.

The enemy was driven out of Maras and Melmay by patrols from 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, while the bulk of the battalion was still three or four kilometers short of Esprels on September 13.

The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, attacked Presle and by 2115 September 12 was in the corner of the woods near Trevey. At 2300 2d Battalion began its move toward Presle and at 2400 Company F entered the town, with Company E generally to the northeast and Company G to the southeast. There was little resistance at the town, but there were indications that the enemy had just

pulled out. Companies F and G remained in Presle while Company E blocked to the northeast until 0700, when the battalion moved out toward Vallerois-le-Bois. The 3d Battalion's Company I, which had been on a flank-protection mission at Thieffrans, was relieved by a company of the 180th Infantry and at 0850 attacked to the northeast toward Montbozon. The remainder of the 3d Battalion prepared for an attack on Mt. Jesus, moving in from the west.

During the foregoing period, 1st Platoon, Company B, 601st TD Battalion, scored a notable success by catching a column of enemy foot troops and killing seventy-five to a hundred enemy.

During the afternoon of September 13 the entire Division advance continued against strong enemy opposition, but the Division occupied all immediate objectives before dark. The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, sent one company on to Hill 410 while the remainder of the battalion moved to the east flank. The 1st Battalion advanced through Cerre-les-Noroy and started up the slopes of Hill 430. The 2d Battalion was released from Division control at 1445 and returned to regimental control. The 3d Battalion's remaining two rifle companies moved southeast to Autrey-les-Cerre. The 1st Battalion encountered considerable opposition and at 1915 some enemy still held on Hill 430. The 3d Battalion, meanwhile continued pushing until its leading company ran into heavy artillery, small-arms and mortar fire. The 2d Battalion rested during the latter part of darkness and resumed its advance at 0400, toward Borey and Arpenans. The battalion moved against light opposition. The 1st and 3d Battalions moved out at 0830 and by noon 3d Battalion had occupied Montjustin without making contact with the enemy and was sending a company toward Arpenans. The 1st Battalion moved ahead steadily on 3d Battalion's flank.

Company A, 15th Infantry, occupied Lievans during the evening of September 13 and one platoon was left in the town until relieved by the 7th Infantry. On the morning of September 14 Company B, followed by Company A, moved to Mollans without resistance. Company C moved northwest toward Pomoy and Company B moved toward Genevreville toward noon September 14. The 2d Battalion, Companies F and G leading, entered Velleminfroy at 0920, September 14 and upon occupation of the town went into regimental reserve.

The 3d Battalion's Company L occupied Hill 289 and on the morning of September 14 followed Company I into reserve. Company K attacked Saulx-de-Vesoul, meeting enemy small-arms and machine-gun fire, but had the town cleared at 1855 September 13. Elements of the 141st Infantry relieved Company K, which then moved to Creveny and Chateney. Toward noon Com-

pany K was advancing toward Colombe-le-Bithaine. Company I moved from Chatenois and occupied La Creuse at 0945 September 14 against practically no resistance. Toward noon 3d Battalion was continuing the advance toward Adelsans.

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 30th Infantry, began their attack at 1530 September 13, 1st Battalion located about 1000 yards beyond Esprels and 2d Battalion on the left (northeast) flank. The 3d Battalion moved up to Les Patey. Both battalions advanced against small-arms fire. The 3d Battalion sent a platoon to Autrey-le-Vay in conjunction with a platoon from the 45th Division to protect the sector between divisions. At 0630 September 14, 2d Battalion, from its position reached the night before, resumed its attack due east toward Oppenans and advanced without meeting enemy resistance. 1st Battalion fired interdiction machine-gun fire into Marast during the night, and on the morning of September 14 moved into the town against no opposition.

During September 14-15 the Division continued its steady pace toward Lure, swinging to the north and east against enemy resistance that became increasingly stronger during the afternoon of September 14 and which continued strong. The 15th Infantry, on the Division left flank, occupied Pomoy, Genevreville and Mollans against strong resistance and moved toward Lure from the northwest. The 7th Infantry had contact with the enemy throughout the period, receiving small-arms, machine-gun, and mortar and artillery fire as it advanced to Arpenans, Les Aynans, and headed toward Vy-les-Lure.

Company C, 15th Infantry, entered Pomoy at 1200 September 14, then moved on toward Genevreville. At 1315 a patrol encountered enemy artillery, mortar, machine-gun and small-arms fire, but the company continued its advance against well-prepared enemy positions and dug-in enemy and at 1830 reached the outskirts of Genevreville in spite of heavy casualties. The company was pulled back from the town and an artillery barrage laid down. Company B was relieved at Mollans by a company from 30th Infantry at 2245 and moved to rejoin the battalion at Pomoy.

At 1245 3d Battalion was located at Colombe-le-Bithaine, from where it moved to Danbenoit. Company K occupied Citers and patrolled to Quers.

Company A, 30th Infantry, entered the town of Ailevans at 1310 against no opposition, then moved to the east, Company B moving to the northeast. Company A crossed L'Oignan River and reached Hill 324 at 1600. Company C cleared the town of Longeville after overcoming considerable sniper fire. Patrols were sent north of Longeville and to the northeast up to 1000 yards, making negligible contact.

At 2125 the 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, was ordered

to move to Bithaine and to send a reinforced company to Hill 412. Company F reached the hill at 0925 September 15.

After continuous fighting over September 14 and during the night, 1st and 2d Battalions, 7th Infantry, continued to advance on the morning of September 15. At 0840 2d Battalion was in contact at Les Aynans, our troops on the west side of L'Oignan River, the enemy on the other side. The 1st Battalion by noon had sent patrols toward Vy-les-Lure, ready to attack the town from the northwest.

The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, assembled during the morning in the vicinity of Citers. Company K attacked Quers in the face of considerable enemy fire and occupied the town by 1750 that evening. Remainder of the battalion moved toward Lure from the northwest. The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, moved on Genevreville and at 1210 Company B entered against little opposition. The battalion continued toward Amblans, which was occupied in the face of moderate resistance.

The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, was assembled at Aillevans. At 0115 September 15 the battalion moved by truck to Lievans, closing in at 0345.

The 3d Battalion moved from Les Patey to Mollans, its last company closing in at 0200, and remained in regimental reserve. The 2d Battalion was in Division reserve.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, entered La Grange du Veau shortly after noon, September 15 and prepared a defensive position around the town. Strong enemy harassing fire was received, and at 2015 the battalion launched an attack toward high ground to the east. Enemy resistance was strong and the Germans had to be routed from their holes with bayonets and grenades. The battalion dug in for the night about halfway between La Grange du Veau and its objective.

The 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, secured two bridges near Les Aynans at 1310. One platoon of Company E, assisted by fire from Company G, attacked Hill 383. Patrols were sent into Gouchenans during the night and reported enemy in the town, which Company G took the next morning.

At 1410 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, attacked Vy-les-Lure and at 1500 Company L was almost in the outskirts with Company I on its right flank. Determined enemy resistance, supported by considerable machine-gun, artillery and mortar fire prevented I and K companies from entering the town.

Company L, led by Capt. Ralph J. Yates, advanced through heavy artillery and mortar concentration, to seize a cluster of houses on the outskirts of the town. The company was swiftly surrounded by an enemy which outnumbered the men three to one. For seven

hours the company beat off savage counterattacks one after another, as artillery and mortar fire scored eight direct hits on the company CP, tearing down a corner of the house and demolishing an adjacent shed.

At the cost of 37 casualties the company repulsed all counterattacks and inflicted heavy casualties—18 dead, 70 wounded—on the enemy.

At 0150 a patrol from Company K entered Vy-les-Lure and contacted elements of Company L. The 3d Battalion entered the town in strength at 0900, September 16.

For the foregoing action Company L was later awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, resumed its attack toward the high ground east of La Grange du Veau at 0710 and reached its objective at 0945. Toward noon the battalion was moving toward Lure.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, in its attack on Adelans during the afternoon of September 15, met considerable resistance. Patrols were sent into the town during the night and the attack was resumed the morning of September 16. The town fell before noon. Company K, 15th Infantry, moved to Francheville during this time and protected the regiment's left flank while the remainder of 3d Battalion moved toward Lure from the northwest.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, sent a patrol toward Gouchenans, which engaged approximately forty enemy in a fire fight on the afternoon of September 15. At 0015 four enemy infiltrated into Company B lines, killing one man, but losing one captured, and two killed. The other escaped. Later Company B patrols captured nine enemy who were asleep and at 0804 September 16, patrols captured six more. The 2d and 3d Battalions remained in Division and regimental reserve, respectively.

Lure was entered first by 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry shortly after noon September 16; 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, following shortly after.

The capture of Lure ended the toughest battle that the Division had had for some time and the series of coordinated attacks over a wide front that was required in the operation was an indication that the Germans were stiffening their defense.

The actual occupation of Lure was unopposed insofar as enemy infantry was concerned but considerable artillery fell in the city all day September 16, coming from positions north of the town.

At this point, the Division's right zone was taken over by the 1st French Armored Division and the 3d veered almost straight north in the direction of Faucongy.

The 15th Infantry had just moved out of Lure when the 2d Battalion was hit first by artillery fire and then



Gunners of the 3d Division's 441st AAA AW Battalion, their half-track carrier camouflaged, keep an alert watch for enemy aircraft near Remiremont.

by five machine guns at a strongly defended roadblock in a dense woods just northeast of the city.

Hand grenades bounced from tree to tree and the clash of bayonets rang through the forests as the two forces met in this eerie setting, shrouded in pitch darkness. Maj. John O'Connell's men never fought more savagely as the enemy fell, one by one, in individual fights. The Germans retreated after about an hour and the battalion moved on toward St. Germain shortly before midnight.

The 30th moved generally in the same direction as the 15th but the advance was slowed by an increasing number of mines along the roads. The 1st Battalion attacked and occupied the villages of Linxert and Lantenot by noon the following day, repulsing a strong enemy counterattack in the vicinity of Lantenot.

The 7th Infantry occupied Lure and the vicinity south and east of the village, and spent the next three days in patrolling and establishing road blocks in that area.

The 1st Battalion of the 15th, attacking east from Francheville, had many fights before it finally gained the next objectives September 18, when St. Germain, Froideterre and Lemont were taken without opposition. The 2d Battalion encountered heavy resistance including Flak, mortar and artillery fire just south of Froideterre but, as in the battle for the roadblock on the previous day, the enemy was decisively defeated, after which the battalion went into regimental reserve near Lure.

The 30th, after taking Lantenot, met a strong defense when the 3d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Richard H. Nedderson, attempted to take Raddon, a small village about three miles west of Faucogney.

Attacking north, Company L, under Capt. Robert

B. Pridgen, reached a ridge and began defensive preparations along a low, rock wall overlooking Raddon. Shortly after noon, heavy enemy tank and 20mm fire swept over the ridge and the concentration was immediately followed by an assault by some 200 frenzied, shouting Germans, many of whom yelled in English that "they wanted to die for Hitler."

Captain Pridgen, later describing the counterattack, said, "They rushed into our fire in an insane manner, as if they had been given liquor or drugs before the assault."

The right flank squad of Company L, led by Sgt. Harold O. Messerschmidt, bore the brunt of the charge and was subjected to a hail of fire from machine guns, machine pistols, rifles and grenades. Firing his sub-machine gun as he went (180 rounds in all), Sergeant Messerschmidt passed from man to man, encouraging and instructing them as he went.

Sgt. Bob J. Tucker, one of the squad members, stated that Messerschmidt was struck down by automatic fire early in the battle, shot through the chest and shoulder.

"Although badly wounded, he laid burst after burst of fire on everything moving up that slope," Tucker said, continuing, "I saw him grab his tommy gun by the barrel when he ran out of ammunition and kill a kraut by crashing the stock on his head. He sure killed a lot of Germans that day."

First Lt. Glenn Shuler, who brought a squad to relieve the beleaguered men, said that Messerschmidt was fighting alone when he arrived, all other members of the squad having been killed or wounded.

"I saw the sergeant run to the rescue of a wounded comrade who was being overpowered," the Lieutenant said. "Messerschmidt got the kraut and then I saw him disappear down the slope, flailing his empty gun at

another fleeing German. The sergeant's body was later found at the bottom of the hill."

Colonel Nedderson said that the Nazi group which attacked our numerically inferior force was "the most determined and fanatical that we encountered." True, these SS Panzer troops, wearing long black overcoats, gave an excellent account of themselves.

Sergeant Messerschmidt was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously.

Captain Pridgen's men fought off the enemy for several hours before they received reinforcements from Company I, commanded by Capt. Thomas A. Dawson.

The Distinguished Unit Citation which was later awarded to Company L for its gallant stand stated: "For six hours, the heavily outnumbered company fought on without respite, repulsing the German assault forces time and again with heavy loss despite the enemy's immense superiority in firepower. . . . When the last wave of counterattack was rolled back, the men of Company L, their ammunition almost entirely expended, their ranks reduced by casualties and their situation apparently hopeless, prepared to assault and break through the German lines, although they had but four rifle squads with which to do it. But the enemy had already withdrawn, battered and beaten, abandoning his broken line to attempt a new stand at the Moselle."

By 2000, the enemy counterattacking force, which comprised Flakwagons, armor, an antitank gun and several bazooka teams in addition to the large infantry group, was driven from the slopes and at daylight of September 18 Company K, commanded by Capt. M. B. Etheredge, Jr., moved into Raddon, which the badly-mauled Germans elected not to defend.

The retreating enemy fell back rapidly after the fight at Raddon and the next two days were spent in setting up a series of roadblocks in the Division zone and in maintaining vigorous patrols.

The 3d was now only a short distance from the headwaters of the Moselle River, which rises on the north face of Ballon d'Alsace. The Moselle is the most important river in this area and it captures all other streams in the vicinity as it courses northeast toward the Lorraine Plain.

While awaiting relief by French units, the Division on September 20 launched an early morning attack northeast toward the Moselle, guided along the main road out of Faucogney, which the Germans had deserted in their flight.

The route of advance was through a semi-valley edged on both sides by hills which the enemy employed to good advantage in slowing our movement. Snipers, defended roadblocks, concealed machine guns, and mortars lined the route.

With the 7th Infantry on the left, the 30th on the right and two battalions of the 15th in reserve, the Division moved steadily forward, overcoming continuous resistance from the hills.

Company I of the 30th felt the brunt of a counter-attack in the vicinity of Melay, where the 3d Reconnaissance Troop, commanded by 1st Lt. Allen R. Kenyon, also suffered heavily when it ran into a minefield just as the enemy opened fire on the troop from a hill near Melay. Company I withdrew and our artillery then laid a terrific concentration on the area.

During the period September 20-26, the 30th Infantry engaged in some of the most bitter and exhausting fighting in its entire history and contributed materially to the 3d Division's outstanding role in the Seventh Army's flanking attack on the Belfort gap.

Jumping off in the attack to the northeast at 0630 September 20, the 2d Battalion, in fog and rain, moved forward with Company F in the lead, followed by Company E, with G Company in reserve. Objective was the village of Voleaux, eight miles distant and north of Faucogney. Route of the battalion led through a valley with rugged wooded high ground on either side. At 1145 elements of the enemy defense system outside the village began a harassing action and by 1400 had built up sufficient resistance, using small arms, machine guns, and mortars, to force the battalion to deploy and bring up artillery and mortars to soften enemy positions preliminary to frontal assault.

As Company E attacked under this fire it almost reached the ridge, only to be forced back by a violent counterattack. Company F launched an attack directly up the south slope of the high ground but was cut in half by a German thrust from the flanks and forced to pull back. At 1600 G Company, in reserve, was sent one mile to the north, across a waist-deep stream, through heavily wooded, mountainous country to a point 500 yards southeast of the objective to prepare for an attack early in the morning.

At 0700, September 21, Company G attacked forward, northeast along the ridge, meeting intense opposition, including much close-range grenade fighting, but the company succeeded in capturing its objective.

Bitterly counterattacked without rest the company and a reinforcing platoon from Company F beat off no less than nine counterattacks in as many hours in one period. Numerous counterattacks were launched by fanatical Nazis who yelled allegiance to Hitler as they attacked.

Relief reached the company late September 21 when Company E finally broke through the enemy positions which had been established across the rear of Company G. In the bitter action the Germans lost an estimated 140 men killed or wounded and twelve as pris-



3d Infantry Division infantrymen "take a break" in the town of Faucogney, France, which despite the ruins, has been decorated by its citizens.

oners. Company G lost twenty-nine killed, wounded and missing. For this action Company G received the Distinguished Unit Citation.

Throughout the September 20-21 period, the 1st and 3d Battalions, 30th Infantry, were engaged in bitter fighting with the enemy in the vicinity of Melay and La Mer. Mined roads prevented extensive use of armor, and heavy mortar and artillery fire caused numerous casualties. Heavy rains made the poor road net impassable.

The advance of the 7th, which was generally north, met only harassing fire as it moved forward to occupy Hill 753 after silencing several machine guns on the hill, which overlooked the Moselle River.

Turning its attack to the southeast, the Division advanced steadily against decreasing opposition, then turned sharply northeast. This sudden shift took the Germans by surprise and the badly disorganized enemy abandoned trucks, field pieces and other material as they broke and fled by whatever transportation they could jump onto, and by foot, across the bridge at Rupt-sur-Moselle.

The bridge had been prepared for demolition with nineteen cases of TNT but the 1st Battalion of the 7th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Jesse F. Thomas, struck so quickly that the baffled Germans who remained to fight were killed or captured and the others retreated across the river. Company B, under 1st Lt. William K. Dieleman, effected the bridge capture and repulsed numerous attempts of the enemy to infiltrate back to detonate the explosives during the night. The company also beat off several efforts to recapture the bridge and by daylight of September 24, the entire 1st Battalion had crossed the bridge and was engaging the enemy in a fire fight in Rupt-sur-Moselle, which lay just east of the Moselle.

A platoon of the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, made another crossing of the river at Maxonchamp, about one mile north of Rupt-sur-Moselle, at noon. The 3d Battalion of the 15th was attached to the 7th to protect its right flank during the river-crossing operation.

Meanwhile the 1st and 3d Battalions, 30th Infantry, following relief by the 117th Reconnaissance Squadron, assembled in Faucogney the morning of September 22

and at 1200 jumped off in a coordinated attack, the 3d on the left and 1st on the right—the 2d holding the line of departure. Objective of the attack, which was straight northeast on the east side of the Faucogney-Remiremont highway, was the high ground east of Corravillers-le-Plain.

Opposition was immediate. All roads in the rugged regimental sector were mined and blocked by trees. Fog and rain added to the difficulties. Every type of enemy fire was encountered. When the 1st Battalion reached the vicinity of Evouhey and encountered a well-prepared enemy line, the advance was halted for coordination purposes, preparatory to a renewal of the attack. The 2d Battalion, meanwhile, cleared the roads to Esmoulières.

Throughout September 23 the advance continued, with the two assault battalions jumping off at 0645, the 1st Battalion securing Evouhey at 0717 and the 3d Battalion moving up on the left only to encounter stiff resistance from by-passed enemy positions in the 7th Infantry sector. The 3d Battalion continued its blocking mission to the right flank and east of the regiment.

At 1400 September 24 a strongly held enemy roadblock on the main road, manned by enemy infantry, with a Flak gun in the woods behind, prevented a further advance by the 3d Battalion. When it appeared that a battalion from the 7th Infantry could not clear this area before dark, the 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, by-passed the resistance, leaving K Company as a blocking force, and proceeded to clear out the enemy in its assigned sector. Company F meanwhile was attached to the battalion, abreast of the left flank positions on the Le Chene road.

At 0630, September 25, the 30th Infantry jumped off in an attack to the southeast to secure high ground overlooking Le Thillot, which was to serve as a springboard for French armor to attack that important city and continue on toward Belfort.

The 3d Battalion advanced on the left and the 1st Battalion on the right of the Corravillers-Chateau Lambert road. The 3d Battalion, whose left flank on the Moselle River was exposed to enemy fire, found the going through dense woods and over the rough terrain very slow, enemy small-arms fire being extremely persistent. Company F attacked and found the Le Chene road almost entirely blocked by fallen trees and heavily mined. By 1620, however, the company had reached the outskirts of Le Chene.

The 1st Battalion, although making no contact initially, ran into well-defended positions at 1305, with mortar, self-propelled artillery and Flak guns composing the opposition. The assault companies forced their way slowly through pouring rain, dense woods, and numerous roadblocks, with visibility very low, to reach

the final objective at 1910. The battalion barely missed capturing an enemy divisional commander, but took a German battalion command post with telephones intact which was in communication with the German division command post. More than 150 prisoners, including three officers, were taken in this outstanding action.

At 1845 Company L was sent to assist Company F in the attack on Le Chene, which had proved in early efforts to be too large a job for one company.

The 3d Battalion, having continued throughout the night of September 25-26, reached its objective at 0930 September 26, after killing, wounding, or capturing fifty-two more enemy soldiers.

On the same day 2d Battalion, less Company G, captured Le Chene after a 40-minute fight, taking twenty more prisoners.

That afternoon the 30th Infantry was relieved by French troops and closed in assembly areas at La Longine and Corravillers. During the afternoon of September 27 the regiment moved by motor to Remiremont, and spent the following day in preparation for the attack toward Le Tholy.

Rupt-sur-Moselle was cleared of all resistance by noon September 25 and Hill 867, which rose directly behind the village and served as a vantage point from which the enemy fired on traffic crossing the bridge, was occupied. The high ground east of Maxonchamp likewise served the enemy well until it was cleared by the 7th, which had expanded its area by fanning out north to Dommartin and south to La Roche.

The 15th Infantry, meanwhile, had moved out from positions in the vicinity of Remiremont and attacked northeast from St. Amé, with the 7th Infantry protecting its right flank south of the Moselette, from a high wooded area containing many enemy gun positions.

With nature as the greatest obstacle to progress, the 15th moved steadily forward after the attack began early September 27 but on the next day the enemy, in well dug-in and previously prepared positions between Le Syndicat and Cremanvillers, put up a terrific fight.

Two night counterattacks, coupled with constant infiltrations after dark, taxed the 15th's strength to the utmost and on September 28 the 30th joined in the attack, going into position between the 15th and the 36th Infantry Division on the 3d's left flank.

The 7th continued to clean out the Germans between the Moselle and Mosellette Rivers and occupied Ferdrupt, east of the Moselle and a little north of Le Thillot, shortly after noon.

It was at Ferdrupt that Company F of the 7th Infantry particularly distinguished itself. For six consecutive days it had advanced in chilling rain up the

precipitous slopes of a 2,500-foot hill mass against determined opposition to seize its objective. Fighting at hand-to-hand range raged for days in the densely wooded terrain. German infiltration attempts through the wooded area and enemy counterattacks were repulsed time and time again. Having secured the top of the hill mass the weary, thinned-out ranks of the company continued to drive off German attacking forces to hold the terrain feature they had so dearly won in the fog and cold. For this grim battle and victory the Distinguished Unit Citation was later awarded the doughty warriors of Company F.

The 15th Infantry approached one of its greatest battles in the Vosges (and the entire war) as it neared the Cleurie Quarry. During the afternoon of September 26 the 1st Battalion relieved elements of the 36th Infantry Division in the vicinity of St. Amé. The enemy still held a roadblock on the bridge crossing the stream south of the town, which was covered by fire from positions a mere 300 yards from the bridge. The battalion immediately seized it and the crossroads there in the face of heavy enemy fire, just in time to prevent the enemy from detonating 250 pounds of dynamite laid to demolish the bridge. The 1st Battalion had thus secured the southern extremity of the line of departure for the following day's attack, and seized an important bridge.

The same afternoon, 2d and 3d Battalions moved into positions in preparation for the attack; 2d Battalion to an area just west of St. Amé, and 3d Battalion farther to the north.

At daylight, September 27, the 2d Battalion attacked east through the densely wooded sector following a 15-minute artillery concentration. The battalion pushed through the gloomy, rain-soaked foothills and almost at once the leading elements drew enemy mortar fire. The first group of enemy was contacted immediately north of St. Amé and was protecting the secondary road leading north from the town, from the woods west of the road. Elements of the 2d Battalion surprised the enemy from the rear and there was a brief skirmish, during which thirty-two prisoners were captured.

The battalion continued to the northeast through small-arms, machine-gun, and mortar fire, and booby-trapped roadblocks. By 1400 it had reached the secondary road running southeast from Bemont. Resistance then slacked off and the 2d Battalion pushed rapidly to its objective on the high ground northeast of St. Amé.

The 3d Battalion, which had held back initially to support the 2d's advance with fire, attacked at mid-morning toward Cleurie, from the vicinity of Putières, and moved along the ridge to the northeast without opposition. In the afternoon the advance was punctuated by bitter hand-to-hand fighting, but the battalion

battered its way to positions on the high ground south of Cleurie.

At dusk about 150 Germans launched a counterattack against Company K. This attack was preceded by a short, intense, artillery barrage, but was repulsed within three hours.

The fight for the Cleurie Quarry was in the mold. Company I attacked all night and secured Bemont. Company G continued toward Cremanvillers, held up in the woods, and sent patrols to the town. At 0230 the enemy hit Company G with a heavy counterattack, which was beaten off. Daylight found the company again heavily engaged just northeast of Cremanvillers. Company C was attached to the 2d Battalion to aid G Company, and pushed east from St. Amé, where it was counterattacked by the enemy in the wooded areas.

The enemy was now completely aroused. He struck again at K Company and again was beaten off. The constant, driving rains, the fog and mist, cut visibility almost to the zero point and the Germans used this to advantage to move between our elements in attempts to disorganize our lines and demoralize the men.

Company F, moving south from the 2d Battalion hill position toward G, again was heavily attacked, and fought throughout the day. Other enemy groups pushed through the gaps between the companies of the 2d and 3d Battalions, one group even penetrating almost to the 3d Battalion command post.

By dawn, September 28, the entire effective strength of the 15th Infantry was committed. Elements of the 1st Battalion were pushing toward Cremanvillers and Bemont to assist the other two battalions, moving out to attack north through the woods in the zone east of the road leading north out of St. Amé. As the 1st moved north into the clearing east of Bemont, it drew heavy fire of all descriptions from the woods to the east, and consequently it attacked northeast through the woods to outflank the enemy positions from which the fire was coming. 1st Battalion remained heavily engaged throughout the day.

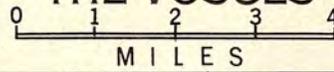
Enemy tanks were encountered for the first time in several days. One moved south almost to Bemont, where it was beaten off by artillery. Two others fired on the houses east of Bemont.

Ration details were forced to run a gantlet of roving enemy tanks and snipers while hand-carrying their heavy loads up slippery, wet slopes. Even litter teams were not exempt. Many a wounded doughboy had to be carried through small-arms and mortar fire.

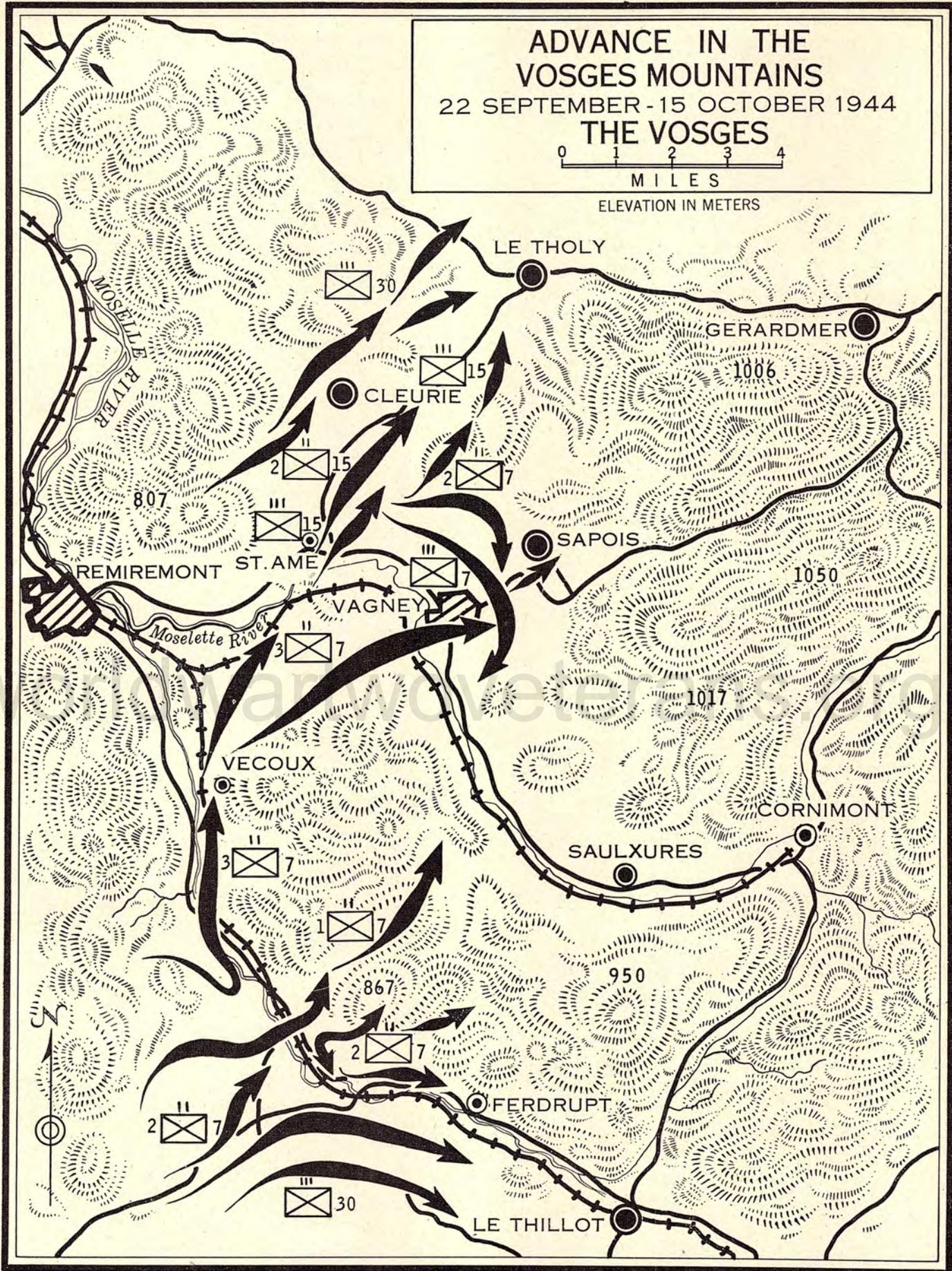
The ferocious fighting continued throughout the day and through the night of September 28-29. In the early morning hours five enemy tanks moved in to shoot up F Company positions in a group of houses, and before the armor could be turned away withartil-

ADVANCE IN THE VOSGES MOUNTAINS 22 SEPTEMBER - 15 OCTOBER 1944

THE VOSGES



ELEVATION IN METERS



lery the company had become badly scattered, the Commanding Officer and much of company headquarters either killed, wounded, or captured. Only seventy men could be accounted for by the time the attack was beaten off.

Company E was counterattacked and forced to fight for four hours to hold its positions. The attack was finally broken.

Company L, fighting south toward K Company, was hit by 250 enemy and engaged in a furious battle to hold its hill. Two platoons of the company were split and scattered and it was daylight before about seventy or eighty men could be rounded up, organized and moved up to the original hill positions.

The 1st Battalion continued its drive as the remainder of the regiment cleaned out the enemy who had infiltrated everywhere into the regimental sector. Company I was attached to the battalion. From the area east of Bemont the 1st drove up the main road, against small-arms and mortar fire. Our artillery raked enemy strongpoints near Cleurie and in the buildings south of town. The battalion made good progress and turned east along the edge of the woods. Late September 29, the forward elements were hit with fire from about forty enemy who were lodged in the vicinity of Cleurie Quarry. It was then that the great battle began.

Company B held up—then pushed on. A few hours later the enemy launched a light counterattack. At midnight, a full-force counterattack hit the tired company. Capt. Paul Harris and his men groped their way toward the top of "Great Rock," to reach the crest and hole up, but under the thick night fog the enemy once more slammed back. Closing in, feeling their way along like blind men, the enemy approached behind a heavy artillery preparation to within fifty yards. Slinging potato-masher grenades and blasting away with machine pistols, he hit B Company's right flank. Fanatical young Nazis pressed the attack for five hours. The attack mounted in fury. Then, just before the dawn of September 30, the enemy withdrew. Although the right flank platoon of B Company, which had borne the brunt of the savage battle, had been forced to pull back, the bulk of the company was still holding firm.

In the remainder of the 15th Infantry zone, the constant attempts at infiltration had continued. One group of enemy had probed its way between G and C Companies; another counterattacked E Company, and still another struck at G Company twice during the day, and the night of September 29-30. All attempts finally were repulsed with the help of prepared concentrations from mortar batteries and the regimental Cannon Company. But the battle was not yet over.

On September 29 the 30th Infantry assumed offensive action, with the objective of seizing Hill 781, high



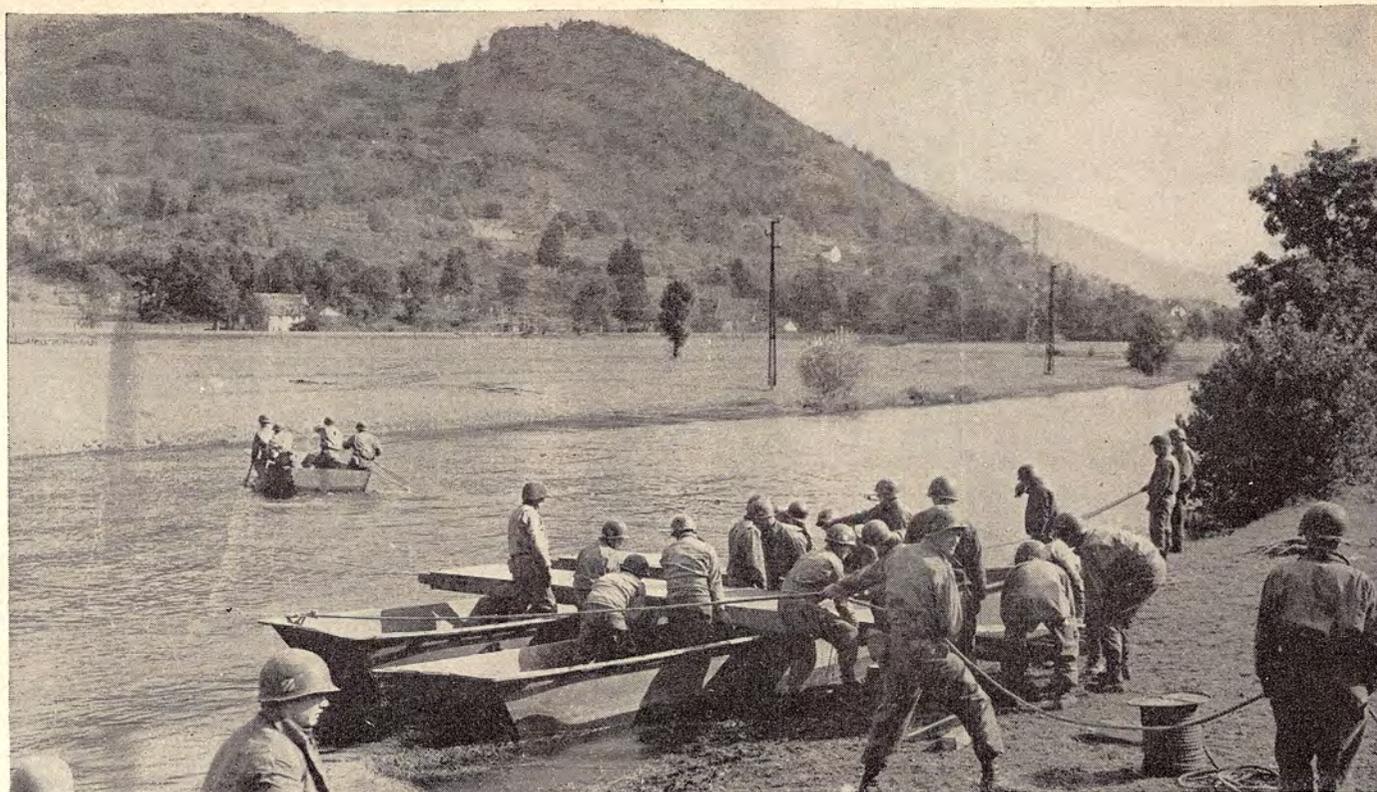
This statue in Remiremont serves as a signpost for traffic control signs.

ground overlooking Le Tholy. The 3d Battalion led the attack, crossing the line of departure at 0700 and continuing without resistance until 0835, when strong resistance in the form of small-arms and artillery fire was met from well-defended all-around positions, which blocked maneuvering elements at every point. The 2d Battalion, following to the right rear, found it could not pass through 3d Battalion without becoming engaged in a fire fight, and 1st Battalion was then committed. The 2d Battalion became the reserve battalion and established roadblocks.

Company A relieved Company K, 15th Infantry. Later A Company was relieved by E Company. It took part in a cross-country march with 1st Battalion which began at 1500 September 29 and continued until 0020 September 30, when the entire battalion relieved 3d Battalion, 141st Infantry (36th Division).

At 0715 that morning, 1st Battalion jumped off in the attack again, and began receiving heavy fire at 0810, initially from machine guns, mortars, and small arms, but which was intensified with the addition of heavy artillery concentrations at 0945. Severe casualties, numbering up to 150, were received. Company B, under 1st Lt. Lysle Standish, attempted to maneuver and flank enemy positions, and was met with heavy automatic-weapons fire, which slowed the advance. The 3d Battalion resumed its attack at 0915, September 30, but strongly-entrenched enemy in commanding positions held up the advance. Another attack at 1815 secured a line and gained strategic ground, while the 2d Battalion remained in regimental reserve.

As the month of September closed, the Division was embroiled in heavy fighting. Enemy counterattacks were characterized by a ferocity hitherto encountered only in Italy the previous winter. Increased artillery



The 3d Division's 10th Engineers begin construction of a ponton bridge north of Remiremont in the Vosges.

fire from 75s, 88s, and 105s was evidence that the German commander had received reinforcements in this all-important branch as October came and actual winter began to set in.

The Division was well into the first phase of October, with the three regiments battling for important ground in its over-all attack northeast toward Le Tholy in conjunction with the move east to overrun Vagney and Sapois. The second phase was to come following the capture of these important centers, and consisted of an attack through elements of the 45th Infantry Division that carried across the Mortagne River and to the high ground overlooking the important enemy communications center of St. Dié. The latter attack was to begin at noon, October 20, and result in a breakthrough of the enemy's strong defensive line based on the Mortagne River. But much fighting remained before this could be achieved.

By September 30 the 7th Infantry had taken Ferdrupt and was pushing on toward Vagney to come up on the 15th Infantry's right flank. While the remainder of the 15th was forced to halt and clean out its zone of infiltrating Germans, the 1st Battalion continued to batter away against the quarry positions.

The quarry was a major thorn in our side and had to be cleaned out, although it was proving a tough obstacle. It controlled the main route of advance, the Le Tholy-Gerardmer road, which itself had to be cleared before the Division could continue on the over-all mission of

penetrating the Vosges proper. The quarry was the anchor point of the enemy main line defending the important St. Amé hill mass, and the largest hill in the area which controlled the entire situation all the way back to Remiremont.

There were several reasons for the difficult mission that the quarry proved to be. First, it was situated on the slopes of the large, thickly-wooded hill mass. The only approaches to it were up the steep, almost clifflike sides of this mountain. On the north and south sides of the quarry were steep cliffs covered by machine guns. In order to gain entrance to the interior, our men had to charge up the sides in the face of furious fire. East and west ends were blocked by huge, stonewall roadblocks constructed by the Germans. The steep cliffs on either side made it impossible to by-pass these, and thus the only way left open was to go over the top of them which again, was covered by terrific concentrations of small-arms fire.

The quarry was honeycombed with passageways, tunnels and walls, rendering the defenders virtually safe from mortar fire. Another difficulty was that it was impossible for us to use artillery after the companies had closed in around the position, since our guns in position in the flat lands near St. Amé had to fire over the top of the hill mass, and with our troops so close to the enemy, tree bursts often fell within our own lines.

As October came, prisoners reported that there were

two companies, approximately 100 men each in strength, with orders to fight to the death for the position. The regimental plan now was to coordinate with the drive of the 30th Infantry in a house-to-house push down the valley toward Gerardmer, the VI Corps objective, where the enemy was known to be entrenched in strength.

All three battalions of the 30th Infantry during the period October 1-8 continued an unrelenting pressure toward the northeast. On October 1 the 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, resumed its attack at 0700, and the 1st Battalion jumped off at 0800. The 2d Battalion patrolled into the valley, encountering and charting minefields, and taking and occupying fifteen houses. Despite enemy artillery concentrations and counterattacks the 1st and 3d Battalions continued to advance.

On October 2, the 2d Battalion was moved by motor to the extreme left of the regimental sector, behind Hill 769, to outflank enemy positions on the high ground and open the route across the Tendon-Le Tholy highway to the high ground beyond. The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, continued a yard-by-yard advance against well dug-in and held enemy positions, sustaining heavy casualties and overrunning one enemy mortar platoon. The battalion also captured four mortars, two antitank guns, two Flak guns, and fifteen soldiers plus an artillery observer. Throughout the day the 2d Battalion continued the slow advance through heavily mined areas, and was relieved by 15th Infantry and 10th Engineer Battalion elements at 2010, following which the battalion entrucked and moved to an assembly area, prepared to attack on October 3.

In the 15th zone, virtual stalemate had set in by the morning of October 2. In some places the lines were barely seventy-five yards apart. It was jungle warfare, with thick nests of enemy snipers and infiltrating German parties. At the mouth of the quarry the enemy now had constructed a rock wall squarely across both entrances, then covered them with fire from positions in the rock piles. During the night of October 2-3, Companies C and I were returned to their battalions, and took up positions in their respective zones.

The all-out drive got underway October 3. At first light two tank destroyers and two tanks mounting 105mm assault guns were moved into position across the valley from the quarry, from where they pumped 500 rounds of high explosive into the tunnels and main part of the quarry. At the same time, 1st Battalion mortars laid in a terrific concentration. When the fire lifted, patrols from all three rifle companies of the 1st Battalion ranged out to probe the quarry. Opposition still remained, and brisk fighting raged throughout the day. Company B patrols were hit by an enemy machine gun immediately in front of its lines short

of the quarry, and captured a sniper. Other prisoners indicated that a complete company of sharpshooters, eighty men strong, had been brought into the area, each man carrying a rifle equipped with telescopic sight. One squad of marksmen was attached to each regular rifle platoon of the 601st *Schnelle* Battalion, defending the quarry, for employment as snipers.

Contact with the enemy was constant throughout the day. Plans to launch the cleanup attack the following day were made. While on his way to an observation post, Col. Richard G. Thomas, regimental commander, was stricken with a heart attack, and command of the 15th Infantry passed to Regimental Executive Lt. Col. Hallett D. Edson. In the 3d Battalion, Lt. Col. Frederick Boye, commanding, left for the United States on temporary duty and his executive officer, Maj. Russell Comrie, replaced him.

At 0530, October 4, the 3d Battalion launched an outflanking attack. In conjunction with the 30th Infantry, the battalion drove northeast down the valley from positions just northwest of L'Omet, and sent Company I around west of the quarry to cut the road. The other two battalions remained in blocking positions.

Despite the fact that the enemy had poured strong reinforcements into the quarry and prepared for a bitter stand, Company I surprised the first positions short of the quarry and the enemy here withdrew.

Behind the supporting fire of three battalions of artillery, the 3d Battalion drove on. In less than two hours L Company had destroyed two machine guns, captured a crew of six, and driven two other machine-gun crews back. By noon Company I was halfway around the quarry on the west side and was meeting heavy sniper fire, while L Company was overrunning the houses in the valley and bringing up tanks to blast them.

All afternoon and during most of the night the fight went on. By dark I Company had cleared the enemy from the western approaches to the quarry, after bringing up tanks to blast down the stone-wall roadblock at that entrance with their guns.

The 3d Battalion had now established a line from the main road just west of Hazinray, bending around almost to the western edges of the quarry. Before midnight one platoon-sized patrol from I Company pushed into the eastern end of the quarry after men of the 10th Engineer Battalion had been committed to blast the stone wall blocking the road at that end.

The fight was at a climax and the job completed on October 5. Mortars of the 1st Battalion opened up with an 1100-round continuous creeping barrage. Then combat patrols from the battalion, plus the 3d Battalion Battle Patrol, and a platoon of Company I pushed out to destroy the last positions. By midafternoon, the Battle Patrol, under Sgt. John J. Shermetta, came up to the



Defeated, dejected, enemy file out of the Cleurie quarry after its reduction by 3d Division troops.

quarry from the west and met S/Sgt. John D. Shirley's I Company platoon coming from the east.

The quarry had now fallen after a gruelling six-day fight.

The Medal of Honor was awarded to 1st Lt. (then 2d Lt.) Victor L. Kandle for his action performed during the last days of the fight for the quarry. While leading a reconnaissance patrol in the vicinity of La Forge in enemy territory, Lieutenant Kandle engaged in a daylight duel at point-blank range with a German field officer and killed him. Having taken five enemy prisoners during the morning, he led his skeleton platoon of sixteen men, reinforced by a light machine-gun squad, through fog and over precipitous mountain terrain to fall on the rear of the approach positions of the German quarry stronghold, which had checked the advance of the 1st Battalion. The citation of Lieutenant Kandle reads in part:

" . . . Rushing forward several yards ahead of his assault elements, Lieutenant Kandle forced his way into the heart of the enemy strongpoint and by his boldness and audacity forced the Germans to surrender. Harassed by machine-gun fire from a position which he had by-passed in the dense fog, he moved to within fifteen yards of the enemy, killed a German machine gunner with accurate rifle fire, and led his men in the destruction of another machine-gun crew and its rifle security elements. Finally he led his small force against a fortified house held by two German officers and thirty enlisted men. After establishing a base of fire, he rushed forward alone through an open clearing in full view of the enemy, smashed through a barricaded door, and

forced all thirty-two Germans to surrender. His intrepidity and bold leadership resulted in the capture or killing of three enemy officers and fifty-four enlisted men, the destruction of three enemy strongpoints and the seizure of . . ."

Meanwhile the 30th Infantry had jumped off on October 3, with the 2d Battalion now committed in a new attack on the regiment's extreme left with the final objective of seizing Hill 781, north of Le Tholy. At 0700 the attack was well under way, with the 2d Battalion coordinating with the 1st Battalion on the right. Throughout the bright moonlight night of October 3-4 the regiment continued its determined attack. At 0500 the 1st Battalion was counterattacked on its exposed right flank. Company B beat off the attack and at 1320 the enemy counterattacked this battalion again, but failed to dent it. The 2d Battalion's attack met equally fierce resistance, but the 3d Battalion reached its objective by 1230, taking eight prisoners and a mortar position, using the mortars to fire back at the enemy. Casualties for the period October 1-3 totalled more than 400.

Throughout October 4, the enemy continued to make limited attacks against the 1st Battalion's right flank. Both the 1st and 2d Battalions continued to press the attack, but enemy resistance was determined and progress was slow. During this period enemy artillery increased considerably with several three-gun batteries firing simultaneously at 30th Infantry troops.

The 1st Battalion maintained its pressure on the enemy, and advanced slowly toward the objective. The 2d Battalion, by late afternoon of the 6th, placed fire on enemy positions astride the main Tendon-Le Tholy highway, driving the Germans out. During the night this position was occupied by 2d Battalion troops.

At 0730, October 7, the 1st Battalion jumped off in an attack which gained the crest of the objective by 0930, while the 3d Battalion moved Company I to reinforce the 1st Battalion's sector.

On the 8th the 1st Battalion launched a concerted cleanup attack at 1515, coordinated with tanks and TDs to drive all the enemy from the ridge by dark, despite heavy enemy 150mm artillery opposition.

Remaining in position on the 9th, and consolidating its positions, the regiment took its final objectives on October 10, with the 2d Battalion pushing Companies E and F across the Tendon-Le Tholy road under cover of darkness and seizing the objectives by 0700. The entire battalion was consolidated on the high ground north of Le Tholy that night and the 3d Battalion moved up to occupy positions left by the 2d Battalion.

The 7th Infantry, in this tedious fight for control of the Vosges, entered Vagney after overcoming stub-

born resistance. The 1st Battalion, which had borne the brunt of the fighting, established its CP approximately in the center of town. The regimental command post was set up just north of Vagney, and the 3d Battalion CP was also moved into town. A dense fog covered the area on October 7 and small, by-passed groups of enemy still held out in the hills and pine forests that flanked the narrow valley floor on which Vagney was located.

The decision to displace 7th Infantry headquarters units forward while Vagney was still receiving strong shell fire involved a deliberate sacrifice of security, but the necessity of establishing and maintaining control over the combat elements required it. Vagney was still under observation from high ground in the direction of Sapois.

Terrain, the weather conditions and the progress of the offensive all conspired to create perfect conditions for a hostile counterattack and the Germans took advantage of one of the darkest and foggiest nights of the early winter to conduct a raid on the 3d Battalion CP.

T/Sgt. Gerald T. Hennings, the battalion sergeant-major, later described the action.

"I heard a terrific roar as a tank came down the road and stopped in front of the house next to the CP," Hennings said. "I knew that some of our tanks were expected to return to the rear areas for a short rest and naturally thought that this was one of them. I heard the sound of a grenade as it exploded in the next house. Then another came through our own window in the CP!"

A supporting tank platoon, under command of 2d Lt. James L. Harris, was in the town square at the time. The noise brought immediate action from the lieutenant's crew.

"There was confusion as to the identity of the tank at first," Hennings continued, "and Lieutenant Harris elected to go forward afoot in an effort to identify it. The first burst of machine-gun fire from the enemy tank caught the Lieutenant squarely, knocking him to the ground. The next burst killed a man beside me. We were really in a bad spot.

"Lieutenant Harris didn't forget his mission and despite his painful wounds, he crawled thirty yards through a hell of machine-gun fire to his tank, where he ordered the tank into a covered archway, but it burst into flames, struck by five direct hits, while still in the center of the street."

Pvt. Burton B. Roberts, a medic attached to the 1st Battalion, said that Lieutenant Harris refused medical aid until the sole survivor of his tank had been cared for.

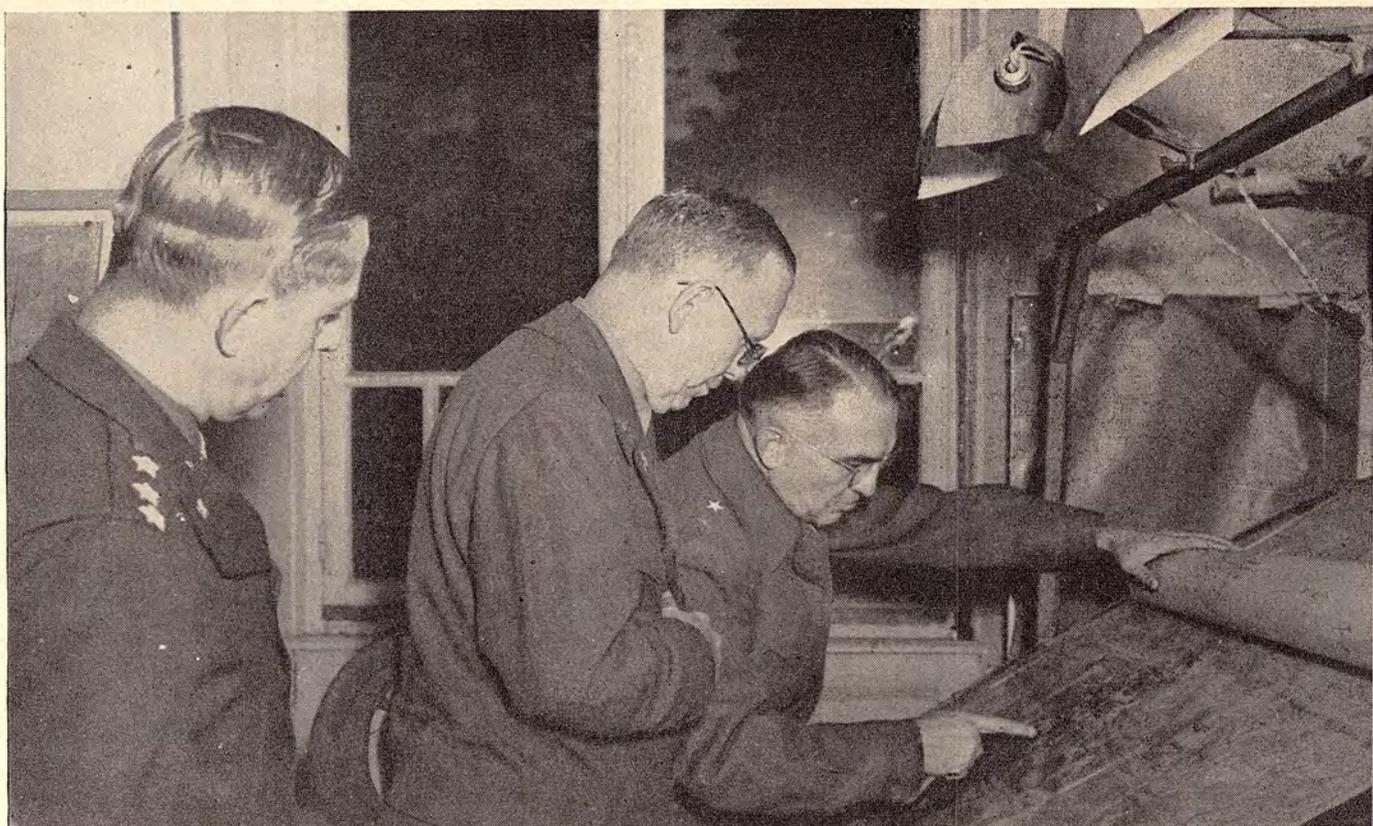
"After I had evacuated the enlisted men I returned to help Lieutenant Harris," Roberts stated. "He asked

me if I had taken care of his men and I told him I had. He seemed relieved. He told me he was done for and I saw that his right leg had been cut off at the crotch, apparently by the flying pieces of armor plate from his tank. He was in bad shape. I don't see how he lived as long as he did."

Col. Ben Harrell, commanding officer of the 7th, commented, "The Germans had struck at the heart of a vital command area. As a result of Lieutenant Harris' heroism and single-minded devotion, the force



Colonel Lionel C. McGarr, CO 30th Infantry Regiment pauses beside his jeep to study his map somewhere in the Vosges.



General "Iron Mike" O'Daniel briefs General Marshall on the situation during the latter's inspection of the division in the Vosges near Remiremont. General Devers, CG Sixth Army Group looks on.

of their blow was warded off; the battalion command post was saved from possible destruction and an interruption of offensive operations in that sector of the Vosges was averted."

The posthumous award of the Congressional Medal of Honor that followed Lieutenant Harris' act was the recognition of many similar deeds performed by the 756th Tank Battalion during the battle for the Vosges and Lieutenant Harris' heroism was typical of many other officers and enlisted men during the bitter winter warfare.

The 1st Battalion of the 7th repulsed a strong tank-supported counterattack at Vagney while another that isolated Companies E and I from the rest of the regiment for a short time was beaten off after a bitter fight in the same vicinity.

The 7th Infantry occupied Sapois and completed the occupation of Zainvillers, clearing out many sniper nests in the process. The regiment was taken out of the line October 11 and began a five-day training schedule in the vicinity of Eloyes. On the same day, Peck Force (elements of the 15th Infantry) took LaForge and the rest of the regiment continued its march to the northeast while the 30th remained in the vicinity of Le Tholy where the Germans were firmly dug in.

Regimental raider platoons and reinforced combat patrols raided enemy positions frequently during the

next few days and although no major gains were made during the period, the Division maintained a continuous pressure that was slowly pushing the enemy back.

The Porter Force of the 30th, led by 1st Lt. Morris C. Porter, commander of the regimental raider platoon, and including a platoon of the division battle patrol, led by 2d Lt. Walter Gill, who was captured in the action, engaged in a torrid fight in the early morning hours of October 16 when another raid was conducted against Le Tholy. Lieutenant Porter's men suffered heavily when they were caught from the front and flanks upon entering the town. The battle lasted for several hours and the force withdrew at daylight.

The 15th was relieved by French units October 17, leaving only the 30th in the line. The latter regiment maintained contact with the enemy through vigorous patrolling until October 20, when the Division renewed the attack northeast toward Verzeville and Brouvelieures.

The setting for this action was generally as follows:

VI US Corps was still fighting with the same divisions which had landed on the Riviera two months before—the 3d, 36th, and 45th. All had been continuously engaged. Now, with winter approaching and the rugged terrain adding to the difficulties imposed by the weather, our tired troops were finding it increas-

ingly difficult to keep up their day-to-day advances. Meanwhile the enemy's lines of supply had shortened, his replacements were becoming more numerous and frequent, and above all he now had time to emplace and employ his artillery.

Against this, the Allies had in their favor the slow but steady buildup of troops and supplies which everyone knew spelled eventual victory, but which was powerless to offset the temporary enemy advantages. It was part of the Allied build-up that the French were to come into the line opposite Belfort, and relieve United States troops as far north as Le Tholy; the slowness of the Allied build-up was emphasized by the fact that our troops could not be relieved fast enough to build up a really large striking force, strong enough, say, to break through and reach the Rhine.

Thus the 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments, relieved by the French in the Vagney and St. Amé areas, were able to effect a breakthrough at Brouvelieures, and the 30th, relieved around Le Tholy, was able to exploit the breakthrough nearly as far as St. Dié. But there the advance momentarily stopped, while our forces regrouped and our build-up continued, augmented next by the 100th and 103d Infantry Divisions, recently arrived from the United States.

The shape of the battle was roughly as follows:

The 7th and 15th Infantry regiments attacked abreast at noon October 20, the 7th on the right heading due east for Verzeville, the 15th on the left swinging to the northeast toward Brouvelieures. The enemy had previously stabilized his positions on the high ground west of Brouvelieures, where the 45th Infantry Division, strung out as far as Rambervillers on the north, had been unable to concentrate enough force to penetrate the enemy line. (As a matter of fact, a strong enemy counterattack with armored support had hurt the 45th badly in this very area the previous week).

Now, with the 36th Infantry Division engaged in a successful attack on Bruyères, and the 45th continuing to attack farther north, the added kick provided by the 3d caused the enemy line to give way completely, and by the end of the second day a definite breakthrough had been accomplished.

The 3d Battalion of the 15th Infantry, commanded by Maj. Russell Comrie, helped the campaign tremendously by seizing a bridge over the Mortagne River just north of Brouvelieures before the enemy could demolish it. The regiment crossed as rapidly as possible at this point, and began an attack to the east along the ridge on which the town of Mortagne was situated. The 15th met many strong detachments of enemy trying to escape over the few roads leading away from this ridge-top to the east and northeast, and fought a series of spirited engagements during this advance.

The 7th meanwhile had captured Verzeville and Domfaing in two powerful attacks, and had then swung east up the south side of the valley leading to Les Rouges Eaux. In night marches over the heavily forested hills the 7th secured valuable ground, although control was so difficult that the 1st Battalion on one occasion had a hard time locating itself on the map when daylight came. On the high ridge southeast of Etival, and south of Les Rouges Eaux, the regiment first made contact with the 201st Mountain Battalion, a fresh formation of well-equipped Austrian mountaineers, some 600 men strong. Fortunately the 7th hit this unit before it had a chance to get well dug-in, and smashed it so badly the first day of contact that it never gained its full fighting efficiency.

It was in this vicinity north of Les Rouges Eaux, on October 25, that S/Sgt. Clyde L. Choate, Company C, 601st TD Battalion, engaged a German Mark IV tank in a one-man battle, with Choate stalking the tank until he finally destroyed it just as it was about to break through to an infantry battalion CP area.

"The Germans had launched a surprise attack on densely wooded positions on a hilltop occupied by our forces," related Lt. Col. Walter E. Tardy, Commanding Officer of the 601st, "and the enemy struck with force and decision.

"The only tank destroyer available in this sector was knocked out before it could open fire. The German tank proceeded straight down a wagon road, slashing through the infantry positions and shooting the soldiers in their foxholes.

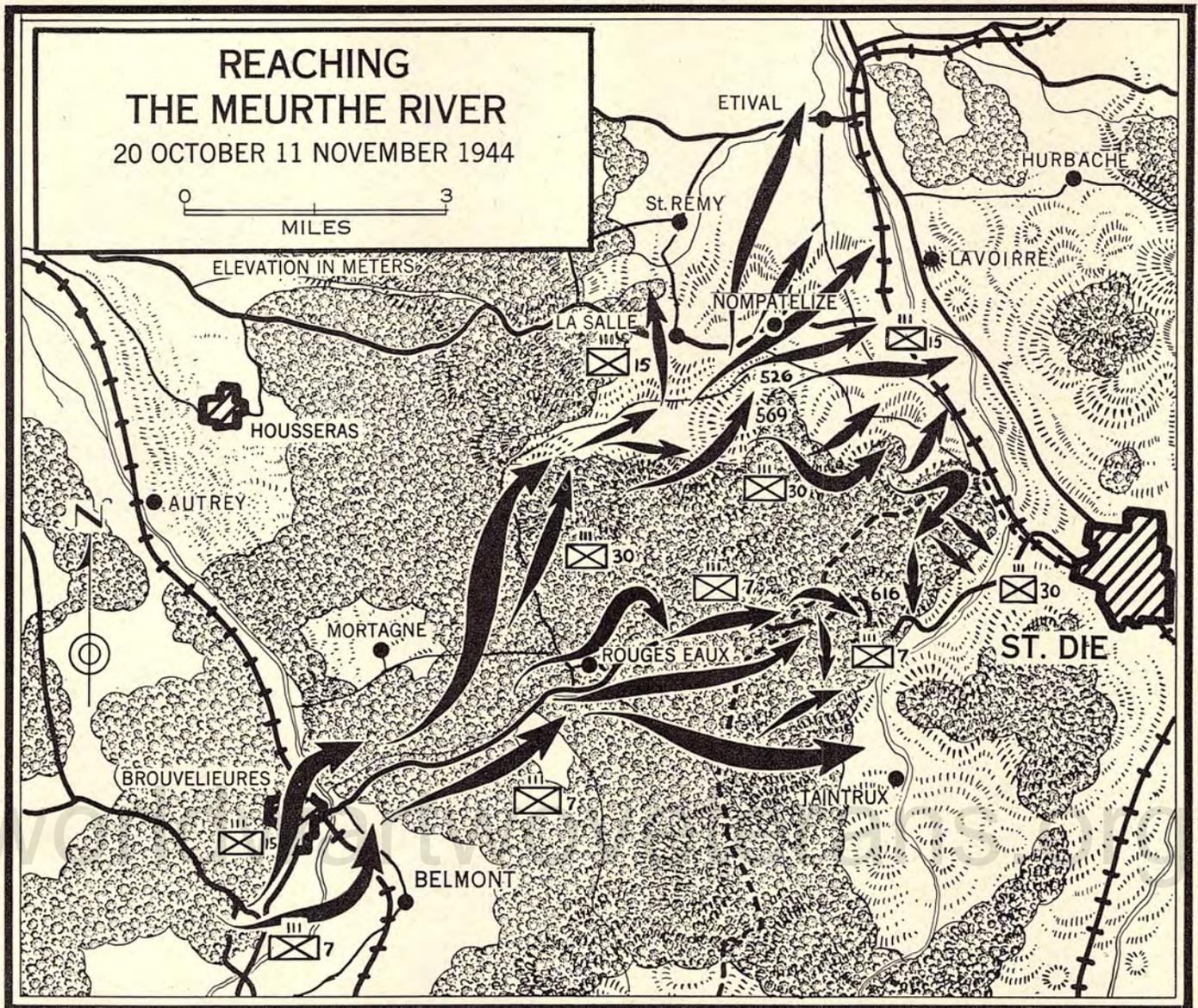
"Sergeant Choate couldn't find all of our crew and he believed the driver was trapped in the burning TD. Choate ran through a rain of enemy fire to the M-10, which was empty. Kraut infantry followed the Mark IV as it headed toward the infantry battalion CP about 400 yards to our rear," added Sgt. Thomas L. Langan, who was a gunner in the ill-fated TD.

"The German tank cruised through the woods, firing down into the foxholes of the doughboys and crushing soldiers to death under its tracks. Grabbing a bazooka from one of the foxholes, Choate immobilized the enemy tank, which the Germans then converted into an armored pillbox.

"Choate ran back to our infantrymen again, got another rocket and closed in on the tank to within ten yards, always under heavy enemy fire. The shot was a bull's eye and Germans began piling out of it, with Choate shooting them with his revolver."

T/4 Jay W. Shively, who also witnessed the event, said that Choate "winged" at least two Krauts and threw a hand grenade into the tank to be certain there were no more live ones in it.

Losing their tank, the German infantry became dis-



organized and the melee ended with thirty Germans killed, wounded or captured.

How Sergeant Choate "got his man" and stopped enemy armor without a tank destroyer is legend in the 601st TD Battalion.

For this action Sergeant Choate was awarded the Medal of Honor.

The determination displayed by Choate was characteristic of the Battalion's efforts ever since it was first attached to the 3d Infantry Division at Monte Corvino, Italy on September 20, 1943. Lt. Col Tardy was commanding throughout the period of the attachment, except for short periods.

The Commanding General at this time decided to commit the 30th Infantry, with the mission of attacking through the 7th Infantry and driving east. Col. Lionel C. McGarr, regimental commander, directed patrols be sent between the 7th on the south and 15th Infantry

on the north, which got through the lines to a depth of 600 yards. Colonel McGarr then recommended that the regiment not batter against the strong resistance which was holding up the other two regiments, but drive through what apparently was a soft spot. The Commanding General approved the suggestion.

The 1st Battalion led off, followed by the 2d, which swung from a road "spiderweb" north to a mill near the south side of the Nompateize Valley. It was there that armor attached to the 2d Battalion encountered enemy armor and shot it up.

Lt. Col. Eugene Salet's 2d Battalion of the 15th followed the 30th here, swung in behind and took a hill to the northeast of the crossroads at which the 15th Infantry had been held up for several days. This maneuver allowed the 15th to flank and clear a strongly-held road junction halfway between Les Rouges Eaux and La Bourgonce for which it had been battling



The Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army, General Marshall addresses the Division staff at Remiremont. Generals O'Daniel, Truscott and Devers are seen in the background.



A dead German is evacuated to the rear on top of the hood of a jeep.

fiercely. On the last day of this road-junction battle, Company I of the 15th, attacking from the east destroyed nine enemy machine guns in a few hours, and provided the flanking punch that drove the enemy clear out of the position.

Both the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 30th were committed along the ridge-top to support the 3d, the 1st taking over the left half of the zone in the area dominated by Les Jumeaux, or twin peaks, which jutted into the plain south of Nompateize, and the 2d going into the right half of the zone, holding a long east-west line north of Le Haut Jacques.

The type of battle that was being waged during these days resulted in a situation of October 28 that brought the 3d Infantry Division another Congressional Medal of Honor.

The 30th Infantry was pressing through the Mortagne Forest toward the heights overlooking St. Dié when elements of the German 201st Mountain Infantry Battalion, which had been by-passed, succeeded in cutting the supply line of the 3d Battalion, disrupting the flow of ammunition and food to the unit.

Company I, commanded by 1st Lt. Maurice Rothseid, was in reserve position when it was called on to drive the enemy out. Going into the attack at 1400 that afternoon, the company was immediately subjected to intense fire from automatic weapons and small arms coming from an enemy that was well concealed in the dense undergrowth and woods.

At this point, S/Sgt. Lucian Adams, a squad leader

of the 2d platoon, under 2d Lt. Frank H. Harrell, took charge of the situation and began a one-man assault that ended after he had killed nine Germans and captured two singlehanded. The number that he wounded as he dashed from tree to tree with his BAR was not determined.

He engaged an enemy machine gun at twenty yards and succeeded in killing the gunner.

Lieutenant Harrell described Adams' action, saying, "Sergeant Adams moved so fast and had such a head start on the rest of us that he killed a great number of them before we could maneuver to shoot at the enemy without endangering him by our fire."

Adams' charge disorganized the enemy in their strong defensive positions and was mainly responsible for the quick manner in which Company I cleared the supply line to the assault companies of the 3d Battalion.

For this action Sergeant Adams was awarded the Medal of Honor.

By this time the exploitation phase had ended, and during the closing days of October the Division fought a bitter, costly action against a constantly-reinforced, infiltrating foe. The 2d platoon of the 3d Reconnaissance Troop, commanded by 2d Lt. John Begovich, holding a hillside position just north of Le Haut Jacques, fought almost nightly actions against enemy who came up draws both from the east and west. All three battalions of the 30th had "hot corners" where two enemy seemed to spring up for every one shot down. This was almost literally true, as the enemy, sensing the threat posed by the 3d Division to St. Dié, robbed other sectors of the front to throw in the 291st and 292d Special Employment Battalions, the 737th Infantry Regiment, the 726th Infantry Regiment, and finally introduced another fresh mountain battalion, the 202d. By this time the German 16th Infantry Division, whose 221st, 223d and 225th Infantry Regiments had opposed our initial attack west of Brouvelieures, had virtually disappeared from the picture, although the division's General Haeckel still commanded the sector opposite the 3d.

The fighting in the western Vosges was weirder than any engaged in before or since by the Division. Crushing concentrations of 120mm mortar fire smashed into the wooded ridges without warning, sometimes wiping out half a company in a comparatively few minutes. Casualties mounted rapidly, largely because of these tree-bursts of artillery and mortars. The nights, chilly before, suddenly turned cold, and frost gave way to snow on the ridge-tops. The artillery airstrip had to be corduroyed because of the deep mud. Logging trails which ran the ridges had to be rebuilt by the engineers in order to support the supply traffic which ran nightly to the farthest units. There was only one area prac-



The chain of command at the 3d Division War Room somewhere in the Vosges: General Truscott, CG VI Corps. General Patch, CG 7th Army and General Devers, CG 6th Army Group.

licable for gun positions—the plateau south of Mortagne—and nightly it was constantly lit up by flashes from scores of artillery pieces.

With a bit of improvisation, Maj. Norman C. Tanner, Division Artillery Air Officer, provided his spotter planes a landing field during the difficult weather which characterized the Vosges throughout the whole campaign there.

It took the form of a 250- by 15-yard wooden runway, and at the time it was built it was 6000 yards from the enemy front lines. To camouflage it, Major Tanner had it painted olive drab.

Capt. Alfred W. Schultz, Assistant Air Officer, commented after his first landing, "I checked my map twice to make sure that I had the correct coordinates, for that little strip looked like a ribbon up there," to which Pilot 1st Lt. Warren T. Ries rejoined, "Yes, a very tiny ribbon."

Meanwhile the Division faced the enemy on three

sides—the north, east, and south. Enemy armor showed up in unexpected places—one Mark IV tank was destroyed by one of the enemy's own mines several hundred yards north of Le Haut Jacques, on the crest of a wooded ridge. Friendly supply parties were ambushed. Small groups of enemy, cut off by our rapid advance, showed up in our rear and fought with CP groups and wire crews. One whole company of the enemy, cut off by the 7th Infantry, surrendered after negotiations which covered an entire night.

October 25 saw the first issue of the Division weekly newspaper, the *Front Line*.

In an opening statement written for the paper, Commanding General O'Daniel declared: "It is fitting that this paper is being published today for the first time. It is the mouthpiece of a fighting Division, and as we are now in the midst of a great attack, we can say that the 3d Division *Front Line* was born in battle.

"We shall therefore be able to submit very soon additional reports on more deeds of valor as performed by our fighting men. This paper is one way we can let them know what we think of them. Therefore the names of all men who are cited in orders of this division will be published in this paper. We salute them all."

At first crude in form, the paper rapidly acquired polish, and by June 1945, was able to announce proudly that it had been adjudged by Camp Newspaper Service the second best overseas letter-press organizational paper.

November began with fights for Hill 256, near Les Jumeaux, and for the crossroads town of Le Haut Jacques.

Survivors of the battle for the crossroads at Le Haut Jacques were later to refer to it as "The Crossroads of Hell." Anzio veterans said that at times the fighting was worse than any they had seen all during the beach-head siege and the drive to Rome.

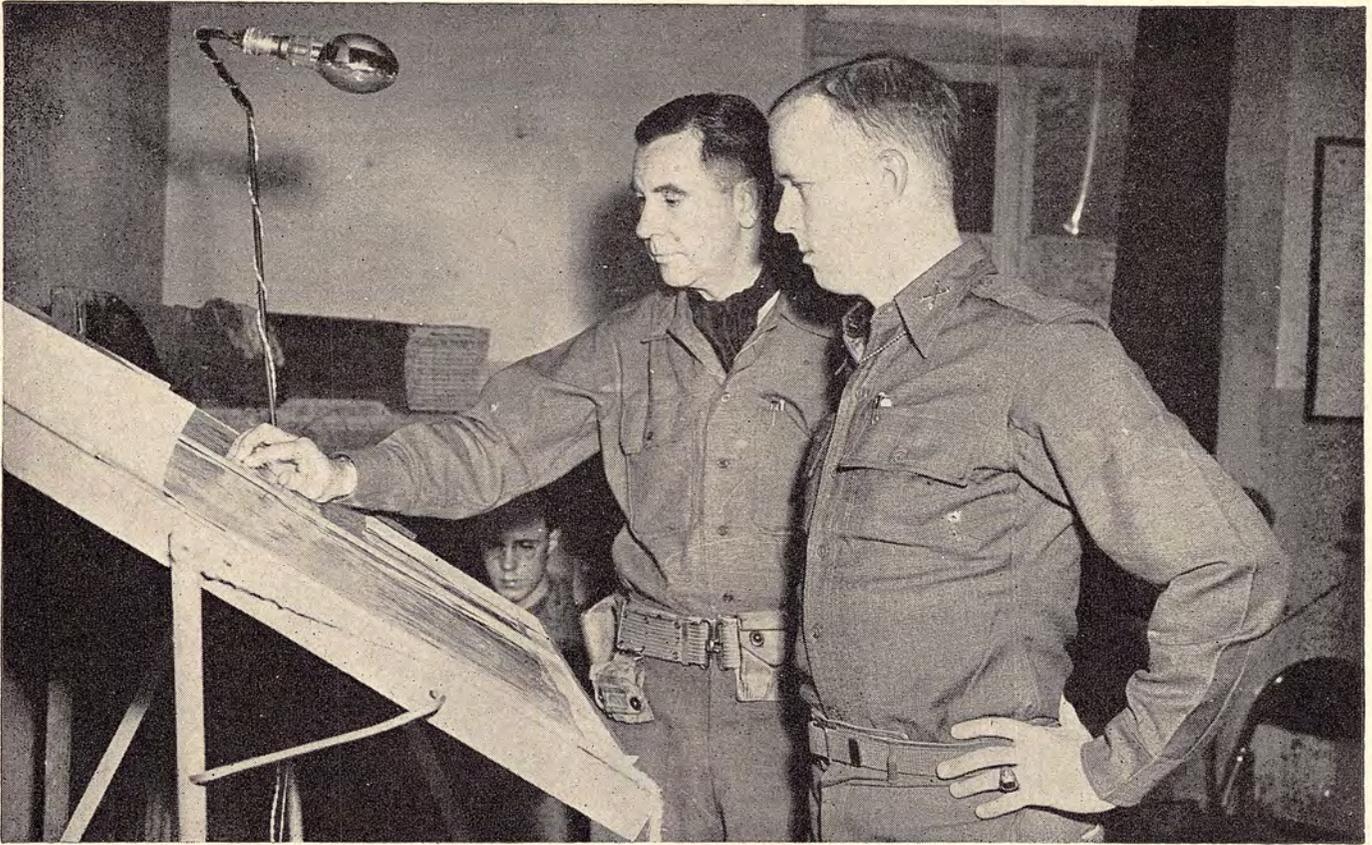
To advance a few hundred yards took the 7th Infantry five days. The enemy had—and used—every weapon in the book: 120mm mortars, Flakwagons, mines and booby-traps, machine guns, artillery, and small arms.

The hot spot was first encountered on October 31st. All three battalions were on line: 1st, under Capt. Kenneth W. Wallace, on the north (left) flank; 2d, commanded by Lt. Colonel Clayton C. Thobro, to right (slightly back); and Maj. Glenn E. Rathbun's 3d Battalion on the regimental right and echeloned somewhat to the rear.

On the 31st, 1st Battalion moved slowly along the St. Dié road. Company A moved north behind a mortar preparation, with the intention of flanking the town from that direction, Company B was in reserve, and Company C attacked due east. Companies E and G of the 2d Battalion took Hill 652, which they had fought for the entire previous twenty-four hours, and continued east slowly. The 3d Battalion, which was



Colonel Harrell, CO 7th Infantry Regiment (center) studies the Le Haut Jacques situation with Lieutenant Colonels Izenour, Exec., and Duncan, S-3 in the 7th Inf. War Room.



General Sexton, CG 3d Division Artillery discusses an artillery problem with his S-3, Lieutenant Colonel Kerwin, somewhere in the Vosges.

attacking southeast, had been stopped the day before by heavy fire in the vicinity of an enemy roadblock. The area, in addition, was found to be heavily mined. On the morning of the 31st the attack was resumed, but initially only Company K made any progress, due to slightly lighter resistance than that encountered by L Company. Hill 499 was taken by K—its second objective. In the afternoon, however, some slight progress was made as Company K engaged the enemy in a moving fire fight. Company L found itself, likewise, in a strong exchange of fire.

The 2d Battalion, under extremely heavy mortar and artillery on its company areas and OP, nevertheless shoved forward, but it was slow, painful going.

The following day, November 1, this same inching forward continued. Every bit of firepower available to the 7th was called down on Le Haut Jacques and the vital crossroads, but the enemy more than matched it with the combined fire of every emplaced weapon. That afternoon the enemy fired a heavy artillery concentration at the 2d Battalion at 1500, and followed up with a counterattack at Company G. which was repulsed. Company C was forced to beat off a counterattack at 1615. During this time mines were encountered throughout the zone of both 1st and 2d Battalions.

The 3d Battalion continued the attempt to push to

the southwest. Company L destroyed an enemy machine-gun nest during the morning of November 2.

The 2d Battalion was counterattacked about noon of the same day and repulsed it. Company F was relieved by the 7th Infantry Battle Patrol at 1230 and in turn relieved Company C, which moved further north toward the remainder of 1st Battalion. Relief of the 3d Battalion was started during the afternoon by 2d Battalion, 141st Infantry.

Meanwhile, 1st and 2d Battalions had launched an all-out attack at 1415, but failed to make any appreciable gains. The enemy fire was of an intensity rarely encountered before in the entire war by the 7th Infantry. The 3d Battalion joined this attack on November 3, and worked further toward the achievement of getting to the east of the village for the final assault. The 2d Battalion would have to attack directly east as 1st Battalion pushed in from the north.

As the attack went into its fifth day, the bloody battle reached its climax. The entire regiment (less one company) moved out at 0615, determined to smash the enemy at Le Haut Jacques. The enemy, aggressive in the defense, almost immediately made a counterattack at Company A and 1st Battalion was held up. Company I encountered withering fire from four well-emplaced machine guns and also stopped, but K Com-



A wounded 3d Division comrade is evacuated on the hood of a jeep near Nompattelize in the Vosges.

pany continued moving on against strong resistance.

To Companies E and F—commanded by 1st Lt. James F. Powell and 2d Lt. Earl E. Swanson, respectively—and especially to E company, fell the task of moving in directly from the west. By 0940 Company F had control of one house in the village and E was taking prisoners.

By 1150, after weathering murderous mortar and artillery, 2d Battalion had cleared the village. Companies I and K still had a fight on their hands, but the back of the enemy resistance was broken. Over a hundred prisoners were taken. The regiment had suffered 125 casualties in the final push. Le Haut Jacques was a costly objective.

“It seemed to me that we were just a handful of men trying desperately to push the whole top away from that mountain,” said Pvt. Alfonso Pesko of E Company, later. “It was worse than Anzio, because we were steadily going up hill and were in such a confined area.”

Although the entire regiment had experienced grim fighting E Company had been especially outstanding and those members who survived were later awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

With the village occupied, the 7th moved east and north.

During the attack by the 7th Infantry on Le Haut Jacques, the 30th Infantry helped greatly by flanking the town from the north—with Task Force Kenyon and Task Force Greer, and without this help 7th Infantry might never have taken Le Haut Jacques.

On October 30, while the bulk of the 30th Infantry

was passing through the Mortagne Forest, Company G, 30th Infantry, passed through Company F to press the battle on Hill 616, north of and part of the Le Haut Jacques position which the 7th Infantry had been attacking from the west. The attack of Company G was made through cross machine-gun fire against enemy established in deep dugouts and bunkers along the forward slope of the hill. The attack progressed to within two hundred yards of the company's objective where it was halted because of the frightful number of casualties exacted by the defending enemy. The company dug in under harassing enemy fire. Private Wilburn K. Ross had placed his light machine gun in a position ten yards in advance of the foremost supporting riflemen. Shortly thereafter the enemy counterattacked. Thirty-three men remained in the company, fifty-five having been lost in the attack. Private Ross, exposed to machine-gun and small-arms fire of the attacking force, fired with deadly effect upon the assaulting enemy troops and repelled the counterattack. Despite the hail of automatic-weapons fire and the explosions of rifle grenades within a stone's throw of his position, he continued to man his machine gun alone, repulsing six more German attacks. The citation of the award of the Medal of Honor to Private Ross is quoted here in part:

“. . . When the eighth assault was launched, most of his supporting riflemen were out of ammunition. They took position in echelon behind Private Ross and crawled up during the attack, to extract a few rounds of ammunition from his machine-gun ammunition belt. Private Ross fought on virtually without assistance, and, despite the fact that enemy grenadiers crawled to within four yards of his position in an attempt to kill him with hand grenades, he again directed accurate and deadly fire on the hostile force. . . . After expending his last round, Private Ross was advised to withdraw to the company command post, together with the eight surviving riflemen, but as more ammunition was expected he declined to do so. . . . As his supporting riflemen fixed bayonets for a last-ditch stand, fresh ammunition arrived. . . . Having killed and wounded at least fifty-eight Germans in more than five hours of continuous combat and saved the remnant of his company from destruction, Private Ross remained at his post . . .”

Such was the fury of the battles fought at the hell-hole, Le Haut Jacques.

The 15th, which had a tough day in attacking Hill 526, occupied its objective the next morning with no resistance as the Germans had evacuated their positions during the night. Les Faignes and Nompattelize, villages in the path of the 15th's advance, were also yielded without a fight but definite resistance was met in the attack on La Salle.



General Truscott, VI Corps commander, beside General O'Daniel, 3d Division commander, says farewell to the Division staff in the Vosges, prior to his assuming command of the Fifth Army in Italy.

The 2d Battalion, commanded by Maj. Eugene A. Salet, hit La Salle from three directions. Company E, under 1st Lt. Charles E. Adams, closed in from the south, Company F, commanded by Capt. Hugh H. Bruner, advanced from the northwest and Company G, under Capt. Richard B. Dorrough, assaulted the village from the west.

All companies were halted at well dug-in positions which surrounded the village and after these were overrun, a house-to-house fight ensued as the Germans were occupying every building in the settlement. Heavy artillery and mortar fire was laid down on the attackers but Company G finally broke through and entered the town at noon on the second day of the battle. By 1200 hours, November 3, the town was cleared.

The 1st Battalion of the 30th Infantry, commanded by Maj. Mackenzie E. Porter, attacked the town of Sauceray. In a perfectly coordinated attack, employing machine guns, mortars, and artillery, the battalion closed in from south and west. There was a sharp 30-minute fight, but the prebattle conception had been excellent and the town fell. This attack was the first of a series of battalion attacks in which the regiment had to pull a battalion from a defensive position and extend it over the other two battalion fronts in order to close up a large gap and make an attack.

During the days of the 7th Infantry's fight for Le Haut Jacques the 30th Infantry's 2d Battalion, under Lt. Col. Frederick R. Armstrong, launched and com-

pleted a successful coordinated attack on Hill 616, a key terrain feature for the defense of St. Dié. The regiment had been battling for this hill even before the 7th Infantry encountered the defenses of Le Haut Jacques, but previous attacks met with furious fire and fanatical resistance. The final attack the enemy also resisted fiercely, and with reinforcements. Enemy artillery fire caused a number of casualties when the command post of Company C, commanded by 1st Lt. Rex Metcalfe, was struck on the third day of the attack. Much air activity, both friendly and enemy, was present during the days that the Division fought on the hills in front of the Meurthe River and our forces were strafed many times by enemy planes. Hill 616 was occupied by the 2d Battalion on November 5 when elements of the 7th Infantry entered the attack.

The day witnessed also the seizure of Biarville by the 15th Infantry. This attack was short lived but it demonstrated great determination.

Biarville was fairly covered by fire when it was attacked by a force comprising Company A of the 15th, one platoon of light tanks, a platoon of mediums, one platoon of tank destroyers and a platoon of engineers. The withering fire brought quick results and the town fell in a short time.

The Germans by now had started a real flight rearward and although the Division was still subjected to heavy artillery and mortar fire during its continued advance, the resistance became more scattered and



Howitzers of the 3d Division's 9th FA Battalion send death hurtling through the air at the enemy in France's Vosges Mountains near Les Rouges Eaux.

sporadic as the 3d Battalion neared the Meurthe River.

The towns of Brehimont and La Vacherie, overlooking St. Michel, were weakly defended and most of the defenders were taken prisoner when the 3d Division occupied them. The PW total mounted rapidly as scattered pockets of left-behinds were cleared.

One by one, the towns fronting on the hills along the Meurthe were occupied with the chief action in the Division zone being waged in the 15th and 30th Infantry sectors. Enemy troops in a draw and in the woods to the north opposed the 15th's advance toward Le Menil, while at the same time the 30th Infantry was clearing the St. Dié hill mass by battalion attacks around its entire perimeter which, in addition, helped the 15th Infantry by covering its right flank. The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, took Chalet on the morning of November 10, and the 3d Battalion took La Bolle after an afternoon and all-night fight on November 10-11, with Companies I and K in the assault. Fighting ended the morning of November 11 when the bridge across the Taintrux River was taken and the Chalet-Saucerey highway was completely cleared.

On the afternoon of November 8, Companies E and F of the 15th attacked Le Menil, supported by tanks of the 756th Tank Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col.

Glenn F. Rogers. There were four light tanks from Company D under Capt. Robert F. Kremer, and two mediums from Company B, commanded by Capt. David D. Redle with the 2d Battalion, when it launched its drive. As at Biarville, the attack was well-planned and vicious and lasted but a short time since the Germans withdrew in the face of the onslaught.

While the 2d Battalion was entering Le Menil, the 3d attacked Deyfosse, a short distance to the south. A wooded area outside Deyfosse gave the enemy convenient emplacement positions but Company K, commanded by 1st Lt. John J. Tominac, wore down the resistance after Companies I and L had made a house-to-house clearance of the south part of the village. Company K completed clearing the village late that night.

The 15th continued the Division advance while elements of the 7th were being relieved by the 103d Infantry Division. Etival, a small village located on the edge of the Meurthe, was taken by the 15th with little resistance.

At a conference conducted at VI Corps headquarters at Grandvillers on the afternoon of November 10, Corps Commander General Brooks outlined to his division commanders the operations incident to the Corps mission of proceeding east through the Vosges from the



Battle-tired soldiers of the 3d Infantry Division eagerly swallow a hot meal near Bult after having been relieved after seemingly endless days of combat in the Vosges.

St. Dié area, capturing Strasbourg, and destroying the enemy west of the Rhine River in its zone. He presented three plans, all of which involved crossings of the Meurthe River by the 3d Infantry Division.

Plans "A" and "B" called for the 3d to cross the Meurthe in the vicinity of St. Michel, and to establish an initial bridgehead on the east bank. In plan "A" the 3d proceeded due east on the axis Saales-Schirmeck-Strasbourg, with the 100th Infantry Division operating on its left, and the 103d Infantry Division on its right, following an administrative crossing behind the 3d and subsequent passage through its right to the south and southeast. In plan "B" the missions of the 3d and 103d Divisions were interchanged after the establishment of the initial bridgehead by the 3d. Plan "C" called for the 3d Infantry Division and the 103d In-

fantry Division to cross the Meurthe River abreast, with the 3d on the left. The action of each division following establishment of the initial bridgehead conformed to the maneuver outlined for plan "A," which was favored.

General Brooks indicated that the probable date for the 3d Division crossing would be November 20. This date was contingent upon the progress of the 100th Infantry Division in its action southeast from Baccarat, and of the progress of the 103d on the right of the 3d in seizing the high ground southwest of St. Dié. Successful consummation of these operations would serve to draw enemy reserves from the front of the 3d, thereby weakening the enemy in the zone of crossing.

At the time of the issuance of the Corps Com-

mander's plans, the 3d was in the process of undergoing relief by the 103d Division of its center and right regiments (30th and 7th Infantry Regiments). At the same time 15th Infantry was carrying out an operation to the northeast to clear the enemy from the west bank of the Meurthe as far north as Clairfontaine. Necessarily, then, the 7th and 30th were earmarked for the assault, whereas 15th Infantry was to hold the west bank of the Meurthe in the Division zone and to cover all preparations incident to the river crossing, then assemble in Division reserve following the crossing.

Men of the Division heard many explosions during the next few days as the Germans methodically began destroying St. Dié. This town, seat of the Congress which named America in honor of the Italian, Amerigo Vespucci, had been shelled to some extent but was not nearly as thoroughly battered as Bruyères, for example. But now reports were received at the Division headquarters from front-line infantrymen and artillery forward observers that "St. Dié is in flames."

It was revealed later that the enemy, without reasons

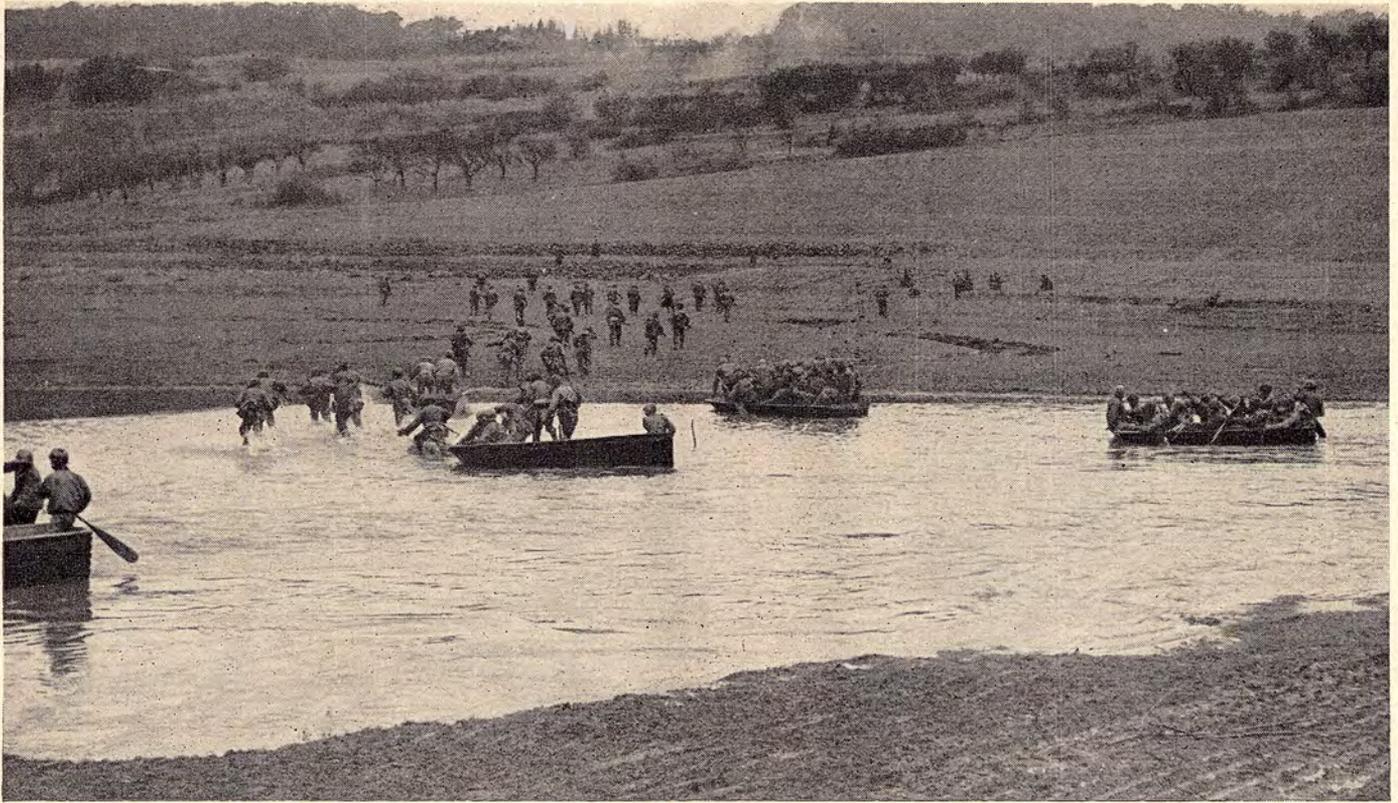
justifiable even on the grounds of military necessity, had ordered St. Dié destroyed. Giving scant notice to the occupants of the town's houses and business structures, the Germans reduced the greater part of the town to ashes; the wall skeletons which were left standing intact testified that high explosive played little part in the needless destruction of St. Dié, but rather that it was gutted by German-started fires. General Haeckel, German 16th Infantry Division CG, was responsible for the destruction of St. Dié and surrounding villages.

"Powerhouse I" was the name given the Meurthe crossing operation. On the face of it, this was an extremely difficult job.

Division engineers had made careful map, photo and ground reconnaissance, but had failed to locate good bridge sites except where hard-surfaced approaches reached the river at points where bridges had been demolished. The Meurthe twisted northwest across a flat bottomland several hundred yards wide which was flooded north of Etival, and boggy everywhere else.



The city of St. Dié on the Meurthe River in the Vosges was burned and gutted by the Germans.



3d Division infantrymen train in river-crossing operations in the Vosges in preparation for the crossing of the Meurthe River.

The river itself, swollen by fall rains, was everywhere too deep and swift to be forded by foot troops.

Worst of all, the "winter line," a solid chain of prepared enemy defenses, ran all the way from Fraize to Raon L'Etape, especially strong in the sector opposite the 3d. These defenses consisted of trenches, barbed wire, weapons pits, AT gun positions, AT ditches, and mines, and had been under construction since early fall. Our machine gunners on the west bank could see many of these defenses clearly.

Rather than make a frontal assault against these defenses behind an artillery heavy barrage, General O'Daniel decided to try to gain surprise by infiltration in force under cover of darkness. Plans were made therefore to throw footbridges across the river at last light, move the foot elements of the 7th and 30th regiments across during the night, and attack from the *east bank* at daylight with strong preparatory fires. Caliber .50 machine guns, Flakwagons, tanks, TD's and all available weapons were to provide fire support from the west bank.

The 15th Infantry held the line of departure (the west bank of the river) for several days prior to the attack, and patrolled vigorously to determine the conditions of the river and the nature of enemy opposition on the far bank. The patrols confirmed the fact that fording for any large body of troops was out of the question, and that employment of boats and rafts

would be difficult because of the current. It was then that the use of prefabricated footbridges was decided upon.

Enemy reaction to the patrolling, however, was surprisingly weak, and although no prisoners were taken it was fairly clear that (1) the enemy held the east bank very thinly, and (2) enemy troops who were present were neither aggressive nor alert. The enemy was compelled to keep his line thin by continuing attacks on the part of the 103d Infantry Division in the Taintrux area, on the 3d's right, and the 100th Infantry Division's attack southeast through Raon L'Etape, on the 3d's left.

Then, for two or three days prior to the attack, friendly planes strafed and dropped fire bombs all along the enemy's line of prepared positions, to further lower the already low morale of the German soldiers holding those positions.

While plans went forward for the crossing, 7th and 30th Infantry regiments were engaged in training with their respective combat-team engineer companies. Since the crossing plan had been communicated to the appropriate commanders at the outset of the five-day period, it was possible to make all training objective in nature. To this end full emphasis was placed on engineer training in assault-boat operation and in construction of footbridges of the prefabricated type. Infantry received training in assault boats and in crossing over



General Brooks, CG VI Corps stops on an inspection of the front to question a 3d Division soldier.

footbridges. This training was conducted on a battalion basis. Half of the training was conducted at night with a view to developing speed, coordination, and control. Directional aids such as luminous markers, telephone wire, engineer tape, ropes, and markings on the rear of helmets were stressed. Finally, special exercises were conducted for the assault platoons earmarked for covering footbridge construction.

In order to deceive the enemy as to the date and time of our crossing, the Commanding General directed the artillery commander, Brig. Gen. William T. Sexton, to increase harassing fires on the Division front during the three days prior to the crossing. In addition, he prescribed for these three days a 15-minute pre-daylight shoot plus a 15-minute after-darkness shoot. It developed later from prisoner accounts that this program served as an effective cover plan for the main preparation which was fired from H-minus-30 to H-hour, since the enemy had become accustomed to heavy firing at this time.

On November 18 notification was received from Corps to the effect that the splendid progress of the 100th Infantry Division southeast of Baccarat warranted cancellation of crossing plans for the 3d Infantry Division in the interest of passing the 3d through the 100th to exploit its progress. Immediately upon receipt of these instructions, the concentration plan for the crossing which had been underway for two days was cancelled, and the assault regiments were directed to reconnoiter forward assembly areas in the zone of the 100th Division in the vicinity of Raon L'Etape. A movement order was issued covering concentration in forward assembly areas preliminary to passage through the

100th Infantry Division. Movement was to be initiated on Corps order during the night of November 19-20.

At a meeting on the 18th, originally intended to be a final review of crossing plans, General O'Daniel made the announcement of the new plan and initiated discussion on it.

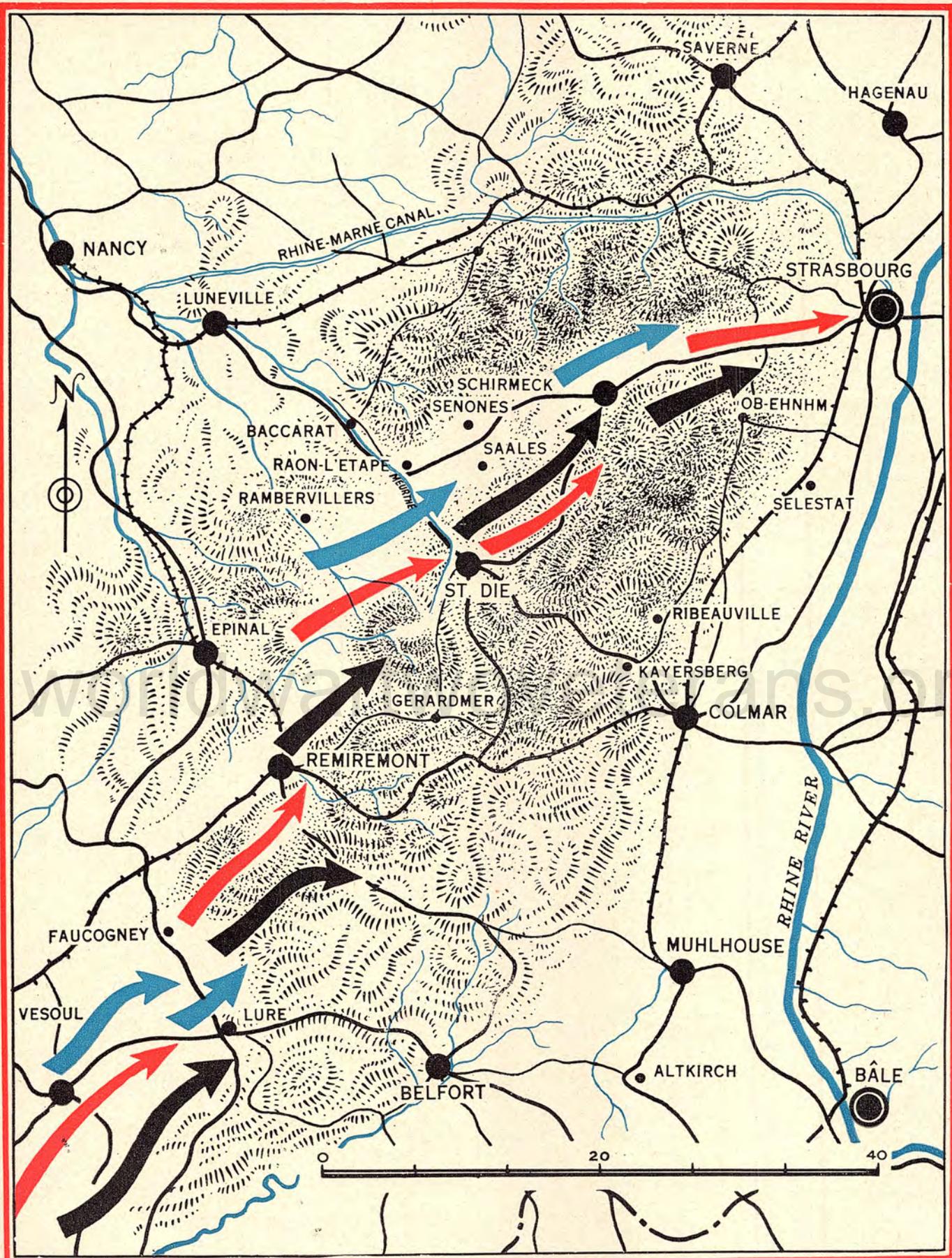
The original plan was destined to carry through, however. For, on the morning of November 19, word was received from General Brooks that the progress of the 100th Division for the preceding twenty-four hours had been considerably retarded, and that instead of passing the 3d through the 100th in the face of increasing resistance, the 3d would effect its crossing of the Meurthe as originally planned.

Fortunately, the thorough preparation pertaining to both the concentration and crossing plans enabled the Division to resume its concentration and complete all preparations without incident. It was impossible, however, due to the loss in time, to emplace all tanks, TD's and smoke generators originally scheduled to move into position during the three nights prior to D-Day. The tanks and TDs were instead tied in with artillery fire-direction centers and used in an indirect fire role to support the crossing.

The Division drew a damp, moonless night for the crossing—the night of November 19-20. A platoon of Company I, 15th Infantry, had crossed two nights before by boat in the 7th Infantry's zone and occupied a house immediately in front of the enemy's main position without being detected. This platoon had radioed back several reports on the 19th, all of which indicated that



The bodies of the dead near the mine sign at St. Die attest to the truth of the sign.





This piece of 3d Division's 9th FA Battalion is well camouflaged in its position in the coniferous forest near Bourgonne in the Vosges Mountains.

the enemy was holding his main position with light forces, who appeared entirely to be occupying buildings along the Raon L'Etape-St. Dié highway.

To observers not actually on the river line, it seemed unbelievable that a large-scale river crossing was in progress. There was hardly as much shooting as on any quiet night of ordinary patrol activity. Division artillery dropped its normal quota of harassing shells along the enemy's supply routes with studied haphazardness; rifles cracked occasionally, but there was nothing approaching a genuine fire fight. Obviously, the enemy was totally unaware that two of United States' finest regiments were moving onto his doorstep on a narrow front.

By 2400 the footbridge assault platoons, which had been ferried across by Company A, 10th Engineers, under the command of Capt. Albert Cook, were in possession of a line of departure approximately 300 yards from the Raon L'Etape-St. Dié highway. Footbridges were installed with exceptional speed, being completed by approximately 2359. Foot troops of the

main assault forces proceeded from detrucking areas to the footbridges without incident. Immediately they started over—riflemen, BAR men, machine gunners, mortar squads, communication men, aid men—everybody who walks in the infantry team.

Meanwhile the bridge trains of the 36th Combat Engineer Regiment were moving toward St. Michel and Clairefontaine, to be in position for beginning construction of the Bailey and treadway vehicle bridges as soon as the far bank had been cleared to sufficient depth. Company B of the 10th Engineers, under Capt. Daniel A. Raymond, and Company C, under Capt. Homer M. Lefler, also ferried advance troops and took part in the bridge construction. The treadway and Bailey bridges at St. Michel drew intermittent enemy artillery fire all during the first day, but this did not prevent the construction and continuous use of the bridges until the approaches of the treadway bridge finally became unusable.

At 0600 hours, five battalions of United States doughboys stood on the east bank of the river, having won a



Brigadier General Robert N. Young, Assistant Division Commander, 3d Infantry Division.

solid victory by their quiet crossing before even beginning the attack.

It was now time for Division artillery, with Corps artillery and several other battalions in support, to raise the mask of secrecy and fire an all-out preparation. Tanks, TDs and Flakwagons stationed on the west bank of the river opened direct fire on houses and strong-points known to be in the enemy main line of resistance. Under cover of this fire, infantrymen of the Division struck, and in less than an hour the 7th had seized Le Voivre while the 30th had captured La Hollande and Himbaumont, preparatory to springing a trap on Clairefontaine.

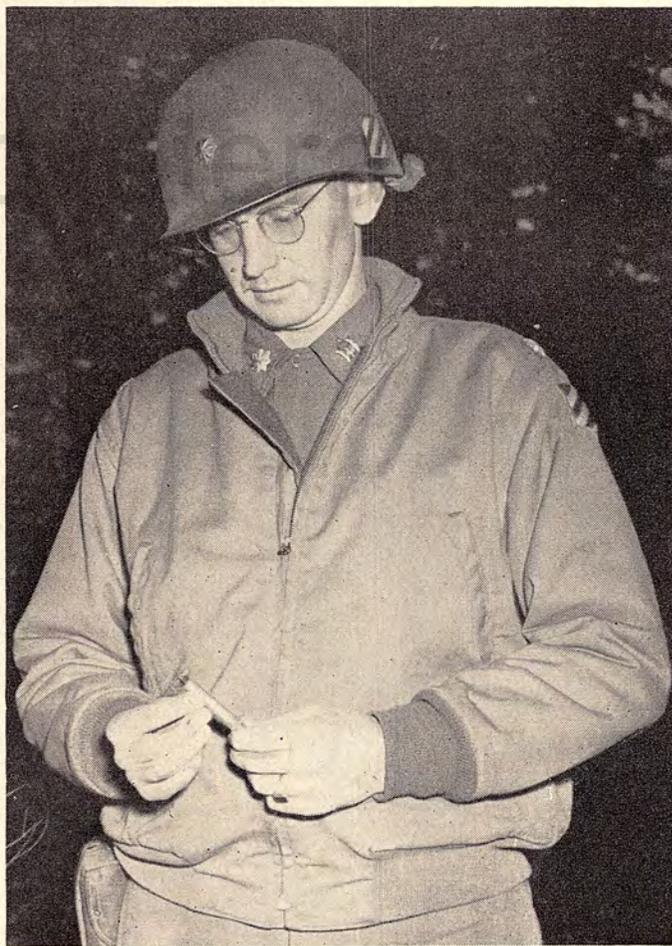
It was one of the smoothest operations ever conducted by the 3d Division. It was easily the quickest and most successful large-scale river crossing we had ever made.

The Winter War of Movement was under way.

The 36th Engineer Combat Regiment, together with certain personnel of the 10th Engineer Combat Battalion, initiated reconnaissance of the four heavy bridge sites at daylight of November 20. Reconnaissance of the two Clairefontaine sites was rendered impossible by small-arms, mortar and self-propelled fire from the town. At the two St. Michel sites, however, reconnaissance proceeded satisfactorily and by midmorning engineer material had been moved to the vicinity of the bridge sites. Work was initially concentrated on con-

struction of a wide-track armored force treadway bridge in the vicinity of St. Michel. After initial progress the work was suspended for several hours due to accurate enemy mortar and self-propelled fire on the bridge site. Although efforts were made to smoke the sites by means of generators, smoke pots, and chemical mortars, shifting winds and the fact that the enemy had registered on the bridge sites minimized the effect of the smoke.

At approximately noon orders were received from Corps that two regimental combat teams of the 103d Infantry Division were to be crossed over 3d Division footbridges at the earliest possible moment and, following assembly on the far bank, were to pass through the right of the 3d and continue the attack to the southeast. Immediate contact was made with the 103d, and it was ascertained that the two regimental combat teams (409 and 410) were in assembly areas on our right rear in the vicinity of the town of La Bourgonce. The 103d was requested to send its reconnaissance forward to the footbridges and to the CPs of the assault regiments of the 3d. Gen. Robert N. Young, As-



Lieutenant Colonel Petherick, CO 10th Engineer Bn.

sistant Division Commander, was designated as coordinator of crossing and was stationed at the foot-bridge sites.

Quickly exploiting the crossing, 7th and 30th Infantry Regiments moved to the east. The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, shoved on toward Hurbache. Second Battalion, 30th Infantry, entered the town at 1635 in conjunction with Company C, 7th Infantry, and the village was shortly cleared. The 2d Battalion 7th, leaving Company G to block on the right flank, continued to advance without opposition. The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, cleared Clairefontaine on the afternoon of the 20th.

The 15th Infantry moved from its defensive positions on the west bank of the Meurthe River to the vicinity of La Hollande commencing with the 3d Battalion at 1530 and followed by 1st Battalion at 1600. Both battalions crossed on the northern footbridges in 30th Infantry sector.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, had seized Denipaire by 2100.

Meanwhile on the "engineer front" the progress of front-line troops was such that by late afternoon the enemy was unable to bring fire to bear upon the bridge sites. At darkness, therefore, work progressed in earnest and continued steadily through the night. The light assault bridge at the footbridge crossing area, which had been completed prior to daylight of the 20th, had passed approximately seventy-five ¼-ton loads



Lieutenant Colonel Walter E. Tardy, CO 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion.



Sgt. Joseph Powell, 41st FA Battalion relaxes on a real bed at Bourbonne-les-Bains rest center in France.

prior to 2300, at which time the approaches to the bridge were rendered impassable by rising water and mud. Had it not been for this bridge, the Division resupply and emergency evacuation at the most critical time would have been imperiled.

With daylight on November 21 work on all four heavy bridge sites was intensified. By 0645 the wide-track armored force treadway bridge at the St. Michel site was completed and promptly passed seventeen armored vehicles and about twenty other tactical vehicles. At this time a tank bogged down at the exit of the bridge because of flooding of the approach by rising water, and the bridge was inoperative from this time on.

During the night the two combat teams of the 103d Infantry Division had crossed the Meurthe over 3d Division footbridges, and during the morning of the 21st passed through Company G, 7th Infantry, to the south.

On the morning of the 21st Denipaire became the assembly area for the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, and 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry. The 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, which had been pushing steadily, despite Company I's meeting small-arms fire a good part of the way, was still moving. Company I cleared La Paire. Companies I and K followed Company L toward La Chapelle. The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, which had captured Denipaire the night before, shoved on toward St. Jean d'Ormont.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, was the last of that regiment to cross the Meurthe, which it did at Etival at 0715, after which it closed in its assembly area at La Hollande before noon.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, seized St. Jean d'Ormont on the afternoon of the 21st.

Task force Whirlwind was activated on that same

afternoon. This consisted of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry; Company C (minus one platoon) of the 756th Tank Battalion; a platoon of Company C, 601st TD Battalion; 3d Recon Troop minus one platoon; B Battery of the 93d Armored FA Battalion; a platoon of Company B, 10th Engineers, with an armored bulldozer; and the 2d platoon of Company D, 756th Tank Battalion. Division provided twenty-five 2½-ton trucks to motorize the battalion of infantry.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, scarcely paused in its rapid move as it seized La Fontanelle, Launois, and Maire. Its fight carried over to November 22, when it encountered strong resistance at Nayemont.

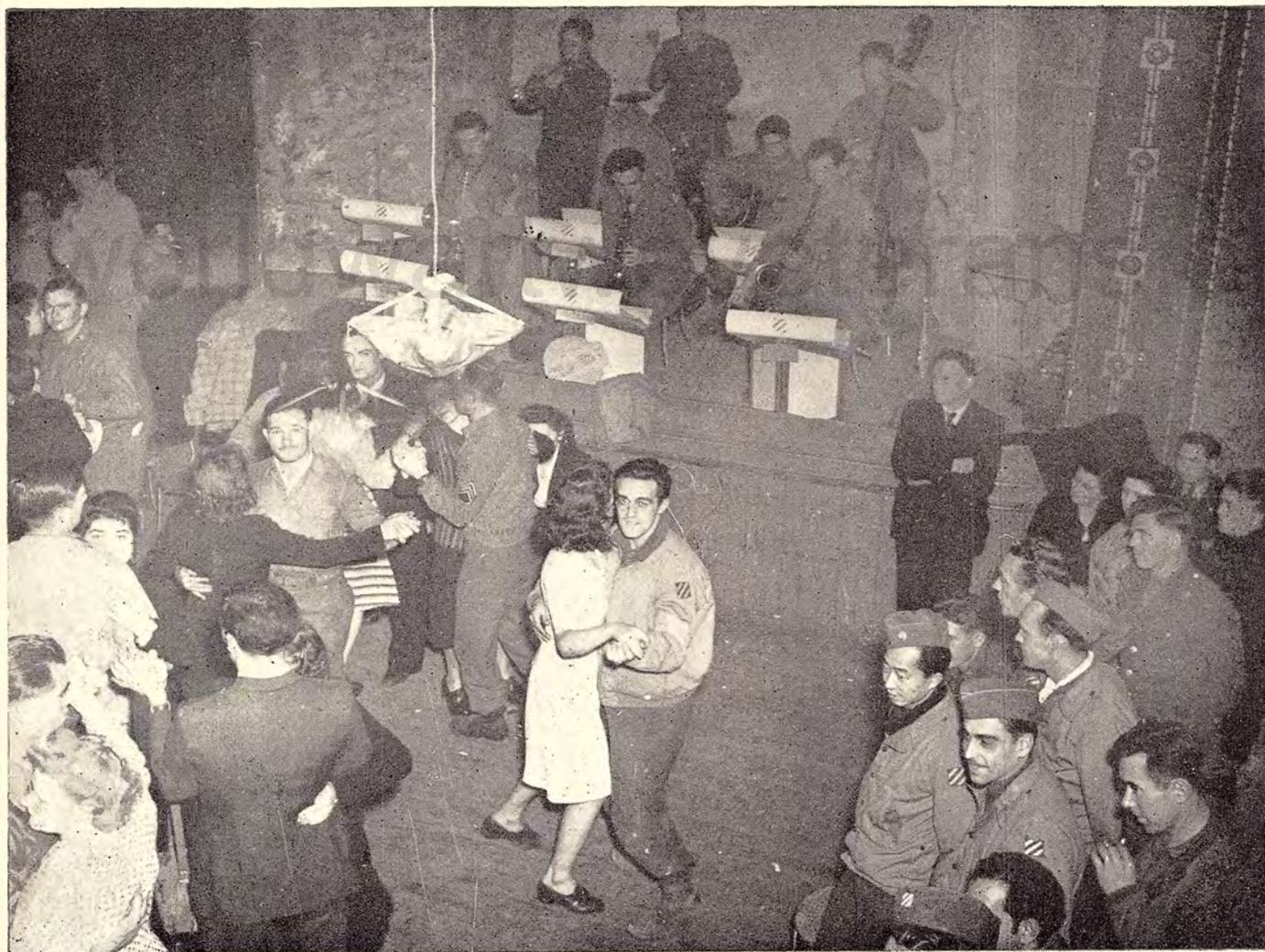
The 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, pushing east, sent its Company I into La Chapelle without opposition, at 1230, November 21. At 1300 Companies K and L moved from La Chapelle and headed for Menil which they entered at 1500, meeting no opposition. The 1st Battalion moved by marching from Clairefontaine to La

Paire, with Company C moving on to La Chapelle. The remainder of the battalion closed into La Chapelle during the afternoon, reverting to regimental reserve. The 2d Battalion continued its attack, attaining successive objectives before Laitre, which fell at 1700.

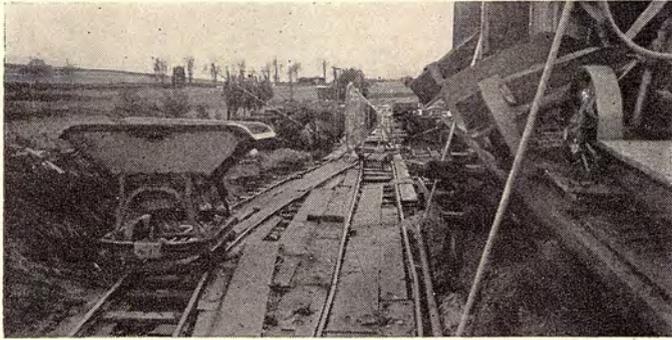
By late afternoon of November 21, the attack of the 103d Division on our right (south) flank, which had commenced at 0900 that morning and moved out to the southeast through elements of 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, had progressed from two to four kilometers on its entire front. At 1430 the 103d was given traffic priority over the St. Michel bridge. Upon completion of the crossing of the 103d Infantry Division tactical transportation, the 103d's passage phase as applied to the 3d Division was complete.

During the night of November 21-22 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, occupied Baltant de Bourras.

Task Force Whirlwind moved out of its assembly area at 0730 November 22 and passed through 7th In-



Soldiers of the 3d Infantry Division make merry while they may with French companions at the Division rest center at Bourbonne-les-Bains.



Concrete mixers and steel carts used to build the "Winter Line" at Saales.

fantry along the route La Hollande-Hurbache-Deni-paire, north to a road junction, and then southeast toward Launois. The 3d Battalion of the 15th moved from the vicinity of La Hollande at 0800 and followed the Task Force by shuttling. Task Force Whirlwind had reached Launois (which had fallen to 1st Battalion, 7th) by noon and was prepared to continue the advance.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, during the morning seized Hill 619 and drew enemy fire from a nearby crossroad.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, had run into a definitely tough battle at Nayemont. Here the enemy "Winter Line" positions were first encountered by 7th Infantry elements. These consisted of elaborately-constructed zigzag fire trenches, machine-gun emplacements, and partially-finished concrete bunkers. These positions had been under construction for several months preceding, and it was here that the enemy had planned on spending the rest of the winter. The VI Corps attack, spearheaded by 3d Infantry Division in its surprise crossing of the Meurthe and rapid advance eastward, gave the Germans no opportunity to utilize fully the well-built positions. The 103d and 100th Divisions (the latter attacking on our left) had helped draw enemy strength from our zone and stretch his reserves to the breaking point.

The positions were so formidable, however, that 1st Battalion was engaged in a harrowing fight that lasted several hours before the line was cracked and the German remnants forced to withdraw. Nayemont was occupied at 1650.

The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, took Le Roaux in its stride, reaching the town by 0820 November 22 and continuing to Chatas, which was cleared at 0945. By 1010 the battalion had reached a further phase line and was still pushing.

The 3d Battalion's Company I reached Grandrupt and was still clearing the town at noon.

The 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, engaged an enemy roadblock force in the village of Le Fraiteux during

the afternoon and, after reducing it, continued east on the Saales road, but was passed through by the 3d Battalion at 1600. The 7th Infantry Battle Patrol advanced east on the Saales road after Nayemont was taken and encountered a mined enemy roadblock.

Task Force Whirlwind had shoved off from Launois at 1200, and made good progress until it encountered enemy resistance in the early morning hours of November 23, when it halted for the night.

The 2d Battalion, 15th, assembled in La Fontanelle and moved to Grandrupt at 1625, establishing roadblocks on main roads leading into town upon arrival.

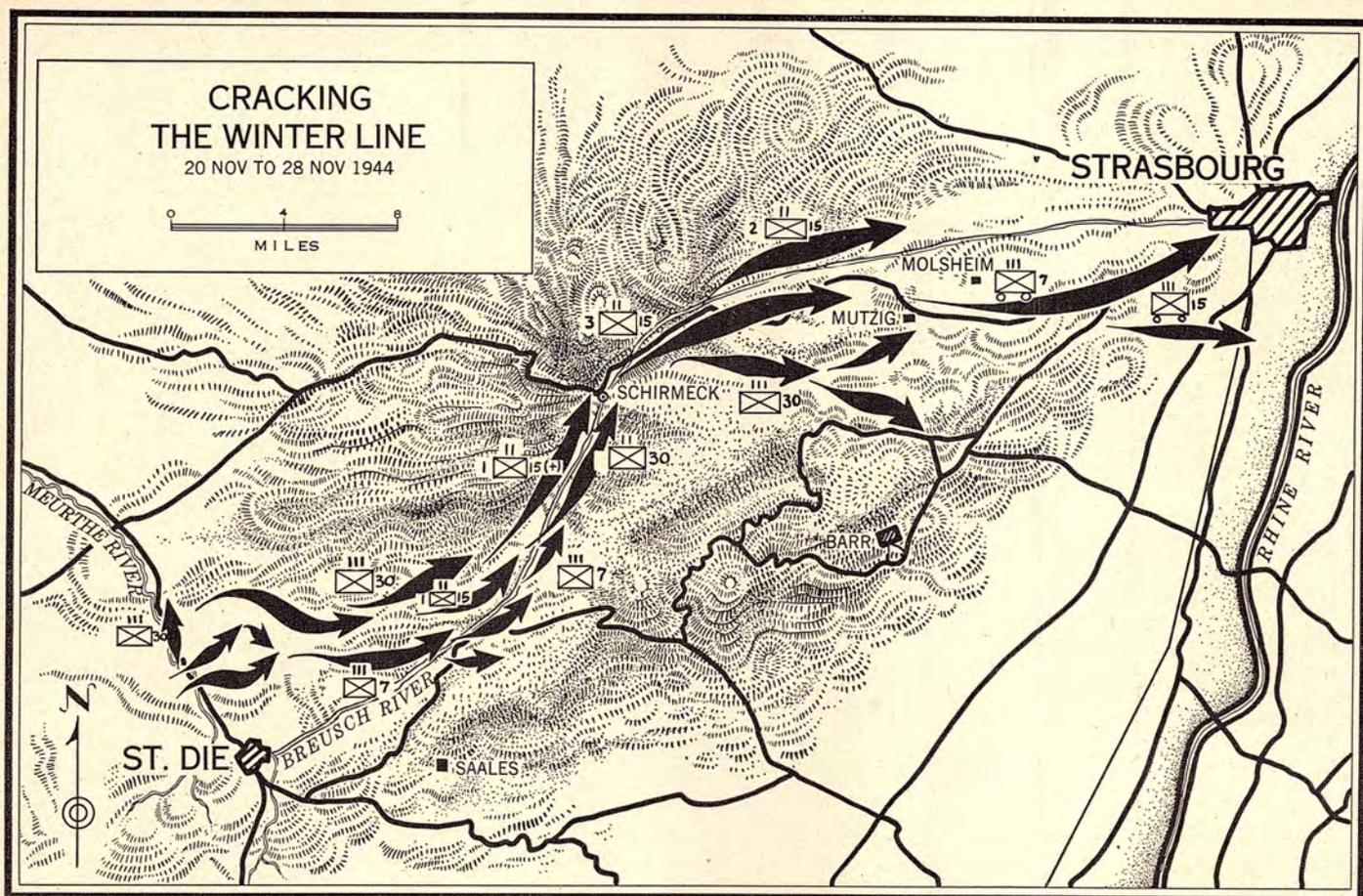
At 1645 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, continued its advance and seized the high ground overlooking Saales.

The Division advance scarcely paused during the night of November 22-23. The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, by-passed the roadblock on the Saales road which the regiment's Battle Patrol had encountered during the afternoon of the 22nd and at 0100 Company I seized the town of La Grande Fosse. While 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, sent patrols into Saales which destroyed an 88mm gun and actually cleared the northwest corner of town, Company K, 7th Infantry, spearheaded its battalion's attack on the town, entering at dawn and promptly becoming engaged in a fire fight. The 3d Battalion was engaged in this mission all the morning of November 23 and into the afternoon. Capture of the town symbolized entrance of the Division into Alsatian territory, but still more important was the fact that one of the two principal hinges of the Winter Line, (the other being Saulxures) had been taken and that now the enemy could not hope to stop us short of the Rhine River.

The 2d Battalion, 7th, eliminated the roadblock in the wake of 3d Battalion. The 1st Battalion en-



This deep pit near Saales was probably intended as the base of a large concrete pillbox.



trucked at Nayemont and moved to a point near St. Barbe, north of Saales, where the men detrucked and marched to the heights of St. Barbe, from which point the battalion moved south to assist 3d Battalion in clearing Saales. Upon entry into the town the afternoon of November 23, 1st Battalion found that Saales had been cleared by 3d Battalion at 1535. The 1st Battalion thereupon headed east again, toward Bourg-Bruche.

Task Force Whirlwind had been held up by an enemy roadblock and small-arms fire from the vicinity of Saulxures. At 1400, in conjunction with 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, it attacked Saulxures. Companies I and L, 30th Infantry, attacked the town while Company K went over the high ground east of town and there seized Hill 512. Companies I and L entered town, along with elements of Whirlwind, at 1400, and had cleared the town at approximately 1630 against stubborn enemy resistance. The Winter Line was now completely broken. The condition of prisoners captured both in Saales and Saulxures indicated that they had been expecting a protracted stay behind what their superiors fondly imagined to be a secure line. Many of the rear-echelon personnel had acquired such appurtenances as skis and snowshoes, in anticipation of moments of relaxation. The skis found new owners and the dispossessed would-be skiers found exercise in marching

back to the PW cages, hands clasped firmly and resting lightly on top of the head.

Only disconnected battles along the route to Strasbourg now remained. One of the toughest of these was encountered by 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, at Bourg-Bruche. It was here that the Germans had marshalled a striking force and were on the verge of counterattacking the 3d Battalion in an attempt to recapture Saales. At 1730, November 23, 1st Battalion moved out to attack Bourg-Bruche.

Approximately 150 yards beyond Saales elements of Company B encountered heavy machine-gun and rifle fire from both sides of the road. S/Sgt. James P. Wils, a squad leader, immediately rushed an S-shaped communications trench from which a storm of enemy fire was issuing, jumped inside it and fired eight clips of M-1 ammunition, coming out with twenty prisoners. The company's 3d platoon on the other side of the road wounded and killed another sizable number of enemy, putting the rest to flight.

At 1930 the battalion resumed its advance along the highway. A mile along machine-gun and rifle-grenade fire flayed the assault company. Reconnaissance disclosed that a strong German force was defending a railroad overpass which had been partially demolished by explosives.



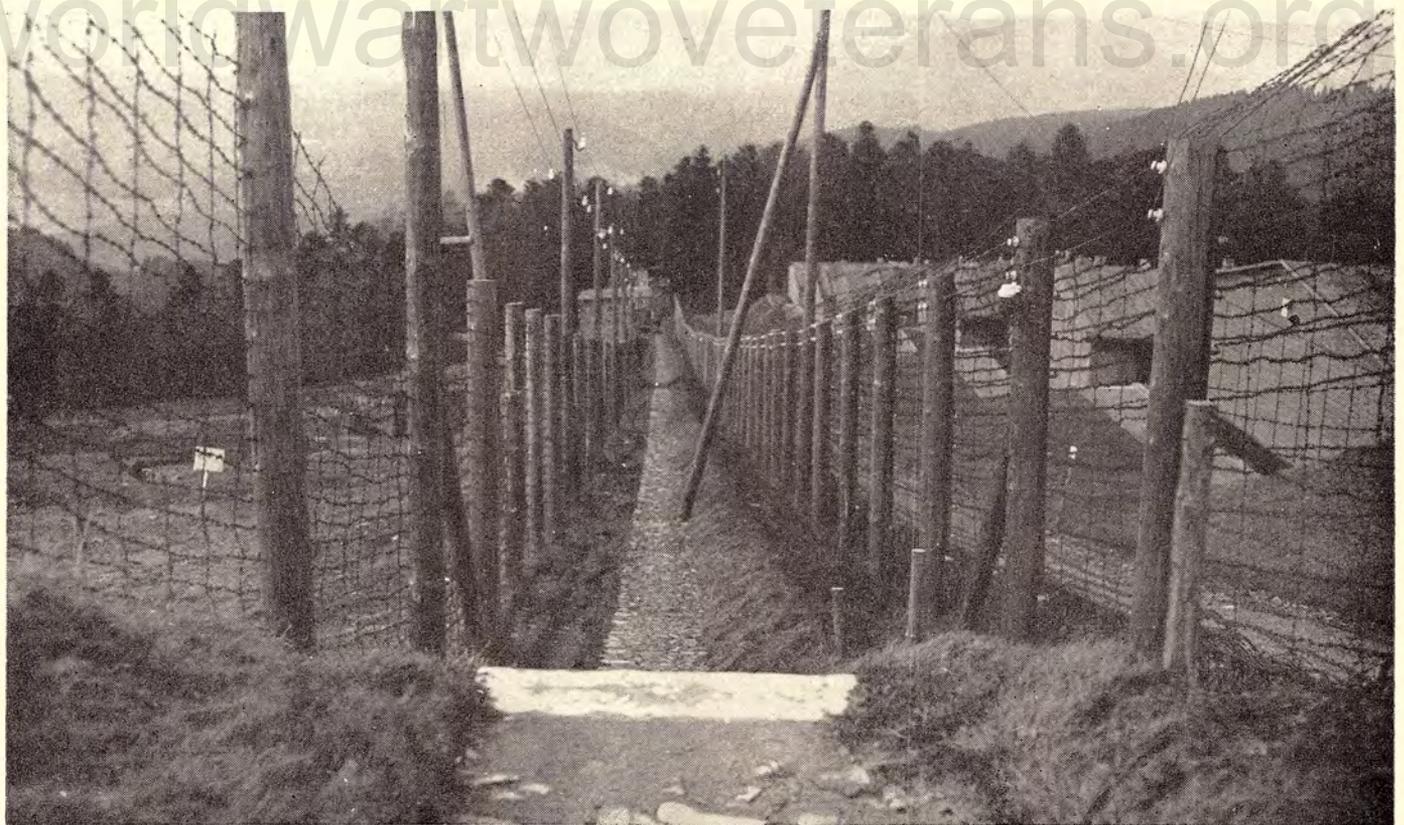
Lieutenant Colonel Donald E. Long, a 3d Division soldier in World Wars I and II, receives, as Division Civil Affairs Officer, thanks from the Mayor of Saales for liberation of the town.

Riflemen of Company B worked their way forward, firing at enemy muzzle blasts in the gloom. Soldiers of an enemy platoon attempting to strike at the company's left flank silhouetted themselves on the embankment and were decimated by a prompt fusillade of M-1 fire.

After tough fighting the enemy was gradually driven from the embankment. At 2300 the 1st Battalion resumed the advance toward Bourg-Bruche. Spearhead

elements of Company B worked their way from building to building upon reaching the town, toward a crossroads in the center of town. A pair of building strongpoints held up the advance. Flakwagon and 88mm gun fire deluged the intersection.

A tank was brought forward by 1st Lt. Wendell D. Leavitt, who rode it up to direct cannon fire on the enemy 88mm guns and Flakwagons. The assault platoons then charged forward into the building strongpoints to



At Natzwiller Concentration Camp SS guards and trained dogs patrolled between the fences.



A German AT gun destroyed this 3d Recon Troop scout car near Mutzig.

destroy or put to flight the German occupants.

Company C drove up the right side of the highway and penetrated into the eastern section of Bourg-Bruche. The 3d platoon, with a strength of nine men, held its gains against strong enemy pressure for five hours. A squad of Germans assaulted the house in which the platoon had taken cover and demanded that the platoon surrender, only to be greeted and repulsed by fragmentation hand grenades.

Another group similarly held out in a nearby house throughout the night.

In the morning Company C's 1st and 3d platoons joined forces and proceeded to clean out the houses on the right side of the east-west road through Bourg-Bruche, leaving the 2d platoon in support. This attack took place under strong enemy artillery, emplaced on a ridge running north-south and masking the eastern portion of the town. The ridge contained a long communications trench and heavily fortified emplacements.

The two platoons pressed their attack and reached a tavern near the railroad overpass, where they remained under concentrated fire and from which they directed artillery on the German gun emplacements, destroying an 88mm gun, blowing up an ammunition dump, and destroying a dug-in 20mm Flak gun.

During this time the Battalion CO, Lt. Col. Kenneth W. Wallace, committed Company A in an attack on the eastern section of town. As the company advanced it came under fire from two machine guns and a 20mm gun emplaced on a ridge, but these weapons were silenced by tanks and a tank destroyer after a duel which lasted several minutes.

Rounding a curve in the road, the company resumed the advance. The men drew furious blasts of Flak and machine-gun fire from the right. The enemy opened fire with an intensive mortar concentration. The company halted, having had five casualties. An unsuccessful assault on the enemy positions in which a platoon leader was killed and two men wounded followed; then a bazooka team crept forward and placed three rockets on the position, killing two Germans and crippling the position. The 3d platoon assaulted and destroyed it.

Companies B and C occupied positions in a cluster of buildings and rained fire on the Germans emplaced on the ridge. By midafternoon of the 24th they had killed between forty and fifty of the enemy and silenced two machine guns.

At about 1500 the third platoon of Company C assaulted the communications trench which was dug into the ridge. As the platoon surged up the hill slope the effect of the M-1, machine-gun, and intense artillery fire, added to the assault, convinced the Germans of the uselessness of the struggle. Approximately eighty-five prisoners were taken. Remnants of the battered German garrison fled from Bourg-Bruche only to be captured in large numbers by the 3d Battalion, which had maneuvered into position beyond the town. By 1630 Bourg-Bruche was firmly in our hands, lacking only the clearance of isolated snipers. Approximately 200 prisoners had been taken and seventy-five of the enemy killed.



3d Division infantrymen moving up near Schirmeck pass a dead enemy.



The 3d Division's 756th Tank Battalion cautiously enters the environs of Strasbourg.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, had moved from St. Stail to Chateau St. Louis. Company G remained in St. Stail and sent patrols north to Le Vermont, contacting the 398th Infantry of the 100th Division. The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, remained in assembly in the vicinity of La Fontelle, alerted to move.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, was in flank-blocking positions along the regiment's route of advance over the 24-hour period from noon to noon of November 23-24. The 2d Battalion's Company E reported Sanatorium clear at 1540 November 23, after a brief fire fight, while Companies G, F, and H were assembled and moved toward the town. At 0700 of the 24th the battalion moved out toward St. Blaise, sweeping the edge of the woods en route.

The 3d Battalion, 7th, passed through 1st Battalion in Bourg-Bruche and encountered enemy north of the town on the afternoon of the 24th. This resistance was taken care of and the battalion had pushed on to an assigned phase line by 1840. The 2d Battalion moved north from Lehan and cut the Bourg-Bruche-La Saales Road, leaving Company F there to block. Remainder of the battalion pushed north and assembled.

Task Force Whirlwind continued to push east until 0550 the next morning when it made contact with an isolated group of enemy. By 0830 this group had been cleared up and the Task Force, its mission accomplished, was dissolved and its elements returned to control of parent units.

The last phase in the Meurthe-Rhine River push was a sweep out onto the Alsatian plain, clearing scores of towns en route. There were only brief fire fights with bewildered, isolated enemy groups. At the town of Mollkirch there were nearly a hundred Germans who wanted neither to fight nor surrender. They finally decided to fight a little, then surrendered almost wholly. Taken prisoner, most of them stated that their only hope had been to make their way back across the Rhine.

The 30th Infantry took Grendelbruch. The 2d Bat-

alion, commanded by Lt. Col. Frederick R. Armstrong, had an all-night house-to-house fight at Grendelbruch. Shortly before midnight Company E, under Capt. Ralph R. Carpenter, moved around to the right of the town, sweeping out the woods as it went. The company then attacked from the east as Company F, commanded by Capt. Marshall T. Hunt, struck simultaneously from the west. By 1000 November 26 the battalion headquarters was doing business at a CP situated in the center of the town.

The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, had advanced from La Broque to Schirmeck, Wisches, Schwartzbach, Urmatt, and Dinsheim, to west of Mutzig, along the main road to Strasbourg by noon of the 26th. On the afternoon of November 26, 3d Battalion cleared Mutzig.

Combat Command A, 14th Armored Division, passed through the 3d Infantry Division, moving from Schirmeck at 0700, following two routes. One column followed the route Schirmeck-Mutzig-south to Obernai east in the direction of Erstein. The second column followed the route Schirmeck-east to Russ-Grendelbruch-Obernai south to Coxwiller.

On the night of November 26-27, 1st and 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, assembled and moved by truck to an assembly area in the vicinity of Strasbourg, to which patrols had gone and met elements of the French 2d Armored Division which reached the town ahead of the 3d Division, having come in from the northwest. The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, also moved by motor to take up defensive positions along the Rhine River south of Strasbourg that same night, and 2d Battalion prepared to join it.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry cleared Rosheim, and moved on to establish defensive positions in the vicinity of Dorlisheim by 0330 of November 27. The 2d Battalion established roadblocks during the same period to protect 1st Battalion's flank. Company G patrols cleared Laubenheim and Mollkirch.

The 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, captured Boersch, Klingenthal, and Obernai. Roadblocks were established on all roads leading out of Obernai.

On our north flank the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, attached, screened the last move into Strasbourg. Isolated enemy elements occasionally offered resistance, but the squadron encountered no real fight until it approached the vicinity of Gamsheim, where determined SS troops made a stand. After much tentative probing of the strong positions here, the 117th settled down and awaited stronger forces to attack the town.

Strasbourg is the great communications and market center and capital of the Bas-Rhin Department, located on the Rhine River. The 7th prepared to relieve General Jacques Le Clerc's famed 2d French Armored Division which had taken Strasbourg and held posi-

tions in the city in the vicinity of the Kehl Bridge, which crosses the Rhine east of Strasbourg.

The port of Strasbourg, third largest in all France, stretches east to northeast between the Rhine and Kleiner Rhine (small Rhine) opposite the Kehl Bridge and has a peacetime annual capacity of ten million tons.

Strasbourg's peacetime population was nearly 200,000 persons. The Ill River crosses the city in two branches, one along the northeast edge and the other along the southwest. Upstream, the Ill joins the Rhone-Rhine Canal and the Breusch River whereas downstream, the river receives the waters of the Rhone-Rhine Canal.

The 7th Infantry took up defensive positions on the western outskirts of Strasbourg, the 15th occupied positions south of the city along the Rhine River and the 30th continued to scour the rear sector of the Division for straggler groups that had been by-passed in the rush to the Rhine and that had taken refuge in some old forts near Mutzig.

In one of them some 200 Germans, armed with bazookas, machine guns and small arms, offered stubborn resistance to all efforts to dislodge them. Benko Force of the 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, commanded by 1st Lt. John F. Benko, spent several days searching caverns and hammering the strongpoints with fire from our TDs which had little effect on the occupants.

These forts had been a part of the Maginot Line. This one had been built in the late 1800s and later modernized, completely equipped with generators, water supply, and ample ammunition. In its location and structure the fort posed a perplexing problem in reduction to the 30th Infantry, artillery, and 10th Engineer Battalion. Special interest was manifested in it owing to the fact that the VI Corps command post wished to move into Mutzig, but thought it inadvisable to locate with such proximity to the enemy.

The fort was built below ground level on the crest of the highest terrain in the area and was enclosed by a moat thirty feet wide and thirty feet deep. Any attempt to enter the fort could be frustrated by fire covering all angles of the moat. Direct fire could be brought to bear only on the steel turrets housing 150mm guns, and the entrance, which was set at an angle to the fort proper. Tanks could not approach the edge of the moat to pound the walls because of extremely accurate *Panzerfaust* fire from slits in the walls.

Lt. Col. John A. Heintges, 30th Infantry executive officer, was in charge of operations, and Company E was charged with maintaining a cordon around the fort. A 155mm Long Tom was first employed in an attempt to batter down the entrance, only to find that entrance to the fort proper was still blocked by



The 3d Infantry Division Command Post at Koenigshofen near Strasbourg.

a series of steel doors and compartments, each of which could be sealed off from other sections. The second measure taken was to call on the Air Corps, and two missions with dive bombers, using heavy, delayed-action and fire-bombs, were flown—but with scant success because of the planes' inability to register successive direct hits. Company E maintained its vigil and Company H pounded the fort steadily with mortar fire.

Colonel Heintges finally devised a plan. First, he announced in German to the garrison over a loudspeaker that the men had one-half hour in which to surrender, or else to be subjected to something new in secret weapons. This failed to budge them. At the end of the elapsed time Company H resumed its 88mm mortar fire to cover the work of a tank-dozer which was cutting a driveway to the edge of the moat. When the driveway was completed a captured halftrack personnel carrier loaded with four tons of explosive was started by Company C, 10th Engineer Battalion, and sent driverless toward the driveway. The vehicle toppled over and fell into the moat with its load of explosive resting against the wall.

The electrical detonator was disconnected by the plunge, so mortars fired on the vehicle. There was an explosion which rattled windows in Strasbourg, thirty miles away, and when the dust had settled a fifteen-foot hole marred the side of the fort.

During the night of December 4-5 the garrison endeavored to break out through the fire of Company E. After three unsuccessful attempts the detachment of eight-four men and officers surrendered at 0900, December 5. Only the commander, a major, escaped and he was rounded up at a roadblock a few days later.

Company E guarded the fort until it could be sealed by the 10th Engineers and rendered useless. On Decem-

ber 7 Company E rejoined its battalion at Oberhausbergen.

As November ended, the 79th Infantry Division was on the 3d's left flank and the 103d was on the right.

The 3d Infantry Division of World War II now began its "Watch on the Rhine." The first day of December found the 7th Infantry launching an attack to reduce the German bridgehead at the eastern outskirts of Strasbourg, opposite the town of Kehl, while other elements of the Division began police and guard duty in Strasbourg.

The 7th met stubborn resistance when it attacked on the morning of December 1. Small-arms, automatic-weapon, machine-gun and rocket-launcher fire from dug-in positions on the west side of the river and mortar and artillery fire from the east side comprised the enemy defense.

The 2d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Clayton C. Thobro, took up the "Battle of the Apartment Houses" in the eastern section of the city while Company C, commanded by Capt. Beverly G. Hays, continued the street fight which it started shortly after midnight. Members of Company C will long remember the hand-to-hand battles that were staged in the vicinity of the Hippodrome and in the railroad yards on the edge of town. Sniper fire from across the river also added to the misery.

Organized resistance began to dwindle with daylight of December 2 after the 2d Battalion had cleared the peninsula between the Bassin De L'Industrie and the Rhine River. The entire area rocked late that afternoon as demolitions set off by the Germans destroyed all three bridges across the river. The last Germans to leave the bridgehead escaped by boat.

While the 7th was chasing the Germans from the west bank of the Rhine, the 1st Battalion of the 30th, attached to the 2d French Armored Division, veered suddenly south and crossed the southern branch of the Ill River between Sermersheim and Kogenheim. The mission was to secure a site for the French to build an armor-carrying span.

At about midnight, Colonel Porter's battalion crossed in boats and came under a concentration of heavy mortar and artillery fire. Company B, commanded by 1st Lt. Lysle E. Standish, made the crossing at Kogenheim and Company C, under 1st Lt. Charles H. Skeahan, Jr., landed at Sermersheim, about a half mile upstream. The two companies came under more artillery fire in the towns, where an estimated 600 rounds of heavy enemy shells fell the next morning. Supported by French artillery and tanks, the attackers pushed the Germans out of the villages and carried the assault into the woods east while Company A, commanded by

1st Lt. Willard C. Johnson, took over blocking positions to the southeast.

Action described by a veteran doughboy as the "toughest three days I have ever spent" came to a close when a French colonel announced that the battalion attached to him by the 30th Infantry "is the finest outfit of its kind I have ever seen."

So satisfied were the French forces with the job that they awarded twenty-three Croix de Guerre to members of the 30th's 1st battalion from CO Major Mackenzie E. Porter down to the privates of the front ranks, who received most of the decorations.

In the same way the French 2d Armored Division's plaudits were passed out to Company C. At Company C, 1st Lt. Rex Metcalfe accepted the tribute by passing credit on to his doughfeet, who ended their 48-plus hours of fighting by sitting on the division objective for fourteen hours alone.

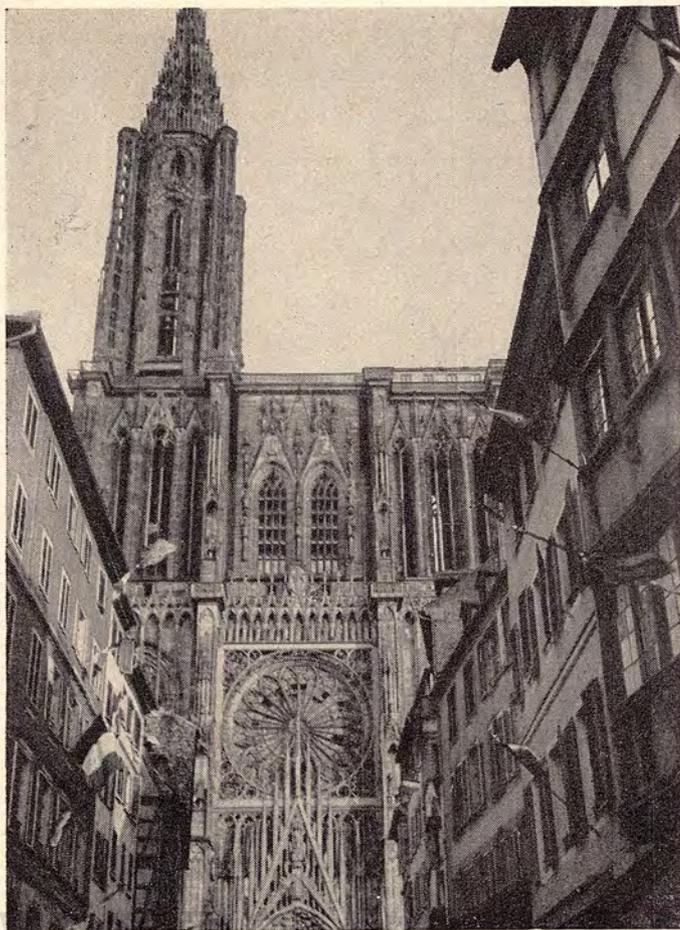
The 15th Infantry continued to maintain defensive positions, check the numerous pillboxes that the enemy had evacuated, and provide antiparachute alert units. Our troops occupied many of the pillboxes as outposts.

Marnemen will recall the guard duty in the old Alsatian capital—the Physics Building, Adolf Kosmier, Matford Factory, Hotel De Ville, the Pioneer Gasno, the laboratories at Fort Ney, and the interminable strings of railroad cars that filled the yards.

Many will remember the worship services that were held in the world-famous Strasbourg Cathedral . . . the first since the Germans came in 1940. Others will recall the burial given Pfc. Simon Quiroz of the 15th Infantry, who was the only 3d Division man to die in the liberation of the little village of Mutzig. M. Haller Eugene, mayor of St. Maurice, was given permission to conduct the services, which were attended by a guard of honor from VI Corps artillery. After eulogizing Quiroz and paying high tribute to the 3d Division, the mayor announced that a plaque would be erected in honor of the fallen soldier.

Strasbourg, as the largest and most important city occupied by the 3d Division in France, called for special attention from the occupying forces. The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, for instance, guarded intelligence targets prescribed by Sixth Army Group's T-Force, which had the mission of protecting and exploiting anything that might yield information of the enemy's army or war industry. Included in the targets were an amphibious-motor-vehicle plant, an important naval munitions experimental plant, and the notorious laboratory at the University of Strasbourg, whose doctors were accused of performing experiments with poison gas and disease cultures on living humans.

Before reaching Strasbourg, the Division also liber-



The facade, and famous rose-window of the Strasbourg Cathedral as seen from the approach street.

ated one of the most brutal of the Nazi concentration camps—that at Natzwiller, northeast of Schirmeck.

The Division established a supervisory city administration (G-5) under the A C of S, G-2, Lt. Col. Grover Wilson. Until the arrival of French 10th Military District headquarters under the French General Schwartz, the Division was responsible for guarding food dumps, utilities and warehouses, arranging for transportation and distribution of food, and other functions performed by military government personnel.

Prize PW of the Strasbourg episode was General Major (equivalent: Brig. Gen.) Vaterrodt, the town commandant, who was described by interrogators as cringing, totally opportunistic, and only too willing to give information if it might improve his position with his captors.

On December 8, the Division started a program of deception, designed to assist the VI Corps in its attack in the north toward Germany.

Artillery registration on points east of the Rhine River, apparently "careless" revealing of rubber assault boats on the banks of the river with an occasional

boat being sent downstream on the loose, and many other measures were perpetrated, designed to make the Germans believe that the 3d was going to cross the Rhine in the Strasbourg sector.

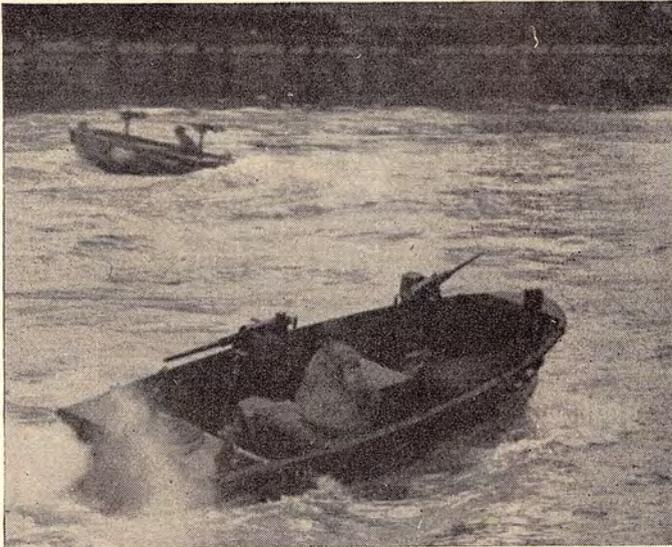
Once the restoration of some degree of order, if not normality, was well under way in Strasbourg, the 3d had some chance to reflect upon its recent accomplishments. The effect of the sullenly-bitter Vosges battle manifested itself in several ways.

LeClerc's 2d Armored Division, the outfit which had been first to enter Paris the previous autumn, and which had moved on Strasbourg from a general north-west direction in the recent drive with characteristic celerity, had spearheaded that effort to crack German defenses before the Rhine River. Enemy elements west of the river were already partially frustrated in their efforts to hold a sizable salient when elements of the French First Army reached the Rhine just above Basle, Switzerland, and moved up to liberate a section of territory which included Mulhouse. This occurred a short time before our own all-out push from the Meurthe.

The 3d Infantry Division had broken through the enemy's intended winter line, spearheading Seventh Army's push through the central Vosges in the latter stages of the drive, to widen the breach made by the first breakthrough to Strasbourg, and to help reduce



Chaplain Ralph Smith, 3d Infantry Division celebrates mass in the Strasbourg Cathedral on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.



The 10th Engineers outfitted these assault boats for reconnaissance work on the Rhine. This is the Kleiner Rhein.

German forces west of the Rhine in our sector and split them into two groups: a large pocket which included Colmar on the south and a German foothold on Alsatian soil to the north which was rapidly dwindling under continued Seventh Army pressure.

The recent drive had been record-making in several ways. In a congratulatory message, VI Corps Commander Major General Edward H. Brooks made note of one precedent-shattering fact:

"Since the beginning of the military history of Europe, to force a successful passage of the Vosges Mountains has been considered by military experts as an operation offering such small opportunity for success as to forestall consideration of such effort. [No military force had ever before crossed the Vosges against organized resistance.]

"To march, supply and maintain a large body of troops through these natural obstacles, without hostile opposition, is a major problem in itself.

"To fight cross-country, in the face of unreasoning, stubborn Nazi resistance, at times supplying over snow-covered mountain roads and trails, through this region and at this season of the year, is a military achievement of which all who participated can be justly proud.

"To those men of the 100th and 36th Divisions who battered the flanks, to those of the 3d and 103d Divisions and of the 14th Armored Division who poured onto the Alsatian Plain, to those supporting combat troops of the Corps, and to those indispensable elements of supply, maintenance, and evacuation, I extend my thanks and congratulations. Teamwork, throughout to a superlative degree.

"It is with pride and humility that I realize the pinnacle and the magnitude of this concerted achieve-

ment of American soldiery—your achievement. I have every confidence that the future of the VI Corps rests secure and bright in your capable hands."

Bare statistics pointed up another important feat. From the beginning of the attack on the morning of November 21 to the time leading elements of the 7th Infantry entered Strasbourg on the night of the 26th, the distance covered was at least fifty miles, measured by road. The troops who ended the long march in the vicinity of Strasbourg were very near exhaustion.

They were not particularly articulate about their great success. The trail was too rocky. Even at the finish, when the Rhine forced a temporary halt, the job was not done. There had been the grinding, nerve-wracking "Battle of the Apartment Houses" under small-arms, machine-gun, and *Panzerfaust* fire, and heavy caliber artillery from Germany for the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Infantry. There was the temporary attachment of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry to LeClerc, and Company E's battle to reduce the Mutzig fort.

There was to be no sustained period of rest in Strasbourg. On the north the bulk of Seventh Army was continuing to force the issue with the enemy remaining in Alsace in that sector. The 36th and 103d (the latter very shortly relieved and sent to rejoin the Seventh) were still in strong contact with the Germans to the south. The French 2d Armored slowed down in its attack toward Colmar as the enemy, anticipating a pincers between I French Corps on the south and II French Corps on the north flank, demolished bridges along every possible route of approach and offered tenacious resistance to the attackers. The 36th Division was attached to II French Corps.

There was much speculation in regard to 3d Division's next assignment. Cross the Rhine? Go north and into Germany through the old Maginot Line? Or south, to join the French . . . ?

TABLE OF CASUALTIES*

Vosges Mountains and Early Colmar
Sept. 15, 1944 through Jan. 21, 1945

KIA	WIA	MIA	Total Battle Casualties	Non-Battle Casualties
1277	4852	108	6237	7895
Reinforcements and Hospital return-to-unit personnel				
Reinf			Hosp RTUs	
Off	EM		Off	EM
195	5667		196	6563

KNOWN ENEMY CASUALTIES

Killed	Wounded	Captured
1151	655	7258

*These figures were provided by the A C of S, G-1, 3d Infantry Division.

X
THE COLMAR POCKET

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We Move in the Lead Again to Crack the "Frozen Crust"

TROOP LIST

1. *Hq & Hq Co, 3d Inf Div*
 2. *7th Infantry*
 3. *15th Infantry*
 4. *30th Infantry*
 5. *3d Inf Div Arty*
 - 9th FA Bn
 - 10th FA Bn
 - 39th FA Bn
 - 41st FA Bn
 - 141st FA Bn
 - II/62d FA Bn (Fr)
 - 802d FA Bn
 - 773d (4.5) FA Bn
 6. *254th Inf Regt (—)*
 7. *3d Bn, 112th Inf Regt*
 8. *441st AAA AW Bn*
 9. *2d Plat, Btry A, 353d (S/L) Bn*
 10. *10th Engr Bn (C)*
 - 3d Bn, 40th Engr Regt.
 11. *256th Engr (C) Bn*
 12. *3d Rcn Troop*
 13. *3d Med Bn*
 14. *3d Signal Co*
 15. *756th Tank Bn*
 16. *601st TD Bn*
 17. *99th Cml Mortar Bn*
 - 168th Cml Co (SG)
 - 21st Cml Co
 18. *5 DB (Fr)*
 19. *Air Support*
-

ALTHOUGH many units of the 3d Division seized the opportunities offered them to rest and rehabilitate in and near Strasbourg, at no time was the Division off the front lines or out of contact with the enemy.

Following elimination of the Kehl bridgehead (with the weird "Battle of the Apartments," and the end, by German surrender, of the publicized Mutzig "Ostfort"), nightly contacts in the form of vicious exchanges of fire across the Rhine punctuated the 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments' otherwise almost monotonous vigil along the banks of the river.

The 3d Infantry Division was on the defensive for the second time in the war, but despite the lack of face-to-face contact it was an uneasy period. Through no direct connection with our activities, stalemate had overcome the Division as a whole. A crossing in strength of the Rhine River was not then feasible nor contemplated; consequently a good deal of wonderment was in store as to the immediate future.

To the north, other units of the Seventh Army were pushing into southern Germany. To the south, First French Army, with the U. S. 36th Infantry Division attached, found, with a growing realization that it still had on its hands an embarrassing German bulge west of the Rhine, and that temporarily it was unable to do anything about it. As the Germans, to preserve Colmar, pushed back some French units and elements of the 36th Division around Selestat, the fact emerged that here was no mere line on the situation map to be wiped out at leisure, but a stubbornly-fighting pocket

of enemy who were becoming fortified more strongly daily, and that a full-scale coordinated army-sized attack was going to be required to eliminate them.

At first it was called "the bridgehead around Colmar," but as it persisted, a name was given it which stuck: "Colmar Pocket." The 3d Infantry Division was to learn that it was a pocket bulging with fortifications and sudden death; and an area whose elimination was to develop into our second greatest fight of the entire war—some said the greatest—in the same degree of ferocity as the attack to break the Anzio "iron ring." Yet, even following the elimination of the Colmar Pocket, comparatively few persons on the outside knew Colmar—if they knew of it at all—as anything more than the name of an upper Alsatian city whose liberation came only after a lengthy period of waiting.

Following receipt of the Seventh Army order that 3d Infantry Division would relieve 36th Infantry Division, 30th Infantry was designated as the vanguard, and commenced moving south on the afternoon of December 13, to be attached to the 36th.

The complete force was dubbed "Task Force McGarr"—so named because Col. Lionel C. McGarr (then acting Assistant Division Commander) was ordered to lead it into the Colmar Pocket action. Lt. Col. Richard H. Nedderson commanded the 30th Infantry. Initially the force was composed of the complete 30th Infantry; 41st Field Artillery Battalion; Company C of the 10th Engineers; Battery D, 441st Antiaircraft Battalion; a section of tanks from Company B, 753d Tank Battalion; and a platoon of tanks and a section of tank destroyers



The exterior of the 3d Infantry Division's Officers' Club in Strasbourg.

from Combat Command IV, 5th French Armored Division (*Cinquième Division Blindée*).

(The attack, which was coordinated with that of a regiment of the 36th Division, commenced one day before the enemy in the north launched the tremendous counter-offensive in the Ardennes-Schnee Eiffel area, although this was not known until two day later.)

The 30th Infantry, of all the 3d Division units, had had the least rest. During its 15-day stay in Strasbourg the 1st Battalion had been attached to the 2 DB (LeClerc's famed 2d Armored) for the five-day engagement near Kogenheim for which twenty-three officers and men had been awarded the Croix de Guerre. Company E, in addition, had been assigned the mission of neutralizing the Mutzig fort, which it accomplished successfully.

The regiment's attack, following its commitment in the Colmar Pocket, got off between 0700 and 0800, December 15, the three battalions attacking simultaneously from assembly areas in the vicinity of Aubure and Freland. The 2d and 3d Battalions moved through the mountainous forest of Sigolsheim into firing positions near Ursprung. The first opposition was encountered by Company I, which received intense enemy machine-gun fire at 1300 from a force emplaced on Hill 651, an irregular mountainous mass which dominated the then critically important Toggenbach-Alspach area. After a 25-minute fire fight, Company I destroyed three machine guns, and killed several enemy riflemen.

The two assault battalions moved across the twin hill-masses flanking Toggenbach. At 1417 approximately fifty Germans, manning concrete and earthwork emplacements of World War I type on Hill 672, opened fire on Company E with machine guns, machine pistols, and rifles. Company E accepted the challenge. In a swift flanking movement it overwhelmed this segment of the German outpost line of resistance and

swept southwest along the rugged wooded ridge toward Hill 621. The movement of the battalion along the ridge line which pointed like an arrow at Kaysersberg directly to the south was harassed by continuing small-arms and automatic fire, but the advance was uninterrupted.

The 3d Battalion meanwhile advanced on Toggenbach, a cluster of houses between Aubure and Kaysersberg. A roadblock, manned by a determined German force, was reported 1300 meters north of the village, and a combat patrol was dispatched to demolish it. Sgt. William A. Nagowski was instrumental in clearing this roadblock. Another 3d Battalion patrol sliced the highway south of Toggenbach at 1500 after a brisk fire fight.

• While Company G was pounded by heavy howitzer fire along the high ground north of Hill 666, Company E organized night positions to the east of the Toggenbach road and plans were completed for the final assault on the village. One platoon of Company K guided on the ridge line for the attack, but encountered a large force of determined enemy on the hillside due west of the village. Fighting in dim light in deep weeds at almost hand-to-hand range, the platoon took eighteen prisoners and killed or wounded the remainder of the German force.

Company G moved through a tempest of howitzer fire to establish night positions at the north base of Hill 666. Companies E and G were deluged by heavy artillery concentrations during the night, in one of which 2d Battalion CO Lt. Col. Frederick R. Armstrong was killed while personally assisting his most advanced assault unit—Company G—in its forward drive. Maj. James L. Osgard succeeded him.



General Young, Acting CG, 3d Division receives General Schwartz, CG 10th French Military District, in Strasbourg.



Lieutenant Colonel Donald E. Hoffmeister, Commanding Officer, 10th Field Artillery Battalion.

At 2200 Company M headquarters repulsed a 10-man enemy patrol, wounding six of the attackers.

As engineers cleared the Toggenbach-Kaysersberg road of mines, tanks thrust their way through Toggenbach. At 1835, patrols of Company B established contact with Company I inside the village. Tanks and engineers with bridging materials moved up to await patrol reports on suitable crossing sites over the Weiss River. The report came back at 2250 that the stream could be crossed without difficulty near the Kaysersberg road, although the stream was swift and elsewhere the banks steep.

Two separate reconnaissance patrols, one from Company I, the other from the 1st Battalion I & R Platoon, thrust into Kaysersberg, heart of the enemy defensive position, engaged an antitank strongpoint and drew withering fire from the buildings.

In the first day's action Toggenbach had been captured, the Toggenbach-Alspach road cleared, a vital bridge site over the Weiss seized, and the first five houses in Kaysersberg taken. In addition 2d Battalion

had taken Hill 672, establishing a line of departure to attack Hills 666 and 621.

On December 16 the Task Force was strengthened by the addition of Companies C of: 756th Tank Battalion, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, and 3d Medical Battalion, all normal attachments to the 30th.

The three battalions of the 30th were now ready to join in the assault on Kaysersberg, located on the rim of the Rhine plain where the Weiss River flows through a narrow channel between rugged, forested mountain masses, which flank the town to the north and south. East is the flatland of the Rhine; west the valley winds upward through the hills toward the La Bonhomme pass, one of the main corridors through the Vosges.

The 1st Battalion drew the assignment of crossing the Weiss and ascending the steep slopes of Hill 512, south of the town. The 2d Battalion was to thrust its way down the precipitous, oblong mountain mass to the north of Kaysersberg, consisting of Hills 616 and 612. The 3d Battalion had the assignment of driving into Kaysersberg itself, to clear the town.

There were confused clashes between patrols and isolated enemy groups as the 30th Infantry moved silently forward to join the battle in the early morning hours of December 16.

By 0630 Company B had moved through the factory area of Kaysersberg and found no enemy. The battalion attack on Hill 512 commenced. The main force was preceded by a screen of scouts, especially coached by Maj. Mackenzie E. Porter to be on the alert to report all evidences of enemy activity. Aim of the battalion commander was to gain his objective by stealth, avoiding all fighting until the troops were established on the crest of the hill.

Using circuitous routes, the 1st Battalion reached the trail net on Hill 512, which constituted the point agreed



Lieutenant Colonel Paulick and Major Potter, 15th Exec. and S-3 discuss the situation over a map.

upon with French Goums. By 0930 the entire hill was cleared with no contact other than overrunning a five-man enemy observation post. The enemy began pounding the hill with mortar fire. The 1st Battalion sent out patrols to guard its positions and repel all counterattacks.

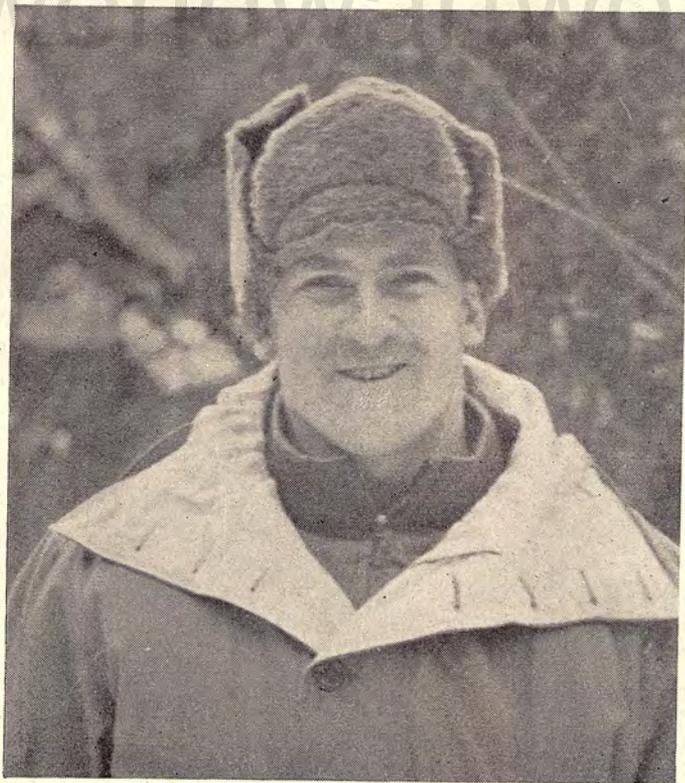
Meanwhile Company I had thrust aggressively into Kaysersberg from the southeast, followed by Company K and supporting armor. The hard, bloody work of house-clearing began. Withering small-arms fire whipped up and back the narrow streets as our troops advanced. Company I changed commanders twice during the battle for the town.

By 1300, footholds had been gained in the heart of the town, at heavy cost. The 3d Battalion CP set up in Kaysersberg, and the work of clearing snipers continued. Suddenly, the enemy launched an all-out counterattack to regain his principal stronghold. Tanks opened fire on 3d Battalion troops in the town, while at the same time Companies I and L were hit from the east by a force of 300 Germans. Heavy artillery, mortar, tank, and machine-gun fire poured in on the troops in the town.

The counterattack continued for two hours, during which numerous separate acts of heroism stood out. The attack was repulsed, but the powerful German force, still determined to regain Kaysersberg, estab-



Colonel Charles E. Johnson, Chief of Staff, 3d Infantry Division.



Lieutenant Colonel William B. Rosson, G-3, 3d Infantry Division.

lished and entrenched itself around the city, gathering its strength for new counterblows.

Meanwhile, 2d Battalion had commenced its attack on the hill mass north of Kaysersberg and east of the Toggenbach-Kaysersberg road. At 1300, Company E's 1st platoon moved to the nose of the long hill which ended at Kaysersberg while Companies F and G continued their slow advance along the wooded slopes of Hill 666 against heavy opposition.

The enemy held the oval hill mass with a determined force of crack troops, abundantly supplied with all types of weapons, and greatly aided by the concrete and earthwork strongpoints originally built by the French in the early part of the war.

The way was prepared by Cannon Company fire on Ammerschwihl and systematic pounding of the hostile hill positions with mortar rounds and machine-gun fire. The battalion then moved toward the crest. By midafternoon Company G was halted by fire from three concrete machine-gun emplacements, which were difficult to locate due to the dense vegetation in which they were sited. At approximately the same time Company F found its attack interrupted by intense fire from six defiladed enemy machine guns.

The 2d Battalion decided to postpone its attack and made preparations for a full-scale assault the following day. The engineers began to clear roads to the hill

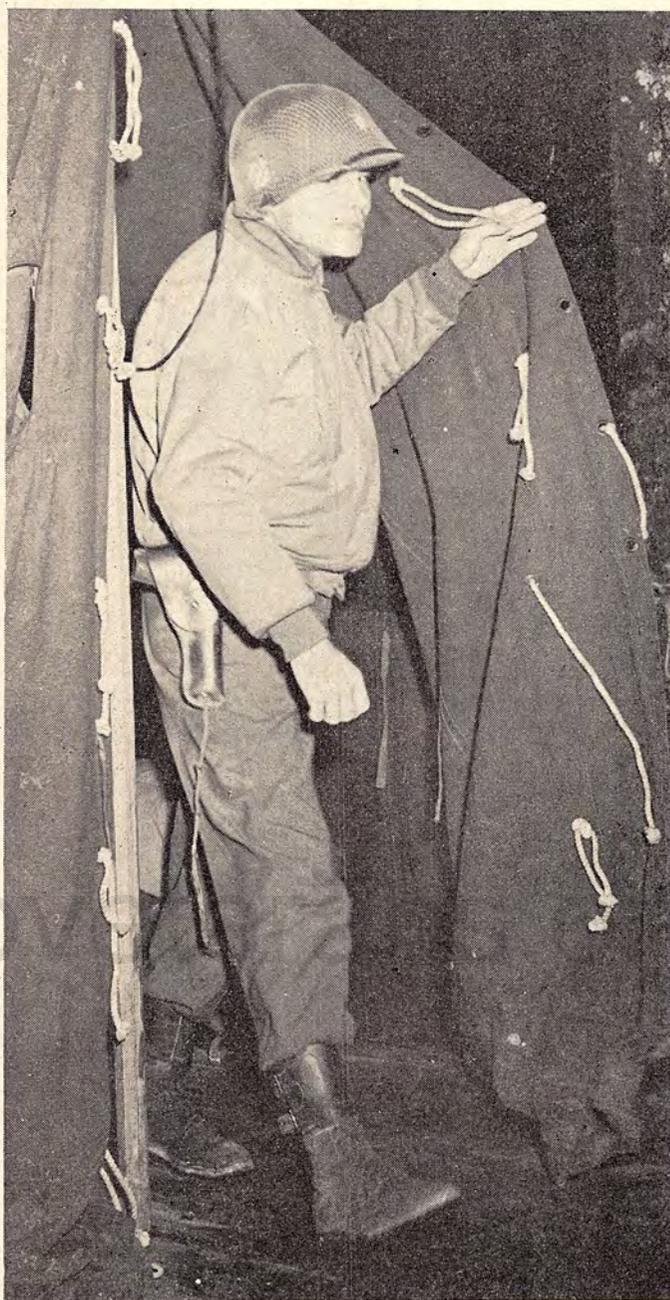
positions so that three tanks, assigned to the battalion from the 756th, could be brought into action. While diversionary fire was laid on the west side of the hill Company E was to attack from the east. Clearing of these two hills was considered the key to the position and the central objective of Task Force McGarr.

The 1st Battalion, which had seized its objective swiftly and without strong opposition, rained artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire from Hill 512 on the Germans fleeing from Kaisersberg. A decision was made to strike southward from the hill crest, setting up a roadblock at Bridge 267, commanding an important east-west highway leading from Ammerschwihr. First Lt. Charles P. Murray, Jr., CO of Company C, led the two platoons which performed this mission and in accomplishing it performed an outstanding deed of gallantry and intrepidity to the successful accomplishment of the mission.

Unwilling to risk his men in the attack, Murray went forward with an SCR 536 to a suitable vantage point. Here he attempted to place artillery on the withdrawing enemy, but found his radio out of commission. Returning to his platoon he borrowed an M-1 with grenade-launcher attachment, returned to his exposed position, and opened fire on the enemy. The German force of 200 replied with intense fire, but Lieutenant Murray stayed at his post until all of his ten grenades had been thrown. He withdrew to secure a BAR and returned to his hazardous position to engage the enemy in a half-hour attack. Fighting alone, he compelled the Germans to withdraw leaving three 120mm mortars, then directed mortar fire on the withdrawing enemy with devastating effect; he led his men forward in an assault from foxhole to foxhole although wounded in eight places by an exploding grenade. He personally killed twenty and captured eleven of the enemy, for which he later received the Nation's highest award—the Congressional Medal of Honor.

On December 17, fighting in the Kaisersberg salient reached a climax. The 2d Battalion continued its difficult drive to seize the hill masses north of the city, and 1st Battalion weathered a furious German counter-attack which was delivered with great power and determination. The 3d Battalion drove deeper into Kaisersberg under accelerated enemy artillery and mortar fire. Company I directed tank-destroyer fire on a medieval tower north of Kaisersberg which the enemy was employing as an observation post. Companies K and L advanced to the south and southwest of town and toward the base of Hill 512. Tank and bazooka fire was received from the northwest edge of the city, but the battalion directed artillery on the tanks, destroying one.

The fighting still continued unabated at noon. Heavy



Lieutenant Colonel James R. Wendt Jr., commanding officer, 41st Field Artillery Battalion.

fighting also occurred at the Weiss River bridge. The enemy jabbed at 3d Battalion's positions with small-scale tank-infantry attacks. Attack and counterattack continued throughout the day with unflagging violence. By midnight the enemy was definitely losing his hold.

The 2d Battalion jumped off on its all-out attack at 0645, December 17. Three tanks from the 756th Tank Battalion supported Company F in its attack on Hill 621 as Companies E and G drove on Hill 666, making such rapid progress that the section from Bat-



Brigadier General William Sexton, CG, 3d Infantry Division Artillery.

tery D, 441st AAA ("anti-anything, anytime") Battalion, which had fired sixty-three rounds of 37mm high-explosive shells and 2660 rounds of cal. 50 ammunition, was obliged to lift fire. Company E scaled the precipitous slope, losing eight men killed and seventeen wounded, but reaching the summit and killing, wounding, or capturing all Germans there. Simultaneously Company G made its frontal assault on the hill through a screen of enemy howitzer, mortar, machine-gun, and *Panzerfaust* fire.

Hills 666 and 621 were cleared by 1130, with at least fifty Germans killed and a hundred wounded, plus thirty prisoners. Twenty machine guns were destroyed, and three mortars captured, as well as a vast quantity of small arms and ammunition.

Companies E and G regrouped and drove southeast toward Company F on Hill 621, encountering strong enemy opposition. In the fierce fight to make this linkup, troops of the battalion destroyed five more machine guns. They also killed thirty and captured forty-five more Germans in the all-afternoon fight, and themselves took heavy casualties. Contact was made with Company F at 1545 by Company G. The companies immediately began to organize night defensive positions. Despite incessant German infiltration and savage patrol combat in the forests, the battalion succeeded in maintaining its grip on the high ground.

The 1st Battalion's daylong fight had commenced with a German counterattack, delivered by an entire regiment, driving from three directions at once. The enemy swarmed toward Hill 512 from Ammerschwihr and Kaisersberg, hitting Company B's line at 0811.

The battalion had not had time to consolidate its hill positions and tie in closely with the remainder of the Task Force. There was but one mountain trail to the summit of Hill 512. No armor had been able to get to the summit and the battalion requirements of ammunition, food, and water had to be hand-carried up the trail, necessitating a four-hour trip each time.

At 0825 approximately a hundred enemy advanced from the southeast to drive a wedge between Companies B and C on the high ground designated Objective "X." By 0840 the three prongs of the enemy counterattack had overrun the eastern nose of the battalion position.

The Battalion CO, Major Porter, placed artillery fire on the enemy's rear to prevent reinforcement of the counterattack and pounded the Germans with a mortar concentration. The enemy, however, continued to gain ground, overrunning the eastern end of Company C's position.

Major Porter consolidated his forces and ordered the battalion to hold the high ridge line at all costs. The nose of the hill had been temporarily lost, but the crucial ridge line and the road net junction were firmly in our hands. The reinforced platoon at Bridge 267, finding itself isolated by the sudden counterattack, now fought its way back through hostile lines, finally reaching the ridge to join the defense.

The battalion engaged the Germans from its high ground position in a fire fight that lasted all day and all night. The enemy forces were composed of German officer candidates, who had been promised that once they regained Kayserberg and the surrounding hills they would be returned to Germany to complete their courses. Fresh, fanatical, and more intelligent than the average *Landser*, these men fought with skill and determination. By the end of the day an estimated fifty had been killed and twice that number wounded.

The German recapture of Bridge 267 was disastrous—for the enemy. Mortar and artillery fire placed on the bridge and roadblock was so intense that the enemy retreated leaving behind twenty-five dead.

On December 18 Task Force McGarr was further strengthened by the addition of Company B, 99th Chemical Battalion, but the battalion's tank and tank-destroyer support from the French CC4 and 753d Tank Battalion was withdrawn.

At daybreak 1st Battalion was still weathering furious counterattacks. It was noticed by Major Porter that the enemy chose the same avenues of assault; accordingly, he regrouped his forces so that they could effec-

tively control with enfilading small-arms and machine-gun fire and mortars, the draws and pathways along which the enemy so persistently advanced.

The supply problem grew more acute. The battalion rear echelon was mobilized, almost entirely, to carry ammunition. Supplies were thus assured for the rest of the day.

Patrols were sent from the beleaguered hill position. First Sgt. Nicholas F. Kiwatsky of Company B reflected the temper of several valorous actions by leading his small patrol deep into enemy territory, killing a machine gunner and assistant with M-1 fire at 200-yard range, and moving straight into the core of the German position to silence a second machine gun and kill seven enemy soldiers singlehandedly.

By 1300 the battalion had repulsed three counterattacks; from the east, from Ammerschwihr, and from the southeast, each of them consisting of from 200 to 300 men supported by tank and self-propelled-gun fires. Three more counterattacks were hurled against the battalion during the afternoon and all were repelled. By 1845, after bringing the combined weight of all fires on the enemy, the counterattacks ceased. At 2055 a check revealed that 1st Battalion had not lost an inch of ground during the day's counterattacks.

During the morning of the 18th, the 2d Battalion expelled the Germans from their last remaining positions around Hill 621, then continued its drive to the southwest to link up with the Task Force positions in Kaysersberg. Company F remained behind to eliminate a small German pocket.

The 3d Battalion received counterattacks during the day but pressed forward, tightening its control over Kaysersberg and establishing patrol contact with the French CCV at approximately 1300. Company L, having cleared its sector of Kaysersberg, was ordered to move up the hill south of town to join 1st Battalion and reinforce its west flank. Preparations were made for the final attack to eliminate the enemy from his remaining positions on and around Hill 512.

The primary task of December 19 was to smash the German positions in the 1st Battalion sector. Tremendous preliminary fires deluged the enemy line. At 0815 1st Battalion, with Companies B and C in the assault, fell on the German force. By 0920 the enemy was driven in confusion from the nose of the hill which he had fought so desperately to retain. Dazed by the furious fire, the Germans put up little more than token resistance. Then, at 1115, Company C reported the establishment of contact with the French in Ammerschwihr and set up and manned a roadblock at Bridge 267.

Company F eliminated the pocket in its zone after a fierce fire fight, destroying eight machine guns and three mortars and taking eleven prisoners, then con-



This scene looking west from the Rhine Plain toward the foothills of the Vosges depicts typical terrain fought over in the Colmar Pocket.

tinued over Hill 21 and entered Kayserberg at 1100.

At 1845 two battalions of enemy were sighted approaching Task Force positions from the west. Company C set up a roadblock on the Alspach-Kaysersberg road to thwart this move and brought a section of Flak-wagons up for its defense.

At daybreak on December 20, the 441st Flakwagons fired 4,900 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition and 170 rounds of 37mm HE ammunition, saturating the woods where the Germans were preparing their counterattack. The 30th Infantry, with the aid of this fire, shattered this counterattack before it got under way.

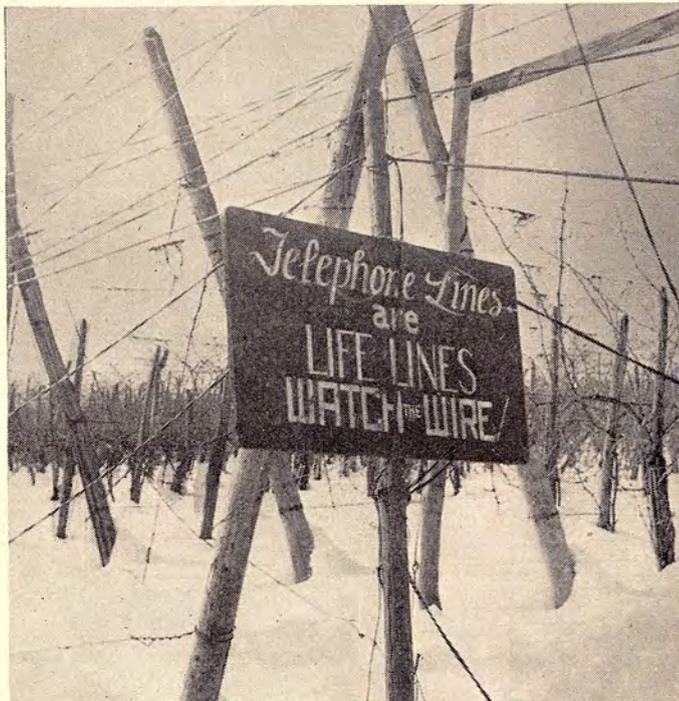
At 1030 another and final enemy blow was reported in preparation, this time from the south in the vicinity of Bridge 267. Again the Task Force deluged the assembly areas of the Germans with artillery, mortar, and cannon fire.

Results of the entire mission, now completed, were striking. A 5,000-meter German penetration between the 3d French DIA (*Division Infanterie Algerienne*) and the 36th U. S. Infantry Division had been sealed off and smashed, opening a vital supply artery from St. Dié to the Rhine Valley for the passage of troops and materiel. A preliminary battle to the major offensive that was to obliterate the Colmar Pocket had been waged and won.

The accomplishment of this task involved the most exacting type of mountain warfare in icy weather. Scaling steep slopes, their passage barred by a tangled undergrowth and a maze of forest, subjected to harrowing fire from German casemates of timber, earthwork, and concrete, the men of Task Force McGarr had fought with determination and quiet heroism.

Prisoner interrogation revealed that nine battalions of German infantry, two of engineers, a specialized support battalion and a minimum of four artillery battalions had been shattered.

The victory was accomplished at a cost to the Task Force of fifty-eight killed, eighteen missing, and 190 wounded. In comparison, known enemy losses were



The 3d Signal Company posted similar signs throughout the area to aid the campaign to keep in communications.

298 killed, 327 prisoners, and an estimated 1185 wounded. In addition the enemy lost four tanks, twelve mortars, two Flakwagons, forty machine guns, and a large number of artillery pieces.

The 41st Field Artillery Battalion fired 7226 rounds of 105mm howitzer ammunition in seventy-four concentrations and ten TOTs (time on target, a system whereby the fire of all guns of a given number of artillery units is brought to bear simultaneously). Cannon Company fired 5864 rounds of 105 and 75mm ammunition, and a total of ninety-nine rounds of 4.2 mortar ammunition were expended by Company B, 99th Chemical Battalion.

(Beginning December 16, the Fifth and Sixth *Panzer* Armies of Field Marshal von Rundstedt lashed out in a counteroffensive in Belgium and Luxembourg which stunned the entire Allied camp. Known later as "Battle of the Bulge," German elements achieved a maximum penetration of approximately fifty-five miles before the tide of battle turned and Third and Ninth Armies to either flank of the attacked United States First Army began slashing at the sides of the Bulge. Colmar Pocket, in the big picture, was an irritating little red grease-pencilled twist on the lower end of the situation map, only a minor battle—unless one was there.)

On December 17 the 3d Infantry Division began moving south for the continuance of the relief of 36th Infantry Division. The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, was first relieved, to commence its move to the vicinity

of Riquewihr, where it closed in on the following day. It was followed by the 3d and 1st Battalions on December 19. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 7th Infantry, were completely relieved on defensive positions in Strasbourg by other elements of the 36th Division, and command of the former 36th sector passed to Brigadier General Robert N. Young (commanding the Division in the absence of General O'Daniel, on temporary duty in the United States) at 1430, December 21.

Two days later, December 23, the 15th Infantry launched an attack against the two towns of Bennwihr and Sigolsheim, as the first step in securing a more stable line of defense. Defense was the keynote at this time. Seventh Army had received a sizable German counterattack against its barely-won positions in southern Germany and was forced to withdraw to a more tenable line in lower Alsace. It was known that the Germans had announced their intentions of retaking Strasbourg, if possible, as a "Christmas present" for *der Führer*, and a pincers between the forces opposing Seventh Army forces and those opposing French First Army, of which the 3d Infantry Division was now a part, was considered a definite possibility. Our first step, therefore, was to secure Bennwihr and Sigolsheim, the last two towns of any size between that part of our line and the key city of Colmar, and to drive the Germans from all high ground north of a line Sigolsheim-Kayersberg.

Sigolsheim and Bennwihr are located at the extreme western edge of the Alsace Plain and just east of the last high slopes of the Vosges. Advance reconnaissance indicated that Sigolsheim in particular was strongly occupied by the enemy, and later events proved this to be entirely true.

Besides drawing the assignment to take the two towns, 15th Infantry also had the mission of clearing Hill 351, a high mass that lies between them.

The 15th's drive was directed east from positions in the vicinity of Kientzheim, which was held by the 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware, was to capture Sigolsheim; the 3d Battalion, under Maj. John O'Connell, to attack Bennwihr, and the 2d Battalion, under Lt. Col. Eugene A. Salet, was to block and support the attack of the other battalions from positions on the northern slope of Hill 351.

At H-hour, 0730, Companies A and C attacked. Particularly stiff resistance was encountered just before reaching the town when a convent just north of it was found to be an enemy stronghold, with enemy manning machine guns, mortars, and small arms. After a stiff two-hour fight Company A succeeded in pressing through and past this opposition to reach the edge of town at noon.

The entrance of Company A into the town of Sigolsheim was only a forerunner to a terrific fight that lasted five days. The small village was a shambles, having been reduced by our bombers and artillery, and by tank and tank-destroyer fire provided by the 601st and 756th attachments to 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, under command of Lt. Colonel Ware.

The 3d Battalion, meanwhile, had marched south from Mittelwihr in the morning and attacked Bennwihr from the north and west. Companies I and K under command of Capt. Warren M. Stuart and Robert W. Hahn, respectively, moved into the town at 0800, and it seemed as if resistance would be light until Company K suddenly came under terrific fire from a school near the center of the village.

Accepting the challenge, Company K stormed the school. The enemy was entrenched in the rubble of houses and cellars, and resisted bitterly. Finally Company K drove the enemy from the school and established the buildings as a temporary PW cage. The conquest, however, was short-lived. A desperate enemy counterattack was launched that afternoon and the Germans retook the school and some sixty prisoners who were being held in it. Enemy armor figured strongly in this attack and a Mark IV tank was reported to have withstood several bazooka and rifle-grenade shots which apparently struck it squarely. As darkness came the 3d Battalion withdrew slightly to prepare for another attack the following morning.

In Sigolsheim, too, there was a bitter fight. Several armored vehicles of the 756th Tank Battalion, under command of Lt. Col. Glenn F. Rogers, bogged down in the muddy terrain, thus reducing the striking power of our force.

Complete penetration into the village had not been accomplished and the battalion was still attempting to gain a good toehold in Sigolsheim when the enemy counterattacked from the center of town with infantry and armor late that night, and from the direction of Hill 351 to the north, with mortar and artillery fire. The position became untenable and 1st Battalion relinquished its slender hold on Sigolsheim and, under orders, withdrew to Kientzheim and Riquewihr for the night.

It was now apparent that before any position in Sigolsheim could be held the enemy must be driven completely from Hill 351, or else the same thing would happen again.

During darkness Companies K and L, the latter commanded by 1st Lt. Earl B. Hobbs, struck Bennwihr again in an early morning thrust, this time from the east. Each company destroyed an enemy tank shortly after the attack got underway and this seemed to help demoralize the enemy, who always had placed a good

deal of faith in his supporting armor. Moving in, the 3d Battalion again commenced the grinding, dangerous, physically-exhausting work of eliminating the enemy from the basements and house-fragments of Bennwihr. By 1225 a major portion of the town had been cleared.

Intent on eliminating the harassing interference from Hill 351, 1st Battalion attacked up the northwestern slope of the hill on the morning of December 24, from the direction of Riquewihr. Company B, commanded by 1st Lt. George W. Mohr, encountered a heavy fire fight en route, coming under machine-gun and small-arms fire from well dug-in and concealed positions. This pocket was eliminated and the company proceeded. Company A, under Capt. Elmo F. Tefanelli, reached the top of the hill twice, but was badly disorganized on the barren slopes by heavy flanking fire and concentrations of mortar and artillery, and was forced to withdraw. Company C, commanded by Capt. Samuel H. Roberts, took up the fight and, with Company B, succeeded in reaching the northeast slope of the hill at noon.

At this point Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware, 1st Battalion commander, reviewed the situation and decided that a vigorous display of personal leadership was necessary to invigorate the troops with an offensive spirit that had been dampened by the extremely heavy losses that had been sustained, the icy-cold weather, and the continuous fighting.

After a two-hour personal reconnaissance, he led a handful of men and a tank in a daring assault on the enemy positions on top of the hill, which was crowned with six enemy machine guns.

In describing Colonel Ware's action, Capt. Merlin C. Stoker, S-3 of the 1st Battalion and himself a member of the group that went with the Colonel, said: "It is my opinion that Colonel Ware's display of icy courage was an act, not only of heroism, but of necessity. It was essential that the deadlock in the Sigolsheim sector be broken and that the discouraged troops be given a new injection of the offensive spirit."

Capt. Vernon L. Rankin, commanding Company D, who directed mortar fire on the hill during the assault, said that Colonel Ware personally killed five Germans and captured about twenty others. Tank fire which the Colonel directed accounted for four of the six machine guns that comprised the hard core of the German hill position.

At the end of the assault, twenty German dead were counted, thirty captured, and about 150 crack SS troops, were put to flight.

Colonel Ware was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for this feat.

The 2d Battalion coordinated its fires with the attack



A German Mark IV tank destroyed in the battle at Bennwihr.

of the 1st in the final clearing of all-important Hill 351.

The 3d Battalion, having cleared all but a few houses on the south edge of Bennwihr, proposed to turn south-east out of the city but again struck a stronghold at a road junction on the edge of town. A platoon of Company K, which had been deployed in the vicinity of the junction, was attacked from two directions—from the southern edge of Hill 351 and from the basements of houses that lined the roads at the intersection. As the Germans closed in from Hill 351 the others, apparently in a prearranged plan, jumped yelling from the basement windows. The remainder of Company K, with a tank destroyer, took up the fight, but the enemy also brought in reinforcements and forced the company back. Captain Stuart then reorganized his men, launched them into a fierce counterattack, and by 1600 the company had killed a great number of Germans and retaken control of the road junction.

This terrific fight over a mere road junction was typical of the entire fight over the small area. Bennwihr and Hill 351 were still the scenes of great violence as night came on—the eve of the birth of the Prince of Peace.

The roast turkey, creamed potatoes, and other supplementary items which the Division Quartermaster had received for the Yule dinner were not to be consumed on Christmas Day by the 15th Infantry. On the contrary, the day was to be only another fierce episode which saw the Germans resisting with a fanaticism generated partly by the exaggerated version of the Rundstedt drive to the north given them by their superiors. Statements from prisoners indicated that the enemy morale, especially that of the younger and more fanatical soldiers, had been greatly raised by such statements as, "The U. S. First Army has been completely destroyed," and which led them to believe that help from northern Germany would soon be on the way.

[West of Echternach the Germans had been engaged at two points near the frontier. The columns of the enemy had

been halted some thirty miles from Namur, Liège, and Sedan Gap.

On the north flank the enemy had failed to take his objectives. The shoulder of the salient above Stavelot was beaten back some six miles. In Belgium, the advance was not halted but was being well canalized. Elements of the 1st SS Division were cut off with the loss of fifteen tanks, 200 prisoners taken. The two regimental combat teams of the U. S. 106th Infantry Division that had been cut off during the initial phases of the counteroffensive, had made contact and were still fighting. They were being supplied from the air.

The 84th Infantry Division had just been committed south of Maffe. The 2d Armored and 75th Infantry Divisions were assembled just to the north. Some 7,000 Allied air sorties were flown December 24. Ten thousand tons of bombs were dropped. One hundred and sixteen enemy aircraft were destroyed. Enemy movements were limited to darkness. One spectacular raid blew up a hundred vehicles loaded with gasoline.

Goebbels told the Germans that it was the worst Christmas of the war. He also told them not to worry, that the *Führer* was filled with plans and visions for the future.

On the main street of Bennwihr, a small figure was implanted in the ground in front of a ruined church. It was a reproduction of Christ crucified. The head was missing.]

Although Company K held the road junction at the dawn of Christmas Day, enemy snipers and machine gunners in the houses near the junction wrought death and injury to a number of our men in that area. At 1700, flame throwers were brought into use and several houses were fired. In a little more than an hour, over fifty Germans had surrendered and the other occu-



A solitary 3d Division soldier patrols the streets of Bennwihr.

pants were either casualties or had retreated to a safer place to spend the rest of the holiday.

Hill 351, Bennwihr, the little road junction outside Bennwihr, and a large number of prisoners constituted the holiday gift that Brig. Gen. Robert N. Young, acting division commander, received from the 15th Infantry.

Sigolsheim remained as the only uncaptured objective of the regiment's offensive, and it was attacked from the east on December 26-27.

The 1st Battalion, after clearing out some of the diehards on Hill 351, tied in with 2d Battalion on the left. Company G moved to the road east of the town and joined with Companies K and L, which had been driven back after attacking the east side of the village Christmas night.

The coordinated attack began at 0930, December 26, with Company K advancing along the north road into town from the east, Company L moving along the center road and Company G taking the south road. Air-support missions were also being flown.

The enemy put up a suicidal defense as he fell back from house to house in the streets of Sigolsheim. It was not unusual to see a German standing completely exposed in the center of the street, firing a bazooka or sometimes only a rifle, at our tanks as the armor relentlessly mowed him down or the doughboys took pot shots at him.

The fighting continued unabated all day throughout the night and into the next day. Company K was the first unit to report its zone "all clear," and when the company finished mopping up the northern part of the town at 1450, it swung north toward the convent, which like Hill 351, had been a thorn in the side of the regiment's operations ever since the attack began.

Company L found opposition stiffest in the center of town but continually kept pounding at strongpoints behind rubble, stone fences and pillboxes until the enemy finally began disintegrating and retreating from the city in small groups.

During Company I's bitter fight to clear the enemy from the houses they held in the fire-swept streets of Sigolsheim, 1st Lt. Eli Whiteley particularly distinguished himself and earned the Medal of Honor. In the midst of the savage street fighting, he was hit and badly wounded in the arm and shoulder. Despite this, he attacked alone a house on the street, fire from which was delaying the advance of the company. He killed its two defenders. Hurling smoke and fragmentation grenades, he charged a second house, killed two and captured eleven enemy. He continued to lead his platoon down the battle-crazy street, eliminating house after house. Finally he reached a building held by fanatical Nazis. "... Although suffering from painful

wounds which had rendered his left arm useless, he advanced on this strongly defended house and, after blasting out a wall with bazooka fire, charged through a hail of bullets. Wedging his sub-machine gun under his uninjured arm, he rushed into the house through the hole torn by his rockets, killed five of the enemy and forced the remaining twelve to surrender. As he emerged to continue his fearless attack, he was hit again and critically wounded. In agony and with one eye pierced by a shell fragment, he shouted for his men to follow him to the next house. He was determined to stay in the fighting and did remain at the head of his platoon until forcibly evacuated . . ."

Company G met the same fanatical resistance in the south part of the city but cleared its section shortly before Company L.

Late that night the town was completely cleared of Germans and the 15th Infantry had captured another hundred prisoners. The regimental I and R platoon, under 1st Lt. Robert Wann, was attached to 3d Battalion for the battle, and distinguished itself in combat.

The convent fell to Company K early the following morning after an all-night siege. The monastery gave up fifty more prisoners, in addition to about 150 civilians hiding in the basement.

While the remainder of the regiment was concentrating on the Sigolsheim attack Company E, commanded by Capt. Charles Adams, cleared the enemy from the area north of the Weiss River, which was the right boundary of the regiment. This mission in itself resulted in many fire fights in which the enemy used mortars, machine guns, and Flakwagons. More than twenty Germans were killed in one of these engagements.

In this area, however, the enemy proved himself particularly obstinate. His infiltration back into the area along the Weiss became a nightly process, and it was necessary to work the vicinity over again and again, since the Weiss was easily forded.

A nasty surprise awaited our troops on Hill 216. Previously reported clear of enemy, the enemy soon proved in occupation of the crest (which was east of the road leading south from Bennwihr) in sizable strength and determined to hold.

Throughout 15th Infantry's occupation of the Bennwihr-Sigolsheim area, and 30th Infantry's subsequent control of the sector, Hill 216 with its sizable, determined forces of enemy defenders, was a salient into our lines. The western side was cleared only after a series of small attacks by 15th and 30th Infantry, but the enemy remained in control of the east side up until the full-scale Division attack which commenced January 22, when the 254th Infantry drove him from it. The crest was no-man's land.

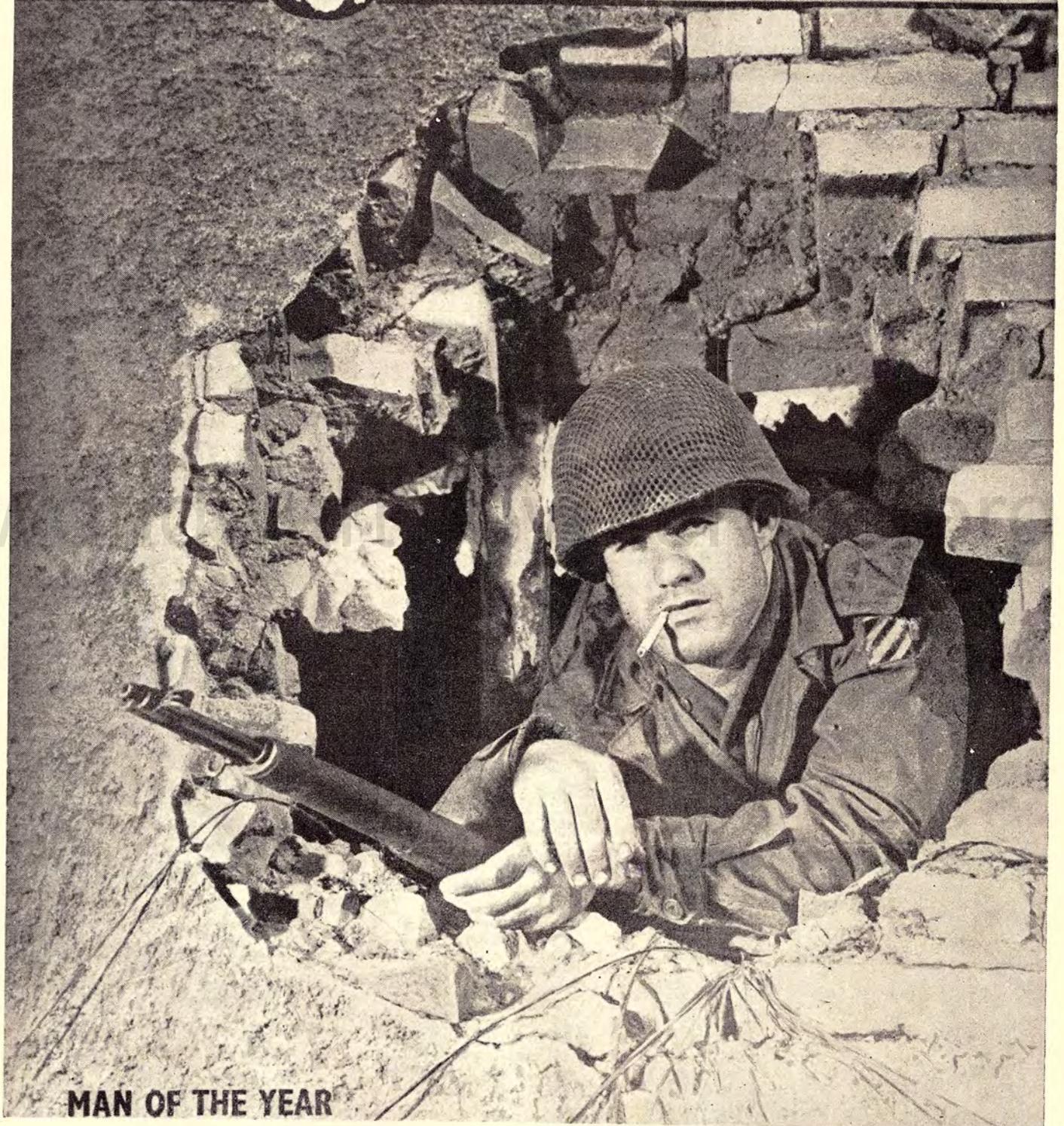
YANK

THE ARMY WEEKLY



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By the men... for the
men in the service



MAN OF THE YEAR

A 3d Division soldier, Technical Sergeant Joe Hodgins is chosen man of the year by *Yank*.

In addition to capturing Bennwihr and Sigolsheim, the 15th Infantry had annihilated the *Zeihler* Battle Group and the SS Battle Group *Braun*, taking nearly 500 prisoners during the last ten days of December.

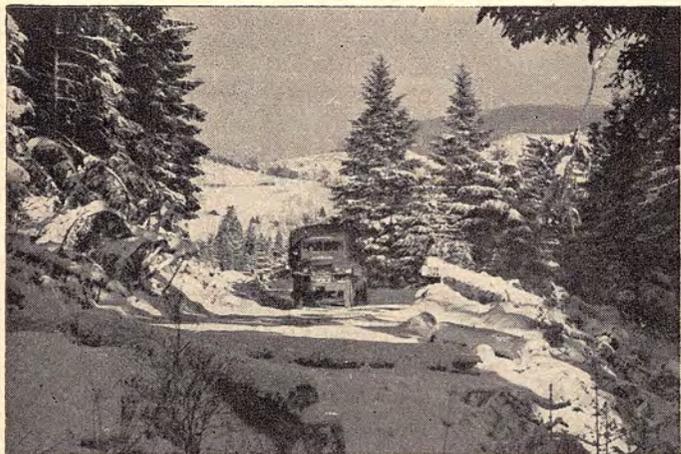
Following clearance of the 15th Infantry sector to the Fecht River on the east, the Division began re-grouping, and received as an attachment the 254th Infantry of the 63d Infantry Division to assist in defending the Division front, which had been broadened by the removal of the 3d Algerian Division, the unit that occupied our right flank during the Sigolsheim-Bennwihr offensive. Purpose of attaching the 254th was to add to the Division's strength and to give the regiment combat seasoning.

On New Year's day the Division sector in the Vosges Mountains covered a frontage of approximately fifteen miles between Chatenois (west of Selestat) and Orbey, which is just south of La Poutroie.

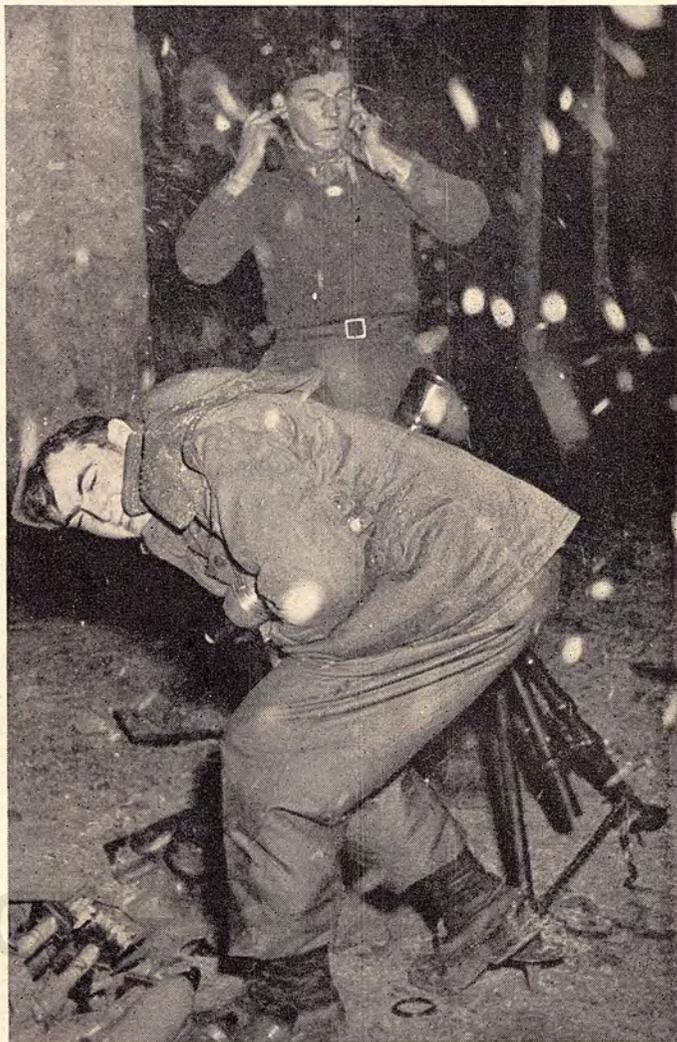
The 15th Infantry held the longest front, its line running from Chatenois, through Bennwihr, to a point west of Alspach. The 7th Infantry's line began at Alspach and terminated at Orbey.

There were numerous adjustments to the Division boundary during the first three weeks of January, chief of which was the extension of the Division front about six miles west into high Vosges.

[These were the days of the "great scare." Even though the enemy had by now been definitely stopped in the Ardennes and the Bulge was being slowly whittled away; although the Seventh Army had temporarily halted with considerable loss the renewed offensive toward the south—the enemy still held the initiative in most areas of the front. A decision to move administrative elements out of Strasbourg, pending the necessity of withdrawing tactical troops to the Vosges, precipitated a panic in the Alsatian Capital. A large number of loyal Frenchmen were fleeing



Over frozen and ice-covered roads the supply trucks crept over the crests of the Vosges to supply the troops in the pocket on the plain.



Two 3d Division mortar men fire a routine 81mm barrage from Beblenheim on 31 December.

the city in terror of their lives should the Germans return. United States and French flags disappeared from the windows, to be replaced in some instances with the swastika. Two men from the Strasbourg staff of the *Stars and Stripes* and three members of the 3d Division's *Front Line* staff formed the only U. S. administrative establishment remaining in the city. (The CP and some troops of 42d Infantry Division, in tactical control of the area, remained in Strasbourg throughout this period.) The two newspaper groups worked together in producing a *Stars and Stripes* with a special, boxed daily column in French for the benefit of the panic-stricken population. It and the daily presence of six Americans did much to dispel many of the Alsatians' fears. The *Front Line* likewise continued to make its regular weekly appearance.]

Division Order of Battle personnel had some difficulty in piecing together some of the rag, tag and bobtail which opposed the Division on its long front. Upon moving into the sector, we inherited from the 36th Division the following Battle Groups (each of about



Brigadier General Robert N. Young, Acting Division Commander, briefs General DeGaulle on the situation in the Colmar Pocket in the War Room at Ribeauville.

battalion size): *Ayrer, Bermann, Backe, Braun, SS Dietrichs, Eberle, Fischer, Fuhr Guth, Geiser, Herbrechtsmeier, Hock, Huth, Krebs, Landeberger, Lang, Probst, Reimers, Remmes, Schaefer, Scheck, Schweitzer, Wallner, Wasser, Zeiher, and Winter.*

As the Division took its own prisoners, however, these elements shook down and sorted themselves generally into members of regular divisions, principal of which were the 198th Infantry Division, 708th *Volks-grenadier* Division, 16th and 189th Infantry Divisions. Toward the end of December two battalions of the 40th *Panzer Grenadier* Replacement Training Battalion made their appearance. Also known to be on the bridgehead, and against some of whom the 3d Infantry Division later fought were: 269th VG Division, 159th VG Division and 338th Infantry Division.

The 254th Infantry, attached to the 3d, was assigned a defensive sector during the adjustments and the 290th Engineer Combat Battalion, a unit with no previous battle experience, was attached for use as infantry. A French parachute battalion was also attached.

Winter weather was present with all its mountain fury with the coming of January and many frostbite cases were added to the trenchfoot casualties brought by cool, rainy days during the previous three months.

Generally speaking, the situation in the first three weeks was characterized by defensive actions and patrolling on both sides, with the east slopes of Hill 216 occupying the most important role.

It was a snowy and cold New Year's Eve and the 10th Engineer Battalion was busy all night keeping roads passable. Company A, commanded by Capt. Albert H. Cook, spread cinders and sand on the road from Kaisersberg; Company B, under Capt. Daniel A. Raymond, de-iced and drained the Riquewihr-Kientzheim road while Company C, commanded by 1st Lt. Robert L. Bangert, continued the never-ending task of erecting triple-concertina wire around and in front of our positions.

Late that night Company E of the 30th Infantry, commanded by 1st Lt. Douglas W. Chambers, engaged a strong enemy patrol in a small arms fight in the woods

north of the Weiss River and another German patrol overran the outposts of Company F, commanded by 1st Lt. Richard N. Hagelin. These outposts, located south of Hill 216, were reestablished before daylight, however.

At about midnight of January 2, Companies E and F of the 15th Infantry attacked south along the eastern slopes of Hill 216, intent on clearing the hill and the area south to the Weiss River. The 30th Infantry assisted the attack by sending out three strong combat patrols with artillery support.

Company E of the 15th met heavy resistance at a road curve northeast of the hill and suffered heavy casualties when the enemy set up a searing defense with machine guns, *Panzerfaust*, small arms, mortars, and hand grenades. The attack, originally scheduled as a strong raid supported by tanks, quickly turned into a bloody full-scale pitched engagement. Two of the supporting tanks were almost immediately destroyed by either *Panzerfaust* or antitank fire as they crossed the rise of



Armored bulldozers became snow plows in the Colmar Pocket.

the next several days. Our own troops, without camouflage clothing, improvised by using mattress covers.

On January 4 the Division sector was extended on the right to include Le Rudlin and abandoned on the left to exclude Zellenberg and Ostheim. The 15th Infantry, which had occupied the extreme left of the Division front, moved to the extreme right, putting our troops deeper into the heights of the Vosges.

A strong German counterattack against the 1st French Motorized Infantry Division, on the Division's left flank, was launched January 7 and resulted in the extension of the 3d Division's zone farther north, and the 254th Infantry was regrouped to take over the newly acquired sector in the vicinity of Ribeauville.

Assisted by diversionary fire by the 7th Infantry's field artillery, chemical, tank, tank-destroyer, and anti-aircraft attachments, the 30th Infantry staged two attacks on January 8, the purpose being to divert the



3d Division Artillery Liaison pilots flew missions from snow covered strips.

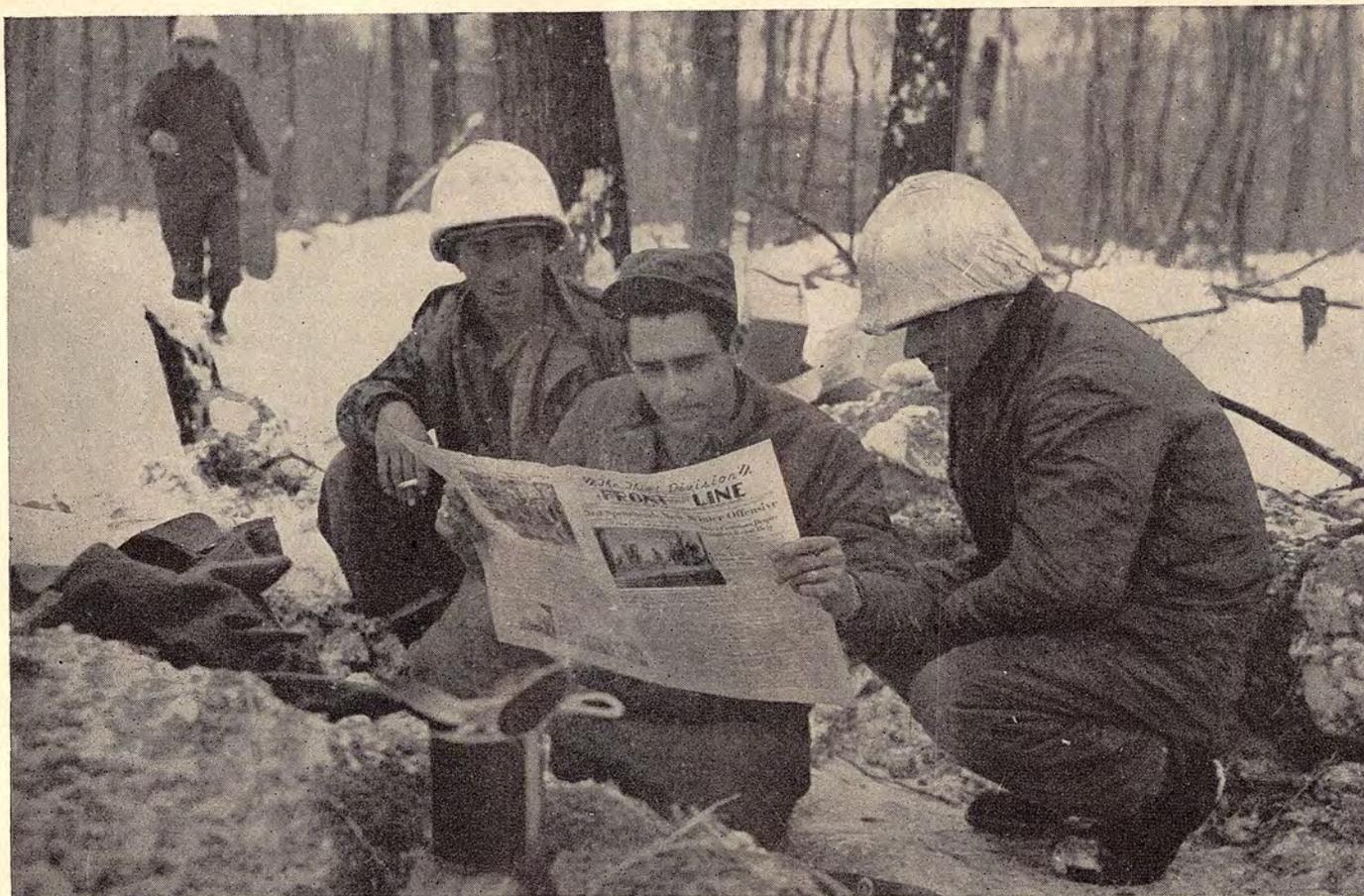
the crest, and the company commander, Capt. Charles E. Adams, went forward to supervise his men personally. While he was moving forward he stepped into a hole in which there was an enemy soldier, who immediately shot and killed him. The company was disorganized and forced to fall back.

Company F, commanded by Capt. Hugh H. Bruner, proceeded well down the forward slopes of the hill but was hit by a strong enemy counterattack early in the morning. A heavy fire fight ensued but Company F held its ground. A short time later, the Germans launched another counterattack supported by tanks and Captain Bruner's men fell back to the road leading to Bennwihr. The two companies took sixteen prisoners in the attack. The enemy's reluctance to abandon any of the terrain under his control was proving costly to both forces and the pocket of resistance on Hill 216 developed into a bloody battlefield.

Enemy patrols, clad in white garments as camouflage in the snow, were little less aggressive than our own, and continuous clashes between them took place during



A Tabor of Goums move along the road toward their position.



Staff Sergeant Charles E. Steiner, Sergeant Nicholas A. Lynch and Pfc John H. Stokes read "The Front Line" near the front line in the Colmar Pocket.

enemy's attention from the fact that an Allied division was being replaced in another sector of the perimeter surrounding the enemy Colmar bridgehead.

Company A, commanded by 1st Lt. Willard C. Johnson, moved through Company C at 1430, under cover of smoke from 4.2 chemical mortars and 81mm mortars, and reached the crest of Hill 216 after overcoming resistance from dug-in infantry using small arms and machine guns. After killing and capturing a number of Germans, Company A was relieved in its new positions by Company C, commanded by 1st Lt. Charles P. Murray, Jr.

Simultaneously Company I, under 1st Lt. Darwyn E. Walker, attacked south from Ammerschwihr toward Hill 616, which lies just west of Katzenthal. Company C of the 756th Tank Battalion, commanded by Capt. John W. Heard, was in close support of the attackers.

After a difficult 45-minute climb through the heavy snow, the company came under enemy fire from German positions halfway up the hill and about eighty-five yards to the front. A Flakwagon on a hill 500 yards southwest of Hill 616 poured extremely accurate fire on Lieutenant Walker's men and they were forced back to cover in a clump of trees. A second attack ended

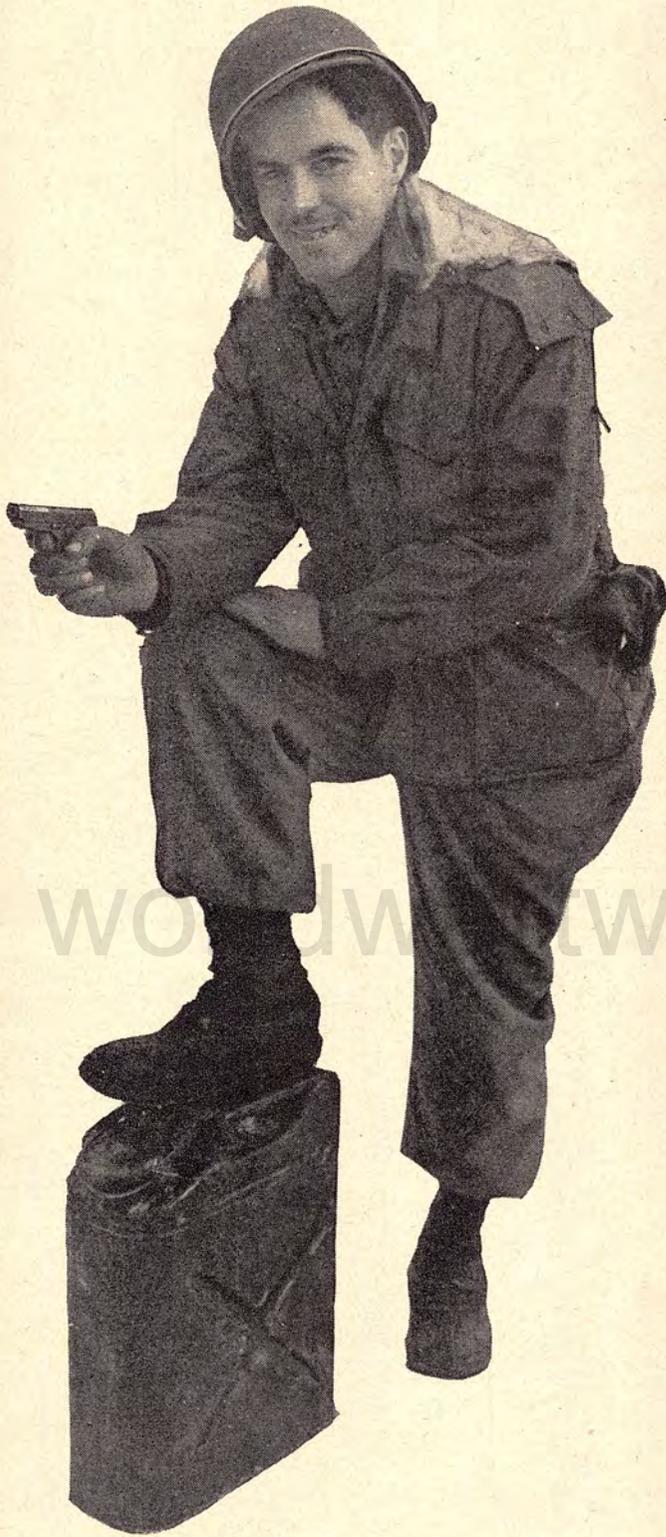
in the same manner and the company swung around the hill out of range of the Flakwagon and attacked for the third time.

It was here that S/Sgt. Russell E. Dunham, acting platoon sergeant of the 3d platoon and commonly known to his buddies as "The Arsenal," performed the actions that earned him the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Dunham carried a dozen hand grenades that hung from his suspenders, from the buttonholes in his clothes and from his belt. And he had eleven full magazines of carbine ammunition, four in pouches, seven more in his pockets.

The enemy machine guns had a clear, snow-covered field of fire from solidly-built emplacements covered with logs hidden by recent heavy snows. Two-man foxholes protected the machine-gun position from all sides.

Dunham's platoon moved forward, with the sergeant far out in front, crawling from small bush to tree stump into the very face of the German fire. A machine gun on the left of his platoon front received first attention and Dunham edged his way toward it until he reached a point about ten yards away. Jumping to his



Staff Sergeant Herman Nevers and his non-functioning Beretta pistol with which he escaped from the enemy.

feet, he charged the position, throwing hand grenades, firing his carbine from the hip and yelling as he went. A second machine gun on the right fired a full clip

at him and Dunham fell, a 10-inch gash ripped across his back.

The doughty sergeant rolled fifteen feet down the hill, arose, and charged again as his mattress-cover uniform turned red with blood. An enemy egg grenade fell at his feet, was quickly kicked aside and exploded in the snow several yards away. Dunham continued to fire, killed the machine gunner and his assistant, and yanked a third German from the emplacement when his carbine was empty.

Refusing evacuation by the medics, Dunham led the advance on the second machine gun some seventy-five yards up the hill. Again he was the lone figure out in front, leaving a crimson trail in the snow as he crept toward the blazing gun. Rifle fire and rifle grenades raked his path. Dunham got within throwing range and tossed a grenade that bounced off a tree a little to the right of the machine gun emplacement. His next heave was a bull's eye which killed the entire gun crew.

Two Germans raised their heads from a nearby foxhole to take a bead on Dunham. The sergeant promptly killed one and wounded the other, winging a third who tried to escape.

The mattress cover was rosy as Sergeant Dunham briefed his platoon for the attack on a third machine gun hidden about a hundred yards up on the side of the hill. Again he was the platoon's "advance element" as he sneaked to the kill.

This time he was favored with a deserving stroke of luck when a German fired point blank at him and missed after Dunham had just tossed a grenade that neutralized the gun. The poor-shooting rifleman fell dead from a Dunham bullet. Another shouted "*Kamerad*" and gave up.

Dunham continued his maniacal attack on enemy foxholes, killed one more German, shot five others as they attempted to flee, and took another prisoner.

Dunham's total was: three enemy machine guns destroyed, nine dead Germans, seven wounded, and two prisoners. He had fired 175 rounds of ammunition and tossed eleven of his twelve hand grenades.

Praise was later heaped upon Dunham by Lieutenant Walker, his company commander, by 2d Lt. James M. Beck, Company I platoon leader, and by 2d Lt. Glenn A. Black who had been Dunham's first sergeant on the day of the attack, prior to receiving a battlefield promotion.

The next few days featured the normal fire fights that come with vigorous patrolling and in addition some of the bitterest give-and-take small engagements the Division ever had encountered. Frequent efforts were made by the enemy to infiltrate our positions to obtain information concerning the shifts that were

being made in the front lines of the 3d Division.

The nights were moonless and bitterly cold; the days chilly and misty and both forces were using houses scattered throughout the area in "no-man's land" as outposts. The Division Operations Report rarely failed to record an account of an attack on one or more of them, either by our patrols or by the enemy.

Preceded by an artillery and mortar barrage, a strong enemy patrol staged a midnight raid January 9 on a platoon CP near La Baroche and took one officer and seven men, retiring under cover of artillery fire.

A patrol leader of Company L, 7th Infantry, S/Sgt. Herman F. Nevers, reported the same night that he had been seized and taken to a house in the La Baroche vicinity and effected an escape while he was being questioned, when he drew a small non-functioning pistol which he had concealed in one of his boots. He held the surprised Germans at bay and backed out of the building into the darkness.

A 254th Infantry outpost was also attacked that night by a patrol of superior force and had to withdraw from its position until the next morning.

An enemy propaganda truck, interspersing subversive words with popular American "hillbilly" music, turned its loud speakers toward the 7th Infantry sector while

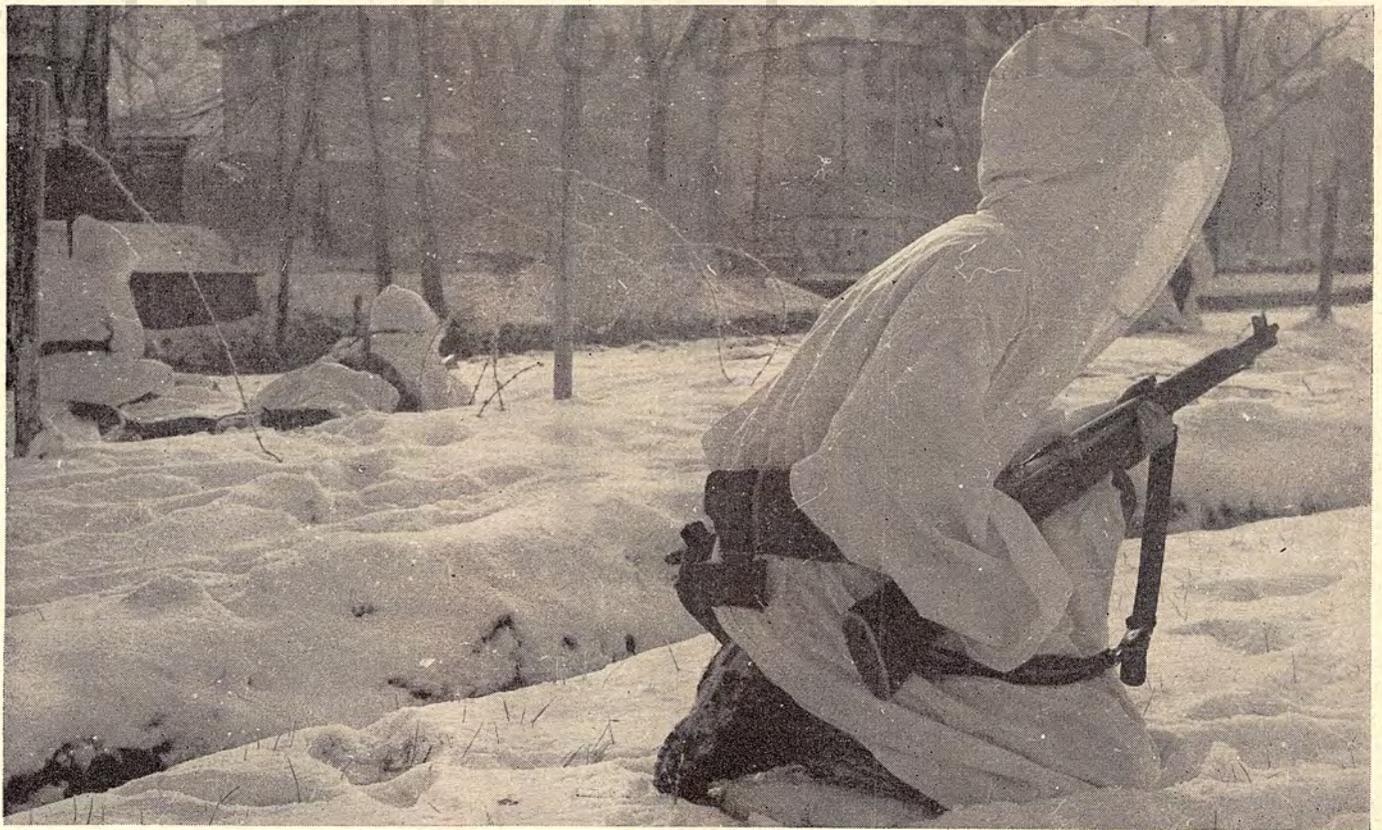
the men were sweating "chow" on the night of January 10. Our artillery answered with well-placed fire that silenced the music.

Our artillery also stopped a sizable attack by an infiltrating group that reached a point west of Ammerschwihr on January 15. A similar attack on an outpost near Ostheim was staged the next morning and the Germans took thirteen prisoners. This latter attack, however, was overshadowed by a highly successful raid conducted the same morning by the 3d Battalion of the 7th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Lloyd B. Ramsey.

Company L, commanded by Capt. Phillip T. Perry, crossed its line of departure at 0630 and immediately encountered heavy enemy mortar and small-arms fire near La Baroche, and a concentration of eight German machine guns north of this point held up the company's advance.

A house which contained about thirty enemy was blown up when one of Captain Perry's men placed a satchel charge in it. Three enemy machine guns also were silenced before the raiders withdrew.

Companies I and K, under Capts. Edward J. Brink and Francis J. Kret, respectively, attacked south at a point east of Company L's effort. Company I headed



3d Infantry Division soldiers attack the enemy on the snow-covered plain of Alsace.

toward the little village of Braderhau, neutralized a machine gun, and captured a few prisoners en route. A heavy fire fight ensued when a strong enemy force was encountered just north of Braderhau. Four more German machine guns were destroyed in this battle.

Company K also silenced four enemy machine guns, killed a large number of Germans, and forced the foe to desert his positions in the area.

The regimental Battle Patrol assisted the 3d Battalion's raid with a diversionary attack on Hill 806, near La Rochette. This raid, which was started and ended before daylight, brought several casualties to the Patrol when it came under heavy artillery fire. The Patrol closed with the Germans, however, and inflicted severe losses on them before withdrawing just prior to dawn.

The raiding companies all withdrew early in the morning. All had accomplished their mission of locating enemy strongholds and measuring their strength.

The tacit understanding which had existed among officers and men of the Division that the defensive was not our style, well though the 3d had performed that role (Cf. Anzio—February) when assigned to it, was sometimes expressed by a shrug, a grimace, and the unanswerable question, "How long before . . .?" To an outsider these cryptic signs would have meant nothing. To veterans indoctrinated in the 3d Infantry Division this restlessness when confronted with stalemate spoke volumes, but translated might be stated very simply. "How long before we start another attack? How long before they shove us in to knock out this damn pocket?"

By the same token, the restlessness could not be interpreted as eagerness. Such an assumption would have been foolish. The cold, bone-chilling winds; the quality and spirit of the German defenders as evidenced during the grim fights for Kaisersberg, Sigolsheim and Bennwihr, and the day-and-night bitterly-fought patrol clashes; the trenchfoot and the frostbite; all precluded any tendency toward individual desire to tangle again full-scale with the enemy. But the restlessness persisted. "We'll have to be at it soon." The feeling pervaded every platoon and squad.

"As long as there's a war and as long as there's a 3d Division, the 3d Division will be in that war." Variations on this same theme were repeated many times by nearly every wearer of the blue-and-white patch. The knowledge was omnipresent. The thought was conveyed in various shades of tone—cynically, bitterly, disgustedly . . . or, confidently, resignedly, cockily . . . or in any combination. But in nearly every case there was a matter-of-fact acceptance of the fact that soon we would return to the offensive. Coupled with this was the feeling of surety, born of success in battle, that

the 3d would accomplish successfully any task given it. And that is the feeling that wins battles.

Withdrawal from the lines in preparation for an offensive began with the 7th Infantry during the night of January 17-18. The 3d Battalion, 254th Infantry, moved from Ribeauville to the vicinity of Kaisersberg and during the hours of darkness relieved the 1st Battalion, 7th, on positions, to become attached to the 7th Infantry. This relief was completed by 0200, and 1st Battalion, 7th, moved into Alspach. The 290th Combat Engineer Battalion moved from St. Croix to the vicinity of Hachimette and relieved 2d Battalion and Antitank Company, 7th Infantry, likewise coming under the command of 7th Infantry. By 0450 this relief was complete and the 2d Battalion, with AT Company, assembled in La Poutroie. The battalion moved to Kaisersberg by motor during the morning.

The 28th Infantry Division, after participating in the initial stages of the Ardennes counteroffensive and suffering great losses, had been relieved from attachment to Twenty-first Army Group and sent south to join Sixth Army Group, which in turn assigned the division to assist, in a minor role, in the attack against the north flank of the Colmar Pocket. As the 3d shifted and regrouped in preparation for withdrawing the bulk of its striking force to the east, in the general vicinity of Guemar, elements of the 28th slipped into position on the right of the 254th Infantry, which held down the 3d's right flank.

There was no time to lose in preparing for the coming operation. On the same day that relief of the 3d was completed by the 28th, January 20, French I Corps launched its drive against the south side of the Pocket from long-held positions immediately to the north of Mulhouse. We had learned at Anzio of the invaluable need for coordination between the Cassino and beach-head forces, and if the German defenders of the Colmar Pocket were to be kept from shifting their strength from one dangerous sector to another, repelling individual attacks in sequence, our attack must get away on time. The date was already set—January 22.

Individual units had begun conducting as much training as was practical under the circumstances, upon their separate reliefs from the line. All armor and all combat vehicles were painted white. Mattress covers, sheets, pillowcases, everything available in the way of white cloth—was set upon and redesigned into "spook suits" for camouflage in the snow. The infantry regiments also undertook limited training programs in small-unit problems, speed marches, weapons training, field firing, night problems, river crossing technique, and use of the German *Panzerfaust*.

The 10th Engineer Battalion assembled bridging materials for the operation.

The narrow zone which we faced was characterized by a front line which followed for the greater part, a river—the Fecht. This stream splits the town of Ostheim and forms the southeast boundary of Guemar. The primary move, therefore, was a crossing of its flooded, icy waters. Although the Division's "target" was not announced to any but important commanders until the latest possible date in the interests of security, regimental and smaller-unit intelligence officers had long concentrated on gathering information relative to the width, depth, steepness of banks, and conditions and swiftness of water, of all streams which lay along a possible future zone of advance. The Fecht had been thoroughly "cased" in preparation for the unnamed eventuality, as had the Weiss. Information was also sought from left-flank French elements as to the same conditions prevailing with respect to the Ill River. Possible marshy areas had also come under the same critical scrutiny: "Is it frozen? How deep is the water? Is it possible to go around it without going too far out of the way?"

In addition to the all-important terrain study, of course, there was the never-ending quest for enemy dispositions and order of battle. The best information available prior to the attack placed the 748th *VG* Regiment of the 708th *VG* Division, and a battalion of the 760th *VG* Regiment, from the same division, to our front. An additional battalion of the 760th and elements of the 728th *VG* Regiment, same division, were suspected but lacked definite confirmation.

The enemy's counteroffensive possibilities were well summed up in the January 17 Division G-2 Report: "While the new Russian offensive in Poland may seem to be a long way from our front-line infantry platoon positions, it is bound to have an immediate and profound effect on the enemy capabilities in the Alsace pocket.

"This effect stems directly from the priorities on reinforcements (both men and materiel) which will have to be reshuffled among the various fronts. Heretofore top priority has gone to the Belgium front, with the Upper Rhine not far behind. Now, however, Poland is bound to absorb everything the Germans can throw into it, at least until the Russian drives are well stopped. The result should be a decline in enemy ability to send important reinforcements, especially for offensive purposes, into the Colmar Bridgehead. *Under pressure, the enemy will always be able to find scratch units to try to keep us from reaching important objectives*, but fresh divisions are a luxury he can hardly afford in a sector like this when he needs them for fire-fighting purposes in other parts of his household . . ."

Substantially, that was the picture of the enemy's offensive capabilities. His defensive capabilities, how-

ever, were to prove an entirely different story. For, in telling the story of the Colmar Pocket, it must be emphasized that terrain and weather were the equal of the worst any unit ever contended with anywhere. From Guemar to Neuf-Brisach there was hardly a depression in the ground worthy of the name, with the exception of a few stream beds (the Fecht, the Ill, the Colmar, and Rhone-Rhine Canals), the basements of houses in the captured towns and old Maginot Line emplacements—from all of which the enemy had to be driven—and finally a few bomb and shell holes, the impressions of which were much less deep than could normally be expected, due to the frozen solidity of the ground.

The mercury in thermometers constantly stood at minus 10 degrees C. (14° F) which was about the highest point reached during the day. In the late afternoon, early morning, and during each night the temperature dropped lower and stayed there. This may not seem extremely cold weather to inhabitants of the northern and eastern parts of the United States, but it must be remembered that men were fighting, attempting to sleep, fording streams—and dying—in constant exposure to these temperatures. To experience a few seconds' exposure of nose and ears to the icy gusts of wind which constantly swept down from the high Vosges was almost unbearable.

Over-all plan of the Division attack was as follows: To attack on D-day, H-hour, force crossings of the Fecht and Ill Rivers in the Guemar-Ostheim area; to pivot to the south, force crossings over the Colmar Canal in the Wickerschwihr area, block to the southwest in the area southwest of Houssen, and isolate Colmar on the east. (It was known that the capture of Colmar was assured once it became isolated from the main road feeding it with supplies and reinforcements via the two bridges over the Rhine near Neuf-Brisach.)

Upon completion of this action, the Division was to group the bulk of its infantry in the Holtzwihr-Riedwihr area, and the bulk of its attached Armored Combat Command in the Horbourg-Bischwihr-Andolsheim area, prepared to:

One: Capture Colmar and block the Fecht Valley immediately west of Turckheim, or

Two: Assist 5 DB (5th French Armored Division) in the capture of Neuf-Brisach.

Separate missions of the regiments were:

30th Infantry (Attached: Company C, 756 Tank Battalion; Company C, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; Company B, 99th Chemical Battalion; Reconnaissance Company, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; 3d Reconnaissance Troop and Division Battle Patrol; 3d platoon, Company D, 756th Tank Battalion; three sections, 441st AAA AW Battalion (SP)):

To force a crossing of the Fecht River in its zone, advance with all possible speed to clear the east-west road in its zone through Colmar Forest (*Forêt Communale de Colmar*), and seize objectives indicated on the Ill River.

To force a crossing of the Ill River at the earliest possible moment and continue the advance to seize objectives indicated (along a line running east from the Ill River south of Maison Rouge bridge).

To extend south to another phase line, blocking to the east.

On Division order, to be prepared to regroup in the Horbourg-Bennwihr area prepared to execute Maneuver 1 and capture Colmar from the east, or to pass to Division reserve.

In addition, 30th Infantry was to protect its own left throughout the advance south along the east side of the Ill; to protect the Division left; to maintain contact with 1 DMI and 5 DB on the left flank, and to reinforce its supporting engineers with one rifle company from the regiment's reserve battalion for the purpose of carrying an infantry footbridge from the Fecht River to the Ill.

7th Infantry (Attached: Company A, 756th Tank Battalion; Company A, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion; Company C, 99th Chemical Mortar Battalion (—one platoon); Company D, 756th Tank Battalion (—two platoons); and three sections of the 441st AAA):

To force a crossing of the Fecht in its zone; advance with all possible speed to seize objectives in a line to the west of 30th Infantry's first phase line across the Ill.

To clear the east-west road in its zone through the Colmar Forest and the road running east from Ostheim in its zone.

To extend its line further south, seizing and holding the objectives taken within the boundary defined.

To push strong combat patrols to the southwest in the direction of Ingersheim and to the south in the direction of Colmar.

On Division order to assemble on last line gained, and to be prepared:

To attack toward Neuf-Brisach and objectives in that vicinity.

To execute Maneuver 1 and capture Colmar, or

To execute Maneuver 2, isolate Colmar on the south, capture Wintzenheim and Turckheim, and block to the southwest as indicated.

254th Infantry (Attached: one platoon, Company B, 756th; one platoon, Company B 601st; one platoon, Company A, 99th Chemical; two sections, 441st AAA Battalion):

Attack through 28th Infantry Division north of Hill 216 at daylight of D + 1, isolate and capture Hill 216, seize Line A-B (extension of 30th and 7th first phase

line, to the west), in zone, and seize and hold bridge over the Fecht River immediately west of its junction with the Weiss River.

Push strong combat patrols to the south on Ingersheim.

On Division order following the forcing of the Fecht River, assemble 2d Battalion in the Beblenheim area under regimental control.

On Division order, undergo relief of positions on line A-B in zone, by elements of 28th Infantry Division.

On Division order following relief of positions on line A-B, relieve elements of 7th Infantry on line C-D (second phase line) between the Fecht and Ill rivers, prevent enemy movement northeast of this line, and patrol vigorously to the south on Colmar and to the southwest in Ingersheim.

Protect Division right.

Maintain contact with 28th Infantry Division on right.

Coordinate directly with commanding officer of regiment on right in reference to passage and assistance.

15th Infantry was assigned the mission of crossing the Fecht immediately behind 30th Infantry to assemble in Division reserve, or

On Division order from present assembly area or the Colmar Forest, be prepared to assume the mission of either the 7th or 30th Infantry Regiments.

The remainder of the order pertaining to 15th Infantry specified several alternatives, duplicating those found in orders for the 7th and 30th, providing the 15th took over for either of them.

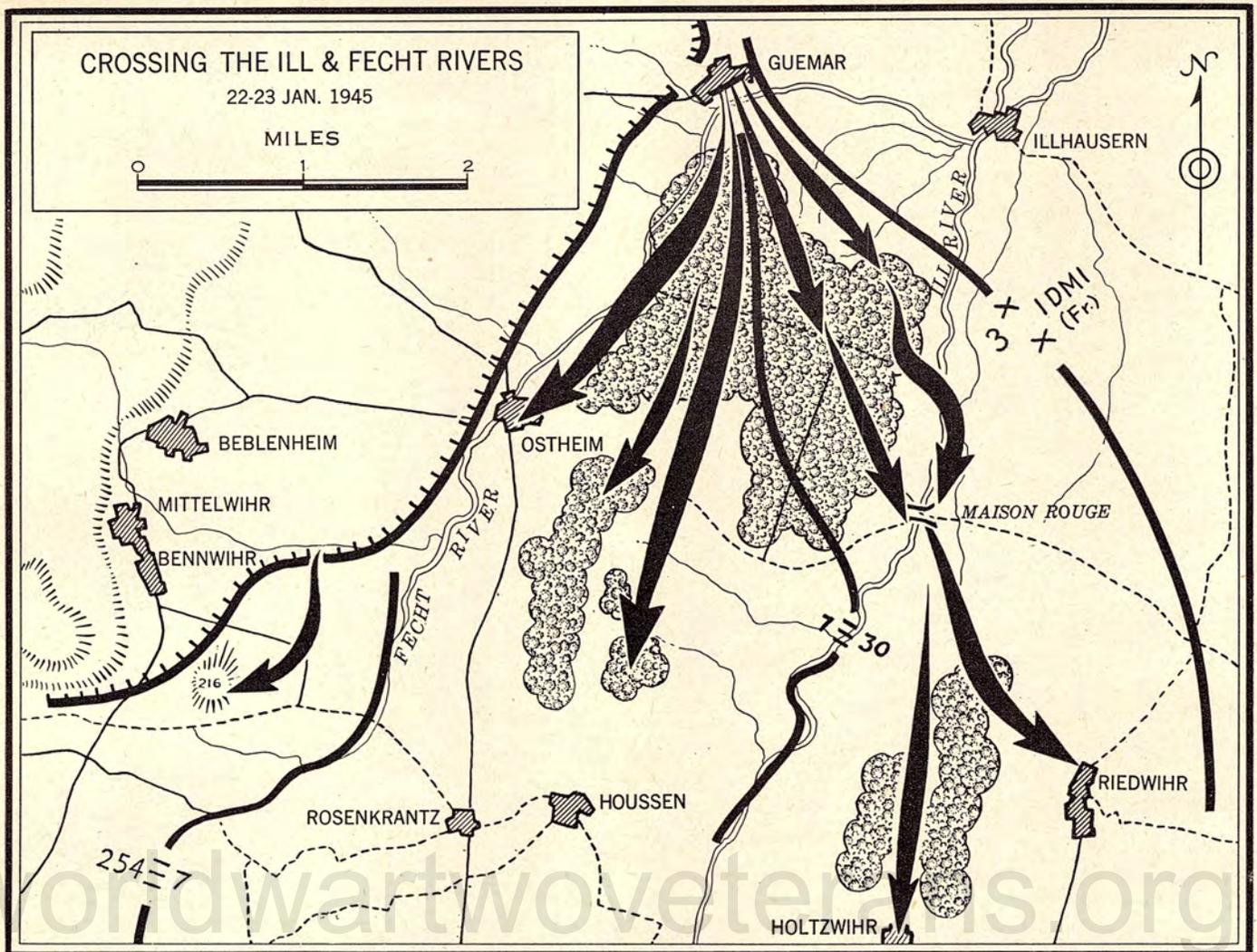
French II Corps Artillery was to support the 3d Infantry Division attack by reinforcing direct-support fires, and by supplementing interdiction, counterbattery, and harassing fires of the Division Artillery.

In addition a powerful air program was to be conducted in support of the Division attack in conjunction with an over-all air program in the entire First French Army zone.

CC4 of the French 5th Armored Division (5 DB) was attached to 3d Infantry Division for the attack.

Attacking on our left at daylight of D-plus-1 was 1st *Division Motorisé Infanterie*.

The attack was scheduled to begin three hours after darkness on January 22, the first anniversary of the landing of the Division below Nettuno. During the morning of January 22 units began moving to the forward assembly areas, and footbridges and heavy bridging material were moved to proposed crossing sites at Guemar and Ostheim during the night. Company A, 10th Engineers, under the command of 1st Lt. Robert K. Fleet, hid a preconstructed 84-foot span in a cemetery north of Guemar.



The 7th and 30th Infantry Regiments, commanded by Lt. Col. John A. Heintges and Col. Lionel C. McGarr, respectively, began their crossing of the Fecht River by stealth at Guemar at 2100, on a front measuring less than 1000 yards in width. It was a repetition of the Meurthe stunt, and it worked. In the 7th zone two platoons crossed just prior to H-Hour and seized bridgeheads. Artillery fell on both bridges of the 7th, and enemy heavy mortar fire fell on 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, but enemy infantry resistance was negligible.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Lloyd B. Ramsey, after crossing the river swung southeast and encountered enemy small-arms and machine-gun fire in the *Bois Commune de Guemar*. After overcoming this resistance the battalion, with Company I on the right and Company L on the left, moved swiftly across the east-west road which runs along the northern edge of the *Foret Commune de Colmar*.

Clearing the woods as they advanced, Colonel Ramsey's men continued past Ostheim and to a small

wooded area, Brunwald, where they beat off an enemy counterattack consisting of tanks and infantry which came from the east. Our artillery and mortar fire played an important part in stopping the German counterthrust while elements of Lt. Col. Glenn F. Rogers' 756th Tank Battalion supported the battalion all along the route of advance. Company A, under Capt. Orlando A. Richardson, Jr., and elements of Company D, commanded by Capt. Robert F. Kramer, were attached to the 7th Infantry throughout.

Maj. Kenneth W. Wallace's 1st Battalion turned directly south after crossing the river and suffered some casualties as the troops moved through a wooded area filled with wire obstacles and mines. The battalion entered Ostheim from the north at 0400 and engaged the Germans in a heavy small-arms and machine-gun battle that lasted for five hours.

The enemy continued to resist fiercely in the southern part of the town, where every window was a potential sniper's nest. By 1730, however, the last vestige of resistance had ended and the battalion was in full possession of the city.



The Maison Rouge Bridge and the camouflaged tank which went crashing through it when it attempted to cross the Ill River.

The 2d Battalion, which had followed in the wake of the assault battalions, moved rapidly south to the Bois dit de Rothleible after engaging in a hot fire fight en route.

The 30th Infantry crossed the Fecht with the 1st Battalion, under the command of Lt. Col. Mackenzie E. Porter, on the left and 3d Battalion, commanded by Maj. Robert B. Pridgen, on the right.

Meeting little opposition, 1st Battalion continued through the *Foret Communale de Colmar* to the east and had elements across the Ill River by daybreak. By 0900 the entire battalion had crossed the Ill and moved south along the east bank of the stream, heading for the Maison Rouge bridge, at the southeast corner of the forest.

The 3d Battalion, 30th, cut southeast through the forest, and encountered a *schu*-minefield and two enemy strongpoints during its advance. A brisk fire fight was staged at Niederwald, a crossroad settlement in the *Foret Communale*, but the doughboys soon eliminated this obstacle.

Closing in on the Maison Rouge bridge, Major Pridgen's battalion had it, intact, by 1155.

That little wooden bridge figured greatly in the 30th Infantry's plans, and around it revolved one of the most fateful moments of the regiment or Division in the entire war.

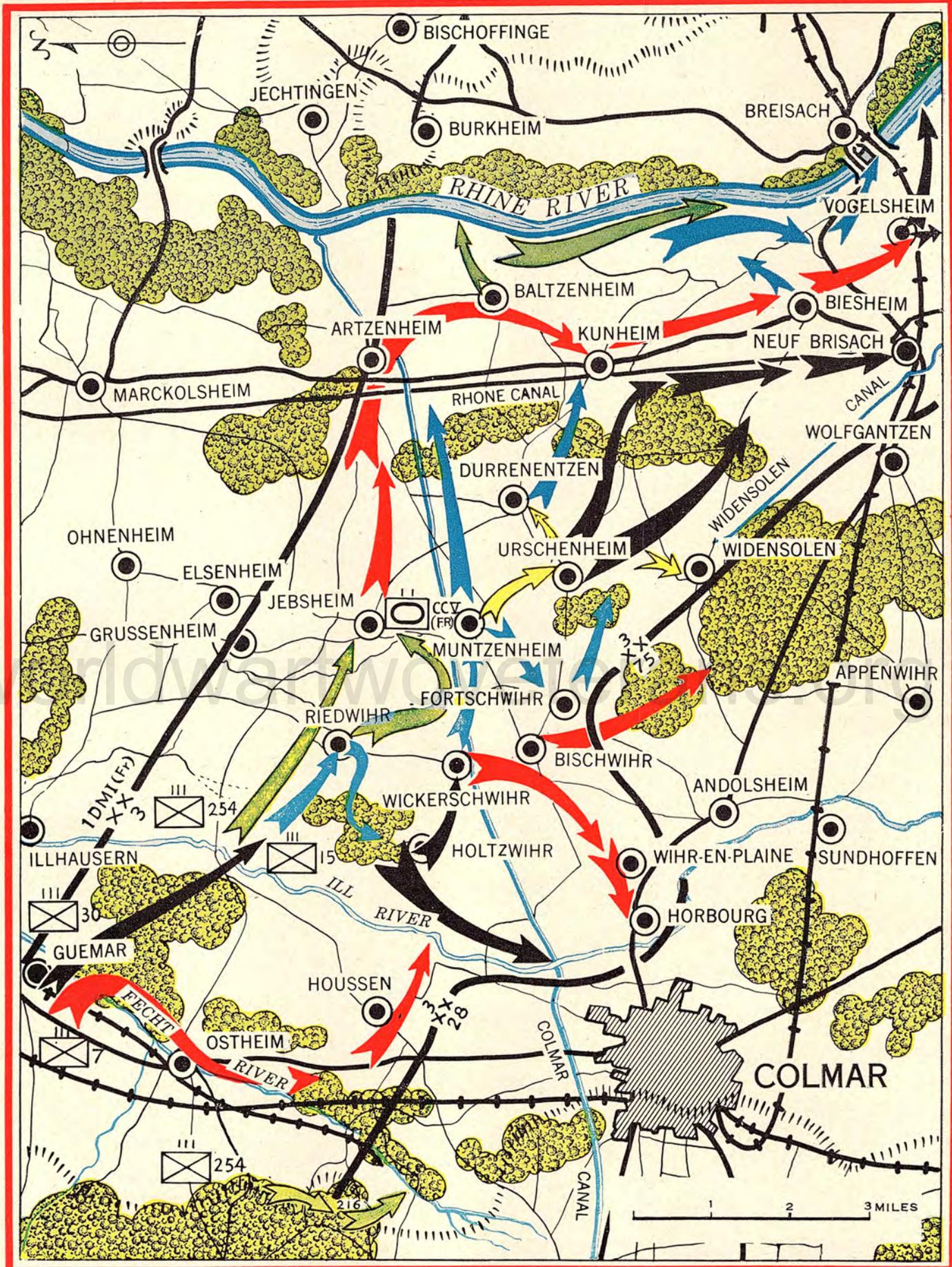
Foreseeing the possibility of capturing the bridge, Division engineers had ordered reinforcing treadway to be delivered as soon as possible to the bridge site once it was captured in order to get armor across in the minimum possible time. Traffic along the roads to the rear was heavy. The engineers, having already allocated most of the available treadway to other bridge projects, sent forward all the remaining treadway to the Maison Rouge site. When they had a chance to look the bridge over and measure it, the amount was just fifteen feet short.

Traffic over the roads to the rear was heavy. The time required to obtain an extra fifteen feet might be prohibitive. After a certain number of tactical vehicles of the 30th had passed over the bridge, it was closed to traffic and the treadway was laid on either side. A 15-foot gap remained in the center.

The order had been given: "Get armor across the Ill with all possible speed." The engineer officer in charge was dubious, but did not want to delay the armor. One tank started across. The bridge shook a bit, but that was nothing unusual. The driver stopped. Engineers, watching tensely, decided the bridge was stable. They waved the tank on. The full weight of the tank passed on to the nonreinforced section of the bridge. There was a rending crash and the bridge collapsed to the level of the river, the tank staying just above water. The crew clambered out. A few minutes passed. A truck, bearing an amount of treadway sufficient to have bridged the gap arrived on the scene.

While the 7th and 30th Infantry regiments were attacking their objectives, the 254th Infantry assaulted Hill 216 at daylight. This long-time salient in our lines proved as difficult as ever, with one important difference. It was no longer the sole point of attack, but only one of many. By noon the 254th had routed the Germans from well dug-in positions on the eastern slopes, which were protected by *schu*-mines and boobytraps, plus the fire of machine guns, small arms, and *Panzerfaust*. This clearing of the enemy from the far side of Hill 216 eliminated a strongpoint that jeopardized the flank of our attacking units and deprived the Germans of an extraordinary observation post.

Following the capture of Hill 216, 254th Infantry continued its mission of clearing the area south to the Weiss River, and of capturing a bridge across the Fecht River, in conjunction with joining the 7th Infantry in that area, once the enemy had been cleared from the



BISCHOFFINGE
 JECHTINGEN
 BURKHEIM
 BREISACH
 VOGELSHEIM
 RHINE RIVER
 BALTZENHEIM
 ARTZENHEIM
 KUNHEIM
 BIESHEIM
 NEUF BRISACH
 MARCKOLSHEIM
 RHONE CANAL
 DURRENTZEN
 WIDENSOLEN
 WOLFGANTZEN
 OHNENHEIM
 ELSENHEIM
 JESBHEIM
 GRUSSENHEIM
 MUNTZENHEIM
 URSCHENHEIM
 WIDENSOLEN
 APPENWIHR
 FORTSCHWIHR
 RIEDWIHR
 BISCHWIHR
 ANDOLSHEIM
 WICKERSCHWIHR
 HOLTZWIHR
 WIHR-EN-PLAINE
 SUNDHOFFEN
 ILL RIVER
 GUEMAR
 HORBOURG
 HOUSSEN
 OSTHEIM
 COLMAR
 COLMAR CANAL
 COLMAR
 1 2 3 MILES

lower Fecht stream bank near its juncture with the Weiss.

Heavy fighting here carried into the following day. The 1st Battalion, leading the attack, became stalled and the 3d Battalion was committed around its right flank. Troops of the 254th were forced virtually to ferret the Germans out of their dug-in positions in a yard-by-yard advance that was bitterly contested all the way.

The Germans had nearly recovered from the initial shock of the surprise attack. The enemy was marshalling every tank and automatic weapon at his command to stem the tide of our advance. The battle of armor and infantry that was waged in and around the wooded areas in the vicinity of Housen, Riedwihr, Holtzwihr, and Wickerschihr will be remembered as one of the most bitterly fought engagements, and without doubt one of the most important, that the 3d Division ever encountered.

During the afternoon of the 23rd, 30th Infantry forward elements reached the outskirts of Riedwihr and Holtzwihr and held the clump of woods known as Bois de Riedwihr.

Companies I and K had moved into the northern edge of Holtzwihr. Position of the 1st and 3d Battalions at this time was like a finger sticking deep into enemy territory. Opposition had been so light up to this point that the 30th had lanced ahead and was completely exposed on the left flank, resistance against the French having prevented them from advancing rapidly, and ahead of 7th Infantry on the right, which was also encountering very tenacious resistance.

At 1650 the first blow struck. Companies I and K of the 30th under 1st Lts. Darwyn E. Walker and Ross H. Calvert, respectively, without armor, advanced into Holtzwihr. Ten enemy tanks and TDs accompanied by at least a hundred foot troops, moved into and beyond Holtzwihr from the southeast. The tanks broke up into groups of two's and three's and sliced the 30th's positions into several pockets. Tank machine-gun fire whipped along the snow-covered ground in murderous grazing fire and the tanks and tank destroyers fired as they came.

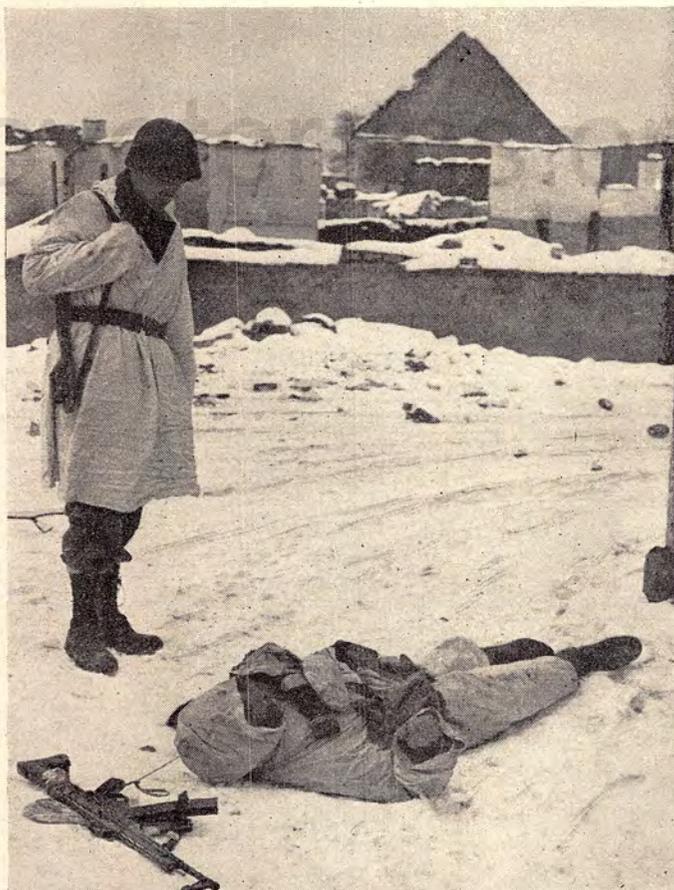
The 3d Battalion had just completed a rapid move and, even had the men had time to dig in they would have been completely frustrated. The ground was frozen solid. It would have taken TNT charges to blow holes in it. And—it was perfectly flat. There was not a vestige of cover as 3d Battalion, struck from three sides and without even one tank or tank destroyer to shoot at the oncoming assortment of power, vainly tried to repel the counterattack. Also important was the fact that artillery FOs with the 30th had not yet established radio communication.

The result was a foregone conclusion. 3d Bat-

talion, badly disorganized, was forced to make its way back—back toward the Ill and the protection afforded by its banks.

At 1720, as the 1st Battalion was about to reach Riedwihr, the blow fell on it as it had on the 3d. The enemy hit with all he had. Men sought in vain for cover. Bands of grazing machine-gun fire criss-crossed in vicious, cracking streams. As in the case of 3d Battalion, 1st Battalion had nowhere to go but to the rear—if possible—nothing with which to combat the thick-sided enemy tanks and the *Jagdpanzer* tank destroyers, and above all no holes from which to fight.

During the withdrawals, handfuls of brave men in each company braved almost certain death or capture to stick it out on the hopeless positions. Despite open flanks on the right and left, small, bitter and last-ditch actions were fought by isolated groups, such as those led by 1st Lts. Darwyn E. Walker and Ross H. Calvert, who were last seen on that day entering a patch of woods from which two enemy tanks shortly thereafter emerged. In the Orchbach stream bed, east of the Ill by several hundred yards, a group of 30th Infantry men was still in position the next day when a



Pfc Steven R. Lakos, 3d Infantry Division takes a look at the winter equipment of a dead enemy.



Colonel John A. Heintges, commanding officer, 7th Infantry Regiment.

counterattack was launched and the ground was regained!

At the Maison Rouge bridge site, bystanders gazed ruefully at a Sherman tank sitting in the center of the Ill River, icy waves lapping at the base of its turret.

The 2d Battalion, 30th, under Maj. James L. Osgard, had crossed the Ill at the southeast corner of the Colmar Forest, but had hardly had time to get reorganized before it, too, was counterattacked by enemy tanks and infantry and was forced back across the river, where it set up temporary positions in the Colmar woods. Approximately 350 men, most of whom were captured, were lost by the 30th in this counterattack. However, during the withdrawal machine-gun sections from H and D Companies and small groups of infantrymen, chiefly from Companies A, B, C and E held on the east side of the Ill and covered the remainder of the battalion.

As night drew on the enemy was completely in possession of the east bank of the Ill, with this important exception. Lt. Colonel MacKenzie Porter and Capt. William F. Stucky organized a group and stuck it out on the east side, north of Maison Rouge. It was the 3d Infantry Division's sole bridgehead during that dark night of January 23-24.

The 30th Infantry was in a bad way. A hurry-up call went out for pyramidal tents, stoves, blankets, clothes,

and hot coffee and food. Regimental supply personnel scoured their stocks and brought these items forward. Division G-4 also got an urgent call: "Send us dry clothes, rifles, and machine guns." A good proportion of the entire regiment was nearly frozen from its terrible exposure to the Ill River and the icy blasts of wind which greeted the men as they clambered from the water.

Straggler posts were set up along all possible routes to the rear, to direct the men back into the line. Although terribly chilled, the offensive spirit was still present in many of them. When collected by the officers they moved up into defensive positions west of the Ill supported by their massed armor and covered by their riflemen and machine guns east of the river. The attitude of some of the men was expressed by several who were wringing out their wet clothes, their weapons at their sides: "Yes, sir, we can hold! No goddamn kraut is going to kick the hell out of us and get by with it! We'll be here in the morning."

The tenure of 7th Infantry troops in Ostheim was even threatened for a time when the enemy organized for a strong counterattack from Houssen but our artillery massed heavy concentrations on the enemy force and broke up the attack at its inception.

The 15th Infantry was also very busy during the night of January 23-24. The attack must be pushed at all costs. It was obvious that 30th Infantry would need some time in which to reorganize. The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, was chosen to cross the Ill first, to seize a bridgehead around Maison Rouge to enable the engineers to get the all-important bridge in. Enemy tanks had ranged to within as close as a quarter-mile, firing direct fire on the bridge site.

The 3d Battalion jumped off at 0300, with Company I on the left and Company K on the right. The attack made good progress east of the Ill until Company I was counterattacked by four tanks and large numbers of enemy infantry. Again, still lacking armor pending a suitable bridge across the Ill, Company I was forced back in much the same manner as had been 30th Infantry the previous day. Three tanks supporting the 15th Infantry from the west bank of the river were neutralized in a few minutes. The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, moving up to the line of departure by 1000, was about to attack in conjunction with 3d Battalion when the counterattack hit the latter.

The 1st Battalion was temporarily held up, but by noon was ready to deliver its attack. The advance rapidly moved through 3d Battalion at Maison Rouge bridge, to the woods northeast of Riedwihr. Here, however, enemy tanks and infantry were encountered and forced 1st Battalion—without armor as had been its predecessors—to withdraw from the woods. At any

rate we now held a bridgehead, and the engineers went forward with all possible speed, completing the bridge. It was more than obvious that the attack east of the Ill would get nowhere if supporting armor was not in close support of our infantry troops.

The enemy taunted us with a special propaganda leaflet sent over by enemy artillery, claiming that over one hundred members of Company I, 30th Infantry, including 1st Lt. Darwyn E. Walker—whom the leaflet named—had been captured on May 23. (In Walker's case, at least, it was true. Both he and 1st Lt. Ross H. Calvert, Company K commander, were later liberated by United States troops in Germany. Walker was liberated by his own Division.)

After completing the clearance of Ostheim, the 1st Battalion of the 7th Infantry, commanded by Maj. Kenneth W. Wallace, had attacked shortly after midnight of January 24 toward Chateau de Schoppenwihir. A strong counterattack consisting of enemy infantry and six tanks came at daybreak. Three of the tanks were destroyed, but the fighting continued all day. It was not until 1830 that night that the Germans were finally driven from their positions in the Chateau area and in the woods between the railroad tracks and west to the Fecht River. Company C, 99th Chemical Battalion, laid down a heavy smoke screen while the fight was at its height, thus enabling Company A, 7th, to rejoin its battalion by crossing the open under cover of smoke at Bois dit de Rothleible. The additional strength was both timely and necessary.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, had a fierce fight in the Brunnwald woods, where the enemy had infiltrated while the struggle for the Chateau was in progress. The infiltration was followed by reinforcements after dark and when the 3d raided the positions at about midnight the enemy was prepared to resist with great strength. Mortars, machine guns and small arms provided stiff opposition to the raiders.

Company L, commanded by 1st Lt. Orville L. Dille, moved around the tip of the woods and ran into German machine guns and Flakwagons. Company A, 756th Tank Battalion, under Capt. Orlando A. Richardson, Jr., and Company A of the 601st TD Battalion, with Capt. Francis X. Lambert commanding, were supporting the 7th in the attack and our armor fought the enemy tanks and tank destroyers to a standstill.

Concealed German bazookamen, mechanized and horse-drawn antitank guns, Mark IV and Mark V tanks, were strewn throughout the area. Our casualties also were high and included six or seven pieces of armor.

At the end of the first forty-eight hours an important identification among enemy units had been made. As suspected, we were opposed by the two battalions of

the 760 VG regiment, as well as elements of 748th, 225th, 308th, and 728th VG regiments. An additional unit, the 602nd Mobile Battalion, was almost wiped out during the period. The new identification, however, was that of the enemy 67th Reconnaissance Battalion from the 2d Mountain Division, previously identified in Norway. This was combined with the recognition of another element of the same division, the 137th Mountain Regiment, in the I French Corps zone. It provided an indication that the enemy was not going to let the Colmar Pocket be eliminated without a determined effort to prevent it. The 2d Mountain Division actually was earmarked for the pocket to replace the 269th Infantry Division, which previously had been sneaked out and sent to the Russian front. The enemy vainly hoped the switch could be completed before any Allied offensive could be started against the pocket.

Also known to be opposing our advance were: Battle Group *Diemer* and 235th Engineer Battalion. Suspected were elements of the 40th PG (*Panzer Grenadier*) Replacement Battalion in the 254th Infantry zone, and a possible addition of elements of the 137th Mountain Regiment opposing the 7th Infantry.

By 2010 of the night of January 24, the 254th Infantry's 3d Battalion, which had been committed around the right flank of 1st Battalion in the regiment's attack south toward the Weiss River from Hill 216, reached the Weiss. The regiment thus held the river line east to its juncture with the Fecht, although north of that point, along the Fecht stream line the area was not completely clear of enemy.

Company K, 7th Infantry, commanded by Capt. Francis J. Kret, was still in close contact with the enemy in the woods when the 7th struck south in an all-out attack, with three battalions abreast, at daybreak January 25. Company I, under 1st Lt. William D. Anthone, was left to contain the enemy in the forest while the bulk of the regiment made the attack, which began after a heavy artillery and mortar concentration had been placed on Houssen and the surrounding area.

Meanwhile, across the Ill, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 15th Infantry, took up the fight at 0300 the morning of January 25. They encountered enemy small-arms, machine-gun, 20mm, tank, and mortar fire about 300 yards northwest of Riedwihir. Two tanks and a tank destroyer with the 2d Battalion (a bridge strong enough for armor had finally been put in several hundred yards north of Maison Rouge) became stuck, and the battalion withdrew about 700 yards. The men were not in the confusion that our elements had been the previous two days, however, when there was no supporting armor whatsoever. The battalion was quickly reorganized. Maj. John O'Connell's 3d Battalion, with

Companies K and L in the assault, encountered enemy in the vicinity of a road junction northeast of Riedwihl. Company K was disorganized and forced to withdraw. Company L succeeded in driving the enemy from some buildings there, and by noon the 3d Battalion was awaiting relief by elements of the French CC4, preparatory to attacking Riedwihl.

The very relentlessness of the Division attacks slowly wore the Germans down and the towns of Riedwihl, Rosenkranz, and Houssen fell during the torrid fighting of January 25-26.

The 7th Infantry inflicted terrific losses on the enemy when the Germans launched a strong counterattack during the afternoon of January 25. The 1st Battalion, beating back the onslaught, turned the counterattack into an enemy rout and drove along the east-west road into Rosenkranz while 3d Battalion was holding firm against strong enemy armor and infantry pressure.

During the night of January 25 near Rosenkranz, Pfc. Jose F. Valdez gave his life in sacrifice. He was on outpost duty with five other soldiers, when the enemy counterattacked with overwhelming strength. From his position near some woods about five hundred yards beyond his lines, he observed a hostile tank about 75 yards away and raked it with automatic-rifle fire until it withdrew. Soon afterwards, he saw three enemy stealthily approaching through the woods. At thirty yards' distance he engaged in a fire fight with them until he had killed all three. The enemy quickly launched an attack with two full companies of infantrymen, blasting the patrol with murderous concentrations of automatic and rifle fire and beginning an encircling movement which forced the patrol leader to order a withdrawal. Private Valdez volunteered to cover the maneuver, and as the patrol, one by one, plunged through the enemy fire toward their own lines, Private Valdez fired burst after burst into the swarming enemy. The citation of his Medal of Honor award reads in part:

" . . . he was struck by a bullet which entered his stomach, and, passing through his body, emerged from the back. Overcoming agonizing pain, he regained control of himself and resumed his firing position, delivering a protective screen of bullets until all others of the patrol were safe. By field telephone, he called for artillery and mortar fire on the Germans and corrected the range until he had shells falling within fifty yards of his position. For fifteen minutes he refused to be dislodged by more than two hundred of the enemy, then seeing that the barrage had broken the counterattack, he dragged himself back to his own lines. He later died as a result of his wounds . . ."

Final mopping-up of Houssen was done the same day by the 2d and 3d Battalions.

Colonel Heintges' regiment took 166 prisoners, including three officers, and killed and wounded a great number of Germans during the 24-hour period beginning at noon, January 25. The 67th Reconnaissance Battalion of the German 2d Mountain Division, being fed into the line as it moved down from Norway, was caught by several stray artillery TOT's fired into Houssen prior to the attack, and was completely disorganized. Although this battalion contained 700 men, it was no opposition for the 7th's attack.

The 1st Battalion of the 15th, commanded by Maj. Kenneth B. Potter, with the 2d Battalion, under Lt. Col. Eugene F. Salet, on its flank, advanced into the woods west of Riedwihl during the afternoon of the 25th and actually fought until its ammunition ran out after they had penetrated some 600 yards into the forest against tree-to-tree resistance. Major Potter stopped the advance of his battalion until ammunition could be brought up and the attack was resumed at 0200 in the morning.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, moving from positions northwest of Riedwihl, also expended all its ammunition late that night and after being resupplied continued the advance and reached its objective on the south edge of the woods at 0930 the next morning.

The 3d Battalion fought its way to the outer edge of Riedwihl at about midnight and within an hour had cleared the Germans out of the city and had patrols out toward Wickerswihl to the south.

While the 7th and 15th attacked their objectives, the 254th had been relieved by the 28th Division's 112th Infantry by 0700 of January 25 on the Division right. After coordinating with 7th Infantry in cleaning out the Fecht River bed, the 254th was committed on the Division left, to attack Jebnheim. The end of its first day's fighting found the regiment temporarily stopped by bitter resistance, and temporary defensive preparations were made along an intermittent stream that ran just west of Jebnheim. An old mill on the stream was a landmark of the area.

The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 15th were holding a line along the south edges of Le Schmalholtz and Brunnwald woods on the afternoon of the 26th, and occupied the Bois de Riedwihl on the north. Enemy infantry, reinforced by armor, struck the 1st Battalion positions on the west side of the woods. An enemy 88mm gun caught one of our tank destroyers flush in the middle, and a swarm of German armor overran the positions of Company B, thus threatening the Division's control of the forest which dominated the German stronghold of Holtzwihl, to the south.

It was here that 1st Lt. Audie L. Murphy stopped an attack practically singlehandedly.

Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware, 15th Infantry Executive

Officer, said later: "Control (of the Bois de Riedwih) had been wrested from the enemy at a heavy cost in blood. Its possession was of cardinal importance.

"Accordingly, on the afternoon of January 26 the enemy launched a determined counterattack, hurling two companies and six heavy tanks at Company B's position in an effort to retake the woods at any cost."

1st Lt. Walter W. Weispenning, a Field Artillery forward observer, said "The woods were sparse and there was practically no underbrush. I could see everything that happened. The kraut tanks rumbled past Murphy's position, passing within fifty yards of him and firing at him as they went by. They did not want to close in for the kill because they wanted to give our tank destroyer, which was burning but not in flames, as wide a berth as possible.

"While we tried to hold off the tanks with directed artillery fire and bazooka rockets, the German infantry line, consisting of two full-strength companies of 125 men each, surged across the open meadow in a wide arc. They fired at Murphy with machine pistols and rifles as they advanced.

"Then I saw Lieutenant Murphy do the bravest thing that I had ever seen a man do in combat. With the Germans only a hundred yards away and still moving up on him, he climbed into the slowly-burning tank destroyer and began firing the .50-caliber machine gun at the krauts. He was completely exposed and silhouetted against the background of bare trees and snow, with a fire under him that threatened to blow the destroyer to bits if it reached the gasoline and ammunition. Eighty-eight millimeter shells, machine-gun, machine-pistol and rifle fire crashed all about him.

"Standing on top of the tank destroyer, Murphy raked the approaching enemy force with machine-gun fire. Twelve Germans, stealing up a ditch to flank him from his right, were killed in the gully at 50-yard range by concentrated fire from his machine gun. Twice the tank destroyer he was standing on was hit by artillery fire and the Lieutenant was enveloped in clouds of smoke and spurts of flame. His clothing was torn and riddled by flying shell fragments and bits of rock. Bullets ricocheted off the tank destroyer as the enemy concentrated the full fury of his fire on this one-man strongpoint."

Sgt. Elmer C. Brawley added: "The enemy tanks, meanwhile, returned because Lieutenant Murphy had held up the supporting infantry and they were apparently loath to advance further without infantry support. These tanks added their murderous fire to that of the kraut artillery and small-arms fire that showered the Lieutenant's position without stopping.

"The German infantrymen got within ten yards of the Lieutenant, who killed them in the draws, in the meadows, in the woods—wherever he saw them. Though wounded and covered with soot and dirt which must have obscured his vision at times, he held the enemy at bay, killing and wounding at least thirty-five during the next hour.

"Lieutenant Murphy, worn out and bleeding profusely, then limped forward through a continuing hail of fire and brought the company forward. Refusing to be evacuated, he led us in a strong attack against the enemy, dislodging the Germans from the whole area. When the fight was over, he allowed his wound to be treated on the field."

Pfc. Anthony V. Abramski, a member of Company



The northern fringe of the city of Colmar, which was isolated from the east by the drive of the 3d Infantry Division during the reduction of the Colmar Pocket.



The village of Urschenheim was wrested from the enemy at great cost. The tanks shown here were lost by the French. The snow has thawed.

B, added that the company was ordered to withdraw to prepared positions inside the woods when an enemy artillery concentration that preceded the attack began.

"Lieutenant Murphy remained at his command post under a tree so that he could direct artillery fire on the advancing tanks," Abramski said. "Together with a tank destroyer, which was across the main road through the woods and about ten yards to his right rear, he held that rear-guard position under raking fire from the German tanks.

"From my position in the woods, I saw a direct hit on our tank destroyer from a *Jagdpanther* carrying an 88mm gun. The crew piled out as fast as they could and withdrew toward the company position in the forest. And that is when Lieutenant Murphy took

over," concluded Abramski. For his action, Lieutenant Murphy later was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Simultaneously with the smash against 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, the enemy, attacking north from Holtzwihr, struck at 2d Battalion positions on the south rim of the forest. Our artillery, however, laid some excellent concentrations on the advancing Germans and marked the area with smoke for friendly fighter-bombers which strafed the enemy forces and attacked their assembly areas in Holtzwihr. The attack came as though planned by a scenario writer. All day the skies had been cloudy. A few minutes before the German counterattack began, the area over the woods became clear enough for our fighter-bombers to strike, caus-



Pictured from the air are the many enemy pillboxes protecting the road to Biesheim. Tank and motor vehicle tracks form the crazy pattern.



This study in black and white is the result of an attack made under searchlights by 3d Division troops near Neuf-Brisach.

ing many casualties and proving instrumental in forcing a complete German withdrawal. Then the clouds closed in once more.

During the struggle a number of enemy entered the woods from the east and got behind 2d Battalion positions. A hurriedly-gathered task force of doughboys, with a Flakwagon in support, was organized, and the enemy was put to flight after a stiff engagement.

The 254th Infantry jumped off at 1630 in resumption of its attack toward Jepsheim; 1st Battalion was

on the right, 2d Battalion on the left. The 1st Battalion encountered strong enemy resistance from a pillbox 500 yards north of Jepsheim, which was seven feet high and manned by twelve men. Following its reduction the advance continued. The 2d Battalion entered Jepsheim at 2355, following a 15-minute artillery barrage, and 1st Battalion followed. Stiff house-to-house fighting lasted through the night and into the morning.

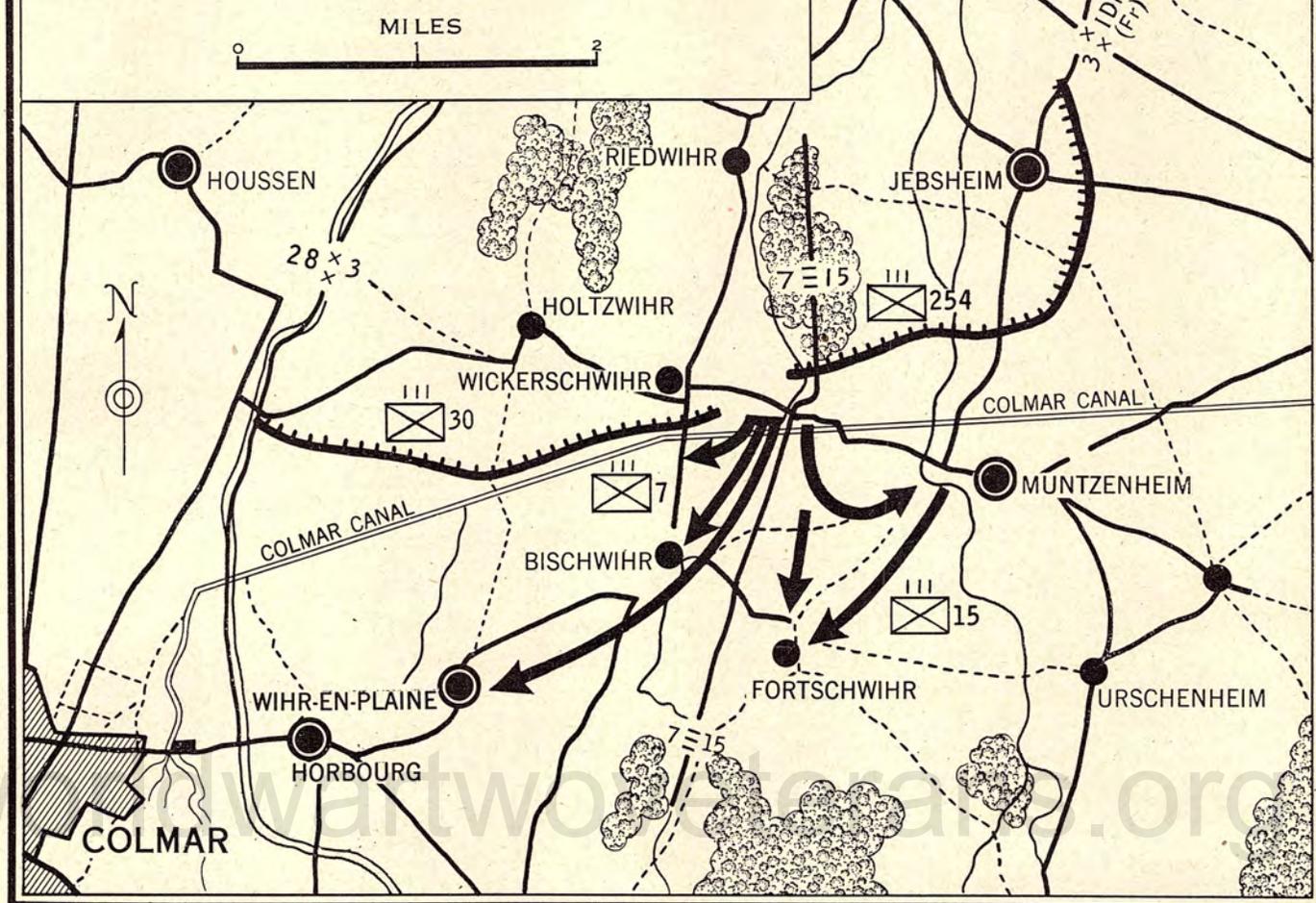
The 3d Battalion, 254th Infantry, attacked at 1750,



The shape of Neuf-Brisach from the air resembles that of the grids of a waffle iron.

CROSSING THE COLMAR CANAL

29-30 JAN. 1944



January 26, with the mission of advancing southeast and clearing the Bois de Jepsheim from the south. Prepared enemy positions were encountered along a stream line and the advance was slow, likewise continuing throughout the night into the next day.

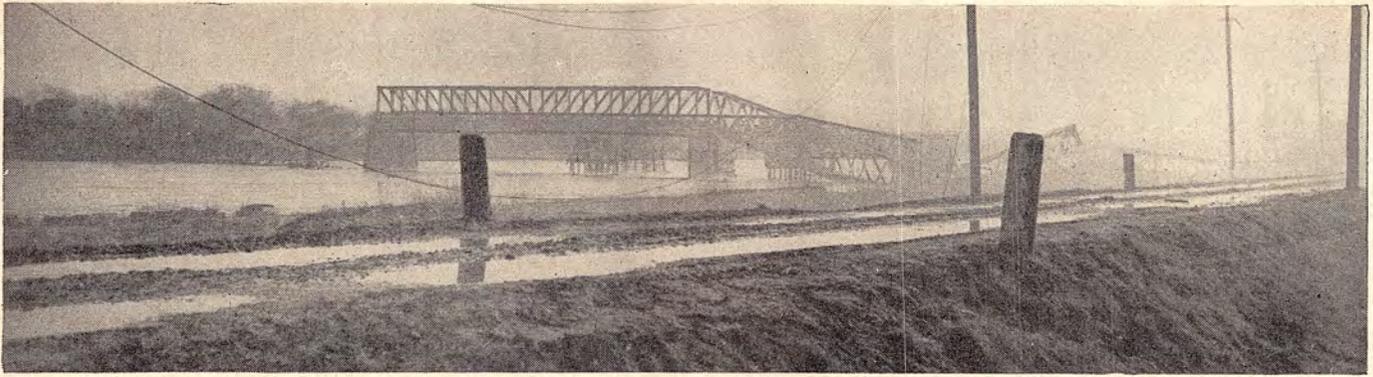
The 7th Infantry's 1st and 2d Battalions made local attacks during the afternoon of the 26th to improve their positions preparatory to relief. The 3d Battalion, following artillery preparation, attacked south from Brunwald woods at 1300, with the Battle Patrol attacking east of Houssen. This got away at 1300 with the purpose of clearing some enemy who were well-intrenched between a dike and the Ill River on the left flank. Company I was particularly successful in its mission, although it was a very bloody small attack. During the night 28th Division's 109th Infantry elements relieved 7th Infantry, which went into Division reserve after having attacked continuously since the night of January 22.

The morning of January 27th saw a reorganized, vengeful 30th Infantry in the fight once again. The

2d Battalion left its assembly area at 0445 in an attack toward the Colmar Canal which was coordinated with French units on its flank. The 1st Battalion moved out, crossing its line of departure and clearing across the road leading southwest from Riedwihr to an area in the vicinity of west of Wickerschwihr by 0510. The 3d Battalion blocked east of the Ill River. By 0845 Company E reported the east side of Holtzwihr clear. Company F, after losing a tank to enemy bazooka fire, withdrew to its line of departure to reorganize, and attacked again, to report the remainder of Holtzwihr clear by 0950. The 1st Battalion cleaned out Wickerschwihr by noon.

The Division Commander later praised the 30th Infantry for its rapid reorganization and resumption of the offensive. In his own words: "It took a fighting regiment to make the gains you made on January 22-23, but it took a great regiment to come back after the reverses you suffered and kick hell out of the kraut at Holtzwihr and Wickerschwihr."

By noon of the 27th all but the southern tip of



A rather thorough job of demolition was done by the enemy on the railroad bridge over the Rhine River at Neuf-Brisach.

Jebsheim was reported clear by the 254th Infantry. Elements of 5 DB moved in to take charge of the southern part of the town, and strong German elements infiltrated back in. The task of clearing them out the French then handed back to the 254th because of their lack of infantry. Fierce fighting continued in that small tip for two more days and it was nearly midnight of January 29th before the 254th Infantry could finally and authoritatively report Jebsheim free of Germans. The regiment, new to combat prior to joining the 3d in the Colmar Pocket, acquitted itself with distinction, first in clearing troublesome Hill 216 and then mopping up in Jebsheim, taking a total of nearly 1,000 prisoners in three days. (The importance of Jebsheim was that it was one of a string of fortified towns on the enemy's main north-south communication artery.)

It now remained for the 15th and 30th Infantry regiments to clear out a few scattered German elements north of the Colmar Canal and the next large phase of the operation was ready to be initiated. During that two-day period, thorough preparations were made to slam across the canal in force, and to move far and fast. This time there was to be no repetition of the

grinding battle of attrition which had characterized the fighting so far.

Patrols to the Canal reported that it was about fifty feet wide and five feet deep, its steep banks being some twelve feet high and about eight feet wide at the top and fifteen at the bottom. The water was slow-moving, but not frozen.

At 2100, January 28, the 3d Infantry Division passed from control of II French Corps to control of XXI American Corps, which was commanded by Maj. Gen. F. W. Milburn.

Reconnaissance along the north bank of the Colmar Canal was continuous during the hours of darkness January 28-29. Huge trucks hauling engineer bridging equipment clogged the roads behind the forward areas.

The entire French 5 DB was attached to the 3d Division as of 1635, January 29.

That evening, with the coming of darkness, 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments stole to the edges of the Colmar Canal with engineer rubber boats, and waited.

Heavy concentrations of preparatory fire of all weapons broke loose just preceding the crossing. During a 24-hour period beginning at 1800, the artillery



Within the walls of Neuf-Brisach these bunkers provided shelter to the enemy and citizens against our bombing and artillery.



Twenty-eight men and a guidon remain of the original Company I, 30th Infantry, which received the Distinguished Unit Citation for its action at Cisterna on 28-29 January, 1944.

battalions fired 16,438 rounds of ammunition, most of which was fired at the beginning of the attack, while the 441st AAA Battalion, under command of Lt. Col. Thomas H. Leary, fired 22,300 rounds of .50-caliber ammunition during the first three hours of the attack. The anti-aircraft gunners sent a continuous hail of shells into enemy positions across the canal and into the towns of Bischwihr, Fortschwihr, and Muntzenheim.

Operation "Krautbuster" was initiated at 2100. Behind the furious screen of preparatory shells, leading

elements of the 7th Infantry moved down the steep banks of the canal and paddled across. Enemy resistance was surprisingly light. The 1st and 3d Battalions of the 7th were completely across by 2205; the 15th Infantry had its bridging supplies held up by heavy traffic, but began crossing at 2145 with the 2d and 3d Battalions in the lead. By midnight the 7th and 15th were completely across.

Company B, 7th Infantry, engaged some enemy in a fire fight while the remainder of 1st Battalion moved into Bischwihr at 2245. The 3d Battalion on the right,



After the battle of the Colmar Pocket was over the thaws came and the terrain was under water in the valleys and on the plain.

also attacking Bischwihr, encountered some resistance in the town but reported the town clear at 2400.

No less speedy was the 15th Infantry's rapid attack upon Muntzenheim. The 2d and 3d Battalions reorganized after the canal crossing, with 1st Battalion crossing behind them. The 2d and 3d then attacked Muntzenheim from the west with 3d Battalion on the left. Company K was reported on its objective by 0110 and the first elements of the 2d Battalion were reported in the town at 0130.

After Muntzenheim was cleared, the 3d Battalion remained in the town and the 2d Battalion attacked Fortschwihr from the northeast in conjunction with 1st Battalion (less certain elements) which attacked south to the town from assembly areas. The town was cleared in short order. During the attack on the two villages approximately 200 prisoners were taken; a 105mm gun with crew, an 88mm gun with crew and two 120mm mortars were captured intact.

The 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, now did some broken-field running. Having crossed the canal on footbridges at 2330, the battalion moved rapidly toward Wihr-en-Plaine, and was approaching it by 0130 in the face of tank fire and some small-arms resistance. Companies F and G entered the town at 0205 as two enemy tank destroyers penetrated between the two companies and the battalion OP group, a member of which was Maj. Jack M. Duncan, the battalion commander. A phenomenal 500-foot bazooka shot by Pfc. Joseph L. Bale destroyed one of the tank destroyers, setting it on fire. The other fled as did the accompanying enemy infantry.

By 0315 the battalion was meeting scattered resistance in Wihr-en-Plaine. At 0630 there was a strong counterattack of enemy armor and infantry. Fierce fighting ensued. By noon the battalion controlled the northern half of the town and was fighting in the southern portion.

During this time 254th Infantry had launched an attack south from Jepsheim to the Colmar Canal and east toward the Rhone-Rhine Canal. At the time 7th Infantry began its crossing of the Colmar Canal, all resistance in Jepsheim had ceased. Five hundred and seventy-five prisoners were taken there the last day of fighting.

The bitter fight in Wihr-en-Plaine conducted by 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, with Company L attached, continued on through the 30th of January. After repulsing a second counterattack early in the afternoon, 2d Battalion and Company L attacked south at 1430, with the 7th Infantry Battle Patrol also participating. Some more of Wihr-en-Plaine was cleared after a hard, close-in fight, and another counterattack at 1830 was repelled. The artillery placed a TOT on Horbourg,



Colonel (then Lt. Col.) Hallett D. Edson, commanding officer, 15th Infantry Regiment.

adjoining. The 2d Battalion jumped off to attack Wihr-en-Plaine's southwest edge at 2230 followed by elements of CC4, which were to pass through the battalion and enter Colmar providing a bridge were seized.

The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, assembled east of captured Fortschwihr at 1640, January 30, and attacked the woods to the southeast. Little or no enemy resistance was encountered by the battalion. Company B was reported on its objective at 1830, Company A on its objective by 1835.

The 1st Battalion remained in position until noon the following day. The 2d Battalion, minus Company F, which was guarding a bridge across the Canal, remained in Fortschwihr.

Elements of the French CC5 attacked Urschenheim from Muntzenheim at 1700. After an extremely stiff fight the town was reported clear at 2000 and Company I, 15th Infantry was ordered to take it over, which it did at 2200.

The 30th Infantry held and cleared the south bank of the Colmar Canal, blocking to the east and west. It was shot at from the south where enemy groups still held out. The 28th Division had not yet attacked south into Colmar, leaving the regiment's right flank open.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, remained in blocking positions to the east in Wickerswihr, with Company A outposting bridges. Company A was relieved

of these positions early on January 31 by elements of the 75th U. S. Infantry Division, which had been brought down from the northern Allied front and was in the process of being placed into position between the 3d and 28th Divisions.

The 2d Battalion also remained in position for the January 30-31 period, as did 3d Battalion, although the latter, and especially Company L, was subjected to very heavy artillery, Flakwagon, machine-gun, and rifle fire in its mission of blocking and clearing. At 1500 an enemy group of about forty men began an attack toward Company L, but artillery and mortar fire stopped them.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, moved south from Bischwihr at 1700 and entered the Niederwald woods. The battalion encountered only light resistance. At 0700 next morning a reported 200 enemy approaching the southern edge of the woods were taken under artillery fire and routed. An armored infantry force from CC4 joined 1st Battalion. The 1st Battalion continued scouring Le Niederwald for isolated groups of enemy.

The 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, continued its fight throughout the night of January 30-31. At 0120 Companies E and L (attached) were 300 yards short of a key road junction in Wihr-en-Plaine, near Horbourg, encountering stiff enemy resistance. They had made only fifty yards and were held up by an antitank ditch at 0435. Company E received a counterattack at 0700 and repulsed it only after bitter fighting.

The 3d Battalion (minus Company L) entered the woods northwest of 1st Battalion and encountered strong small arms resistance. Company I followed 3d Battalion and engaged the enemy in the woods in a firefight, killing many enemy and taking sixteen prisoners.

The 2d Battalion seized the road junction in Wihr-en-Plaine by noon and pushed on to Horbourg.

French CC5 pushed on from Urschenheim to Durmentzen, and engaged the enemy there in a hard fight. Before the town was taken the French lost nine tanks.

The 2d Battalion and Company L, 7th Infantry, together with CC4 attacked Horbourg shortly after noon January 31. By 1435 they were in the town fighting a stubbornly resisting foe. By 1535 they held half the town and were fighting from house-to-house as the French armor drove on through. Artillery was directed on enemy withdrawing from the town. A TOT was placed on the west side of the Ill River and advance elements of the 2d Battalion reached the Ill at midnight putting the town completely in our hands.

The attack was about to go into its final phase. The 15th and 30th Infantry Regiments concentrated on clearing out all enemy west of the Rhone-Rhine Canal which ran north from Neuf-Brisach. The 1st Battalion,

15th Infantry, attacked east from Urschenheim to clear the woods and secure a bridge across the Rhone-Rhine Canal near Kunzheim. During the advance, which was led by Company B with armor, 1st Battalion destroyed two enemy tanks and damaged one. The 2d Battalion attacked at 0100, February 1, on the regimental left flank, and advanced to the east along the Colmar Canal, reaching a position from which it could cover the bridge with fire. The 3d Battalion prepared to make an attack to clear the woods between the 1st and 2d Battalions.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, moved out at 0100, February 1, to clear a stretch east of the Rhone-Rhine Canal. Company A, in the lead, reached its objective at 0625 and fired on enemy vehicles with Cannon Company and artillery fires. At 0637 Companies B and C reached the west side of the canal. Company C crossed the canal on locks at 0717. At 0722 Company A repulsed a two-tank attack. The battalion took 124 prisoners in the twenty-four hours ending noon of February 1.

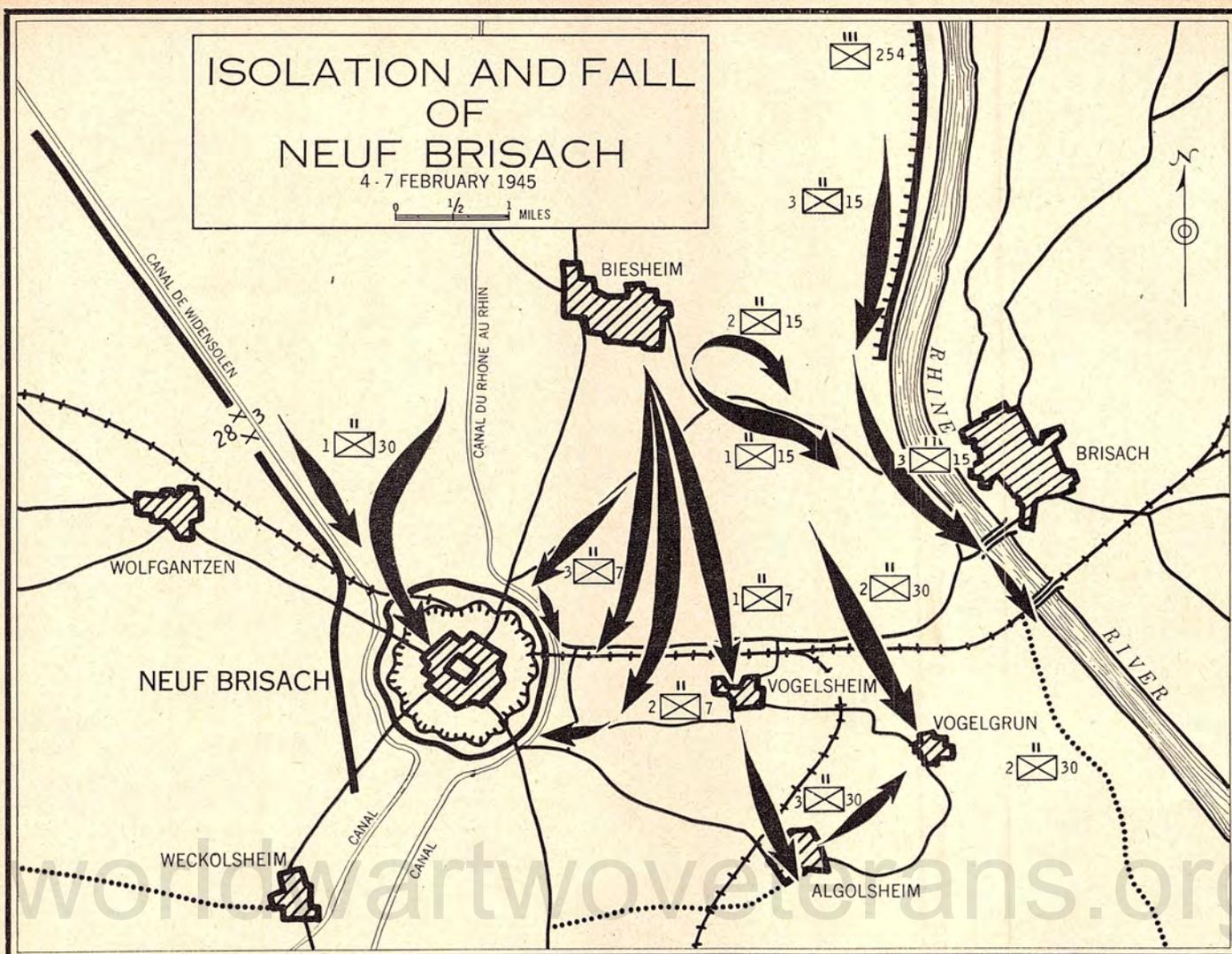
The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, continued clearing objectives west of the Rhone-Rhine Canal during the February 1-2 period. The 3d Battalion repulsed a 40-man, two-tank counterattack, shortly after noon of February 1.

The next play belonged to 7th Infantry. During the night of January 31-February 1, the regiment was relieved from its newly-won positions by elements of the 75th Infantry Division and assembled in Urschenheim. From here the battalions moved to Wickerschihr, and foot elements moved by marching to the Rhone-Rhine Canal.

Artzenheim, on the east side of the Rhone-Rhine Canal, had been taken by the French 1 DMI. The plan now was for 7th Infantry to attack south from Artzenheim in the direction of Neuf-Brisach, which lay close to the Rhine River and east of which were the two bridges over which the Germans had been supplying the bulk of their bridgehead forces for so long.

The attack got off at 0500 February 2, 2d and 3d Battalions abreast. By 0615 Company I had penetrated to the northern edge of Kunzheim. The 2d Battalion became engaged in a small arms and machine gun fight for Baltzenheim at 0800, while 3d Battalion fought to clear Kunzheim. By 0900 both towns were cleared.

With Kunzheim taken, next step was Biesheim, then the final objective, Neuf-Brisach. Leading elements of the 30th Infantry were cleaning out the southern edges of the Schaeferwald woods, a southwestern projection of Bois de Biesheim, directly east of Widensolen. To the south, athwart the 30th Infantry's path which was clearly outlined and guided by the converging lines of



the Widensolen and Rhone-Rhine Canals, were the northern moats and city wall of Neuf-Brisach.

The 15th Infantry moved behind 7th Infantry into Kunzheim, ready to follow the 7th, then to continue branching out to the southeast, to clean out the enlarged zone of advance caused by the southeast bend of the Rhine in the vicinity of Fort Mortier.

At 0230, February 3, Col. Heintges' 2d and 3d Battalions attacked, 3d Battalion on the right following the east bank of the Rhone-Rhine Canal. The 1st Battalion was in reserve, and followed at 0600.

The 2d Battalion passed through enemy in trenches north of Biesheim in the darkness, and entered Biesheim at 0400. The battalion's hardest fight was encountered in these trenches.

It was in the light of a waning moon that the advancing infantry was ambushed. Enemy forces outnumbering the infantry point four to one poured withering artillery, mortar, machine-gun and small-arms fire into the stricken men from the flanks, forcing them to seek the cover of a ditch which they found already

occupied by enemy foot troops. As the opposing infantrymen struggled in hand-to-hand combat, T/5 Forrest E. Peden, an artillery forward observer from Battery C, 10th Field Artillery Battalion, accompanying the infantry, courageously went to the assistance of two wounded soldiers and rendered them first aid under heavy fire. With radio communications inoperative, he realized that the unit would be wiped out unless help could be secured from the rear. On his own initiative he ran eight hundred yards to the battalion command post through a hail of bullets, which pierced his jacket, and there secured two light tanks to go to the aid of his hard-pressed comrades. Knowing the terrible risk involved, he climbed upon the hull of the lead tank and guided it into battle. The tank lumbered on through a murderous concentration of fire until it reached the ditch. A direct hit struck the tank, just as it was about to go into action, turning it into a burning pyre and killing T/5 Peden. His death was not in vain. The remainder of the battalion was guided to the scene of action by the flames and relieved their embattled com-



Captain Claude Lazard, French Liaison Mission, pins the Croix de Guerre on the colors of the 3d Division's 756th Tank Battalion for actions performed in the Colmar Pocket operation.

rades. Peden was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

The 3d Battalion, on the other hand, became involved with enemy along the canal, and initially only Company I succeeded in entering Biesheim. Enemy in the "Jewish Cemetery" also took Lt. Col. Lloyd B. Ramsey's assault elements under fire from their east flank. Maj. Kenneth W. Wallace's 1st Battalion, following the 2d Battalion under Maj. Jack M. Duncan, discovered when daylight came that the hardest enemy opposition had actually been by-passed and that a very determined group held out in the Jewish Cemetery and in pillboxes echeloned in depth between that point and the Rhine. The 1st Battalion was involved in a stiff fight all day and half the night of February 3-4, when the cemetery and surrounding area finally were reported clear. At 0400 the battalion was ordered to return to Kunzheim, pending further action.

During most of February 3 the 3d and 2d Battalions continued to work on Biesheim and it was cleared of Germans by 1700. The 3d Battalion captured 250 prisoners and 2d Battalion took about 150.

Meanwhile the 30th Infantry had attacked south along the west bank of the Rhone-Rhine Canal on February 3 and elements of the 1st Battalion, under Lt. Col. Mackenzie E. Porter, reached the canal bridge east of Biesheim, where enemy fire was received.

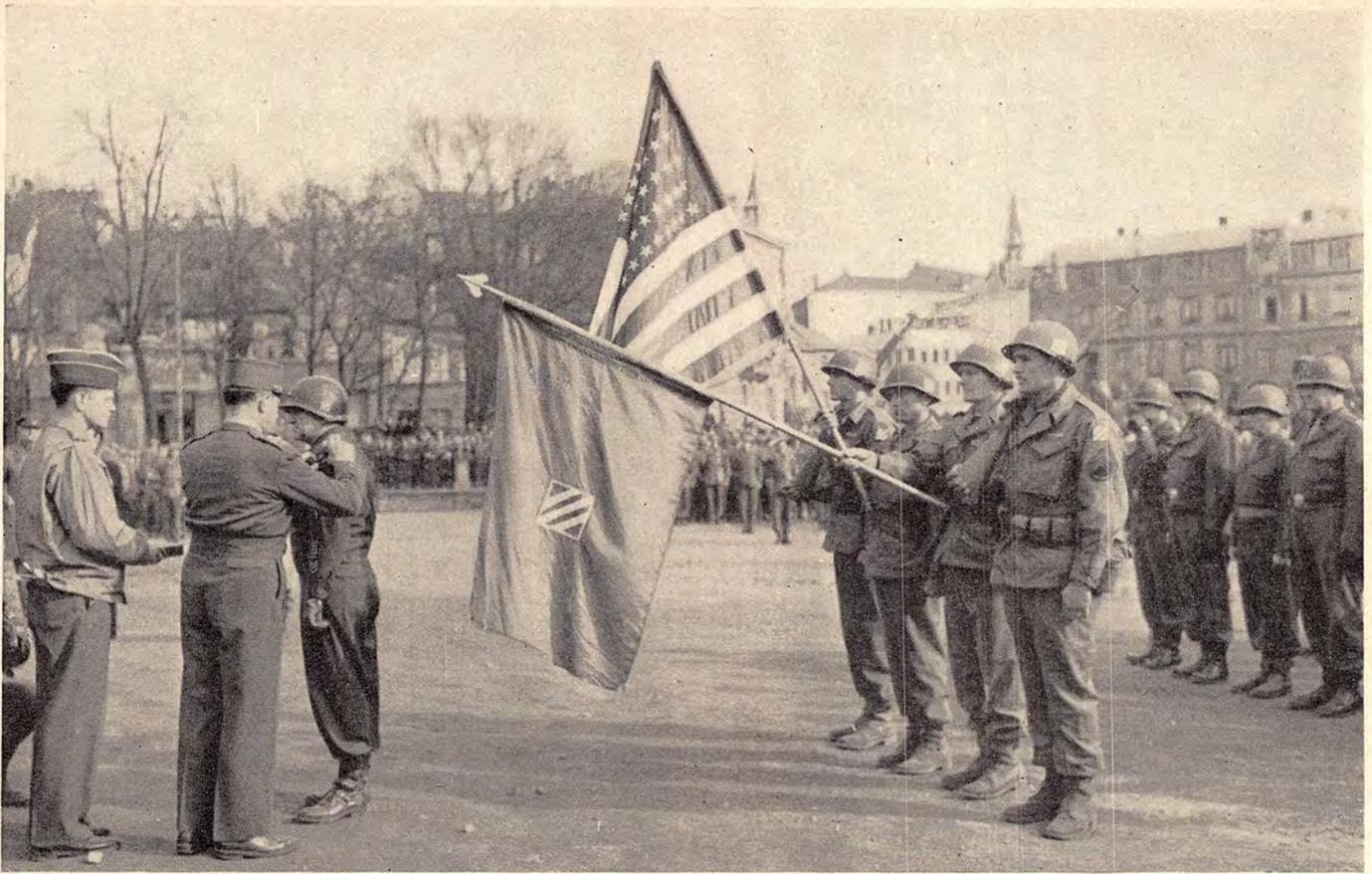
Maj. Kenneth B. Potter's 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, attacked east during the early morning hours of February 4 to assist the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, in

clearing the cemetery area. A small task force from the battalion then moved north from Biesheim to clear up scattered enemy resistance elements along the Kunzheim-Biesheim road, and it was this that shortly thereafter enabled Major Wallace's Battalion to return to Kunzheim.

During the night of February 3-4 and February 4-5, 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, commanded by Maj. James A. Osgard, sent patrols toward Neuf-Brisach, as did the 1st Battalion. Elements of the 1st Battalion encountered some enemy pillboxes at 1925, February 3, succeeded in eliminating two of them by 2100, and at 2340 sent a platoon from Company A to occupy the pillboxes.

At 0435 a five-man patrol from Company A went to a point approximately 500 meters north of Neuf-Brisach and succeeded in returning with twenty-four German prisoners. Major Osgard's 2d Battalion, and 3d Battalion, under Maj. Christopher W. Chaney, maintained aggressive combat patrols to the front and flanks during the 24-hour period beginning noon February 3.

At 0015, February 5, 7th Infantry left the line of departure at Biesheim. The 1st Battalion's mission was to seize the crossroads north of Vogelsheim; 3d Battalion on the right had the mission of seizing the railroad station and sealing the northeast and east entrances to Neuf-Brisach. The 2d Battalion was then to pass through 3d Battalion and seize the hospital and factory area southeast of Neuf-Brisach.



General de Lattre de Tassigny decorates General "Iron Mike" O'Daniel with the Legion d'Honneur, 3d degree and the Croix de Guerre with Palm for his superb generalship in the Colmar Pocket operation.

The 15th Infantry already had moved to the south-east of Biesheim, where elements of 1st Battalion had seized a crossroads there. Maj. John O'Connell's 3d Battalion cleared the Boulay Woods along the banks of the Rhine and was then moved south to continue clearing the woods to the south. Lt. Col. Eugene Salet's 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, also worked on the territory along the banks of the Rhine, operating south of the 3d Battalion.

The 7th Infantry succeeded in clearing Vogelsheim by 0630, February 5, and 2d Battalion moved through on schedule, clearing out the hospital and factory area with little trouble. During the night of February 5-6 a patrol from Company K, led by Sgt. Chester M. Owens, reconnoitered to the east and northeast of Neuf-Brisach, and succeeded in reaching the north-east wall without being fired upon.

The 15th Infantry encountered considerable trouble at Fort Mortier, southeast of Biesheim, on the afternoon of February 5, but the fort was cleared out by 2100. The 1st Battalion accomplished this mission. The 3d Battalion continued to move south. By 1730 Company K had cut the main highway bridge approach, and Company I had moved even further south and cut the railway bridge approach.

Neuf-Brisach was now nearly sealed off. During the

night of February 5-6 the enemy began evacuating the fortress city. Preparatory to this, however, there was a stiff fight north of the city. The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, during the night of February 4-5 assigned Company C the mission of ascertaining the condition of a bridge across the Widensolen Canal just east of Petite Hollande Ferme. At 0430 the four men of the point of 1st Lt. Louis J. Lombardi's 2d platoon were fired upon by machine guns in the vicinity of the bridge and from machine guns at the farm. The platoon thereupon withdrew slightly and dug in along the east bank of the canal.

Company B, 30th Infantry, attacked through Company A along the west bank of the Rhone-Rhine Canal a few minutes after 1500, February 5, with pre-designated phase lines. The attack was successful. The company "peeled off" to the right by platoons, with armor support, and took seventy-eight prisoners, wounded fourteen more, and killed four.

The company set up an outpost line between canals and shortly thereafter Company C, moving south along the Widensolen Canal, contacted Company B's right elements, and the two companies set up their defense.

That same night of February 5, 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, moved by marching to Biesheim and at 2030

the battalion attacked toward Vogelsheim in column of companies. The area east and south of Vogelsheim was interdicted by our artillery as the battalion advanced. Light opposition was encountered and the town of Vogelgrun was reported clear by 2315.

After the 2d Battalion's successful attack on Vogelgrun, the 3d Battalion launched an attack on Algolsheim. The enemy here was supported by at least three tanks, and intense artillery fire was received from enemy Flak guns east of the Rhine. Under the command of Lt. Col. Christopher W. Chaney, the battalion fought through the afternoon of February 6 and into the morning of February 7 to clear the town, beating off one enemy counterattack after the town was taken.

Pfc. Kenneth E. LaRue of Company B led a patrol to the northeast wall of Neuf-Brisach during the night of February 5-6, with a mission of determining the condition of the railroad bridge in that vicinity. The men found strong demolition charges laid, but the bridge was intact. The patrol drew four or five rounds of sniper fire and observed about five men in a nearby grape vineyard. These were captured the following morning by Company C personnel.

At 0900, February 6, elements of the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, reported heavy enemy traffic evacuating from the town on the southeast road leading from Neuf-Brisach. Major Duncan ordered artillery, tank, and infantry weapons fire laid on this traffic.

At 0800 Sgt. Elbert Tapley of Company C, 30th Infantry, led a three-man patrol to the north wall of town and was fired on by an enemy machine gun. However, the patrol remained in wait and at about 1000 observed a white flag above the arch entrance way into the town. Sergeant Tapley returned to find his company moving one platoon down to the northwest wall.

At about 0930 a Company B platoon under S/Sgt. Richard B. Weiler moved south in column. As the men neared the railroad bridge they observed a civilian who, after some persuasion, jumped down into the dry moat and led the platoon to a narrow, low-ceilinged 60-foot tunnel which led through the wall into the town.

The 3d platoon, Company C, under 1st Lt. Hennon Gilbert, however, had preceded the Company B Platoon. Led by Sergeant Tapley the platoon approached a blown bridge on the northwest edge of town, and two young French children went down into the moat to guide them through the archway into town.

Since this platoon entered first, it took all the prisoners. In one building in the north part of town there were thirty-eight. The others drifted in in groups of three and four until a total of seventy-six had been accounted for. There was no fighting in the town.

By 1115 it was radioed that the town was clear of enemy.

The ending was as anti-climactic as the fighting which preceded it had been fierce. The fact that entry into the town was made easily did not detract from the work of the regiments in Neuf-Brisach's near vicinity.

Thus fell Neuf-Brisach, entered by 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry. Built in 1472, and first destroyed by the Germans in 1870, the town had been built to withstand a siege. The 3d Infantry Division's chosen method of attack made direct assault unnecessary. The Division's work was done.

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION

As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec. I, WD Bul. 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), the following unit is cited by the War Department for outstanding performance of duty in action during the period indicated, under the provisions of section IV, WD Circular 333, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

The *3d Infantry Division* with the following-attached units:

254th Infantry Regiment,
99th Chemical Battalion,
168th Chemical Smoke Generator Company,
441st Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion,
601st Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP),
756th Tank Battalion,
IPW Team 183,

fighting incessantly, from 22 January to 6 February 1945, in heavy snow storms, through enemy-infested marshes and woods, and over a flat plain criss-crossed by numerous small canals, irrigation ditches, and unfordable streams, terrain ideally suited to the defense, breached the German defense wall on the northern perimeter of the Colmar bridgehead and drove forward to isolate Colmar from the Rhine. Crossing the Fecht River from Guemar, Alsace, by stealth during the late hours of darkness of 22 January, the assault elements fought their way forward against mounting resistance. Reaching the Ill River, a bridge was thrown across but collapsed before armor could pass to the support of two battalions of the 30th Infantry on the far side. Isolated and attacked by a full German Panzer brigade, outnumbered and outgunned, these valiant troops were forced back yard by yard. Wave after wave of armor

DECISION No 508

The President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, cites:

TO THE ORDER OF THE ARMY:

3rd US INFANTRY DIVISION:

An elite division which has remained faithful to the traditions of courage and sacrifice which it had already acquired during the last war, when it was known as the "ROCK OF THE MARNE".

Under the vigorous command of General O'DANIEL, an energetic and resourceful leader, it fought continuously for 169 days, from the MEDITERRANEAN beaches to the banks of the RHINE.

Placed under the command of the Commanding General, First French Army, for the operations in the ALSACE pocket, by the power of its repeated attacks, it played a large part in the victorious battle for COLMAR.

During the night of 23-24 January 1945, it succeeded in making a surprise crossing of the FECHT and the ILL and capturing the first enemy position, in spite of a snowstorm and terrain strewn with obstacles.

Giving no respite to the enemy, and increasing the strength of its attack, it crossed the COLMAR Canal in order to surround and take the town of NEUF-BRISACH after heavy fighting, thus cutting one of the only two escape routes available to the German troops still defending the COLMAR area.

During these actions it captured over 4,000 prisoners, thus bringing to a brilliant conclusion the series of outstanding operations which took place from the MEDITERRANEAN to the RHINE.

The present Citation carries award of the Croix de Guerre with Palm.

PARIS, 15 March 1945
/s/ /t/ C. de GAULLE

1ere ARMEE FRANCAISE

ETAT-MAJOR - 1er BUREAU

No. 1799 CH/DC

2 copies, including one for transmission to CG, Seventh Army.

CP, 13 April 1945.

For General d'Armee de LATTRE de TASSIGNY,
Commander-in-Chief, First French Army:

Lt. Colonel LEGRAND, Chef du 1er Bureau:
/s/ R. LEGRAND

AG Section

Translation and Coordination
T-1957 18 April 1945

DECISION No 976
(Regularisation)

Sur Rapport du Ministre de la Guerre,
Vu le Decret du 20 Juillet 1944 relatif aux decorations
françaises decernees a des militaires etrangers;
Vu la Decision No 508 du 15 Mars 1945 attribuant la Croix
de Guerre avec Palme a la 3me D.I. U.S.
Le President du Gouvernement Provisoire de la Republique
Française, Chef des Armees,

DECIDE :

la 3me DIVISION D'INFANTERIE U.S. est autorisee a
porter la fourragere aux couleurs de la Croix de Guerre
1939-45.

PARIS, le 27 Juillet 1945
signé, de GAULLE



DECISION No 508

Le Président du Gouvernement Provisoire de la République
Française, Chef des Armées, Cite :

A L'ORDRE DE L'ARMEE :

2eme DIVISION D'INFANTERIE U.S.

Division d'élite qui est restée fidèle aux traditions de
courage et de sacrifice qu'elle avait déjà faites siennes pendant la
dernière guerre où elle s'était acquis le surnom de "ROC DE LA MARNE".
Sous la vigoureuse impulsion d'un Chef énergique et manoeuvrier
le Général O'DANIEL, a combattu sans interruption pendant 169 jours,
des plages de la Méditerranée aux rives du RHIN.

Placée sous le Commandement du Général Commandant la 1ère
Armée Française, pour les opérations de la poche d'ALSACE, a, par
la puissance de ses attaques renouvelées, pris une large part à la
victorieuse bataille de COLMAR.

Dans la nuit du 23 au 24 JANVIER 1945, a réussi à traverser
par surprise la FECHT et l'ILL et à s'emparer de la première position
ennemie, malgré la tempête de neige et un terrain semé d'obstacles.
N'a laissé aucun répit à l'adversaire et poussant de plus en
plus fort son action, a franchi le Canal de COLMAR pour venir entou-
rer et conquérir de haute lutte la ville de NEUF-BRISACH coupant ainsi
l'une des deux seules voies de retraite aux troupes allemandes défen-
dant encore la région de COLMAR.

A capturé au cours de ces actions plus de 4.000 prisonniers,
concluant ainsi brillamment la série de ses opérations glorieuses qui
se sont déroulées depuis la Méditerranée jusqu'au RHIN.

La présente Citation comporte l'attribution de la Croix de
Guerre avec Palme.

PARIS, le 15 MARS 1945
Signé : C. de GAULLE.

1e ARMEE FRANCAISE
ETAT - MAJOR - 1e BUREAU

No 1799 CH/DC

COPIE CONFORME NOTIFIEE :

RO/13

à Monsieur le Capitaine, Chef de la Mission
Française de Liaison auprès de la 7ème
Armée U.S.

-2 exemplaires dont 1 pour remise à M. le Général
Commandant la 7e Armée U.S.



P.C., le 13 AVR 1945
Le Général d'Armée de LATTRE de TASSIGNY,
Commandant en Chef de la 1e Armée Française,
P.o. le Lt Colonel Legrand,
Chef du 1er Bureau

DECISION No 976

(Decision)

On the report of the Minister of War,
Noted the Decree of 20 July 1944 relative to French
decorations awarded to Foreign Military personnel,
Noted Decision No 508, 15 March 1945 awarding the Croix
de Guerre with Palm to the 3rd U.S. Infantry Division,
The President of the Provisional Government of the French
Republic, Chief of Armies,

DECIDED :

the 3rd U.S. INFANTRY DIVISION is authorized to wear
the fourragere of the colors of the Croix de Guerre
1939-45.

PARIS, the 27th July 1945,

signed, de GAULLE

SEAL OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
OF THE MINISTRY OF WAR

and infantry was hurled against them but despite hopeless odds the regiment held tenaciously to its bridgehead. Driving forward in knee-deep snow, which masked acres of densely sown mines, the *3d Infantry Division* fought from house to house and street to street in the fortress towns of the Alsatian Plain. Under furious concentrations of supporting fire, assault troops crossed the Colmar Canal in rubber boats during the night of 29 January. Driving relentlessly forward, six towns were captured within 8 hours, 500 casualties inflicted on the enemy during the day, and large quantities of booty seized. Slashing through to the Rhone-Rhine Canal, the garrison at Colmar was cut off and the fall of the city assured. Shifting the direction of attack, the division moved south between the Rhone-Rhine Canal and the Rhine toward Neuf-Brisach and the Brisach Bridge. Synchronizing the attacks, the bridge was seized and Neuf-Brisach captured . . .

GO 44 WD 6 June 1945

Maj. Gen. John W. O'Daniel, who had commanded 3d Infantry Division since February 17, 1944—through the push to Rome, Southern France, and the Vosges Mountains, had this to say to the Division upon the completion of the 16-day attack against the Colmar Pocket:

"In crossing the Fecht and Ill Rivers, the Colmar and Rhone-Rhine Canals, and your attacks toward Neuf-Brisach, culminating in the routing of the Germans and the capture of the Neuf-Brisach area, you have participated in the *most outstanding* operation in the career of your Division.

"You drove on relentlessly day and night through the worst of weather. Your action not only enabled you to advance, but also made possible the advance of all other forces in the bridgehead and hastened the collapse and elimination of the German-held Colmar Pocket.

"As your commander, I congratulate you on your outstanding performance and am proud of the honor of being in command of such a superb group of fighting men."

Said Maj. Gen. F. W. Milburn, XXI Corps Commander: "The operations of the XXI Corps in the Colmar area have been successfully completed. Colmar has been liberated and the enemy has been driven to the east of the Rhine.

"The success of these operations has been due to the loyalty, the gallantry, and the unselfish devotion to duty of the many thousands of officers and enlisted men of the units that constitute the XXI Corps.

"*The 3d Infantry Division was particularly outstanding in these operations.* It performed its assigned missions with great enthusiasm. It completed these mis-

sions successfully, contributing materially thereby to the great victory achieved by our units.

"I wish to commend you, the officers, and enlisted men of the 3d Infantry Division for the superior manner in which they performed during these operations. Their actions were superb, and they reflect the finest traditions of the Armies of the United States."

". . . This commendable operation," said Lt. Gen. Jacob Devers, Sixth Army Group Commander, "is in the best tradition of the 3d Infantry Division and has added another glorious chapter to your outstanding record which includes almost 400 combat days and nineteen Medals of Honor. I congratulate each officer and man on this fine organization of which you should all be justly proud."

Bare statistics shed further light on the Colmar accomplishment. The 3d Infantry Division, reinforced, during the 16-day period, captured twenty-two towns, over 4,200 prisoners, and killed an enemy total disproportionately high to the total number captured. It virtually destroyed the 708th *VG* and 2d Mountain Divisions, badly mauled the 189th and 16th *VG* Divisions, and destroyed a great amount of all types of enemy materiel.

General Charles de Gaulle, head of the Provisional French Government, chose another way of saying, "Thanks." On February 20, 1945, there was a notable ceremony in Colmar. The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, represented the 3d Division's infantry; a battery of the 41st FA Battalion, the artillery. The 3d Reconnaissance Troop was also represented by a platoon.

General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny, commander of the First French Army, pinned the Order of the Croix de Guerre to the Division's colors. He then conferred the Legion D'Honneur, 3d Degree, and the Croix de Guerre with Palm on the 3d's Commanding General, John W. "Iron Mike" O'Daniel.

TABLE OF CASUALTIES*

Colmar Pocket
(Jan. 23, 1945 through March 14, 1945)

KIA	WIA	MIA	Total Battle	Non-Battle
			Casualties	Casualties
317	1410	323	2050	2550
Reinforcements and hospital return-to-unit personnel				
	Reinf		Hosp	RTU
	Off	EM	Off	EM
	93	2405	106	2265

KNOWN ENEMY CASUALTIES

Killed	Wounded	Captured
713	297	4016

*These figures were provided by the A C of S, G-1, 3d Infantry Division.

XI
GERMANY

worldwartwoveterans.org



The Long Trail from the Rugged Shores of Morocco Ends Deep in the Heartland

TROOP LIST

1. *Hq & Hq Co, 3d Inf Div*
 2. *7th Infantry*
 3. *15th Infantry*
 4. *30th Infantry*
 5. *9th FA Bn*
 6. *10th FA Bn*
 7. *39th FA Bn*
 8. *41st FA Bn*
 9. *10th Engr Bn*
540th Engr Gp (C)
1109th Engr Gp (C)
 10. *3d Signal Co*
 11. *3d Rcn Troop*
 12. *3d Inf Div Arty*
250th FA Bn
693d FA Bn
 13. *441st AAA AW Bn*
2d Plat, Btry A, 353d AAA S/L Bn
Btry C, 353d S/L Bn
 14. *756th Tank Bn*
 15. *601st TD Bn*
 16. *3d Med Bn*
 17. *106th Cav Gp*
 18. *87th Cml Mortar Bn*
-

WITH the capture of Neuf-Brisach, the end of the Colmar Pocket was assured. The enemy was now unable to supply or reinforce his troops. As the 3d Infantry Division inexorably closed on the two bridges over the Rhine east of Neuf-Brisach the enemy demolished them.

The United States 12th Armored Division raced south from Colmar and made contact with I French Corps elements at Houffach. The mop-up of the remaining elements of the German Nineteenth Army took only a few days. And again the 3d took up its Watch on the Rhine.

Limited training was undertaken almost immediately as the Division outposted and patrolled, and made plans to deal with any German attempts to recross the river. The 7th and 30th Infantry Regiments handled this task, while 15th Infantry remained in reserve.

The 254th Infantry was completely relieved on February 9 and reverted to control of its parent organization, the 63rd Infantry Division.

By February 10 a subparagraph in the G-2 Periodic Report noted that: "Organized enemy resistance west of the Rhine River between Strasbourg and the Swiss border is reported to have ceased."

The 99th Chemical Mortar Battalion remained in Division reserve, registering, firing on targets of opportunity, and firing smoke missions across the Rhine. The 168th Chemical Company continued smoke operations along the river, screening our movements from the enemy in Germany until the morning of February 12, when a detachment from the 21st Chemical Company relieved it.

Commencing on February 16, elements of the 4th *Regiment Tirailleurs Marocain* of the 2d Division

Infanterie Motorisé reconnoitered 7th and 30th Infantry positions, preparatory to relief of the entire Division. "You're going back so far you'll be able to eat ice cream," a happy General Devers had promised the Division at the finish of the attack, and the 3d was ready to take the Sixth Army Group Commander at his word.

The relief commenced on February 17 and at 1800, February 18 control of the sector passed from the Commanding General, 3d Infantry Division, to the Commanding General of the 2d DIM.

The 3d assembled and made preparations to move to prearranged areas in Lorraine near Nancy, after 188 days of continuous contact with the enemy.

Pont-a-Mousson is almost exactly halfway between Nancy and Metz. There is a sign which reads, "Nancy 27 km" and directly below it with an arrow pointing in the opposite direction the legend says, "Metz 28 km." It was here that the Division CP set up for business. The regiments disposed themselves in small towns all along the Nancy-Metz highway. The 7th Infantry's 1st Battalion was stationed in Belleville, and 2d at Dieulouard, and the 3d at Marbache, all between Pont-à-Mousson and Nancy. Near Pont-à-Mousson the 30th Infantry set up housekeeping: 1st Battalion near Eulmont, 2d at Bouxieres, and 3d Battalion at Lay St. Christopher. The 15th Infantry bivouacked in towns north of Pont-à-Mousson, in the vicinity of Pagny.

Official status of the Division was now SHAEF reserve, but there were few who doubted that recommitment to combat would long be delayed. Meanwhile rest, rehabilitation, and then, inevitably, training, were the order of the day. The infantry regiments began training new replacements, just as did the 601st TD



This is a smoke-fog generator emplaced near the banks of the Rhine at Neuf-Brisach to afford concealment for our movements on the west side.

Battalion and 756th Tank Battalion. The armored attachments had suffered heavier casualties in the Colmar attack than in any campaign since the push to Rome. New tanks, New TDs, and reinforcements were received to be absorbed into the framework of organizations. The 441st AAA AW Battalion's Battery C was immediately set to work providing antiaircraft protection for lines of communications, bivouac areas, and bridges, while the other two lettered batteries underwent rehabilitation.

The 10th Engineer Battalion and 3d Reconnaissance Troop likewise began rehabilitation and reception of reinforcements.

Along with the commencement of training, recreation was introduced to an organization which had known little recreation since its stay in Pozzuoli, near Naples, six months before. Pass trucks began making regular runs to Nancy, which by now was a large hospital and base-section strongpoint, and the locale of *beaucoup femmes*, always a subject of considerable interest to soldiers. Nancy, in many places virtually untouched by bombs and shells, was a sight for eyes weary of scarred, razed Alsatian villages.

But the war, as always, soon predominated and subordinated all other efforts. As February passed into March the training program rounded off. This consisted of intensive practice in street fighting, the attack of permanent fortifications, weapons firing, intelligence, night operations, and the technique of river crossings.

Effective March 12 the Division became a part of XV Corps, under the command of Maj. Gen. Wade H. Haislip, and plans were formulated for a forth-

coming operation. Although plans for the operation were secret, oldtimers with the faculty of sensing preparations for reentry into combat, knew an operation was scheduled. This time no one doubted the destination or purpose. As one of the very few United States divisions which had fought against Germany almost continuously since July 10, 1943, what was more logical than action in the homeland of the enemy himself? Germany it was to be, and before the war ran its course the 3d Infantry Division was to have the distinction of playing a prominent part in seizing the very place in which Naziism had first arisen to plague the world.

On March 13 the Division began moving to assembly areas near Etting, Schmittviller, and Bining. The move was entirely secret. Numbers on vehicle bumpers were covered over. Shoulder patches were blotted out with strips of adhesive, as were the blue-and-white diagonal patches which decorated either side of each steel helmet.

The Division was poised on the Franco-German border, awaiting the signal for attack. It was not long coming. The date was set—March 15. The hour—0100.

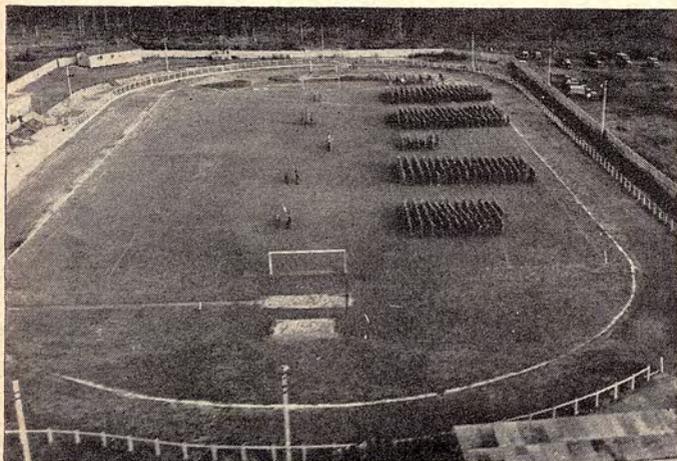
In a special, last-minute briefing, Iron Mike told his regimental commanders: "Within one hour after the jumpoff you will be in Germany."

Events proved him right. The 3d Infantry Division reached the fringe of its long-sought goal exactly thirty-one minutes after its leading elements crossed the line of departure.

The path into Germany was necessarily a thorny one. For the third push to the Rhine River also marked the third time that the division had been assigned to a highly-fortified area and given the task of reducing all obstacles that lay in the path. The two other times



Sgt. Horgan, Pvt. Theole and Sgt. Saridski, 601st TD Battalion inspect their TD at Pont-a-Mousson.



A race-track in Pont-a-Mousson was the scene of many decoration ceremonies during the rest period.

were against the "iron ring" of Anzio and the "frozen crust" of the Colmar Pocket.

Other United States units had faced the enemy in this area for more than two months. Shortly following the beginning of the German Ardennes-Eiffel offensive in the north there had been an attack against the Seventh Army. When this push was stopped, no further offensives were mounted in this area by either side. Stalemate developed. As usual, the Germans promptly mined every possible spot accessible to their engineers; fortified their lines by digging zig-zag fire trenches and siting their weapons with the expert eye to terrain for which they were noted.

Elements of the crack German 17th SS *Panzer* Division occupied a major portion of the sector through which lay our zone of advance at the time of our attack. Although morale of the average German soldier was not, on the average, high, that of the NCOs and officers was still unbroken, and the over-all fighting ability of enemy troops could still be termed no less than "excellent."

The ground was gummy, sticky, following recent rains.

Promptly at 0100, March 15, the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 7th Infantry and 1st and 3d Battalions of the 30th Infantry pushed off; the 7th from Rimling and the 30th from the vicinity of Schmittviller, passing through elements of the 44th Infantry Division. Division Artillery simultaneously opened fire with ten battalions, plus an additional six battalions of XV Corps artillery supporting. The initial barrage lasted twenty minutes.

Advancing on the left flank of the regiment the 1st Battalion of the 7th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Kenneth W. Wallace, moved northward rapidly and aggressively, overcoming small-arms resistance which

was supported by mortar and artillery defensive fire.

At 0135 Company B led the 3d Infantry Division into Germany about one mile south of Utweiler. First Scout Pfc. Wayne T. Alderson was the first man across. Minus Company A, the battalion crossed the Bickenalbe stream and seized crossroads 304, one kilometer east of Baumbusch woods. By noon, despite increasing enemy resistance, Company C was in the eastern edge of the woods, while Company B had pushed through moderate resistance to occupy Erching. Company A, which had swung left after progressing about one and one-half miles from the line of departure, stormed Guiderkirch from the north and had it cleared by 0400, taking sixty-one prisoners.

The 3d Division had had many attacks in which temporary disaster, as it sometimes must to the best formations, came to one battalion. In practically all cases it had resulted from enemy armor counterattacking a temporarily armorless unit. As it was at Maison Rouge bridge in the attack against the Colmar Pocket, so it was on the first day of the attack with Lt. Col. Jack M. Duncan's 2d Battalion of the 7th.

Advancing on the regiment's right flank the battalion encountered thick *schu*-minefields as well as antitank minefields and sustained serious casualties at the outset. Four tanks were disabled and the balance of attached armor halted. In spite of its crippling losses, plus heavy enemy resistance, the battalion forged its way into Utweiler and captured the town, taking many prisoners. At 0730 strong enemy Flakwagon and self-propelled gunfire was received and two hours later a battalion of enemy infantry, supported by nine tank destroyers and four Flakwagons, were observed on the high ground that ringed the town on three sides. Men of the isolated battalion watched the hostile armor roll into town, methodically leveling every house in its path. With no supporting armor, the only alternative to annihilation was withdrawal. Only a portion of the battalion managed to reach the high ground south of the town. There was a heavy toll in killed, wounded and captured, a good part of which was suffered prior to the withdrawal.

The 1st and 3d Battalions, 30th Infantry, also encountered intensely-sown *schu*-minefields from the outset and in addition 1st Battalion drew automatic fire from pillboxes. The 3d reported a stream of small-arms fire on the narrow gaps in minefields and extremely heavy, casualty-inflicting self-propelled gunfire.

Because of their maneuverability and the ease with which they crossed antipersonnel minefields, tanks of the 756th Battalion were employed to great advantage by the 30th both in smashing pillboxes and evacuating wounded.



3d Infantry Division infantrymen move up to the line of departure prior to the attack against Germany itself.

A tank-infantry attack, led by 1st Lt. Richard Rosebury of the regimental raider platoon attached to the 3d Battalion, was outstandingly successful in securing the dominating crest of a hill whose possession was absolutely essential to the battalion.

While the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 30th were rolling up the field defenses, the 2d was in "reserve" near Volmunster, if such can be called the role of a

unit which found it necessary in a 26-hour period to clean out at least fifty pillboxes in an adjacent division's area, rather than endure a hail of fire from these positions.

The 7th Infantry's 3d Battalion, under Maj. Ralph J. Flynn, was committed at 0400. It pulled up behind the 2d Battalion and formed an arc around Utweiler running south to east. Companies I and L, and AT Company



The first group of enemy prisoners taken by the 3d Infantry Division on enemy soil move back to the PW cage on 15 March, 1945.



Rimschwiller village was the scene of a hard-fought battle. When this photo was taken enemy and friendly forces were both under cover.

(organized as a bazooka unit), supported by fifteen pieces of armor, launched a counterattack on Utweiler behind an artillery preparation. By 1540 assault elements of Company I had penetrated enemy defenses and entered the town. Armor of the task force destroyed seven enemy tanks and tank destroyers and all four of the enemy's Flakwagons. Fighting in Utweiler continued until 1800 hours that first day before the town was ours.

First element of the 15th Infantry to be thrown into the fight was the 1st Battalion, which shoved off from its area near Bining at noon, to attack Ormersviller. The battalion moved along the axis of the Rimling-Epping Urbach road to Epping Urbach, then swung north toward Ormersviller. Near midnight, March 15, Company A had pushed to within 1000 yards of the town with no contact save for enemy artillery and mortar fire.

Division artillery, as always, played a very important part in the initial attack. From 0100 until daylight, March 15, the battalions fired a hundred concentrations in support of the attacking infantry units, in addition to the opening barrage.

At 0135 Company A, 15th Infantry, reported that it was entering Ormersviller, now against heavy artillery and mortar fire although there was very little small-arms resistance. Less than an hour later the company had occupied the left side of the town, with Company B on the east side. Ormersviller was captured—first town to fall to the 15th Infantry in the new drive.

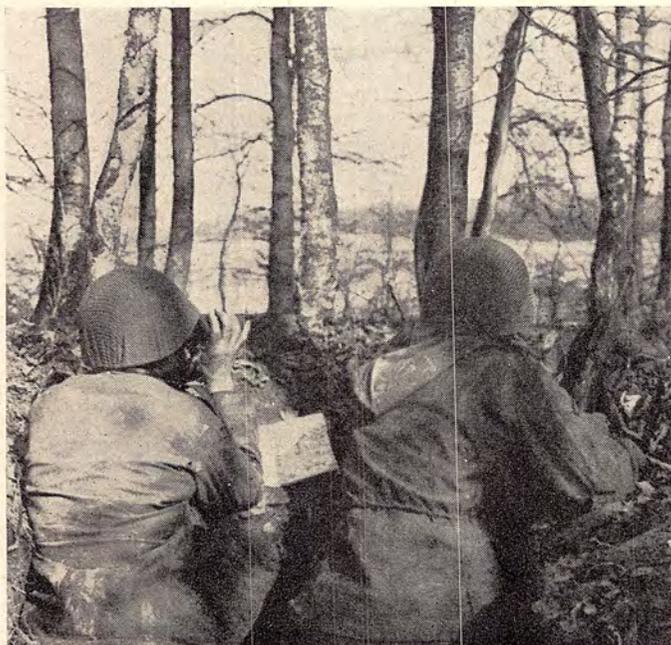
The 1st and 3d Battalions, 7th Infantry, resumed the attack to the north and east toward the Siegfried Line at 0130. Against scattered but determined rear-guard resistance, Company I took Hill 370 while Company L pushed into the Dackerwald woods. The 1st Battalion infiltrated into Medelsheim against stubborn enemy delaying action during the hours of darkness and during the early hours of daylight cleared the town, taking many prisoners.

By noon 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, had got to within 800 yards of Loutzviller, where its lead element, the 2d Platoon of Company A, was held up by small-arms fire from a house on the outskirts. One member of the platoon here killed one and captured nine Germans to eliminate this obstacle, and the town fell shortly after.

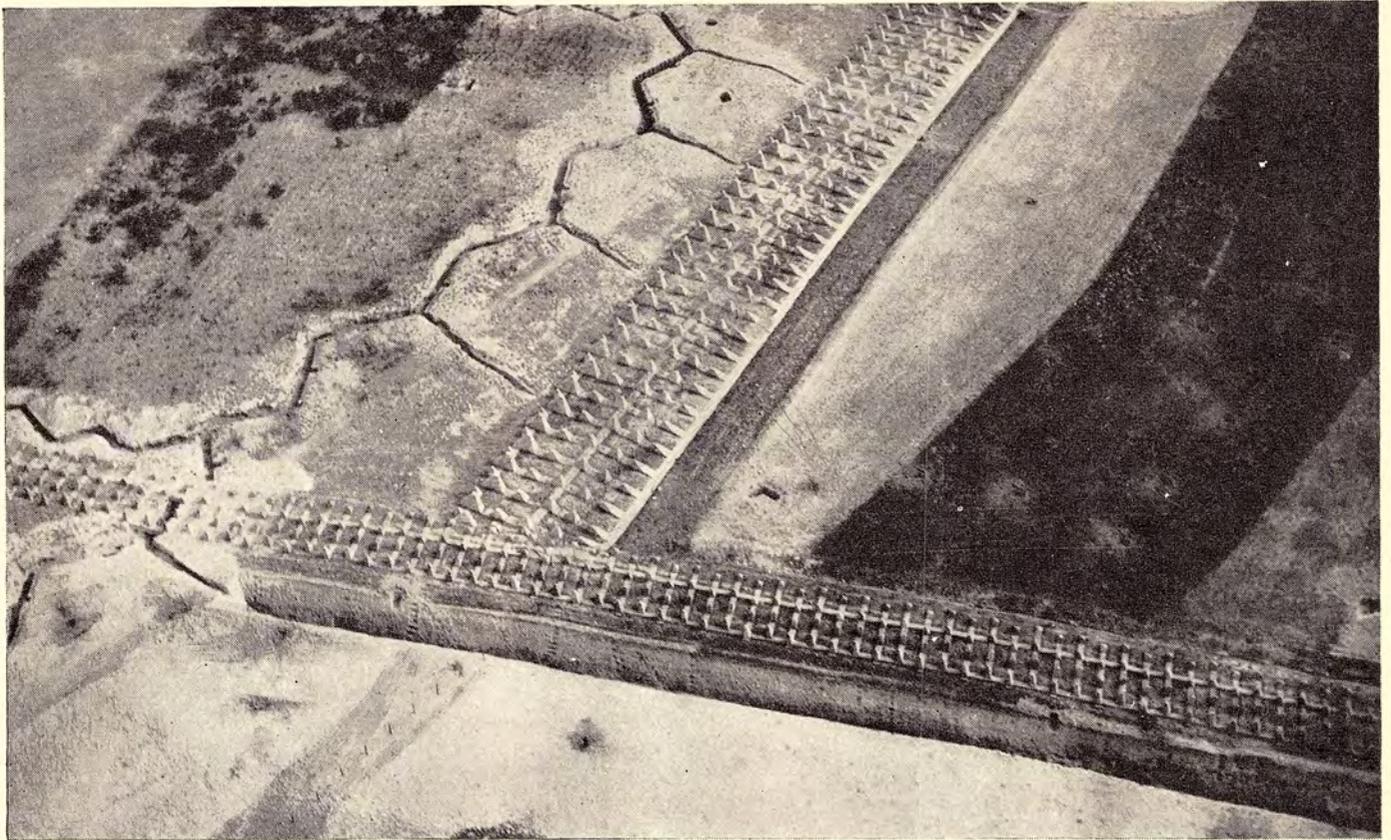
The 3d Battalion had moved from its assembly area near Epping Urbach that morning and passed through 1st Battalion elements at Ormersviller, attacking south-east toward Volmunster. The town fell to Company I within two and a half hours as Company L swung toward Eschviller, which it and elements of Company K took during the morning.

During the rest of the day and for part of the next, 15th Infantry continued to advance. The 1st Battalion overran Scheidberg and stepped into Germany to follow up with the capture of Hornbach, against small-arms and machine-gun fire. One platoon of Company A fought two hours in taking Hornbach. The 1st Battalion moved on to capture Mauschbach.

Dietrichingen fell to the 2d Battalion while a patrol found Brenschelbach clear. The 3d Battalion took the main road junction east of Loutzviller, then swept through Windhof, Schweyen, Ohrenthal, and pressed on to Rolbing where Company I crossed an unnamed river. In the battle for the road junction, Pfc. Buster D. Robertson, first scout in an assault platoon, distinguished himself by walking forward under heavy



Cpl. Edward Keeler and T/Sgt. Paul Mayer reconnoitre possible targets on the approaches to the Siegfried Line from a forward observation post.

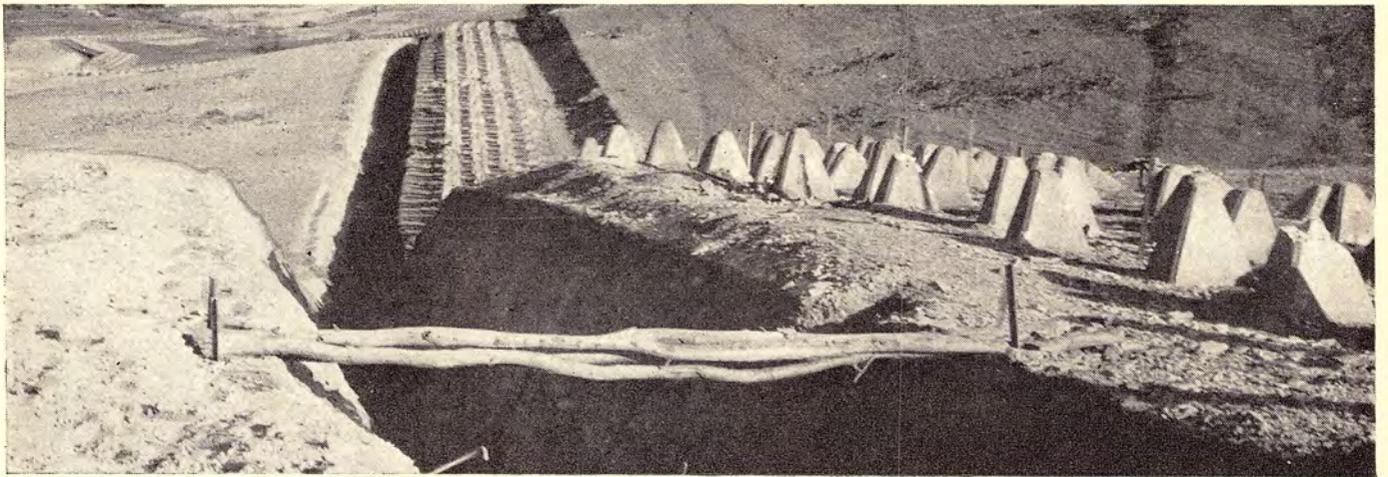


Typical defenses of the Siegfried Line. In the foreground an anti-tank ditch; behind, a band of dragon's teeth; to the left fire trenches.

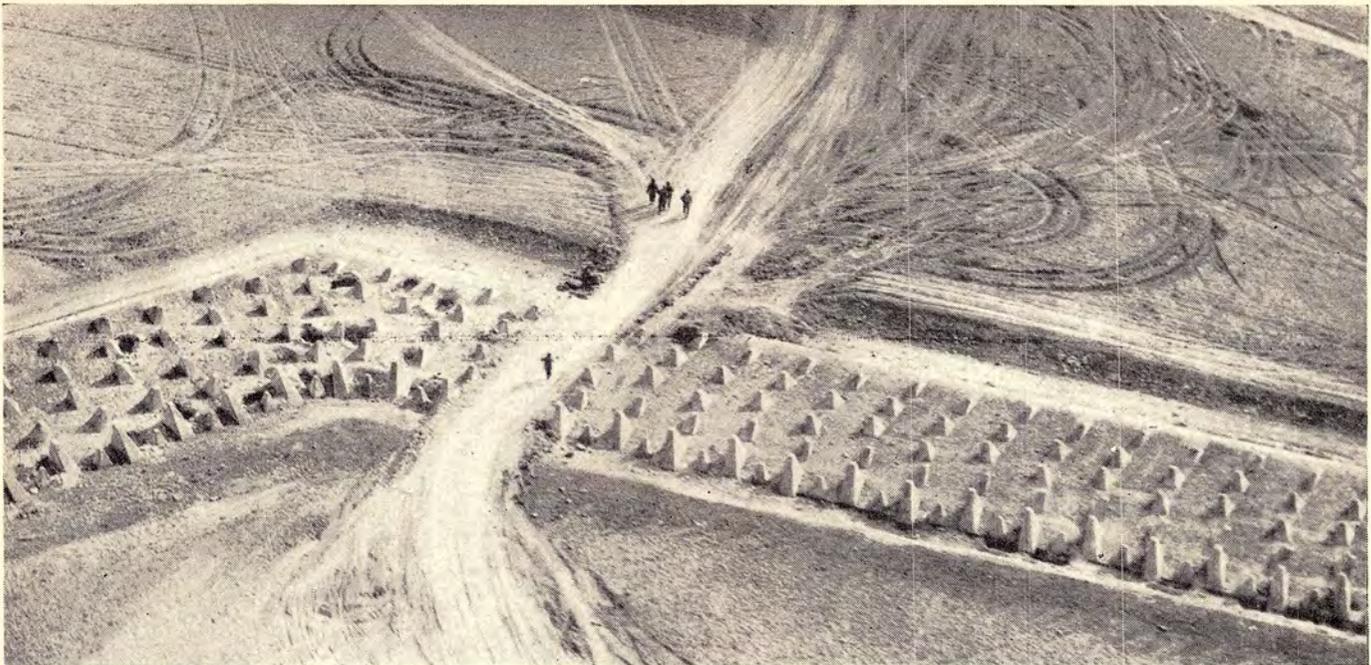
fire and indicating enemy positions to be destroyed. He himself was killed with a burst of machine-gun fire, but the assault platoons inflicted approximately fifty casualties on the enemy causing his forces to withdraw leaving behind eleven machine guns.

At 1400 March 16, the 1st and 3d Battalions, 7th Infantry, resumed the attack in their zone. Troops of the 1st Battalion broke into Neu-Altheim and engaged the

enemy in a bitter small-arms fight. In slightly more than an hour, despite furious attempts on the part of two enemy tanks or self-propelled guns to stem the assault, the town was cleared. The 3d Battalion, in an aggressive attack, seized Riesweiler, closed in and took the *Nasserwald* and *Grosserwald* woods and by 1700 advanced to a road junction and patch of woods a mile east of Altheim.



This is a close-up of a single band of dragon's teeth fronted by an anti-tank ditch. Bulldozers filled the gaps and engineers demolished the obstacles after the infantry took the position.



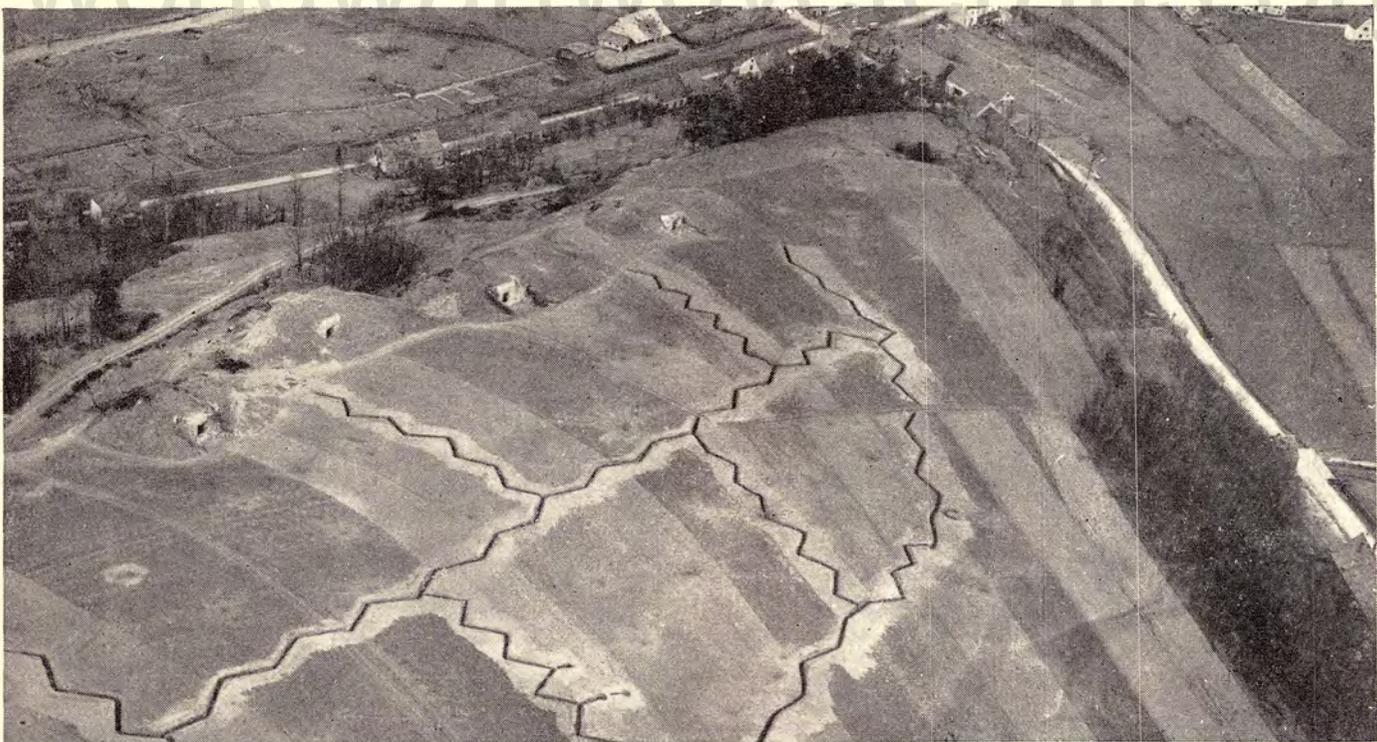
This aerial photo, taken from south of Zweibrücken shows one of the places through which the infantry, followed by armor and transportation, broke.

At 0020, March 17, 1st Battalion pushed out again in the attack, while the 3d Battalion dispatched patrols. Alheim fell without resistance to the 1st Battalion. Companies K and L attacked Stuppacheshof and occupied it within three-quarters of an hour. Patrols moved into Mittelbach unopposed but found

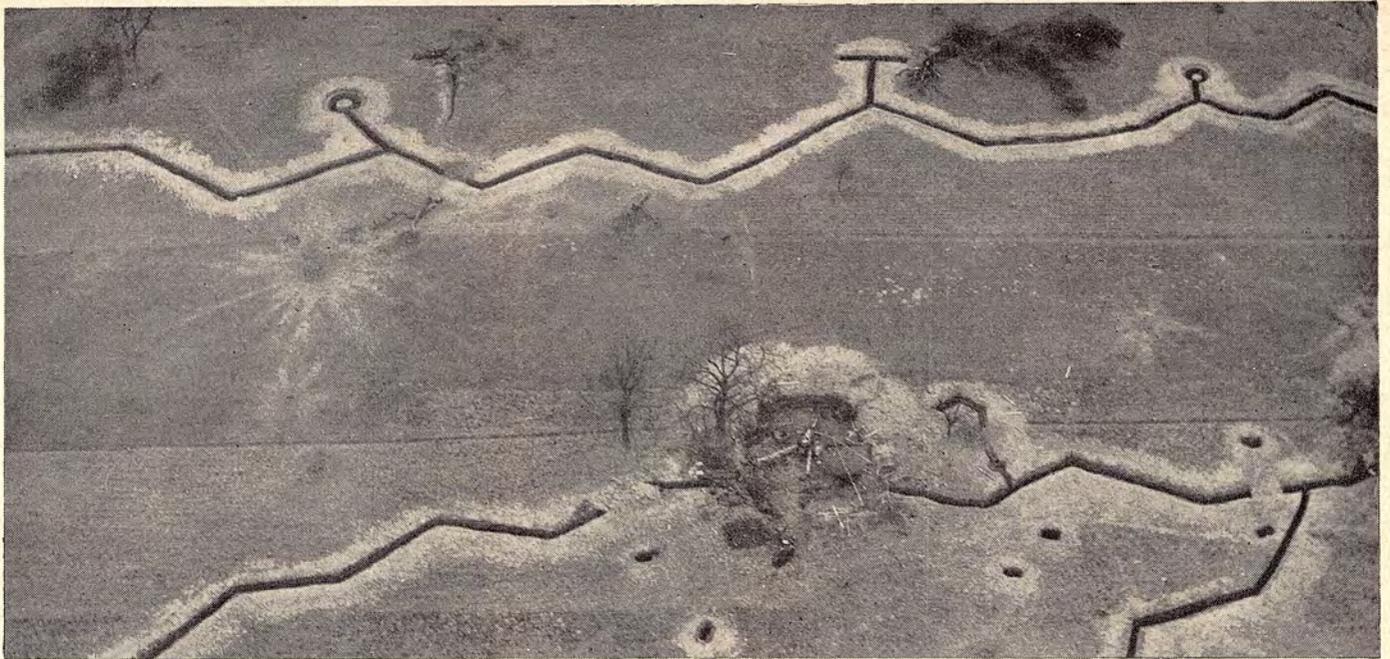
the town heavily mined, and boobytrapped with 75mm shells.

The 3d Infantry Division was now at the first fortifications of the vaunted Siegfried Line.

A task force consisting of a rifle platoon from 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, a bazooka platoon from the



This aerial photo shows part of the German defensive position south of Zweibrücken. These defenses posed a difficult problem to the infantry, who eliminated them.



Part of the Siegfried Line south of Zweibrücken. An anti-tank gun (slightly to the right of center) is sited behind a zig-zag fire trench.

regimental Antitank Company, and five light tanks from the 756th Tank Battalion set out for Mittelbach from Altheim.

During the night of March 17-18 a small, carefully-briefed patrol from 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, was sent out to the first row of the Siegfried Line's "dragon's teeth," and drew small-arms, artillery, and self-propelled-gun fire, indicating that the sector was extremely sensitive.

Maj. Gen. John W. O'Daniel at this time ordered a two-regiment attack against the Siegfried Line, 7th and 15th, with the 15th on the right, to breach the line, push rapidly to the Schwarzbach River, secure two bridges and the high ground immediately to the north; then mop up from the flank and rear of the Siegfried defenses east of the breach. H-hour was set for 0545, March 18.

The 7th Infantry moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Althornbach during the night of March 17-18 and the 15th likewise completed its operations.

The 30th Infantry was still in reserve.

Assault battalion was the 1st in each of the regiments.

At 0545, following a strong artillery preparation, the two battalions jumped off. The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, penetrated the first three belts of dragon's teeth, by-passing many enemy groups in pillboxes, each of which thereafter became an objective of its own, to reach the Muhlthaldershof Ferme, about a mile-and-a-half southeast of Zweibrücken, at 0630, where the battalion was engaged in a fire fight by the enemy.

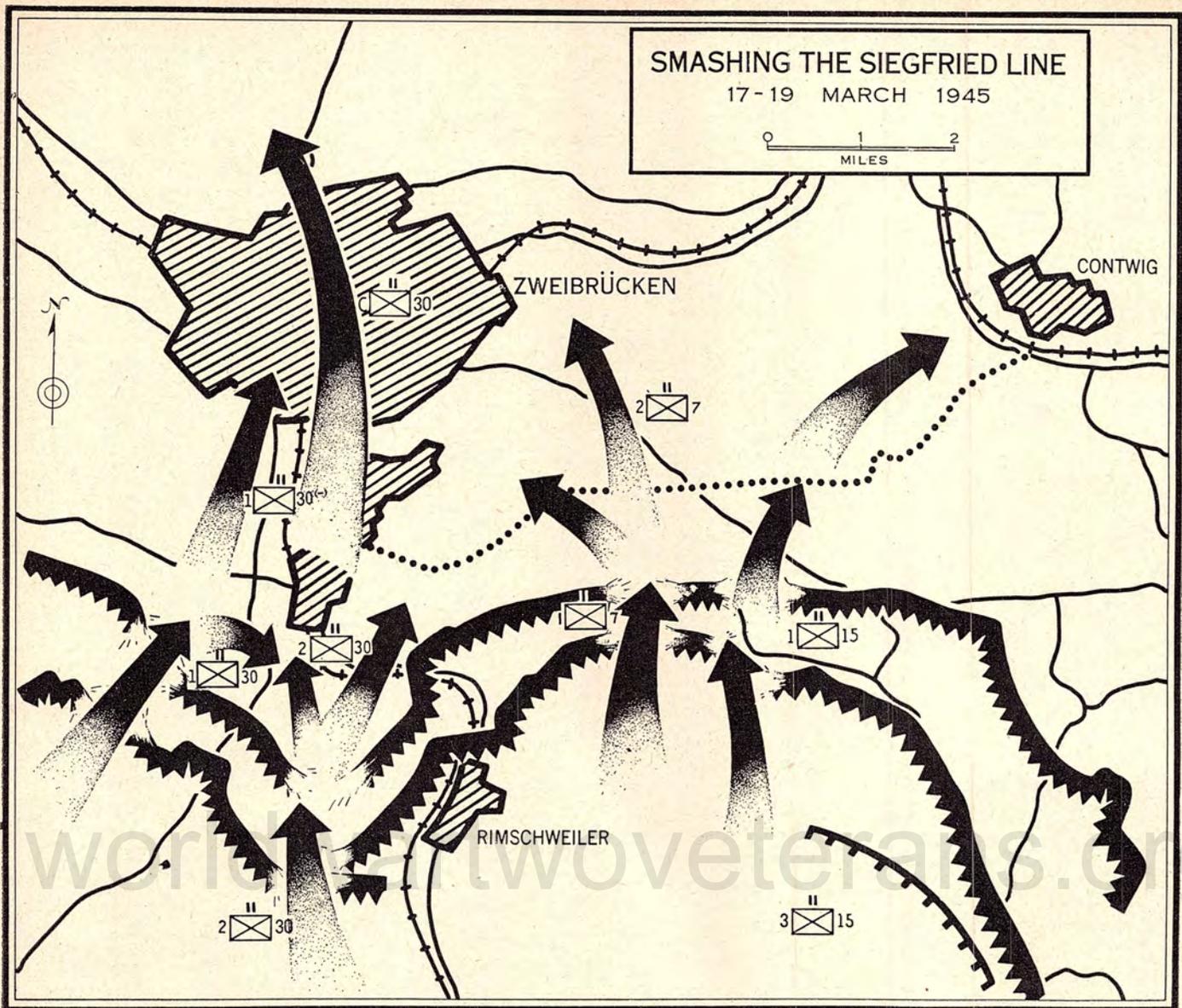
The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, followed by the 2d, while the 3d performed a blocking mission on the

right flank of the Division and regiment, got away at 0545 and likewise advanced behind the massed fire of nine battalions of artillery and was supported by engineers with bulldozers and demolitions.

The battalion immediately drew fierce small-arms fire and picked its way ahead slowly, closing in on the woods to the front. As it advanced, the enemy opened fire with heavy concentrations of artillery fire.

By 0930 Company C was in the woods, with Company A on the right, moving toward the first row of dragon's teeth. The resistance was now furious. Brisk fire fights raged throughout the course of the morning and the enemy succeeded in preventing the battalion from reaching the dragon's teeth until 1130, when Company C forced its way in. Four hours later the company was barely inside the obstacles and commencing to mop up against tenacious resistance that slowed the advance to a yard-by-yard pace. In this sector the enemy was fighting with everything he could muster to hold the Westwall and keep the last great man-made barrier before the Reich intact.

The 7th Infantry, at 0730, committed the 3d Battalion, which initially was without armor because the engineers had been unable to blow the dragon's teeth sufficiently for tanks of the 756th and tank destroyers of the 601st to operate. At 0930 Company I, assault company of the battalion, encountered stiff resistance from by-passed enemy groups 500 yards south of the 1st Battalion. The balance of the 3d Battalion further south also engaged formidable enemy elements by-passed by the 1st. The 2d Battalion meanwhile mopped up and secured the flanks of the advance.



Company B, 15th Infantry, passed through the weary Company C and pressed the attack with renewed force. Fierce fighting raged the length of the Division front.

At about 1900 a reinforced company of enemy infantry counterattacked the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, the brunt of which was taken and repulsed by Company A. The battalion in turn launched counterthrusts that drove the enemy back with many losses. By the end of the day the 7th Infantry had driven a thin wedge 1500 yards in depth through the first and second rows of dragon's teeth and was within sight of Zweibrücken, fighting the enemy on three sides. Shortly after midnight, March 18, Company I repulsed a determined counterattack at Wallerscheid. By this time the 1st Battalion had almost exhausted its ammunition and supplies. Armor was held up by the antitank ditches and one tank was stuck in the "teeth." A task

force, consisting of Company I and engineers commanded by the 3d Battalion S-3, Captain Harold Wigetman, succeeded in supplying the 1st Battalion during the night, although the task force received and repulsed a strong counterattack from the northeast just before it contacted rear elements of the 1st.

The fighting continued all night in the 15th zone also. The 2d Battalion, standing by all the previous day ready to move up and renew the attack, had been held up by furious artillery fire. However, it passed through the 1st Battalion in the early morning hours of March 19 with Company F in the lead, followed by Company E.

The Commanding General decided that the attack needed additional impetus and committed the 30th Infantry to the left of the 7th Infantry in a new sector on the morning of March 19. At 0515 the 2d and 1st Battalions in the assault, preceded by a thunderous half-

hour artillery barrage, blasted their way into the dragon's teeth.

Maj. Kenneth B. Potter, commanding 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, in the absence, due to injury, of the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Michael Paulick, was caught in an antitank ditch while the enemy fired down the portion of the ditch that ran off at right angles on either flank. Thus trapped and unable to crawl out because of a hill, the major and his party remained there until nightfall directing the fight by radio.

The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, assumed the job of blocking to the east and west the morning of the 19th. The 2d's Company G was thrown into the battle and during the morning eliminated four pillboxes. By noon however, the battalion was approximately 2000 yards southeast of Contwig and receiving direct antitank-gun fire. In addition, hundreds of antitank and antipersonnel mines were hampering the advance—one of the greatest mine concentrations the regiment had ever faced.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, had moved north at 0800 to contact advance elements (1st Battalion) of the regiment, despite enemy-manned pillboxes on both flanks of the line of advance which tried vainly to break up the operation.

The grinding, slashing, grueling fight continued that

whole day of March 19. The Germans had provided obstacles by demolishing every bridge in the path of advance. The line was a maze of reinforced concrete pillboxes with interlocking fields of fire, barbed-wire entanglements, entrenchments and deep antitank ditches, in addition to the omnipresent dragon's teeth.

The enemy facing Seventh Army was rapidly being cut off in the rear by elements of the advancing Third Army at this time, but this was nowhere apparent in the quality and ferocity of opposition offered the 3d Infantry Division. The crackup, however, was not far away. General O'Daniel, sensing this, ordered the attack ruthlessly pressed. It went on through the night.

In one small action, Cpl. Henry Mount of 15th Infantry's Company G placed pointblank machine-gun fire on a pillbox from an exposed position, although he could hardly have hoped to neutralize it. After a short time the occupants ceased firing and friendly riflemen, having got next to the fortification unobserved, blew the door with TNT charges and took eight prisoners. In another instance one rifleman killed five snipers with five shots within a very few minutes.

The breakup came on the morning of the 20th. Prisoners began to swarm in, over-run by the relentless attack.



The railroad yards at Zweibrücken had been the target for the airforce long before the 3d Division entered the city.



A 3d Infantry Division patrol cautiously enters the devastated city of Zweibrücken.

At 0230 Company E, 7th Infantry, seized and occupied a pillbox 300 yards south of the Muhlthaldershof Ferme. An hour later 3d Battalion had cleaned out six pillboxes. The enemy's defense began to dissolve and patrols quickly pushed out to the front.

The 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, under Lt. Col. Mackenzie E. Porter, had a bridgehead across the Hornbach River by 0545. As the 1st and 2d Battalions continued their assault, plans were being laid for 3d Battalion to widen the corridor which the assault units were making through the fortifications, and to mop up scattered pockets of resistance.

In front of the 15th, likewise, the breakthrough was obviously successful and the enemy was moving out in double time. Companies F and G were attacked from the rear at 0400 but by dawn the resistance had been mopped up and the 2d Battalion moved ahead toward Contwig without enemy contact save for scattered groups of Germans which surrendered without creating trouble.

Leaving a platoon to protect engineers at the Hornbach River crossing site the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, capitalizing on the Siegfried breakthrough in the 30th Infantry zone, rushed patrols to the bridges leading

into Zweibrücken, the first large and well-known German city yet encountered. The 2d Battalion, after detailing troops to block exposed positions, was ordered to clear the city in its zone. To take Zweibrücken was entirely a 30th Infantry assignment, which the regiment rapidly proceeded to do.

The 1st and 3d Battalions, 7th Infantry, advanced to the north at the same time. By 0825 thirty-five prisoners had been taken. At 1100 a task force, consisting of Company E and tank destroyers, contacted elements of the 30th Infantry one kilometer southwest of Muhlthaldershof Ferme. By noon the 7th Infantry was engaged in mopping-up operations.

During the remainder of the 20th, the 30th Infantry concentrated on clearing Zweibrücken, as the 7th relieved the 30th in Ixheim, and took Nieder-Auerbach. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 30th, moved to high ground north of Zweibrücken following its capture, where the 1st Battalion had a stiff fight with numerous dug-in enemy infantry liberally supported by 88mm guns. The battalion destroyed two of these guns and captured sixty prisoners to secure the high ground, which then served as a line of departure for the 6th Armored Division.

All regiments, during the night of the 20th and over the 21st, re-checked and completed clearing isolated sections of the Siegfried Line, and made ready for some blitz warfare in the style to which the 3d Infantry Division had long ago become so well accustomed.

The deed was done. The Siegfried Line, not engaged until March 18, was breached in the 3d Division zone in three days—start to finish. Despite the fact that the Third Army was threatening the German rear, the



Two 3d Division infantrymen rush forward, crouched low, to avoid fire from their left in a village near the Siegfried Line.

enemy defenders seemingly were not affected by the menace, and the resistance offered to our attack was as tenacious as that encountered anywhere.

During the late afternoon of March 21 the 7th Infantry moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Contwig, and at 2100 attacked to the northeast. Without firing a shot the 1st Battalion cleared the towns of Battweiler, Schmitthenhausen, Reifenberg, Herschberg, Schauer-Berg, and Hoheinod, capturing more than a hundred prisoners in the process. Operating in the right half of the regimental sector, the 3d Battalion cleared Thalischweiler after a hard fight against automatic weapons and small-arms resistance. The 3d Battalion seized more than fifty prisoners, two anti-tank guns and one Flakwagon.

At 2350, March 22, 1st Lieutenant Elmer J. Becker, 2d Battalion S-2, led a task force consisting of a bazooka platoon from Antitank Company and a reinforced rifle platoon from 2d Battalion plus two demolition engineers and two radiomen in a rapid move by vehicle through Schmitthausen, Wallhalben and Saalstadt to Harsberg, where contact was made with elements of the 106th Cavalry Group. From Harsberg the task force moved on foot across country to Steinalben, where the bridge over the Moosalbe River was seized intact and demolitions removed from the span.

By the end of the day, the regiment had accounted for 203 prisoners, including three officers. Over one hundred slave laborers had been freed and evacuated to the rear.

The 30th Infantry had been completely motorized on the previous day. The regiment was chosen to follow up the 6th Armored Division's dash to the Rhine—the Division's third trip to the river in World War II.

The 30th covered the sixty miles in three days, to assemble in the vicinity of Ludwigshafen. The *Autobahn*, built originally for military traffic, served its purpose well. After the first day, the 30th's move was largely administrative as Third Army units had already cleared the route of the *Autobahn*.

The 15th Infantry, meanwhile, had pushed off to the east on March 21, led by the 1st Battalion, and entered Walshausen by 1600 against spotty resistance; then shoved on to take Winzeln while Company C moved due east to Windsberg and Company A to the southeast. The battalion was on the move all night, taking fifty prisoners and inflicting casualties whenever it encountered the enemy. There were brief, but frequent, encounters.

The 3d Battalion jumped off in midafternoon of the 21st, advancing along the axis of the main road running southeast from Stambach. The battalion plowed ahead with a company on either side of the road and

Company L moving astride it. Six tanks supported the attack. Company I reached Nunschweiler before midnight with virtually no opposition. However by midnight the enemy brought up troops and engaged the company in a lively fight using small-arms, machine-gun, mortar and self-propelled gun fire. After two hours the fight subsided; the town fell and Company I pushed on to clean up the woods immediately to the east.

Company L then passed through Nunschweiler, attacking toward Hoheidschweiler. Reaching the town, our assault squads were working their way through the streets when the Germans launched a strong counterattack and directed intense machine-gun fire down the streets. The enemy forces were supported by two tanks. After a short fight one was destroyed and the enemy withdrew.

Company K, in the meantime, had taken the town of Hoh and was ready to forge on to Froschen and south to Petersburg, while Company L attacked toward Fohbach and Hengsbach. By early morning of March 22, Company K had reached Thal and Company I had captured Petersburg.

The 15th Infantry regrouped and early in the evening of March 22 moved out from the vicinity of Contwig to reach Kaiserslautern. The 2d Battalion remained at Kaiserslautern while the remainder of the regiment, following in the wake of the 7th and 30th Infantry Regiments, went on to bivouac in the vicinity of Hardenburg to the northeast. On the following day the battalions pushed on to the Rhine.

The 7th Infantry, after resting on March 22, made an administrative move to the vicinity of Carlsberg, and during the night of March 24-25 moved to the Frankenthal area in preparation for the crossing of the Rhine.

The 30th Infantry was ordered to an assembly area near Herxheim-am-Berg.

The Division immediately began practicing boat drills and made preparations for crossing. Even while training, one 30th Infantry company captured four Germans and forced them to finish a speed march with them.

The tremendous Seventh-Third Army pocket was now completely eliminated with the exception of a number of stragglers and small groups, and Seventh Army was being grouped for the plunge across the river.

The Wehrmacht now reeled like a punchdrunk boxer, unable either to duck or parry. Armored spearheads of other United States armies already had broken loose east of the Rhine and were wheeling, almost without opposition, deep into Germany.

Supreme Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower's pre-



Capt. L. H. Bishop, 163d Engineers (attached) helps anchor one end of a ponton bridge being built across the Rhine.

diction that the war would be won west of the Rhine River was becoming fact.

Shortly after dusk on March 25 the 10th Engineers began bringing boats and river-crossing material to the water front. Because of the high dikes south of the unfinished *Autobahn* bridge it was necessary for the troops to hand-carry their boats to the water's edge. Work was considerably hampered by mortar fire coming from the town of Sandhofen in the 7th Infantry zone and several boats were lost, as well as nine casualties sustained before the enemy fire was silenced by counterbattery and smoke from Division Artillery.

H-hour was set for 0230, March 26. The 7th and 30th Infantry Regiments were to make the assault. On the left (north) flank the 45th Infantry Division was to cross at the same time.

Division Artillery, with the 250th and 693d FA Battalions attached, opened fire at 0152. It was a terrific barrage. Approximately 10,000 rounds were fired in a 38-minute period. Corps artillery fired a program on towns, enemy artillery, and road nets.

For over half an hour, as assault troops of the 3d Infantry Division tensely crouched on the western bank, shells from friendly artillery burst on the other side, less than 300 yards away, painting the skyline a lurid red. In the 7th Infantry Zone, a chance hit by an enemy incendiary shell on a barn in the vicinity of the regimental CP lit up the crossing area, silhouetting the men and boats, and rendering them excellent targets for the enemy.

As H-hour approached, the boats of the first assault wave were at the water's edge in an inferno of fire. Many boats were splintered to kindling before they could be launched. Those men who could pick up their boats ran quickly to the water, shoved them in and climbed aboard. The boats got off. Some were hit, some capsized. Motors sputtered and died and engineers and men paddled frantically through the

smoky, murky haze to the far shore. As the first wave hit the opposite bank a heavy concentration of mortar and self-propelled-gun fire awaited it. Both banks were zeroed in by the enemy. Quickly men of the 7th Infantry reorganized and headed east with the 1st and 3d Battalions abreast.

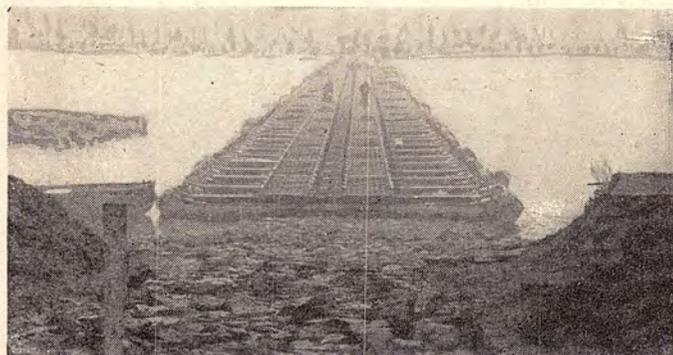
Ahead lay an open field. Powder smoke burned the nostrils of the men. A bright moon cast eerie shadows against the high bank of the *Autobahn* as numerous but scattered enemy machine guns, forming the final protective line for Sandhofen, opened up on the troops. Within a few minutes the 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, minus Company L, was at the cloverleaf north of Sandhofen, while Company L was moving north toward the castle. By 0500 hours, the 1st Battalion closed in on Sandhofen against determined resistance. Forty minutes later the 3d Battalion was at Scharhof, sending elements in a flanking move to the north to take Kirschgartshausen. Without pause 3d Battalion continued to the east until it ran into the direct fire of four enemy tanks, supported and protected by infantry firing from the factories deep in the Viernheimer woods.

Against initially light enemy resistance and artillery fire on the near bank, 30th Infantry, with 2d and 3d Battalions in the assault, had hurdled the Rhine at 0230. The regiment found the east bank defended by a position of double foxholes and squad positions, with a light machine gun in each squad.

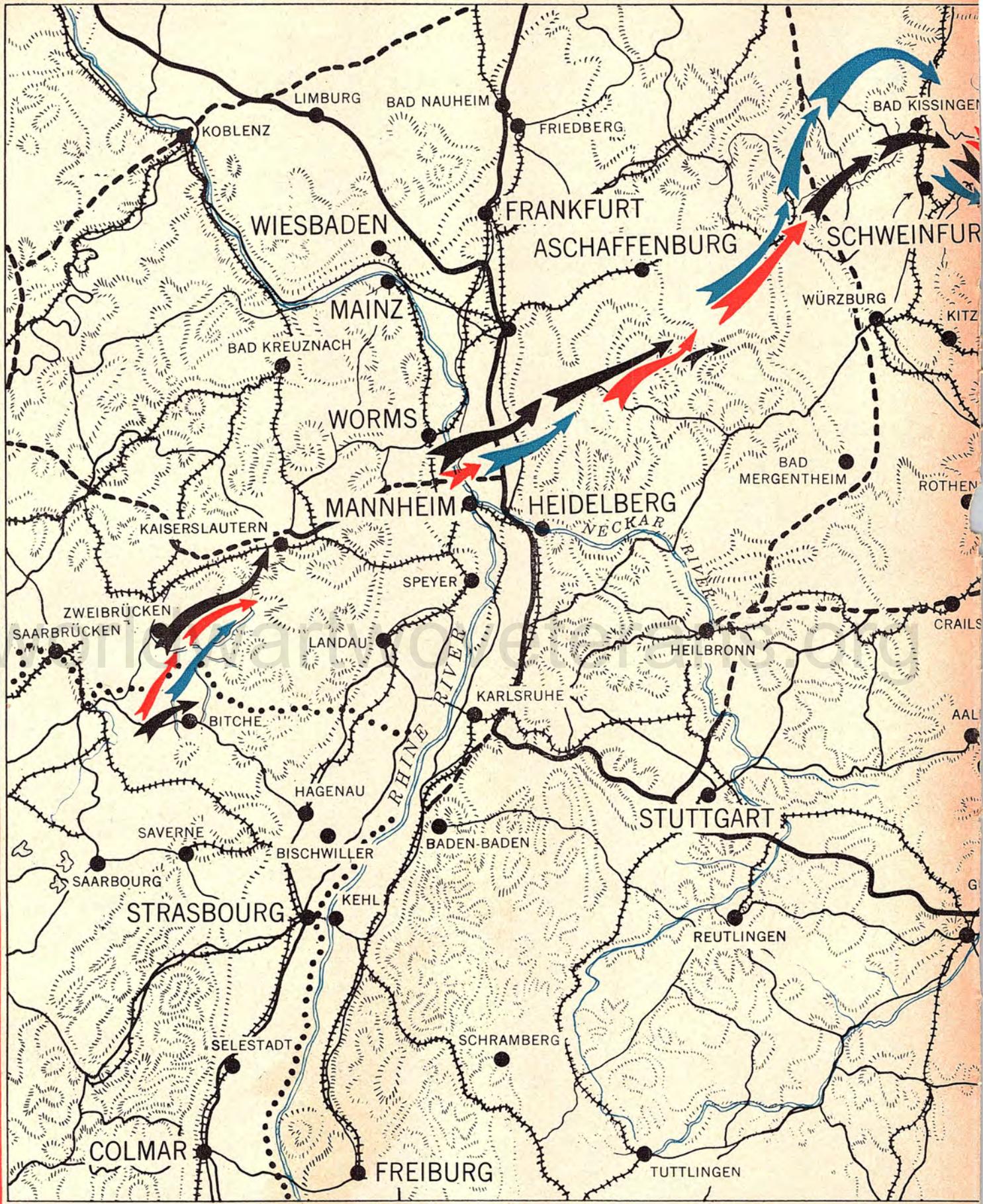
By early morning real resistance was encountered in each battalion sector and it became imperative that the movement inland be swift, and the all-essential high ground secured. However, hardened soldiers of the 30th refused to be stopped by anything the enemy could offer.

By midmorning engineers and regimental vehicles as well as tank destroyers and tanks at the 7th Infantry crossing site were under an almost constant barrage of 88mm fire. This continued to midafternoon.

At noon elements of the 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, were in Sandhofen fighting fiercely for the town. Every



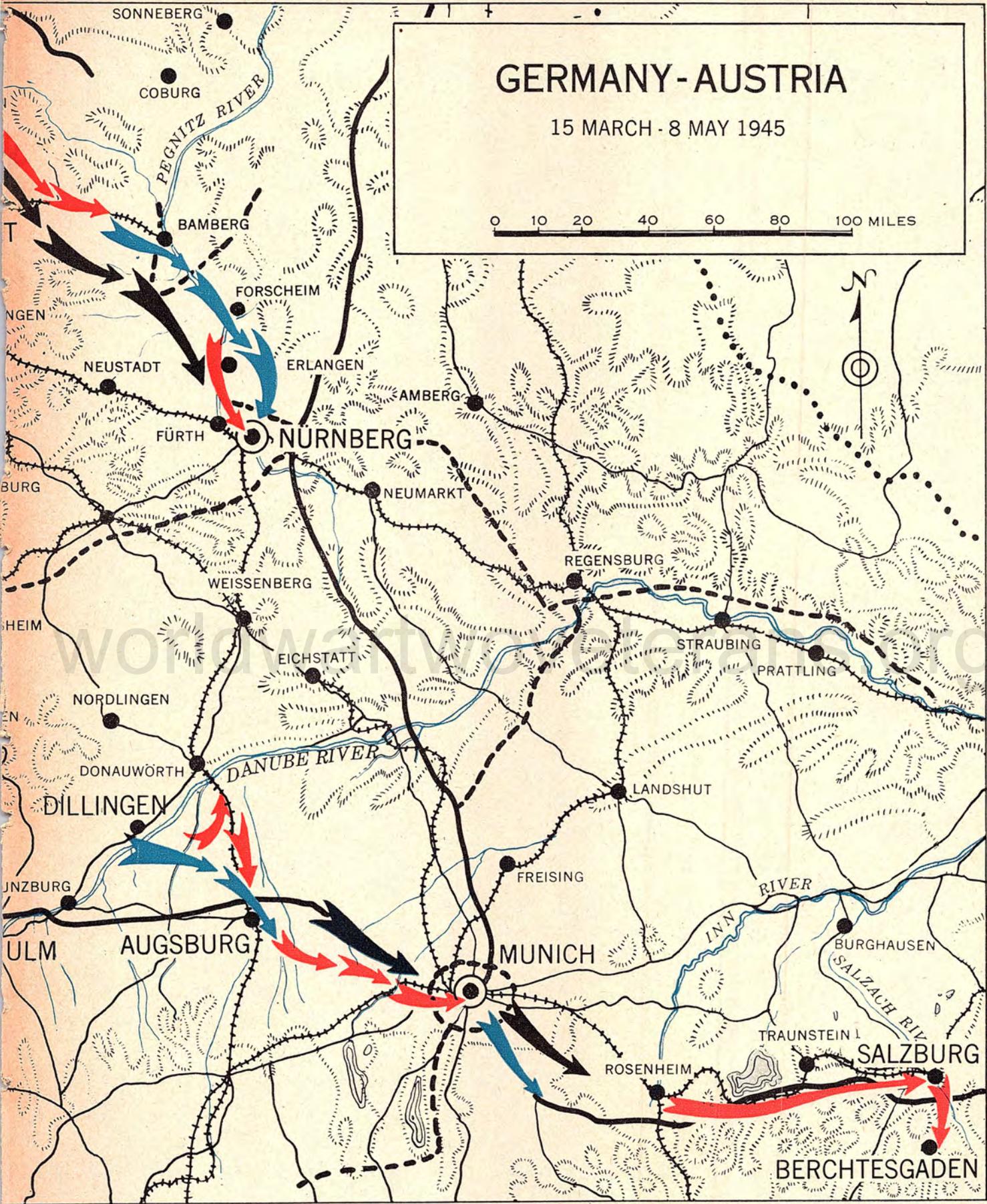
The heavy ponton bridge constructed across the Rhine near Worms.



GERMANY-AUSTRIA

15 MARCH - 8 MAY 1945

0 10 20 40 60 80 100 MILES





An engineer assault boat tows a ponton back upstream after it had broken away.

house was a pillbox that had to be destroyed, along with its fanatical occupants.

Enemy troops made a number of attempts to pierce the positions of 3d Battalion, but each fresh assault was repulsed and prisoners were taken continuously. Moving out of reserve, 2d Battalion crossed the river and tied in with 1st Battalion in Sandhofen at 1415.

Most opposition encountered by the 30th Infantry was in Hofheim, Bobstadt, Burstadt, and Lampertheim. The 1st Battalion, crossing behind the 2d and 3d, circled to Bobstadt and took the town in a brilliant maneuver against withering small-arms, 40mm, and 88mm direct fire. One company drove straight through on the flank and came around from the rear; after this the frontal attack was launched. All Germans in the town were either killed or captured. Eighteen generators and searchlights from German anti-aircraft units were captured along with much other enemy materiel.

Bobstadt, reported cleared by another army, had never been entered by United States troops before the 1st Battalion fought for and took it.

By 1000 the 2d Battalion had reached Hofheim and cleared the town immediately thereafter. The enemy then withdrew what he could toward Burstadt, near which town he combined his troops with other forces withdrawn from the Rhine, and counterattacked with armor and Flakwagon support.

Company F took the brunt of this counterattack. Although hampered by lack of supporting armor or other attachments, because they were hit before the bridge was in and after heavy ponton ferry boats had just begun operating, Company F and other 2d Battalion elements fought tigerishly. Using *Panzerfaust* and bazookas; receiving aid from their battalion anti-tank-platoon bazooka teams, the company dealt the enemy a decisive blow and repulsed the counterattack. Subsequent interrogation of prisoners revealed that Hofheim had been defended by 200 infantry with Flak-wagons and five dual-purpose 88mm guns in support.

The 7th Infantry's fight for Sandhofen continued

with unabated fury throughout the day and far into the night as 1st Battalion slowly but aggressively pushed through the town. The enemy resisted the cleaning-up process with mortar and sniper fire, later supplementing it with machine-gun and artillery fire. Every building was employed for protection and concealment by the enemy and our forces. The success of the regimental operation depended upon the taking of Sandhofen, which stuck into the regiment's right flank like a knife.

Under cloudy skies, the 15th Infantry, in Division reserve, crossed during the morning of March 26. During the preceding evening 2d and 3d Battalions had moved to assembly areas along the river just south of the famous old cathedral city of Worms and at 0330 2d Battalion had moved out for the crossing site on the edge of the city followed by the 3d. At 0900, troops of the 3d Battalion piled out of their rubber assault rafts and up the east bank of the river, followed by 2d Battalion an hour later. Both encountered self-propelled-gun and mortar fire during the crossings, but little damage was done. The 1st Battalion, assembled in the woods south of Worms, crossed at noon.

Once on the east bank, 3d Battalion was committed almost immediately to clean out the island in the Rhine northwest of Lampertheim. Enemy forces there had been firing on the crossing site with self-propelled-gun and small-arms fire, and so effective was the harassment that engineer operations on the bridges under



Colonel McGarr, CO 30th Infantry, confers with two of his staff by the banks of the Rhine.



The first tank destroyer of the 3d Division's 601st TD Battalion crosses the heavy ponton bridge at Worms to aid the infantry on the far side of the Rhine.

construction had to be suspended for two hours. Several assault craft also had been sunk.

Attacking from the south, the bridge was seized, and within an hour Company K was on the island making good progress, having taken twenty prisoners. By 1400 the entire east side was cleared, and three hours later the entire island was cleared and seven Flak guns captured.

At Lampertheim, five miles from the Rhine, 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, had met 500 infantry supported by 88s, Flakwagons, and armor, all determinedly resisting. While Companies K and I placed a pincers on the town from the northwest and northeast respectively, Company I undertook the main enveloping role. Company K attacked from the right, bearing into the city almost frontally. Company L, which was defending the battalion left flank and blocking to the north at vital road intersections, ran into intense opposition.

In the attack on the city itself the Company I commander, 1st Lt. Gerald G. Mehuron, directed artillery fire that landed on all sides of him and even fired it to the rear of his position with great effect.

First Lt. Eldon North of the regiment's Cannon Company, attached to Company L, destroyed a complete battery of 88mm guns with fire from his unit's guns. In addition, Company L bazooka men destroyed two tanks which attempted to counterattack their position. After clearing the woods beyond Lampertheim, the 3d Battalion passed into regimental reserve.

During the early morning crossing, the second tank of Company C, 756th Tank Battalion, which had attempted to cross was stuck on the river bank. The remaining tanks of an original fourteen in support of the

30th Infantry had "swum" (having been fitted with canvas flotation aprons) across successfully between 0930 and 1130. Of the seven tanks attached to 7th Infantry one was hit and destroyed by enemy artillery fire prior to the crossing. Shell fragments ripped the canvas flotation aprons on the remaining two, which sank, and two more were unable to float on the hastily-repaired aprons.

The remainder of the tanks in the battalion were ferried across at intervals during the rest of the day.

The 601st TD Battalion supported the crossings with fire and awaited facilities to be ferried across the river.

By nightfall the backbone of the enemy defense in the factory area in the Viernheimer woods was smashed by the 7th Infantry, and shortly before midnight 3d Battalion, 7th, with its attached armor, attacked southeast through the 1st Battalion in Sandhofen, encountering small-arms fire.

The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, after mopping up the island, had sent a patrol to Santdorf, just southeast of Lampertheim, where it was greeted with self-propelled-gun fire from the crossroads. Artillery was called for, the strongpoint smashed, and Company L moved in on the town followed by the remainder of the battalion. More enemy fire was met and artillery fire was once more directed on the enemy. Again the attack was launched and by 1935 the town fell.

Morning of March 27 saw 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, in control of Sandhofen as the enemy sought to blast down every building with concentrated artillery fire. As the men reached the Alt Rhine dike to the southeast, all organized enemy resistance in the sector ceased.

Morning also saw 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, in control of both Burstadt and Lorsch. The entire battalion

The regiment's attack began shortly after midnight, with the 1st and 2d Battalions jumping off from Lampertheim. Swinging southeast through the woods, the two battalions moved rapidly ahead while the 3d followed closely behind, mopping up by-passed groups of enemy.

Company A, under 1st Lt. Michael J. Daly, cut the north-south *Autobahn* just west of Huttenfeld shortly after the attack got under way and Company C, commanded by Capt. Samuel H. Roberts, moved into Huttenfeld just before daybreak. The enemy retreated so fast that numerous bridges over canals in the area were all left intact, although Company A, leading the push, destroyed an occasional enemy machine gun left to guard them.

The battalion was on the objective of Laudenbach before noon. Company G, under 2d Lt. William T. Nickerson of the 3d Battalion, met heavy opposition outside Hemsbach but tanks and tank destroyers laid a concentration on the town and the battalion moved in. Suddenly the enemy opened up with a hail of Flak fire from the high ground east of the village and Company F, which had just left the battalion and was headed for Sulzbach, was driven to cover. Again the tanks and tank destroyers were sent into action and their deadly fire neutralized the enemy guns. Company F, under 1st Lt. Charles O. Wigmore, then continued on to Sulzbach, overcame 40mm fire on its outskirts, and took the objective late that night.

All three battalions of the 15th were in the attack as it was continued on the morning of March 28.

The 1st Battalion overran Juhoe and cleared Bonselweier while the 2d occupied Nieder-Liebersbach and drove into Morlenbach in time to capture five boxcars loaded with Germans. A sharp fight in Morlenbach and on the high ground in the vicinity was the first organized infantry resistance that the 15th had met since the crossing of the Rhine.

The 3d Battalion, which had been blocking to the south in the Lorsch woods for two days, quickly occupied Rimbach, Burth and Ober Ostern and on the 29th enemy resistance before the 15th had melted away as Hammelbach, Litzelbach and Gros Ellenbach were occupied.

By noon, March 29, the regiment's mission had been completed and it moved into Division reserve in the vicinity of Kirch Brombach and Bollstein.

The 7th Infantry moved out of its positions near Reichelsheim on the morning of March 29 and without resistance occupied Rohrbach, Ober Mossau, Rehbach, Steinbach, Zell, Momant and Kimbach. The 3d Battalion also moved rapidly and occupied Mickelstadt, where 525 enemy in three hospitals were put under guard. The 1st Battalion passed through the 3d

and reached the Main River at Laudenbach after capturing a huge ammunition dump en route over a detour made necessary by bad roads.

Resistance in the Division zone was entirely disorganized and only small battle groups were encountered during the final day of the drive to the banks of the Main.

The 3d was now poised for a forced crossing of the Main at Wörth, which lies southeast of the large industrial city of Frankfurt.

Although our advance reconnaissance of the river banks in the vicinity of Wörth drew considerable small-arms, machine-gun and artillery fire from the enemy, the crossing itself, which began at 0300 on the morning of March 30, was surprisingly unopposed.

The advance plan called for the initial crossing by the 30th Infantry and the securing of the bridgehead by that regiment, which would be followed by the 15th and 7th Infantry Regiments in order.

The crossing was made virtually without incident as the 1st Battalion of the 30th, commanded by Lt. Col. Mackenzie Porter, took to the assault boats and skimmed across the river under cover of darkness. Captain Montgomery led Company A across first, followed by Company C, commanded by 1st Lt. Charles P. Murray.

The battalion captured a number of German gunboats tied up on the east bank of the river and within three hours had cleared out Erlenbach, which is located directly across the river from Wörth.

The 2d Battalion, under Maj. James L. Osgard, crossed the river north of Wörth, the bridge having been demolished by the Germans shortly before midnight, when the last remnants of the German force evacuated Wörth. Company C, 10th Engineer Battalion, commanded by Capt. Robert L. Bangert, quickly threw a footbridge over the wreckage and it was in operation the next day.

The 2d Battalion swung south and east and secured the high ground east of Erlenbach and Klingenberg, destroying three *Nebelwerfers* in the process.

The 3d Battalion, committed to reserve in the crossing, met more difficulty than the assault battalions when it engaged the enemy in a strong fight at Trennfurt.

After his battalion had destroyed a tank and two Flakwagons and had killed a large number of German snipers, Lt. Col. Christopher W. Chaney, the battalion commander, procured a captured German barge that carried the entire battalion across the river the following day.

The 30th went into Division reserve at 0500 March 31.

The crossing of the Main by the 15th Infantry came at noon March 30 and although some small-arms fire



Pvt. John J. Flynn, 3d Military Police Platoon, directs traffic onto the ponton bridge across the Maine River near Wörth.

was received, the 1st Battalion, commanded by Maj. Kenneth B. Potter, continued without halting and turned south to occupy Rollfeld, Gros Heubach, Miltenberg and Rollbach.

At Miltenberg, the enemy counterattacked after resisting with small arms, and recaptured six German prisoners before being driven back. Two military hospitals, in which there were four Americans and more than 200 German patients, were seized intact with staff and equipment. More than a hundred prisoners were taken at Gros Heubach.

Crossing the river later in the day, the two other battalions of the 15th drove east and southeast. The 2d Battalion, commanded by Maj. Burton S. Barr, pushed through the woods and took the town of Reistenhausen after moving down from the high ground north of the village to defeat the enemy in a short fire fight. Occupation of Fechbach was accomplished without resistance.

The 3d Battalion, under Maj. John O'Connell, captured Smachtenberg and with it a valuable airport that yielded a dozen gliders, a German glider instructor and a number of his students.

The 7th Infantry, last of the Division's regiments to make the crossing, passed through elements of the 30th at about midnight of March 30 and attacked east.

By daylight, the 1st Battalion, under Lt. Col. Kenneth W. Wallace, had cleared Eschau and was headed northeast, while the 2d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Jack M. Duncan, had ended the resistance in Wildensee and Hofwildensee, which had been evacuated by the enemy. The 2d had a bitter fight against small arms and automatic weapons at Krausenbach which lasted until noon the following day, when the Germans pulled out after losing a large number of men.

In the meantime, the 1st pushed rapidly through Unter Aulendorf, Wildenstein, Hobbach and Wintebach.

The entrance into Germany brought strange sights—the white token of capitulation that greeted the Men of the Marne as they crashed through town after town with unrelenting power and speed. Panties, bed sheets, nightgowns—anything that was white—flew from windows that for years had displayed the Nazi swastika. A farmer plowing in the field near Wörth attached a white flag to the harness on his horse.

In towns where civilian groups had been organized and armed with *Panzerfaust* and rifles, and resistance was offered when the doughboys started their house-to-house "canvass." Our tanks and tank destroyers laid down short concentrations and the resistance quickly ended.

As in France and all other countries that the 3d Division had touched, people lined the streets and roads to stare at the oncoming troops, some out of curiosity, some to express their relief at the end of the Nazi regime and some to glare in open hostility.

Many townspeople smiled as the 3d tore through and around the German roadblocks in pursuit of the fleeing enemy army. They called the obstructions "61-minute blocks" because, they said, "It will take the Americans sixty-one minutes to get past them. They will look at them and laugh sixty minutes and then tear them down in one."

This derision of German military might and leadership was also demonstrated by the increasing number of deserters and stragglers that poured into the Division PW cage, which handled 6,146 prisoners from March 15 to March 31. Most of these prisoners were taken in battle, but many were Germans who surrendered after seeing their home towns lost or destroyed in the wake of their retreat.

With the crossing of the Main completed and all objectives secured, the 3d Division was assigned a new sector as the April campaign began. Elements of the 42d Infantry Division relieved the 15th Infantry on the Division's right and the 15th replaced elements of the 45th Infantry Division on the left flank.

The 30th Infantry was in Division reserve when the 7th and 15th turned the axis of the Division advance to the northeast April 1.

The advance of the 15th went well until the lead elements reached the spiderweb road junction southwest of Weibersbrunn, a little village hidden in a dense wooded area. The enemy had determined to hold the road net with a company armed with machine guns, small arms and *Panzerfaust*. The fight continued for several hours before Company L, commanded by 1st Lt. John H. Toole, broke through the defense and entered Weibersbrunn, closely followed by Company I, under 2d Lt. Daniel J. Shulkatis. The companies quickly suppressed the opposition in the town, which was cleared shortly after noon, yielding twenty-five prisoners.

The 1st Battalion passed through the 3d after Weibersbrunn was taken and engaged in a hard fight at Rothenbuck, which was occupied at midnight after two "88's" that had held up the attack were neutralized. Company C, under 1st Lt. Wilmer L. Lee, entered the town first.

The 7th Infantry began the month with the 1st Battalion moving northeast of Lichtenau, intent on seizing Rechtenbach. Moving through the 3d Battalion in Lowenstein Park, the 1st neutralized a roadblock at Bischenbernerhof and occupied its objective after overcoming strong small-arms and antitank resistance. An enemy 155mm gun was destroyed during the melee but not before it had disabled one of the tanks of Company A, 756th Tank Battalion, commanded by 1st Lt. William R. Engger. The 756th, under Maj. Oscar S. Long (and later Maj. Edwin Y. Arnold) played a major role in the 3d Division's dash through the Siegfried Line and into Germany.

Rodenbach and Wombach, on the banks of the Main, were the 7th's next objective and the 2d Battalion moved to the attack early in the morning of April 2. A spirited battle for Rodenbach took place against an enemy force comprising officer candidates, Luftwaffe pilots and other personnel. The battalion took 160 prisoners and chased the remnants of the enemy force south along the Main River, returning to establish the battalion command post in the town, after which the assault elements moved northwest for an attack on Wombach.

While the remainder of the troops were fighting in Wombach, a reinforced platoon of Germans attempted to destroy Lt. Col. Jack M. Duncan's headquarters

at Rodenbach but the personnel of the CP fought off the attack; they killed at least five enemy and captured fifteen others.

Movement of the Division came to an almost complete standstill April 2-4 while the 14th Armored Division passed through the 7th on April 3 to seize Lohr, located about a mile north of Wombach on the Main. The armored unit made the capture after losing several tanks at the town's approaches. The 7th occupied the high ground on three sides of the town, after Wombach fell late on the night of April 2.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Infantry, remained in Rechtenbach until noon of April 3, when it moved north and took Steinhälerhof without opposition after a difficult march over hilly, densely-wooded terrain.

Without incident, the 2d Battalion crossed the Main River south of Lohr in "ducks" and assault craft to occupy Pflöchsbad the same afternoon, and completely cleared the peninsula formed by the loop of the Main River northeast of Lohr the following day. The battalion remained on the peninsula during the night of April 4-5, prepared to shield and cover proposed bridging operations of the 14th Armored Division but the plans were changed and the battalion crossed the Main for the third time during the morning of April 5, following an intensive artillery preparation. A great deal of trouble was experienced in getting the "ducks" into the water, for the enemy had felled a number of large trees along the river bank at one point.

The battalion was across the river east of Gemunden at 1400 hours and immediately set out for the town, meeting stubborn resistance along the railroad tracks south of the town from well dug-in Germans equipped with *Panzerfaust*. After taking seventy prisoners during the morning battle outside the town, the 2d entered the village under heavy mortar fire shortly after noon and by 1530 hours had cleared the village, capturing a number of German marines and sailors committed as infantry.

Early in the morning of April 4, Company G of the 15th pushed down the valley of the Main River and secured a bridge west of Langenbrozelten while the rest of the 1st Battalion occupied Wohnroth, Fellen and Aura.

The 3d Battalion of Col. Hallett D. Edson's 15th Infantry, however, met one of its stiffest fights in weeks at Rieneck, just west of the Sinn River, moving southeast from Rengersbrunn. Maj. John O'Connell's 3d Battalion completely surprised the enemy who were digging in on the western slopes of two bald hills that guarded the town from the west. Tanks, TDs and Flak-wagons, placed on the wooded nose of the hill along which the battalion had advanced, added to the slaughter that followed the assault. The German officer who

surrendered his troops found only two of his men unaccounted for. By actual count, eighty-five had been killed, the remainder wounded or captured.

Following the surrender, Company I, commanded by 1st Lt. Robert L. Hawkins, remained behind and dug out a number of civilian snipers who persisted to the end.

After being in Division reserve for five days, the 30th Infantry went back into the line April 5, leaving its assembly area west of Rieneck early that morning. Attached "ducks" were used as infantry carriers and with the available armor and organic vehicles, the regiment spent the day seeking fire fights and strongpoints as it proceeded rapidly northeast toward Wolfmunster, which forward elements of the 3d Battalion entered late that night.

The 15th Infantry, like the 30th, swept through village after village that day and the 1st Battalion, spearheading, took Detter and Seissenbach before noon almost without a fight.

In the afternoon the 1st swept through Modlos, Bruckenau, Breitenbach and Mitgenfeld while the 2d moved out from Fellen to Heiligkreuz, cleared through the 1st Battalion and attacked toward Heckmuhle. A small delaying force was met and overcome outside Heckmuhle, which had been evacuated by the enemy; the battalion pushed elements through Ober Geiersnes and by the following morning had reached Ober Leichterbach.

Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion had blocked for other regiments of the Division from positions near Rieneck and had pulled stakes to join in the 3d's mad rush through western Germany. Passing through Reidenbach and Oberbach, which had been cleared by the 14th Armored Division, the 3d Battalion won another short fight at Wildflecken, which purportedly was to be defended by SS troops. The defense melted before Major O'Connell's battlers and the short fight that ensued ended as all other German resistance had ended in the last several weeks—with the Marnemen in complete control of the situation. A huge German chemical warfare plant and great quantities of guns and other war materiel were taken in Wildflecken, which was also the site of an enemy army camp capable of housing approximately 40,000 men. Striking southeast from Wildflecken, Company L quickly occupied the nearby town of Langeleiten.

Late that night, the 2d Battalion moved up to Wildflecken and attacked northeast to Ober Weissenbrunn, from where Company G, commanded by 2d Lt. William Nickerson, struck out to seize the village of Frankenheim, which was protected by a roadblock manned with small arms and self-propelled guns, designed to delay our advance. The battalion deployed and

wiped out the enemy force; Company G entered the town before noon of April 7.

Early in the morning of April 6, the 7th Infantry had driven north, with the 2d Battalion riding "ducks" to a point where it seized the high ground in the vicinity of Michelau and continued on to the area near Schonau, while the remainder of the regiment, in successive marches, moved to the vicinity of Geroda, preparing to force a crossing of the Saale River.

Under cover of darkness and with the 1st and 3d Battalions abreast, the 7th turned sharply east and advanced over bad roads, strong enemy roadblocks and blown bridges during the rest of the night. Company A, commanded by 2d Lt. Floyd W. Clark, had a sharp fight before seizing Aschbach but found no opposition at Grossenbach. Company B, under Capt. James B. Rich, Jr., crossed the Saale River with only slight resistance and occupied Bocklet, one mile northeast of Aschbach. The enemy infiltrated our positions later from the north and attacked the Company CP in Bocklet, burning the building to the ground. This adventure cost the Germans dearly as virtually every member of the attacking force was either killed or captured in the fight that followed and in which Company A took part. The rest of the battalion entered Frauenroth and Stralsbach and found both towns clear.

Major Flynn's 3d Battalion picked its way over the rough roads and rugged terrain to Stangenroth, from where it jumped off to take the deserted villages of Premich and Steinach. Continuing north, the battalion approached a roadblock consisting of three Mark V tanks, three antitank guns and nearly a battalion of enemy troops southwest of Steinach. The battle raged all night long and into the next day, when two of the three tanks were destroyed by accurate fire of Company A, 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion, commanded by 1st Lt. George Philipovich. The Germans brought down artillery and salvos of *Nebelwerfer* fire and rushed additional armor into the fray in an effort to stem the tide but finally retreated before the continuous pressure of the 3d Battalion. In all, the enemy lost twelve Mark V tanks during the struggle.

The advance of the 30th Infantry had been a succession of occupations and small fire fights for two days and the regiment gathered several hundred prisoners en route. The battalions seemed to be spread out like so many claws and when they contracted they were filled with German PWs. For instance, one patrol of Company E, under Capt. Ralph R. Carpenter, engaged in a fire fight northwest of Hammelberg at 1715 hours April 6 and one hour later reported back with thirty-five prisoners.

Windheim, Unter Thulba, Elfershausen, Seeshof,

Witternhausen, Hetzlos, Thulba, Albertslauter and Lauter all were seized by Col. Lionel C. McGarr's regiment, although three of the towns did not fall without resistance.

Company I, commanded by 2d Lt. Gerald G. Mehuron, fought a small enemy group before entering Hetzlos; Company L, under 1st Lt. Phillip B. Larimore, shoved the enemy out of Ober Thulba after a 25-minute tussle while Company G, commanded by Capt. John H. West, met determined opposition and called for supporting fires before Seeshof was finally cleared.

Leaving Ober Thulba, Company L pushed directly east, with patrols out toward Bad Kissingen, a world-famed watering place noted for its fine springs and numerous resort hotels, twenty-eight of which had been converted into German military hospitals, whose red-crossed roofs had saved the city from Allied bombing.

One of the patrols, led by 2d Lt. Emil T. Byke, moved along a road leading into the city and met an officer delegation from the hospital community whose spokesman announced a desire to surrender the city intact.

After summoning Lt. Col. Christopher W. Chaney, 3d Battalion commander, Lieutenant Byke placed his men at advantageous points on the hills surrounding the town while Company M, commanded by 1st Lt. Harold J. Saine, brought up mortars and placed them in firing position "just in case."

Colonel Chaney, with Capt. Carroll McFalls, Jr., 3d Battalion S-3, went to the city hall with the delegation and laid down surrender terms to a ranking German field officer who had been recuperating at one of the hospitals.

Bad Kissingen is an important rail and highway center and its spacious buildings could easily accommodate corps and army troops, making it a highly desirable military prize. Thus, Colonel Chaney made it clear that the 3d Division would not accept Bad Kissingen as an "open city" but that it would be used as a military base for United States troops. This being acceptable to the negotiators, the colonel sent for Col. Lionel C. McGarr, regimental commander of the 30th, who, accompanied by two Division staff officers, Major F. C. Spreyer and Capt. Henry Huguenin, restated the American's conditions and accepted the surrender of the city and 2825 German soldier-patients as prisoners.

As a denouement, the battalion moved through the city to an assembly area on the outskirts of town while Company F, commanded by Capt. Robert L. Fleet, was brought in from Witternhausen to guard the public buildings and hospitals.

The Saale River divides Bad Kissingen into halves and both vehicular bridges that connect them were destroyed by German demolition crews who always worked in small groups, hiding in areas until our

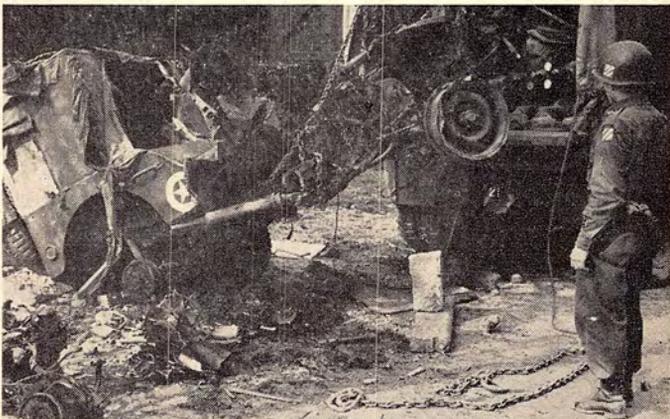
troops were within striking distance before detonating their charges. Company C of the 10th Engineers, commanded by Capt. Robert L. Bangert, had one of the bridges replaced a few hours after the city surrendered.

While the 3d was taking Bad Kissingen, the 1st Battalion, moving on the regiment's north flank, ran into a battery of "88's" that was silenced by our artillery and by the regimental Cannon Company, commanded by Capt. Norwood L. Snowden. The 2d Battalion, meanwhile, encountered artillery fire falling in Aura; and destroyed an enemy antitank gun in Euerdorf.

After winning the armor-infantry battle at the crossroads outside Steinach, the 3d Battalion of the 7th Infantry met more enemy armor at the edge of town and another pitched battle took place, featuring an increased amount of enemy artillery and *Nebelwerfer* fire. After several hours of bitter fighting, the resistance weakened and when the tussle ended the enemy had lost the remainder of his twelve Mark V tanks to our TDs and bazookamen, who led the battalion into the city.

The 2d Battalion moved down from the heights near Schonau and rejoined the regiment with the mission of taking the town of Haard. At 1010 hours, the battalion was in the western outskirts of the town, where a one-hour fire fight was staged with members of a German cavalry training battalion and of the 2d *Panzer* Division, who had been committed as infantry. Moving through Haard, the battalion continued east to clear the high ground beyond the village; the advance was speeded up considerably and was only lightly contested because the 14th Armored Division was just ahead of the 2d and was leaving only scattered enemy remnants in its wake.

Around midnight, the 3d Battalion's command post



A 3d Signal Company officer stares at the destroyed jeep of General Young, Assistant Division Commander, after it was hit by an enemy shell.

and OP was attacked by a large number of reassembled German stragglers intent on making an opening for an enemy artillery unit to pass through. In the early stages of the surprise attack, the enemy took five prisoners, shot up four jeeps and destroyed one of our TDs. At daylight a great number of German dead were found, fifty-five prisoners had been taken and the battalion had acquired four German horse-drawn 155mm howitzers.

After passing through the 2d Battalion at Weichtungen, the 1st Battalion on April 9 seized the towns of Thundorf, Rothhausen, Stadtlauringen, Altenmunster and Fuchstadt and halted while the 2d Battalion passed through. The regiment stopped at this point and spent most of April 9-10 patrolling and cleaning rear areas of stragglers, who were becoming more numerous each day.

The 2d Battalion of the 15th Infantry, after clearing Frankenheim, moved out to attack Bischofsheim, the Division objective. But, like Bad Kissingen, it was surrendered by a group of civilians who met the leading elements of the battalion some distance outside the town. It was coincidental that both towns were being handed over to the 3d Division at about the same hour on the same day, as both surrenders were negotiated shortly after noon.

South of Bischofsheim, the 3d Battalion ripped through light opposition after the main part of the battalion had joined Company L at Langenleiten and swept southeast in the direction of Neustadt. The remarkable pace that the battalion maintained was attributed in a large measure to the work of Company C, 10th Engineer Battalion, commanded by Capt. Daniel A. Raymond, which cleared the debris-covered roads ahead of Major O'Connell's battalion. All highways were literally strewn with German vehicles that had been hit by our armor, artillery and air support.

Company L struck northeast to Waldberg, through Sandberg and on to Kilianshof, where the company turned southeast to Hohenroth. Company I, followed by Company K, moved east from Sandberg to Schmalwassen, where Company I came under enemy fire from self-propelled guns, which were silenced that night. After taking Schmalwassen, the two companies drove unopposed through Windhausen, Leuterhausen and to Hohenroth. Company K, commanded by 1st Lt. Walter H. Kropp, attacked Strahlungen, where the enemy resisted for a short time with small-arms fire which was effectively suppressed with the capture of sixty-five PWs.

The 1st Battalion, acting as infantry support for the 14th Armored Division, moved rapidly east along the main road to Neustadt from south of Bischofsheim.

Company A, commanded by 1st Lt. Michael J. Daly,

quickly cleared Unter Weissenbrunn, Wegfurt and Schonau. Company B, under 1st Lt. Harold M. Patterson, swung northeast off the main road, passed through Weisbach and Sondernau and pushed several miles to a point just north of Neustadt, where a strong roadblock was established.

The 15th Infantry was now closed in on Neustadt and the time was ripe for its capture. In a two-pronged thrust, Colonel Edson, the regimental commander, shot one column out from Schonau and another from the south, with Neustadt as the target.

Company C passed through Company A at Schonau and cleared the towns of Reyersbach, Braidbach and Rodles, which lie directly north of Neustadt. Company A, riding "ducks" whipped through Brendlorenzen, right outside the northern edge of Neustadt, and was met by heavy small-arms, sniper, *Nebelwerfer* and *Panzerfaust* fire coming from the southeast section of the town. Company B went north to occupy Weisbach and Sondernau and then struck southeast to an intersection near Wollbach, where a strong roadblock was established. Elements of the 1st Battalion entered the northern part of the city shortly after noon while the 3d Battalion's Companies K and L closed in from the south, Company K taking Strahlungen and Company L taking Ebersbach en route with a total of approximately 100 prisoners.

Resistance to the 15th's attack buckled late in the afternoon and the town fell with the bridges across the Frank Saale still intact. In less than twenty-four hours, the regiment had captured nineteen villages and nearly 300 prisoners, had destroyed at least ten enemy tanks and had neutralized a number of enemy guns.

With the capture of Neustadt, the 15th went into Division reserve and on the morning of April 9 moved into assembly areas near Schweinfurt, a city which once was known as the "graveyard" of Allied airmen because of the huge Flak concentrations that came from the city's numerous anti-aircraft installations.

After the fall of Bad Kissingen, the 30th Infantry moved east and southeast and met considerable artillery and antitank fire from the vicinity of Hambach and Maibach, outer defensive points protecting Schweinfurt. The excellent coordination between our field artillery units and infantry elements was never better demonstrated than when the forward observer of the 41st FA Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Barney D. White, called for a concentration in the Maibach area that neutralized two tanks and a Flakwagon and drove off three other enemy tanks in less than an hour of firing.

It was obvious at this time that the Germans were trying once more to slow the 3d Division's relentless attack, either to make a stand along one of the few

remaining natural lines of defense or to give the Nazi "bigwigs" a chance to withdraw to safety to the Redoubt area in the high Austrian Alps.

While the 42d Infantry Division was taking Schweinfurt, the 30th Infantry, which had gotten ahead of friendly elements on the flanks, was forced to slow down and confine its activities during April 10-11 to semidefensive warfare, consisting mainly of mopping-up and eliminating enemy roadblocks.

Many roads leading into Schweinfurt, a main industrial center, were heavily mined and several regimental vehicles were ambushed by isolated German resistance groups.

The 7th Infantry, commanded by Col. John A. Heintges, struck southeast from positions near Fuchstadt with the 2d Battalion, under Lt. Col. Jack M. Duncan, on the right, 3d Battalion, commanded by Maj. Ralph M. Flynn, on the left, and 1st Battalion, under Lt. Col. Kenneth W. Wallace, in regimental reserve.

Very little artillery and mortar fire, but much small-arms resistance was encountered as the 2d seized Kleinsteinach, Kleinmunster, Mechenreis, Holzhausen, Uchenhofen, Ober Hohenreid and Unter Hohenreid. The Germans attempted to make a stand at Uchenhofen, a few miles northwest of Haszfurt, but it was only suicidal and the battalion brushed on to Unter Hohenreid, overlooking Haszfurt.

The 3d Battalion captured Heilingen and Romershofen, receiving light artillery, small-arms, mortar and automatic-weapons fire designed primarily to slow the attack but actual defense of the towns was not made. The battalion seized Prappach and the high ground in that area and when 2d Battalion took Augsfeld in an early morning attack, it gave the 7th Infantry all the high ground surrounding the city and paved the way for 1st Battalion to move into Haszfurt at noon the following day with only a few roadblocks to impede the advance.

Continuing southeast along the banks of the Main, Colonel Wallace's men passed through Zeil, which the 2d Battalion had previously taken, and moved on through Zieglander to Steinbach, where the march was temporarily halted because the next two battalion objectives, Gleisenau and Ebelsbach, had already been taken by elements of the 45th Infantry Division. The retreat of the German forces at this point was matched only by the drive of the 3d Division doughboys and by the maintenance of our ever-lengthening supply routes and constant movement of our artillery and antiaircraft units, whose frequent changing of position kept the personnel digging in around the clock.

Hundreds of German stragglers, many of whom had changed into civilian clothes, were picked up by our



German prisoners of war are herded across an infantry footbridge near Haszfurt by 3d Division soldiers.

rear elements and the Division Intelligence Section reported that two German officers and a master sergeant had bicycled into one of our outposts near Madenhhausen and stated that they were "going home."

On April 11, the Division crossed the Main River for the fourth time at points east of Schweinfurt and the drive for Nürnberg (Nuremberg), important German bastion and symbol of Naziism, was on. The 45th Infantry Division was on our left flank and the 42d (Rainbow) Division was on the right.

The Division's crossing was effected by the 30th Infantry, with 1st Battalion taking the lead in assault boats at a point near Unter Theres. Company A, commanded by Capt. Hugh S. Montgomery, met enemy Flakwagon and other fire near the village of Dampfach shortly after making the crossing but our artillery placed effective fire on the enemy positions and silenced the only display of resistance that marked the crossing.

The 3d Battalion crossed the river at Ober Theres on a footbridge constructed by Company A of the 10th Engineers, commanded by 1st Lt. Robert K. Sleeth, and turned east into the enemy-deserted village of Wonfurt.

Numerous *Panzerfaust* with trip cords attached were laid by the enemy in the path of the 30th but most of

the roadblocks that were encountered were either entirely unmanned or poorly manned with only small delaying groups. In the 24-hour period from noon April 12 to April 13, the regiment captured no less than forty German "88's," testimony to the disaster that the 3d was wreaking on enemy forces.

The 15th Infantry moved out of its reserve positions northeast of Schweinfurt on the afternoon of April 11 and attacked south toward the Main with the 3d Battalion leading the advance into Mainburg, which was occupied without a fight. Schonungen, Forst, Gadheim, Ottendorf, Bayerhof, and Gresshausen all fell to the battalion by the next day and the PW count was increased by 265.

The 2d Battalion pushed on to Kleinmunster and cleared the woods between that town and the Main as it rushed into Wulffingen, a river-bank village.

Both battalions crossed the river at Ober Theres on foot April 12, passed through 30th Infantry, and boarded every available vehicle to assume the spearhead of the Division's attack along the banks of the Main and to the southeast.

The 2d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware, moved along the river and seized Limbach and Eltman, and Maj. John O'Connell's 3d Battalion drove southeast to occupy Zell and Unter Schleichach. The enemy forces were completely disorganized and occasional small-arms fire presented the only opposition to the regiment as it sped on almost without pause to Bamberg, a sizable city located at the junction of the Main and Regnitz (or Pegnitz) Rivers. En route, the following towns were occupied and quickly cleared, giving the 15th control of the southern part of Bamberg and all entrances to that section of the city: Priesendorf, Walsdorf, Gaustadt, Muhlendorf, Höfer, Reundorf, Pettstadt, and Sassanfahrt. The German retreat was so hasty that it was becoming more difficult each day for the Division to maintain contact with the enemy. The 3d Reconnaissance Troop, commanded by Capt. Allen R. Kenyon, roved the left flank of our units with abandon, capturing many towns, numerous prisoners, and much enemy equipment. The daily report of the 2d platoon for the 24-hour period beginning at noon, April 12, revealed the capture of six villages and 112 PWs, and the destruction of two machine-gun nests. This report was repeated in its generalities day after day as the Division maintained its pursuit.

The 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, captured four enemy artillery pieces and a large ammunition dump and destroyed a Mark V tank at Gaustadt, just west of Bamberg, while elements of the 3d Battalion recalled the days of Anzio when a large number of Goliath tanks (miniatures loaded with high explosive) were encountered in the vicinity of Erlau, southwest of Bam-

berg. Ten Goliaths were captured but not until two had detonated, killing two 3d Division men and wounding two others.

At 1835, April 13, less than twenty-four hours after the 15th had been committed across the Main River, 2d Battalion had entered Bamberg, a German hospital city containing some 200 enemy medical installations. In two days the regiment had occupied forty-four villages and captured more than 1,000 prisoners, including many German officers.

In sheer desperation and with utter disregard for the German patients in the city's hospitals, the *Luftwaffe* that night attacked the town, spilling numerous bombs on the hospitals and in the area occupied by the 2d Battalion, which suffered many casualties and lost a number of vehicles. This apparently was a token raid, mustered as a final kick of a dying enemy.

Only slight resistance to the occupation of the town was offered by the German troops and the officer in command had been taken with hundreds of other prisoners when 2d Battalion entered the city.

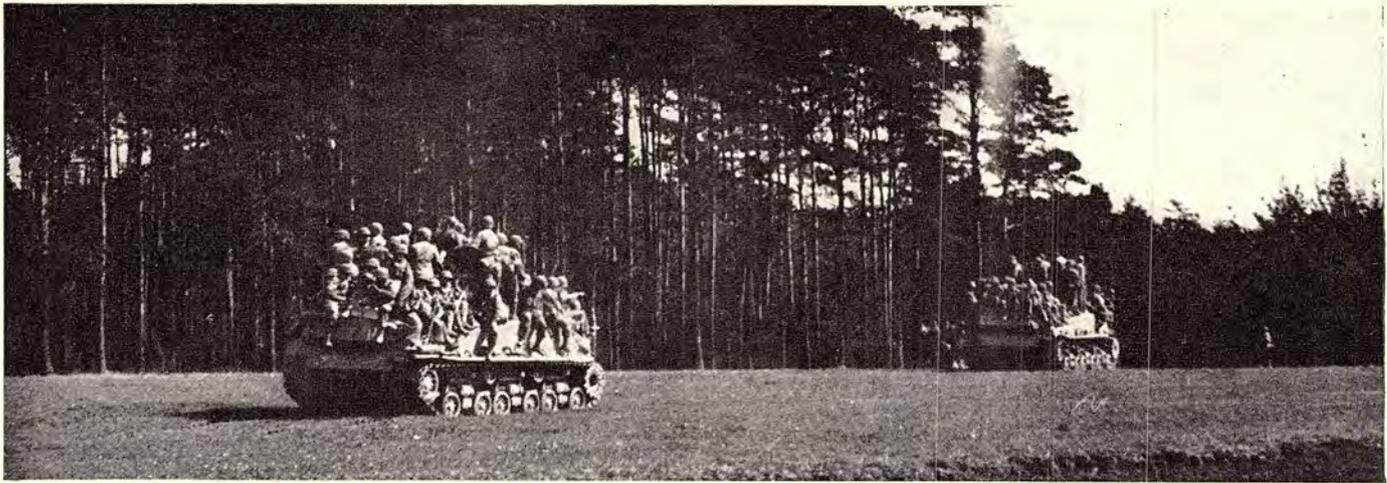
The 7th Infantry, in assembly areas near Frenshof, also received the full blast of an air raid on the night of April 14 and antipersonnel bombs dropped in the area occupied by the regiment's Cannon Company, commanded by Capt. George E. Guckert, Jr., caused a number of casualties.

The 30th Infantry, which was on the right flank of the 15th, met little opposition as it proceeded southeast. The complete confusion which permeated the German ranks as the regiment drove forward was illustrated at a small town which Capt. George S. Peck, 2d Battalion S-3, entered on April 13. Unaware that the town was held by a company of Germans, Captain Peck acted under the pretext that he had come to accept a previously proffered surrender and to his amazement a majority of the defending officers and men gave up without a struggle, unsure that a surrender offer had been made but glad to accept Captain Peck's declaration as fact.

Although the advance of the 30th was only slightly restricted by the enemy, small fire fights were encountered at a few of the many towns that the regiment occupied during its headlong drive.

At Hochstadt, a hastily-organized town command put up a short fight that resulted in the capture, among other Germans, of the German colonel in command. At Millersdorf, southwest of Bamberg, a platoon-sized counterattack was repulsed and reconnaissance elements had fire fights in the vicinity of Greinendorf while some of our troops west of the Pegnitz River received enemy artillery fire coming from Forchheim, which was later taken by a small Division task force.

The force that took Forchheim was led by 1st Lt.



3d Infantry Division soldiers ride the 756th Tank Battalion's tanks in pursuit of the enemy near Erlangen.

Richard W. Rosebury, Jr., and was composed of Battle Patrols from all three of the Division's regiments, three demolition men from the 10th Engineer Battalion, a radio team from the 3d Signal Company, a forward observation party from Division Artillery and one mechanic from the 703d Ordnance Company. All members of the force volunteered for the special assignment.

Moving six miles behind enemy lines, this daring group had the mission of securing the railroad and highway bridges across the Pegnitz in the vicinity of Baiersdorf. A motor-driven railroad engine captured by the Division was carried to the narrow-gauge railroad that ran between Bamberg and Hausen and the six-car "train" had to be jacked over several bombed-out stretches that were met en route to the marshalling yards of Forchheim, where a house-to-house battle netted the raiders twenty prisoners. After a thorough reconnaissance in this unusual vehicle, the lieutenant and his group returned to Division headquarters with seventy-five PWs and much information for the Intelligence section.

By April 15 the entire 3d Division was poised on the west side of the Pegnitz ready for a lunge toward Nürnberg. The 30th Infantry made the initial crossing, overrunning many small towns and capturing numerous 88mm guns en route. It also included the crossing of the Ludwigs Canal at points in the vicinity of Baiersdorf, with 3d Battalion under Lt. Col. Christopher W. Chaney leading the attack, followed closely by the 2d Battalion, under Lt. Col. James L. Osgard.

The crossing, made under cover of darkness, was met with only slight opposition and the rest of the Division moved across the river on the following day and struck south toward Nürnberg, overrunning many small towns en route. Erlangen, Brück, Eltersdorf, Gründlach, Steinach, and Stadein fell to the Division but many casualties were suffered at the hands of a

strengthening German defense and more frequent reappearances of the *Luftwaffe*.

At Erlangen, which offered a poorly-conducted defense, the German colonel in command committed suicide after agreeing to terms surrendering the city.

The 1st Battalion of the 7th Infantry encountered small-arms, automatic-weapon, and self-propelled-gun fire in the fight for Tennenlohe, and 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, received similar opposition in taking Heroldsberg. The 3d Battalion of the 15th also ran into strong 88mm artillery concentrations at Kalchreuth as the Division neared the outskirts of Nürnberg.

The Germans were determined to make a strong bid to defend the shrine of Naziism and members of the 441st AAA Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Thomas H. Leary, fired thousands of rounds of ammunition at enemy ME 109s and FW 190s during the advance on Nürnberg.

Our troops came under heavy fire from hundreds of German anti-aircraft guns located in small villages that surrounded the big city. Entrance into the political capital was to prove little less costly than anticipated.

The 7th Infantry, for instance, was held up for some time at the small town of Kraftshof, just north of Nürnberg, by stubborn resistance and the villages of Kleinrueth and Thon were also taken against stiff opposition.

The 3d Battalion, 15th Infantry, met strong resistance as it moved through Bueckenbuhl while the 1st Battalion battered down the defenses of a large garrison of SS troops and drunken *Volkssturm* at Heroldsberg.

During the advance of the 15th Infantry, Pvt. Joseph F. Merrell performed the heroic action in a hill position near Lohe for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor. He made a gallant one-man attack against vastly superior forces in an effort to drive the disorganized enemy forces from the hills dominating Nürn-



This aerial photo taken while the fighting was in progress in Nürnberg indicates the degree of destruction that was visited upon the city.

berg. His company was pinned down by brutal fire from rifles, pistols and two heavy machine guns.

“. . . Entirely on his own initiative, Private Merrell began a single-handed assault. He ran a hundred yards through concentrated fire, barely escaping death at each stride, and, at point-blank range, engaged four German machine-pistol men with his rifle, killing all of them while their bullets ripped his uniform. As he started forward again, his rifle was smashed by a sniper's bullet, leaving him armed only with three grenades, but he did not hesitate. He zigzagged two hundred yards through a hail of bullets to within ten yards of the first machine gun, where he hurled two grenades and then rushed the position, ready to fight with his bare hands, if necessary. In the emplacement, he seized a Luger pistol and killed all Germans who had survived the grenade blast. Rearmed, he crawled toward the second machine gun, located thirty yards away, killing four Germans in camouflaged foxholes on the way, but receiving a critical wound in the abdomen. He went on staggering, bleeding, and disregarding bullets which tore through the folds of his clothing and glanced off his helmet. He threw his last grenade into the machine-gun nest and stumbled on to wipe out the crew. He had completed this self-appointed task when a machine-

pistol burst killed him instantly . . .” (General Orders No. 21, War Department, 26 February 1946.)

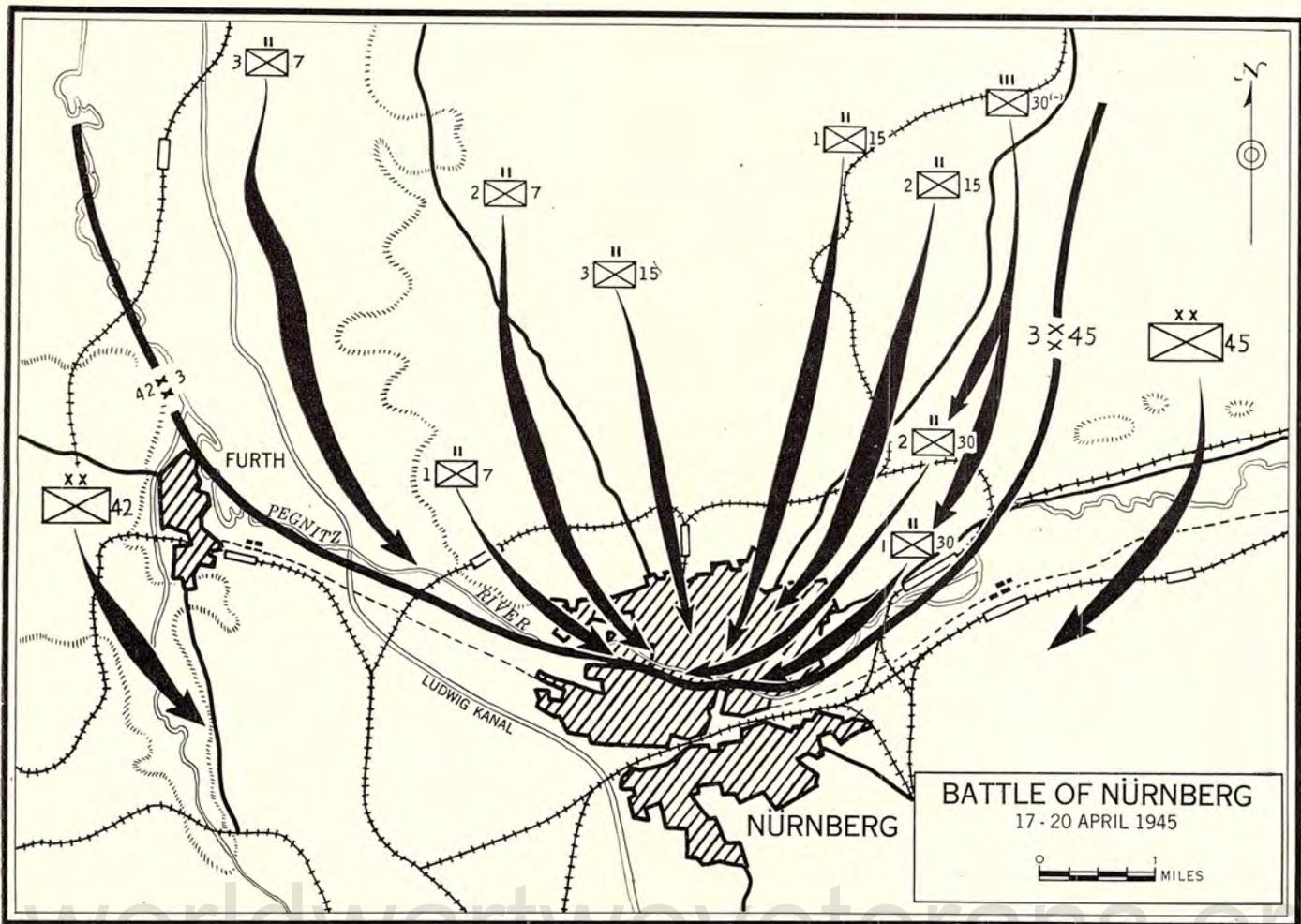
The coordinated Division attack on Nürnberg was worked out in minutest detail. Major General O'Daniel issued comprehensive orders for the forthcoming operation.

Although the fighting in Nürnberg itself was fierce, it was no worse than in the little villages that edged the city proper and where enemy infantry, antiaircraft, artillery and machine gunners were imbedded in bombed-out structures that now served as strongpoints of defense.

Penetration of Nürnberg was made doubly difficult by the fact that the city was a “city within a city” in that a century-old wall surrounded the inner section, which once was the fortified Nürnberg of feudal days.

Although the entire 3d Division was committed in the siege, elements of the 15th Infantry were the first to enter the outer, or “new” city, shortly after noon of April 17, after Division troops had overrun at least fifty “88s” in the drive through the outskirts of the city on the previous night.

It was on April 17 that 1st Lt. Frank Burke, transportation officer of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, fought with such extreme gallantry in the war-torn



streets of Nürnberg that he was later awarded the Medal of Honor. Lieutenant Burke had gone forward to select a motor-pool site, when in a desire to perform more than his assigned duties and take part in the fight, he advanced beyond the lines of the forward riflemen. Detecting a group of enemy making preparations for a local counterattack, he rushed back to a nearby friendly company and obtained a light machine gun, with which he engaged the superior enemy force. A fire fight ensued in which Lieutenant Burke succeeded in driving off the force after having killed a machine-gun crew of the attacking unit. Lieutenant Burke then picked up a rifle, dashed about a hundred yards through intense enemy fire and from a position behind an abandoned tank engaged the enemy. Lieutenant Burke finally disposed of the majority of enemy riflemen in and about his position with a hand-grenade assault. He continued on fighting his way forward along the battle-crazy street aiding our units to advance by his heroic example of willingness to close with the enemy. His citation reads in part: ". . . In four hours of heroic action Lieutenant Burke single-handedly killed eleven and wounded three enemy soldiers and took a leading role in engagements in which

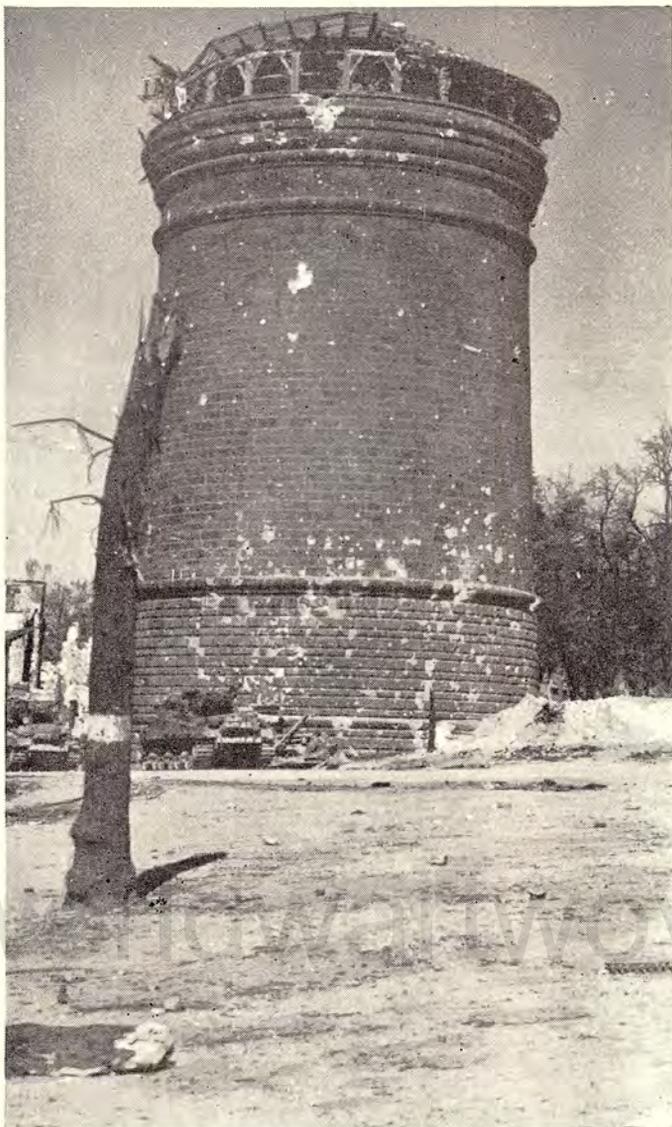
an additional twenty-nine enemy were killed or wounded."

However, it was the 30th Infantry that entered the "old" or walled city first, a little later, and it was through a hole breached by the 30th that the remainder of the Division entered.

Three solid German battle groups defended the old town in addition to many civilians, including a group of about 150 city firemen who were holed up in the eastern section of the town.

One of the defending units was the Battle Group *Dirnagel*, made up mainly of SS troopers organized in Rothernberg, southeast of Würzburg; the Battle Group *Rienow*, consisting of air force personnel and officer candidates from an airfield at Roth, south of Nürnberg and the 1st Battalion, 38th SS *Panzer Grenadier* Regiment. Although armor was not available to a great extent, the enemy employed all kinds of small arms in defense of the city as well as great numbers of *Panzerfaust*, which destroyed several of our vehicles in the drive through the outer edges of the bastion and on the road leading from Heroldsburg, where many Hungarian box mines had been laid.

Hundreds of snipers holed up in debris in the city



This ancient tower in Nürnberg yielded 125 Germans to a 3d Division patrol, after having been blasted with TD fire.

caused numerous casualties and it was a step-by-step fight to ferret out the defenders in the northeastern part of the city, where they occupied individual holes effectively concealed in the tall grass in that area.

Four blocks of apartments between Bismarck Strasse and Sulzbacher Strasse were strongpoints that took several hours to clear and the fighting went into the second day with the city and its adjacent small towns converted into a giant inferno.

Company K of the 15th hit fierce resistance at the settlement of Klein and was forced to withdraw and call for artillery to blast out the buildings and other strong points.

The Germans used every trick in the book to hold the city. Mines, boobytrapped German bodies, civilians with *Panzerfaust* and rifles, all combined to make the

attack very costly but all three regiments drove on in their zone of advance as house after house, park after park and even every immobilized streetcar was taken with a fight.

Civilian snipers hid in spider holes, let our troops pass, then opened fire at their backs.

The 15th Infantry, in its march toward the Pegnitz River, which runs through the heart of the town, captured a German general and several hundred German patients in a number of hospitals that were taken intact with their staffs.

Through the early days of the attack on Nürnberg the 30th Infantry had been in Division reserve with the 1st Battalion blocking to the Division right rear on the west bank of the Pegnitz River and the 2d and 3d Battalions blocking to the left rear or east bank of the river.

On April 19 the regiment was committed to the final drive to clear Nürnberg in a wide flanking movement driving in from the northeast. The 1st Battalion led the 30th Infantry's advance through the outer city, with Companies A and B spearheading the drive, and by noon of April 19 the battalion had captured 150 prisoners and reached the walled old city of Nürnberg.

That afternoon, 2d Lt. Telesphor C. Tremblay and his antitank platoon engaged in a spectacular action at the Laufer tower, on the edge of the walled city.



3d Division soldiers feel their way down a Nürnberg street, wary of snipers.



An aerial photo of Nürnberg depicts clearly the scene where the 3d Division fought one of its bitterest fights in Germany.

Advancing toward the tower, Lieutenant Tremblay and his men engaged in a hot pistol duel with a large number of Germans whom they kept imprisoned in the tower until bazooka and TD fire was placed on the structure. The ensuing concentration brought out a white flag and some 125 prisoners and the last resistance in the residential and factory district had ended in the 30th's zone.

The 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. James Osgard, was the first to enter the inner city after a coordinated regimental attack on the evening of April 19.

At 0400 hours the next morning, however, Company F was hit by a fierce enemy counterattack and the first fire hit the Company CP group, causing a number of casualties. This fanatical attack came from the island which was the 1st Battalion's objective and was led by the *Gauleiter* of the city.

The attackers were armed with automatic weapons, grenades and *Panzerfaust* but Capt. Robert L. Fleet's company stood them off in an hour-long battle that at times threatened the entire battalion positions in that section of the city. Although some casualties were suffered by Company F, a five-to-one ratio of losses was inflicted on the attacking force, which withdrew around daylight.

Many individual feats of heroism were performed in the attack on Nürnberg and 1st Lt. Michael J. Daly was one of the many officers who led their men into the face of well-protected enemy positions in order to conquer the seat of the German political party.

Maj. Burton S. Barr, executive officer of the 1st Battalion, stated later that Lieutenant Daly had gone with-

out sleep for two days and nights during the attack, "advancing ahead of his men into blistering fire, destroying German gun positions single-handedly and fighting with an unfaltering heroism that won the admiration and amazement of all who witnessed it."

First Sgt. Roy A. Kurtz said: "We had advanced as far as the *Nordost* railroad station when Lieutenant Daly, moving far ahead of us as usual, found that the twisted wreckage of a railroad bridge lay across the Bayreutherstrasse, the principal highway into the city. Swinging around to the right of the bridge, Lieutenant Daly had just begun to climb upon a low embankment along the railroad when a machine gun suddenly opened up on us from the other side of the Leipziger Platz. We were caught out in the open by rapid traversing fire. Our men were killed left and right.

"Realizing that the whole company was threatened with annihilation, the lieutenant ran toward the machine gun, a conspicuous target as he crossed the tracks to a position in some rubble within fifty yards of the enemy gun. He killed all the German gunners with his carbine and he pushed on forward, ahead of his company, until he sighted an enemy antitank detachment which was 'zeroed in' on our attached armor units."

S/Sgt. Ivan Ketron said that Lieutenant Daly signalled for the company to halt and again struck out alone.

"He was taking his life in his hands and we all knew it," Ketron said, adding, "I saw the Lieutenant work his way forward to what was left of a house and open fire with his carbine.

"The krauts replied with a rain of automatic fire



Probably the most devastated and ruined section of the ancient city of Nürnberg is shown here.

that sent up eddies of fine white dust from the building he was shooting from. Then *Panzerfaust* rockets began to slam against the furthest wall of the building. Although the whole kraut patrol was concentrating on him, Lieutenant Daly kept firing his carbine until he killed six Germans and silenced the enemy fire.

"Leading his men forward once more, he entered a public park, well ahead of his troops. As he paused to place his platoons in position, two Germans rushed forward from concealment and set up a machine gun only ten yards from the Lieutenant. An American sergeant fell dead at the first burst and Lieutenant Daly seized the M-1 that was lying on the ground and took up a pointblank fire fight which resulted in the killing of the enemy MG crew."

Major Barr said that in four singlehanded fire fights with a strong enemy Lieutenant Daly "had killed fifteen Germans, destroyed three machine guns and wiped out an entire enemy patrol.

"During two days and nights of bitter hand-to-hand fighting he served as first scout of the company, taking all the major risks himself and fearlessly disregarding deadly enemy fire. His heroism during the battle for

Nürnberg will never be forgotten by the officers and enlisted men who fought there," Major Barr concluded.

Lieutenant Daly was awarded the Medal of Honor for this deed of heroism.

Just before noon on April 20, 1945—Adolf Hitler's birthday—the 2d Battalion of the 30th reached the Adolf Hitler Platz in the center of the town after taking its ground in a building-to-building fight. The street markers in the square were replaced by others bearing the name "Eiserner Michael Platz" (Iron Mike Square) in honor of the 3d Division's Commanding General, Maj. Gen. John W. O'Daniel, who was known to his intimate friends and to thousands of Marnemen as "Iron Mike."

The 7th Infantry, which reached the center of town at about the same time as the 30th, attacked directly south from the area northwest of Nürnberg, including the villages of Schnepfenreuth, Kleinreuth and Thon. After neutralizing a great deal of small-arms opposition at these points, 2d Battalion, in the regimental lead, moved slowly south through the outskirts of the city and by noon of April 18 the front elements were some 600 yards south of the railroad tracks and the

left flank of the battalion was along the main road leading from Thon into Nürnberg. Fanatical resistance was encountered and an actual room-by-room battle was fought in one apartment house which finally yielded fifty PWs. Several small counterattacks were launched by the Germans but they were all repelled by Colonel Heintges' battalions, who fought amazingly and with utter disregard for their own safety.

A storeroom completely filled with machine guns and machine pistols was captured in Ruckert Strasse. The materiel was quickly demolished by our troops who were taking no chances with the boobytrapped contrivances that the Germans used so freely in defense of the city. Friendly tanks that roved the streets were kept constantly on the alert by *Panzerfaust* fired by Germans from upstairs windows. This was an innovation first introduced by the enemy, but which in the end proved costly to him. The standard procedure was to turn the fire of the nearest tank against the source of trouble.

The push down Ruckert Strasse by 2d Battalion was slow but devastating. When day broke April 19, its forward elements had reached the park at Wieland and Roritzer Strassen, where a road block covered by heavy machine guns held up the advance to the Pegnitz River.

By noon, Company G, commanded by 1st Lt. Louie R. Van Hoy, was in the municipal park of Unter Perkeheimer; Company E, under Capt. James F. Powell, was cleaning out the buildings on Judg Strasse and eliminating another roadblock in front of Company F, commanded by 1st Lt. Willis B. Conklin.

Close contact was maintained by all units of the Division as the block-by-block cleanup proceeded. Members of Company E found themselves firing at the same targets as the 15th Infantry, Company E moved onto Wieland Strasse.

In the vicinity of Frommann Strasse, Company E had a hard fire fight as it moved down Graben Bucher Strasse. The street was lined with old stone walls which the enemy utilized to the fullest extent as protection. The old city rang with shellfire and smoldered in its ruins as the 7th fought into the second night of the siege. At 2000 April 19, Company E crossed Burgschmeit Strasse and was hit on both flanks by small-arms and machine-gun fire and one of the company's platoons was cut off by a sharp counterattack that was staged by *Luftwaffe* trainees in Johannes Strasse. Two platoons of Company F were sent to relieve the beleaguered outfit and in a short time the Germans were driven back.

At about noon, when the large castle north of Adolf Hitler Platz fell to the 15th Infantry, 7th Infantry was in the famed square, withdrawing from the old city



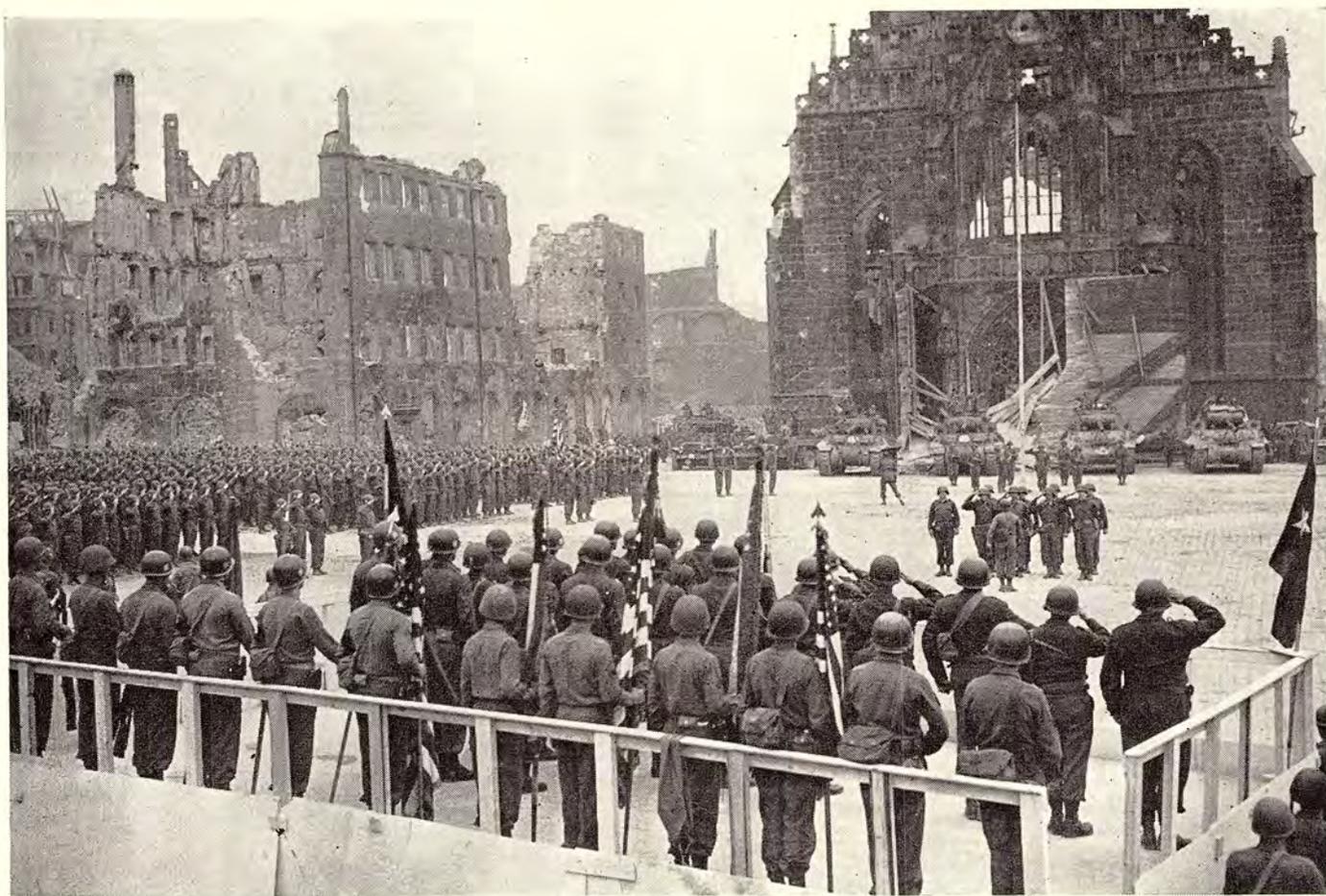
A group of 3d Division soldiers move down one of the rubble-lined streets of Nürnberg near the close of the battle.

late that afternoon to assembly areas north of the Pegnitz River and west of Graben Bucher Strasse. Here the men got their first real rest and sleep in four days.

The 1st Battalion, 7th, in its battle for Nürnberg, attacked from positions in the vicinity of Reutles and Gross Grundlich, hitting the northwest section of the city. The movement of Lieutenant Colonel Wallace's battalion was hindered in the early stages of the attack by unusually heavy small-arms and machine-gun fire that came from dug-in positions in a cemetery and from across the Pegnitz River.

During the early hours of the battle, 140 members of the Nürnberg police department, who had been fighting as infantrymen, surrendered when attached tank destroyers moved into view.

By 1430 April 19 Company C, commanded by Capt. M. Morris, had taken two vehicle bridges and one foot bridge intact and had crossed the Pegnitz River. Within four hours the entire area west of Kern and Will Strasse had been cleared and more than 200 prisoners taken.



The United States flag is raised in Adolf Hitler Platz, Nürnberg, by troops of the 3d Infantry Division in the presence of General O'Daniel.

Late that night, Company C had a hot fire fight about 600 yards west of the clock in the old tower. This was overcome, and the company entered the walls of the old city at Max Pi early the next morning.

The 3d Battalion, 7th Infantry, had a hectic time before it entered Nürnberg and took several hundred prisoners en route from positions in the vicinity of Erlangen.

A large ammunition manufacturing plant at Brück, surrounded by hastily-abandoned anti-aircraft positions, was taken by Major Flynn's battalion, which successively occupied Tennenlohe, Klein Grundlach, Gross Grundlach and Steinach after coming under heavy "88" and artillery fire en route.

Company L, commanded by 1st Lt. Sherman W. Pratt, was in Steinach when the lieutenant, acting as fire control officer for the 10th FA Battalion, saw fourteen German Flak guns firing on Company E positions from the vicinity of Bislohe, Sack, and Braunsbach. His call for artillery resulted in a 20-battalion concentration on the three towns, two of which surrendered without a fight, although slight resistance appeared at Braunsbach.

Continuing to Poppenreuth, Company L captured

twelve "88's" and their sleeping crews and drove southeast through Wetzendorf, Schniegling, and Muggenhof, taking much radar and searchlight equipment that had been abandoned by the enemy.

Pressing on in the wake of the remainder of the regiment, the 3d Battalion accumulated vast stores of war materiel as well as hundreds of prisoners before it moved into Nürnberg following capitulation of the city.

The battle for Nürnberg cannot be described without mention of the Antitank Company of the 15th Infantry, which fought as infantrymen from the 18th to the 20th of April. Numbering only 52 officers and men, weary from continuous marching and fighting, after two nights without sleep or rest, these infantrymen blasted their way through the Nürnberger Stadtpark, destroyed a heavily manned roadblock in a rifle-grenade assault, broke through a block of sniper-infested apartment houses, and finally reached the massive Innerstadtmauer and moat which girded the old city. In the sector assigned to them this unit broke the back of enemy resistance. For this action it was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

Officially, at 1400, April 20, Nürnberg—"the most



On April 22, 1945, Lt. Gen. A. M. Patch, Seventh Army commander, conferred the Medal of Honor on five 3d Division officers and men. Left to right: Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware, Lt. John J. Tominac, T/Sgt. Russell E. Dunham, S/Sgt. Lucian Adams, and Pfc. Wilburn K. Ross.

German of all cities"—fell, and all resistance north of the Pegnitz River had ceased.

At 1830, in the battered Adolf Hitler Platz, a rifle platoon from each regiment, as well as tanks, TDs, and Flakwagons, stood in silent array. Old Glory ascended an improvised flagpole and the band played the National Anthem. Maj. Gen. John W. O'Daniel then spoke.

"Again the 3d Division has taken its objective," he

said. "We are standing at the site of the stronghold of Nazi resistance in our zone. Through your feats of arms, you have smashed fifty heavy antiaircraft guns, captured four thousand prisoners, and driven the Hun from every house and every castle and bunker in our part of Nürnberg.

"I congratulate you upon your superior performance. . . ."

The band broke into "Dogface Soldier." A few be-



The Zeppelinfeld at Nürnberg is the scene of the raising of "Old Glory" which eclipses the Hakenkreuz.

wildered civilians contemplated the red, white, and blue banner flying at half-mast in mourning for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

On the following day an impressive military ceremony was conducted and the United States flag was officially raised over the city of Nürnberg, while still another ceremony was held on April 22 when Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Commanding General of the 7th Army, presented five members of the Division with the Congressional Medal of Honor in an impressive display witnessed by many of the famous news correspondents and radio announcers of the European Theater of Operations. The awardees were: T/Sgt. Ralph Dunham, S/Sgt. Lucian Adams and Pfc. Wilburn K. Ross of the 30th Infantry, and Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware and 1st Lt. John J. Tominac of the 15th Infantry.

The 3d Battalion, 30th Infantry, all blitzed up with new infantry jackets, painted helmets and new boots, represented infantrymen of the Division at both ceremonies. The 3d Battalion was Division reserve at the time.

The latter ceremony was held at the famous Nürnberg Zeppelin stadium, site of great rallies in the more

halcyon days of the National Socialist German Workers' Party.

The fall of Nürnberg rocked Nazidom. The center of distribution for Nazi laws and Nazi propaganda was gone, the last-ditch fight which was exerted in defense of the city had been for naught and the relentless drive of the 3d Division and other United States units was no longer to be denied nor halted.

The Division was now about to go into Seventh Army reserve. However, in a dramatic move south, the 12th Armored Division, which had broken loose while the Marnemen were cleaning up Nürnberg, fought its way across the Danube River, last barrier before Munich, and captured a bridge intact near Dillingen, to the southwest.

The last chance for the Germans to develop a line west of Munich had now vanished. The 15th Infantry was rushed to that vicinity to reinforce and hold the bridgehead while the remainder of the Division stayed in Nürnberg on guard duty until relief by the 80th Infantry Division was effected.

After an all-night move, the 15th crossed the Danube near Dillingen and assembled in the Kicklingen-Holzheim area early on April 24.

The 3d now was poised to strike toward Munich, Germany's third largest city and key to the entire southern part of the country and to the Redoubt area, in which many military authorities thought the Germans would make a last determined stand.

Passing through the 12th Armored Division at Binswangen, the 15th Infantry attacked toward Weringen, with the 1st Battalion, commanded by Maj. Kenneth B. Potter, taking the lead following a heavy artillery concentration on dug-in enemy positions.

With Company A on the right and Company C on the left, the battalion pushed ahead but was met with a counterattack just outside the village and a six-hour fight against small arms, machine guns and antitank weapons ensued. The town was cleared, the blocks established by midmorning, and Company A moved on to occupy Roggden before nightfall.

The 2d Battalion, meanwhile, was conducting guard



Brigadier General Fehn (left) Stadtskommandant of Augsburg, with two officers, after his surrender.

duties in and around Dillingen and the 3d Battalion blocked in the vicinity of Holzheim, Weisengen, Altenbaindt and Eppisburg.

The 3d Battalion of the 30th Infantry also had a blocking mission in support of the 12th Armored Division in the vicinity of Crailsheim while the armored units exploited the brilliant capture of the Dillingen bridge.

The bridgehead situation was precarious for several days and what was expected to be a two-day "breather" for the 30th turned out to be an active period of blocking that finally developed into an all-out attack by the regiment to clear troublesome Germans from woods on the left flank.

The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, crossed the Danube on the right of the established front and cleared a salient



A German youth views probably without understanding the wreckage of a Jagdpanther near Eisenach.

after establishing another bridgehead shortly after midnight of April 25-26.

This crossing was made northeast of Augsburg while the 7th and 15th Infantry Regiments fought through that portion of the city west of the river.

Crossing the Lech River and then the Werk Canal, on the early morning of April 28, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 30th ran into some of the heaviest artillery fire witnessed since Anzio. The 3d Battalion, crossing behind the 1st Battalion, came under intense artillery fire as it was crossing the bridge. It was learned later that the massed artillery fire of two German divisions had been turned on the crossing site in addition to much 20mm Flak and tank fire. Numerous battle groups, supported by fifty dual-purpose "88s" and a large number of "Tiger Royal" tanks carrying 120mm guns, were astride the *Autobahn* facing the river and poured hundred of shells into our attacking force. This was the last organized German defensive position protecting Munich.

The site chosen for the installation of a bridge was at the *Autobahn*, but the troop crossing site was 500 yards north over a spillway where the canal and river meet.

The intense enemy fire precluded the building of



United States soldiers liberated from the enemy.



A view of some of the Anti-aircraft gun positions that ringed the city of Munich in the environs and at the approaches.

bridges and no ferry could be put into use. Every five minutes a heavy concentration of at least fifty guns was placed on the river crossing site and not until the doughboys overran the German positions did the firing cease.

Company C, under 1st Lt. Charles P. Murray, broke a German counterattack, cut through the enemy lines, and took a large number of "88's" in an attack from the rear. The pitched battle continued all day of April 28, with 1st Battalion taking 24 "88's" and 3d Battalion netting 16. Company A alone captured 18 of the dreaded German field pieces.

Late that day, Company L, under 1st Lt. Abraham Fitterman, left the rest of the battalion and proceeded to clear the vital suburbs of Augsburg, east of the Lech River including Lechhausen, where contact was made with 15th Infantry, which had taken several hundred prisoners in its dash through Hettlingen, Gerashofen, Laugna, Asbach, Osterbuch, Reidsend, Wengen, Sontheim, Marzelstetten, Willenback, Rischgan, and Zu-

samaltheim. Company A captured a completely equipped airplane-parts plant at Roggden.

Frequent small groups of Germans were encountered during the rapid advance but there was no organized resistance such as was met at Wertingen, although the *Luftwaffe* came over at intervals. These raids did little more than harass our hard-driving troops.

The 2d Battalion of the 15th pushed through Affaltern, Feigenhofen, Lutzelburg, and Gablingen and the 3d raced into Bocksberg, Heretried, Holzhausen, Rettenbergen and Lautersbrunn on the morning of April 27; Company K, in front, was nearing Edenbergen on the Munich *Autobahn*.

Pushing north and northeast over a 20,000-yard front toward Therhaupten and Mertingen, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 7th crossed the Lech River and the Werk Canal, turned south and southeast and, over a 4,000-yard front, moved into position for entrance into Augsburg.

The 1st Battalion encountered stubborn small-arms



Hundreds of German prisoners of war walk along this street in captured Munich under guard of 3d Division soldiers.



German prisoners by the thousands stream onto the Autobahn south of Munich to begin their long trek back to the 3d Division PW cage.

resistance as it moved out of Wortingen but the enemy fire was soon silenced and the town of Gottmannshofen was cleared. Company B, commanded by 1st Lt. Aldo F. Dal Molin, moved into Frouerstetten and Company C, under Capt. Victor M. Morris, took Bleinsbach. Hohenreichen, Prettelshofen and Hirschbach were taken without a fight but members of Company A had to eliminate the defenders of a roadblock before they could occupy Rieblingen and Company C was forced to inspect forty-two Storch planes that the enemy had destroyed near Langenreichen. Company A came under enemy artillery fire at Biberbach after the Germans had evacuated the city.

All during the night of April 26-27, the 1st Battalion received artillery fire from enemy positions across the Werk Canal and many casualties were suffered. Early the next morning, Company C was in Markt, Company B was in Erlingen and Company A was in Eistenbrechtshofen, en route to Theringen, the jumping-off position for the attack on Augsburg from the west.

One of the most memorable liberations of the war was celebrated at the small town of Unter Thurheim, which was entered by Company K, under 1st Lt. Herman Ramer.

Fifty-two Americans, some of whom were members of the 3d Division who had been captured by the Germans at Anzio Beachhead more than a year before, were set free when the Marnemen entered the town. A wilder celebration and more genuine greeting had never before been received by 3d Infantry Division men who captured the town.

The men had heard the 3d Division Artillery for several days and all of them had "sweated out" the liberation.

"When I saw those guys out of the window, my knees started to knock and I didn't know whether to jump or fly," said Pvt. Frank Parco, one of the lib-

erated Anzio veterans. "Everybody was out in the street hugging and slapping each other, and I even kissed the first infantryman I saw, because I had been swearing for the last fourteen months that I would do so." Most of the 150 Germans defending the town were taken prisoner after a short fire fight, and Company K continued on to Vord Reid, Greggenhof, and Allmanshofen, where the company secured a bridge intact. Company I, commanded by 1st Lt. Eli Levy, took Pfaffenhofen, Buttenwiesen, Druisheim, and Mertigen, destroying three 150mm guns that had caused several delays to the advance of the battalion. Company L, under 1st Lt. Sherman W. Pratt, cleared Westendorf, Ellgau, Ostendorf and Waltershofen, coming under machine-gun and Flakwagon fire from across the Werk Canal while in the process.

Main over-all enemy resistance in the 7th Infantry area was centered on the north-south road leading from Nordendorf to Mertigen which the enemy attempted to deny our forces by frequent concentrations of self-propelled-gun fire on the highway.

The regiment's 2d Battalion, which had been in mobile reserve, moved from its bivouac area in the vicinity of Langenreichen and Company F attacked Langweid, where the enemy put up one of the few organized-resistance fights that the 7th had encountered in recent days. Twelve "88's" were captured on the outskirts of the village and the attacking force was brought under heavy small-arms and mortar fire directed from woods north and east of the town.

Lieutenant Conklin's men overran ten 105s whose crews withheld their fire until the attackers reached a close range.

The remainder of the battalion met stubborn delaying action as it proceeded through Achsheim and Stettenhofen but the enemy gradually withdrew along the railroad tracks running into Augsburg.



At Obersalzberg, the Nazis' retreat near Berchtesgaden, the RAF bombs had caused considerable destruction as evidenced by this photo.

The push to the south continued and Company G moved into Augsburg along the railroad right-of-way.

A civilian delegation offered to surrender the city to Lt. Col. Jack M. Duncan, Commanding Officer of the 2d Battalion, late that night, but while negotiations were under way elements of 2d Battalion, 15th Infantry, swept into the town from another direction—also with civilian assistance—and the 30th threw a ring around the city, completely cutting off any possible escapes and making a surrender unavoidable.

A hastily-organized task force of the 15th had passed through elements of the 7th at Krigshaber early that day, taking Rettenbergen, Edenbergen, Batzenhofen, Westheim, and Städtbergen in a whirlwind drive into Augsburg. Col. Hallett D. Edson, the regimental commander, devised a surrender plan for the differing groups of civilians and military authorities.

The military commander of the city, a Brigadier General Fehn, desired to capitulate “honorably” but members of the German “Freedom Party” wanted to hand over the city without a fight, so Colonel Edson directed that the German garrison in the city of 200,000 population be surrendered in small groups, which was quickly accomplished to the satisfaction of all concerned, including the “honorable” German commander who also became a PW.

With the fall of Augsburg, the seizing of a bridgehead over the Lech River and the liquidation of the strong enemy defensive position astride the *Autobahn* to the east of the city, the 3d Division hardly paused in its sweep to Munich, whose Rosenheim Strasse beer hall was the scene of Hitler's famous “putsch” in 1923.

The 15th remained in Augsburg as the garrison unit

while the other two regiments of the Division took up the pursuit of the disintegrating German army.

Passing through elements of the 30th Infantry at Friedberg, the 7th attacked on the right flank with Task Force Horton, commanded by Capt. Robert Horton of the 3d Battalion, in the van as the regiment raced down a road parallel to the *Autobahn* in quest of new towns to conquer.

Hegnenberg, Horbach, Eitelsreid, Galgen and Puch all fell before the Horton Force, which was comprised of a platoon of the Reconnaissance Company of the 601st TD Battalion, a section of the regimental Battle Patrol, a platoon of light tanks from Company D of the 756th Tank Battalion and a platoon of mediums from Company A; an armored advance guard of two platoons of medium tanks and a platoon of TDs; one tank dozer from Company A, 10th Engineer Battalion; and all the personnel of Company L of the 7th mounted on the armored vehicles; followed by other elements of the 3d Battalion utilizing organic and reinforcing transportation.

It was no wonder that the Germans surrendered by the hundreds upon seeing these fast-moving forces sweeping over the country.

Twelve “88's,” a huge searchlight, and much radar equipment were taken with a large number of prisoners between Friedberg and Mering. Some enemy machine-gun and antitank fire was met on the road between Mering and Merching. Kiefersbrunn, Steinach and Hochsdorf were also occupied by noon but a large crater and blown water main at a railroad crossing on the *Autobahn* held up progress shortly before midnight of April 29. The force moved slowly past the

wreckage and was in Puchheim at 0200 the next morning. At Germering, fourteen "88's" were taken, in addition to numerous prisoners, after a fight that lasted almost until daybreak. Driving into Neubing, the battalion detrucked, distributed its tanks and TDs to the other battalions of the regiment and continued the advance on foot, all Task Force missions having been completed and accomplished.

All the towns that were by-passed during the rapid advance of Task Force Horton were secured and cleaned out by the 1st Battalion while 2d Battalion, marching on foot, covered approximately twenty-five miles on the first day's trek toward Munich.

Rederzhausen, Mergenthau, Bachern, Holzburg, Harmonsburg, Ried, Zillenbergl, Eismansberg, Sichenried, Baierberg, Tegernbach and Baidlkerch all fell to the 2d Battalion. At Holzberg, 800 prisoners were taken while another 500 were gathered up at Mittelstatten, Langenmoos, Hanshofen, Vogach and Gunzelhofen. By 0230 hours, April 30, the battalion had reached Unter Malching where it went into regimental reserve.

The 1st Battalion struck a strong resistance pocket at Pullach, where several hundred *Hitler Jugend* and

SS troops fought for several hours before surrendering. Several bridges over the Isar River in the vicinity of Pullach were destroyed.

After clearing the suburban districts south of Munich to the Isar on May 1, 7th Infantry was placed in Division reserve and moved to the area east of the Isar.

Task Force Osgard, named after its commander, Lt. Col. James L. Osgard, commander of the 2d Battalion, 30th Infantry, jumped off on its race to Munich at 0130 hours on the morning of April 29 with the other two battalions close behind mopping up by-passed German groups.

Moving down the Munich *Autobahn* at breakneck speed, Task Force Osgard liquidated or captured a great number of Germans in carrying out its mission to secure approaches to Munich and clear the suburbs around the southwestern side of the city.

Before noon, the force was at a slight rise before the last barrier, the Amper River, where only one of a large number of bridges had not been blown. This lone bridge was discovered by Col. Lionel C. McGarr and Lt. Col. James L. Osgard on a personal reconnaissance well forward of the advance units of the regiment.



The United States flag is raised at Obersalzburg, above Berchtesgaden, by Pvt. Bennet A. Walter and Pfc. Nick Urich of the 3d Division's 7th Infantry, after capture of the village.



The much-publicized front window of Hitler's chalet at Obersalzberg above Berchtesgaden.

Late in the afternoon, Company F, commanded by Capt. Robert L. Fleet, moved across the bridge with supporting armor, and after overcoming stiff early resistance established a bridgehead. The remainder of 2d Battalion followed by the 1st Battalion moved across the river later in the evening.

At 0945 hours, April 30, Company C, under 1st Lt. Charles P. Murray, entered the city and the rest of the

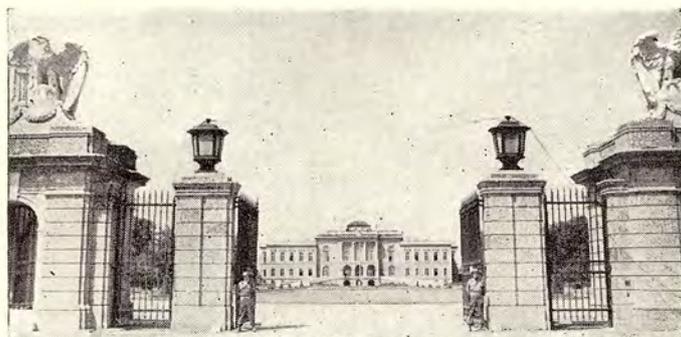


One of the spacious magnificently-furnished rooms of the Schloss Klessheim near Salzburg.

1st Battalion moved in around noon, after overcoming a force of 300 enemy with machine guns who had arrived in the southwest corner of the city from the east almost simultaneously with the 30th's advance units from the west.

Capt. Gilbert Hunt, 1st Battalion Adjutant, reported that civilians had pointed out hiding places of stubborn enemy troops and that United States soldiers and vehicles had been showered with flowers by some civilians.

Resistance in Munich was indeed weird, with flower-throwing in some parts of the city and last-ditch fighting taking part in other sections. There were numerous anti-aircraft guns protecting Munich and most of them were employed against the invading infantry of the 3d Division. The 30th Infantry encountered much small-



The gateway to the main entrance to the Schloss Klessheim, Hitler's Guesthouse for visiting foreign plenipotentiaries.

arms fire as it worked its way through the city's streets toward the center of the town, where a suicide squad of about twenty-five German Elite Guards held out in a building until one of our artillery pieces tore the structure down with several well-directed shots.

There was no official surrender at Munich such as in Nürnberg and many other smaller towns for the very simple reason that all the city's officials had left before General O'Daniel rode into the main part of town at 1600 hours, April 30.

The General talked with three men who held minor jobs in the city government but none of them felt sufficiently responsible to offer up the city, although they were Nazi party members and had been ordered by party leaders to remain behind to care for the 450,000 persons in Munich.

With Nürnberg and Munich in our hands, pursuit of the German army by the 3d Division was converted into a campaign of mopping up scattered points of resistance and running thousands of PWs through the cages, which now were so full that it was almost impossible to keep an accurate check on their numbers.

Leaving Augsburg April 30, the 15th Infantry assembled in the area near Rottbach, northwest of Munich,



The 3d Infantry Division Honor Guard passes in review before Secretary of War Patterson, Lieut. Gen. Patch, CG 7th Army and Lieut Gen Haislip, CG XV Corps (none is visible under archway of Schloss Klessheim.)

and organized small, hard-hitting task forces that quickly pushed past Munich, moved south along the Isar River to Grunwald then southeast along the axis Grunwald-Strasslach-Pullach-Oden-Kreuz and Ober Haching.

Task Force Ware, named after Lt. Col. Keith L. Ware, commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, led the regiment's attack as it took Otterloh, Sauerlach, Berg-ham, Holzham, Foching, Unter Darching and Unter Laindern during the drive of May 1-2, when 1478 prisoners were taken. German units were surrendering in their entirety and hundreds of enemy marched into our lines to give themselves up.

The closing days of the war were some of the most spectacular that the Division had encountered and the 30th Infantry, after leaving Munich, engaged in some stirring episodes during these final phases.

Task Force Chaney, named after Lt. Col. Christopher W. Chaney, 3d Battalion commander, was running hell-bent down the *Autobahn* to cut off escaping Germans in Rosenheim and to secure bridges across the Inn River, last natural barrier to the area leading into the Redoubt country.

It was May Day and a freak snow storm had blanketed the countryside. A cold, damp wind reminiscent of the Vosges whipped across the highways from the Tyrolean Alps as the task force pushed rapidly on, capturing one airport that held more than 300 German planes, many of which were "warmed up" and ready for flight when the raiders swooped down on the field.

Through Feldkirchen, the force reached Rosenheim where Company I and two platoons of Company L

slipped through four enemy battalions and secured two of the three bridges in the city.

The third, and most strategically-located bridge, a two-lane structure that reached 135 yards across the Inn, was reconnoitered by 2d Lt. Emil T. Byke's 1st platoon of Company L.

A fire fight arose when the platoon neared the bridge site and when the Germans fled; the Marnemen took up the chase only to be stopped by a great number of mines that had been strewn along the bridge flooring. At this point, Lieutenant Byke saw a smoldering fuse beneath the bridge, rushed down and cut the primacord (an instantaneous type fuse) on a huge amount of demolitions just in time to save the bridge and many of his men's lives.

The lieutenant's alertness and quick action saved the only bridge in that area capable of carrying the armored units on their drive south, and without it the entrance of the 3d Division into Salzburg and Berchtesgaden would have been delayed several days.

While Company L was securing the bridges, Company I, commanded by 2d Lt. Gerald G. Mehuron, cleaned out the sentinels and outguards of the Rosenheim garrison.

By making the German commander believe that the United States forces were much larger than they were Lieutenant Mehuron won the surrender of nearly 1500 men and 125 officers in a slick ruse.

Task Force Chaney was held up at Traunstein when French and 20th Armored Division elements passed through, creating a traffic tie-up that was also agitated by a blown bridge over the Salzach River. After tak-



Lieutenant General Geoffrey Keyes, CG U. S. II Corps, pins the Distinguished Unit Citation to the colors of the 3d Division near Salzburg, awarded for action in the Colmar Pocket.

ing Bergen, the entire 30th Infantry assembled in the vicinity of Traunstein, from where it moved to Salzburg to perform guard duty in that historic old city until May 10.

The 7th Infantry took up the chase along the *Autobahn* east of Bergen. A blown bridge over the Tirolder Achen River near Stegenhauser held up the forces until a crossing could be effected east of Moosen. A surprisingly stiff fight was encountered by Company I in Ober Siegsdorf but the resistance was short-lived and ended with the killing or capture of all the defending Germans.

During the night of May 2-3, the 2d Battalion passed through the 3d in the vicinity of Ober Siegsdorf but was held up at the Saalach River, west of Salzburg, because all three bridges spanning the river had been destroyed.

On the following night, the battalion crossed the river in assault boats to be the first troops of the 3d Division to enter Austria.

Brig. Gen. Robert N. Young, Assistant Division Commander, accompanied advance elements of the 106th Cavalry Group, which was the first unit officially to enter Salzburg. General Young accepted the surrender of the city.

The German collapse was so complete that the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry, commanded by Major Kenneth B. Potter, cleaning up behind advance formations, took over 3,000 prisoners including three Generals.

One member of the battalion who had become separated from his company was called upon to accept the surrender of a completely equipped German battalion. While he was preparing to have the Germans march to the PW cage, twenty more enemy officers came down from the hills and joined the surrender group.

Although Berchtesgaden was beyond the Division zone, General O'Daniel ordered the 7th Infantry to continue on through the hills to Hitler's mountain retreat, with the 1st and 3d Battalions following the regimental Battle Patrol in the attack.

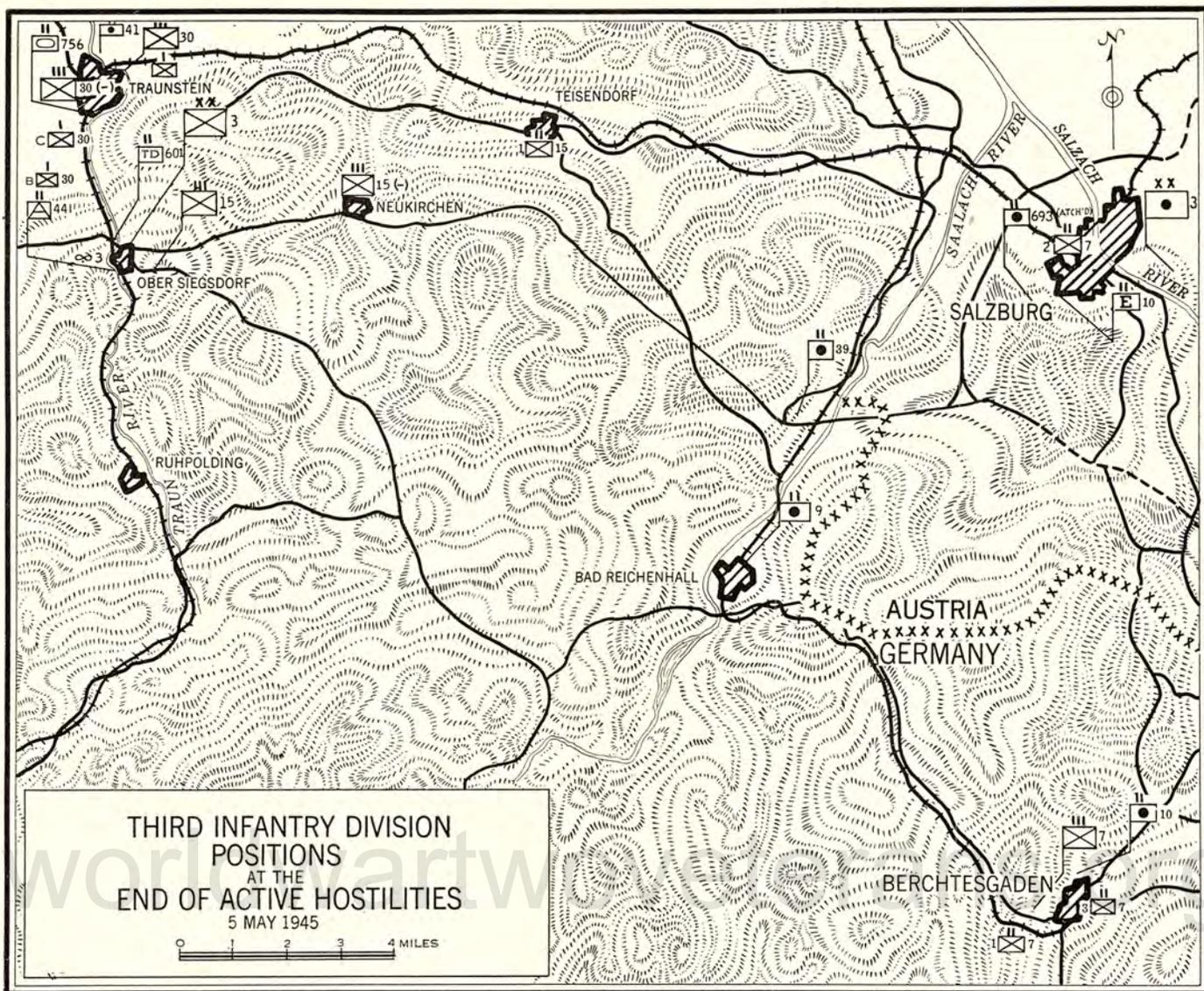
Smouldering ruins of Hitler's Der Berghof Obersalzburg greeted the 3d Division. The Allied bombings of previous days had left little to defend, although the subterranean caves later proved interesting to sight-seers who swarmed over the grounds for several weeks after the war's end.

During the afternoon of May 5, an American flag was raised over the charred buildings by members of the 7th Infantry in a ceremony that put the final touch to the 3d Division's pursuit that had begun at Fedala, French Morocco, more than two years before.

The last act of *Nazidämmerung* was played out beginning May 3, before an appreciative 3d Infantry Division, the division which had fought over a longer trail than any other organization of comparable size in the European Theater of Operations. It was a fitting climax to the brilliant career of the Division which suffered 35,000 battle casualties in its almost solid twenty-two months' campaigning against the Axis.

An armistice commission representing Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, commander of all German forces on what had been the Western Front until the Russians and Americans met along the River Elbe and cut that front in two, had been reported in the Salzburg area for the past forty-eight hours.

In a small, rock-walled room, some hundred feet below the street level and at the bottom of a shaft sunk into the depths of the Mönchsberg close by the Klausen Tor in Salzburg, several United States officers, Brig. Gen. Robert N. Young; his staff officer, Major Frederick C. Spreyer; and Lt. Col. Jack M. Duncan, CO of the 2d Battalion, 7th Infantry, were discussing and attempting to solve the many problems attendant upon the surrender of the city of Salzburg with the *Stadtkommandant*, Colonel Lepperdinger, and his staff. Suddenly the radiotelephone in an alcove off the main room rings and the German *Feldwebel* responds with, "*Jawohl, Herr General . . . Jawohl!*" Colonel Lepperdinger is summoned to the phone and after a few minutes returns to inform the United States officers that he is in communication with Lieutenant General Zimmerman, Field Marshal Kesselring's chief of staff. General Zimmermann wishes to know if Salzburg is in United



States hands. If so, would the United States commanding general receive a German armistice delegation from Field Marshal Kesselring's headquarters? German officers begin to talk *sotto voce* in little groups; General Young confers with his staff officers; English is translated into German, and German into English. Finally arrangements are agreed upon and relayed to Lieutenant General Zimmerman. The German armistice delegation will proceed from Field Marshal Kesselring's headquarters in motor vehicles plainly marked with white flags of truce via Hallein to Salzburg and will be met by General Young at the Osterreichischer Hof.

In Room 49 at the Osterreichischer Hof General Young and Major Spreyer await the arrival of the German delegation. Col. Bernard Wilson, commander of the 106th Cavalry Group, is ordered to send out parties in reconnaissance cars to aid the delegation in passing the lines. A British captain, recently released from a German prison camp by the U.S. 3d Infantry Division, joins in the search.

That afternoon a German major drove through the lines and requested to be conducted to an American headquarters. He brought the information that a Lt. Gen. Foertsch was heading the party, which was on the way.

"Shortly after 1900, Major Thomas Howard and Lt. Herbert Heldt burst into Room 49 of the Osterreichischer Hof," reported AP's Howard Cowan, ". . . and said, 'They blew the bridge up right in our faces!'

"The bridge near Hallein south of Salzburg had been dynamited by SS troops and it was feared the armistice party was trapped.

"'Maybe they've been picked up by some of our men and taken to the PW cage,' said General Young. 'We'd never find them'.

"The deal had been given up as a bad job as the sun went down and no sign of the German officers. Room 49 cleared. . . .

"I left and got down one flight of stairs when I was almost knocked down by Foertsch and his party

striding up the stairs two steps at a time. The party was covered with white chalk dust which gave their faces a deathly pallor and grayed their hair. They were loaded with brief cases and parcels of paper. . . ."

The British captain had located the delegation and guided it to the Oesterreicher Hof.

A German colonel said: "Do you want to see our credentials?" General Young nodded and the colonel began fumbling for the papers as General Foertsch began speaking in German with Maj. Frederick C. Spreyer.

"I have come to ask an armistice as soon as possible to complete arrangements for unconditional surrender of the German army, navy, and air forces," said Foertsch. "I have full authority to act for the German army and German government. It is imperative that I see your Sixth Army Group commander immediately. The meeting should be as near this spot as possible because of the state of our communications."

[The communications were in worse state than Foertsch suspected. Surrender negotiations were also being conducted in other parts of the dissected Reich.]

The party left immediately for the Division CP at Ober Siegsdorf. The Germans travelled in their own vehicles, sandwiched in between armored cars and jeeps bristling with machine guns. White flags flew from the radiator of the touring car in which Foertsch was a passenger. Behind him a huge American flag was folded on the lap of a German lieutenant.

"All along the route, which was cleared of heavy tank and truck traffic by scouts speeding ahead," said Cowan, "parties of doughboys lined the roads and you could hear the babble of comments as we passed by.

"'Von Kesselring!' one ejaculated.

"'Is it over?' was shouted scores of times."

The mission arrived in Ober Siegsdorf shortly after midnight, after detouring most of the way. The German general spent the rest of the night at the CP.

Foertsch and his party left in the morning and went back to XV Corps headquarters to surrender to General Devers.

Following the meeting the German party passed through the 3d Division on its way to Kesselring's headquarters.

A United States party headed by Captain Rhoman Clem of Division Headquarters accompanied the German delegation on its quest for the headquarters. In the party were: 1st Lts. Joseph A Mercer, George Allen, and Harold Willingham; Sgt. George Allen and a group of twenty-one other men.

SS fanatics held up the combined party on the first day's try, blowing up roads and one whole mountain-side. The 3d Division personnel present were treated to the rare spectacle of an SS 2d lieutenant arguing

with a German lieutenant general, and actually getting abusive.

Captain Clem's detachment returned to the Division CP, which had moved into Salzburg, while negotiations were held up for a day. Then a German Colonel Zelling led the party along the road to Zell-am-See, "an idyllic Austrian lake resort where Nazi big-shots alternately played and planned their next conquests," according to Edgar Snow of Saturday Evening Post.

On the night of May 8, Captain Clem met Marshal Kesselring on his private train, the "Brunswick," which had moved to the south of the lake. From that time on communication was constant with the Allied high command, including General Eisenhower, and remained constant until the following day, when representatives of Sixth Army Group headquarters appeared to receive the Marshal's final surrender. This historic act, involving the submission of more than one million enemy troops, took place in the "Brunswick" at the little town of Saalfelden. The last German force in Europe had surrendered.

(At 2:41 A.M., Monday, May 7 at Reims, France, General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower turned to his deputy commander, British Air Marshal Tedder and said, "Thank you very much, Arthur." Then he held up the two pens with which surrender had been signed and made a "V" for victory. Peace had officially come to Europe.

(Russian ratification of the final surrender came in Berlin, a little later in the day of May 8 when Field Marshal Keitel capitulated to Stalin's deputy, Marshal Gregory Zhukov.)

As far as the 3d Infantry Division was concerned, however, the war was not quite over.

A few days after the official V-E proclamation, 15th and 30th Infantry Regiments suddenly got the order to move, in full battle equipment. A group of SS troops was supposedly still holding out in the Redoubt area.

"A hell of a time to be shot—after all them speeches," grumbled the men, many of whom had well above the announced "critical score" necessary for a trip to the United States and possible discharge. According to C.I.C. information Himmler, the notorious SS leader who was still at large, was supposed to be in charge of the force.

The information proved erroneous, however, and men of the two regiments breathed sighs of relief. "For," said Jack Bell of the Chicago *Tribune*, "men do not want to be killed, even while playing cops and robbers."

The 3d Infantry Division apprehended the notorious Skorzeny, SS leader who had "rescued" Mussolini following the Italian dictator's downfall in 1943, and who had organized the abortive assassination missions against high-ranking allied military leaders during the

Ardennes counteroffensive and breakthrough—a very much-sought war criminal.

Probably one of the most valued comments was made by Kesselring. The German Field Marshal, who commanded troops on the Italian Front during the entire time that 3d Infantry Division fought in Italy, and who succeeded Marshal von Rundstedt as commander of the German West Front, was asked directly by Seymour Korman, war correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*: “What was the best American division faced by troops under your command on *either* the Italian or Western Fronts?” Without hesitation, Kesselring named four American divisions, two infantry and two armored. The 3d Infantry Division he placed first on the list.

The incidents relative to the downfall of an entire nation only punctuated the fact that the fighting was finished. As men who have been living in constant apprehension of physical injury for the better portion of two and a half years, veterans of the 3d's total campaigning were almost skeptical, at first, of the fact that the war, indeed, was over. The ultimate goal of every soldier who had ever fought, the end had seemed like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. It had been wonderful to dwell upon, but it would never materialize. Then, suddenly, it was upon them all and the impact of the fact was a thing that failed to register—like the sudden death of a loved one—an idea, like some involved bit of philosophical reasoning that had to be taken again and again, in small doses. The sure knowledge of the fact was there, but the full implication of it needed much time and serious consideration to sink in.

Only after the connotations of the word “peace” began to manifest themselves in such realities as the absence of shot and shell, enough food to eat and enough time to sleep, did the end of hostilities effect the fullest benefit on the minds of all men.

Then, and only then, did the transition reach full cycle. It was sad that so many thousands of 3d Division men slept in places so far from the scenes of rejoicing.

It is with pride that the men of the 3d Infantry Division point to their record of combat, of campaigns, of landings, of victories [said the Division *Front Line*]. The route from Casablanca to Berchtesgaden is strewn with the wreckage of the shattered *Wehrmacht*. Never did the 3d Infantry Division falter or fall back in its thirty months of combat.

All of this is indeed glorious and in Army language can be said to be, “in keeping with the highest traditions of the service.”

But there is another side to the picture. Now that the active campaigning is over in Europe we must look back and tally the cost of all this glory.

The Division has its heroes, its Footsie Britts. It has its thousands of unsung heroes, the infantry and engineers, the artillerymen, the medics, signalmen and QM, its ordnance and tankers, its pencil-pushers and staff officers. From the privates to the generals they are heroes, all of them. They did their job. Some of them never saw the Germans; some of them saw too many. But it was teamwork that made the 3d what it was and is.

But the cost of the reputation—it cannot be tallied. The cost cannot be added in terms of cash, materiel, time. Nor can it be a statistical report of so many killed, injured, missing, prisoners. For the cost has too personal a significance to each of us to permit it to be summarized as a statistical report. All of us have lost someone in this war; a friend, a brother, a son, someone whom we loved.

It is to these men that we look back today in our moment of triumph. We cannot look back to them if we do not look forward to the future for which they fought—and died.

The cost has been great—almost at times, it seemed, too great. It is now our task to build the future on the solid foundation laid by those who have left us forever. That future may keep us in Europe, for a time, send us home, send us to the Pacific. No one knows. But we are still the 3d Division—the Division that has never failed. We shall go forward, in our traditional way, never forgetting those who march with us in memory.

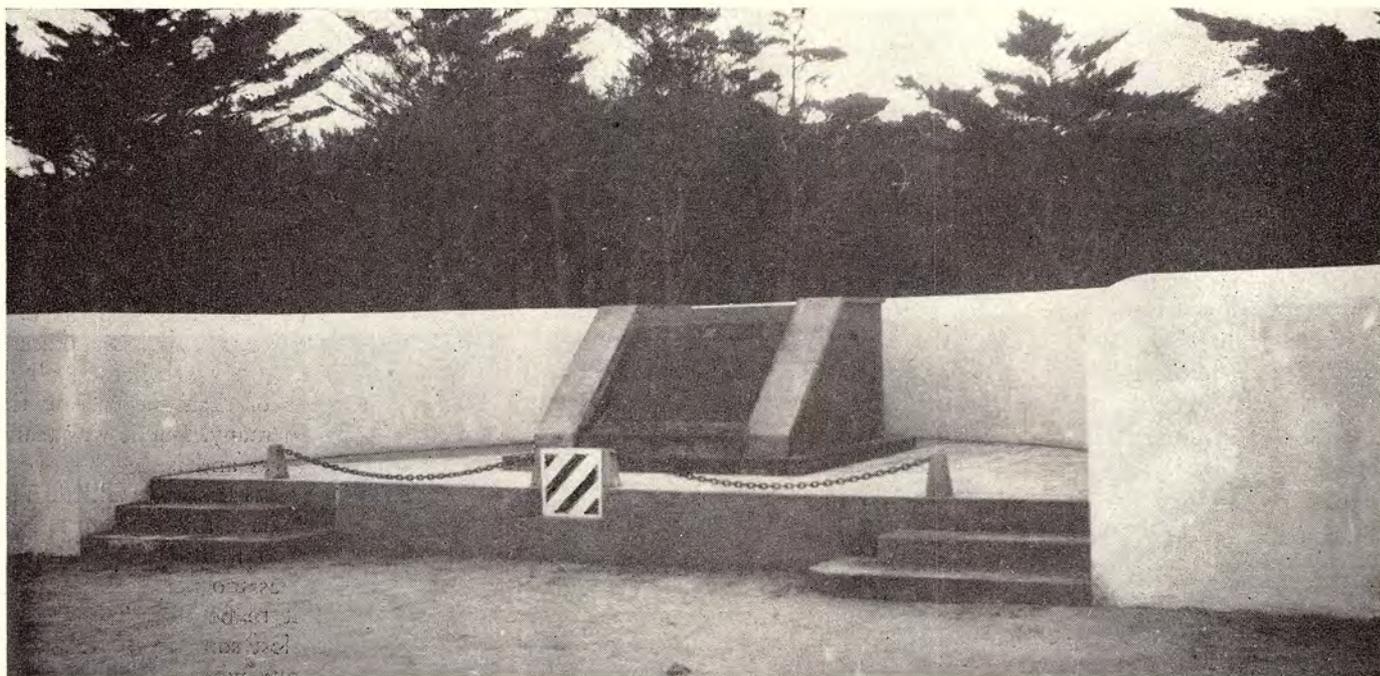
TABLE OF CASUALTIES*

Germany				
(March 15, 1945 through May 8, 1945)				
<i>KIA</i>	<i>WIA</i>	<i>MIA</i>	<i>Total Battle Casualties</i>	<i>Non-Battle Casualties</i>
373	1744	416	2533	1909
Reinforcements and Hospital return-to-unit personnel				
	<i>Reinf</i>		<i>Hosp RTUs</i>	
<i>Off</i>		<i>EM</i>	<i>Off</i>	<i>EM</i>
56		1970	63	1278

KNOWN ENEMY CASUALTIES

<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Captured</i>
381	1020	101,201

*These figures were provided by the A C or S, G-1, 3d Infantry Division.



3d INFANTRY DIVISION MONUMENT AT FEDALA

Location: At Fedala, on the beach esplanade at a point midway between the Casino property and the Hotel Miramar property. The site is on the shoreward side of the esplanade in a semicircular revetment surrounded by a white wall. The inscription, translated from the French, reads:

NOVEMBER 8, 1942

U. S. THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION MADE AN ASSAULT AMPHIBIOUS LANDING IN THIS VICINITY. THE ENTRANCE INTO CASABLANCA MARKS THE DAY ON WHICH THE DIVISION TOOK ITS PLACE AT THE SIDE OF ITS FRENCH COMRADES-IN-ARMS IN THE LONG, HARD STRUGGLE THAT TERMINATED IN THE LIBERATION OF FRANCE AND THE DEFEAT OF GERMANY.



3d INFANTRY DIVISION BEACHHEAD MONUMENT AT LICATA

Location: On a triangular piece of ground located at the intersection of three streets on the northeastern edge of the city of Licata, adjacent to the city park and overlooking the beach. Licata is located on Highway No. 115 at the southern termination of Highway No. 123. The inscription, translated from the Italian, reads:

JULY 10, 1943

U. S. THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION, REINFORCED, MADE AN ASSAULT AMPHIBIOUS LANDING IN THIS VICINITY. ESTABLISHED A FIRM BEACHHEAD, AND COMMENCED AN HISTORIC ATTACK, CULMINATING IN THE CAPTURE OF AGRIGENTO, PALERMO, AND MESSINA.

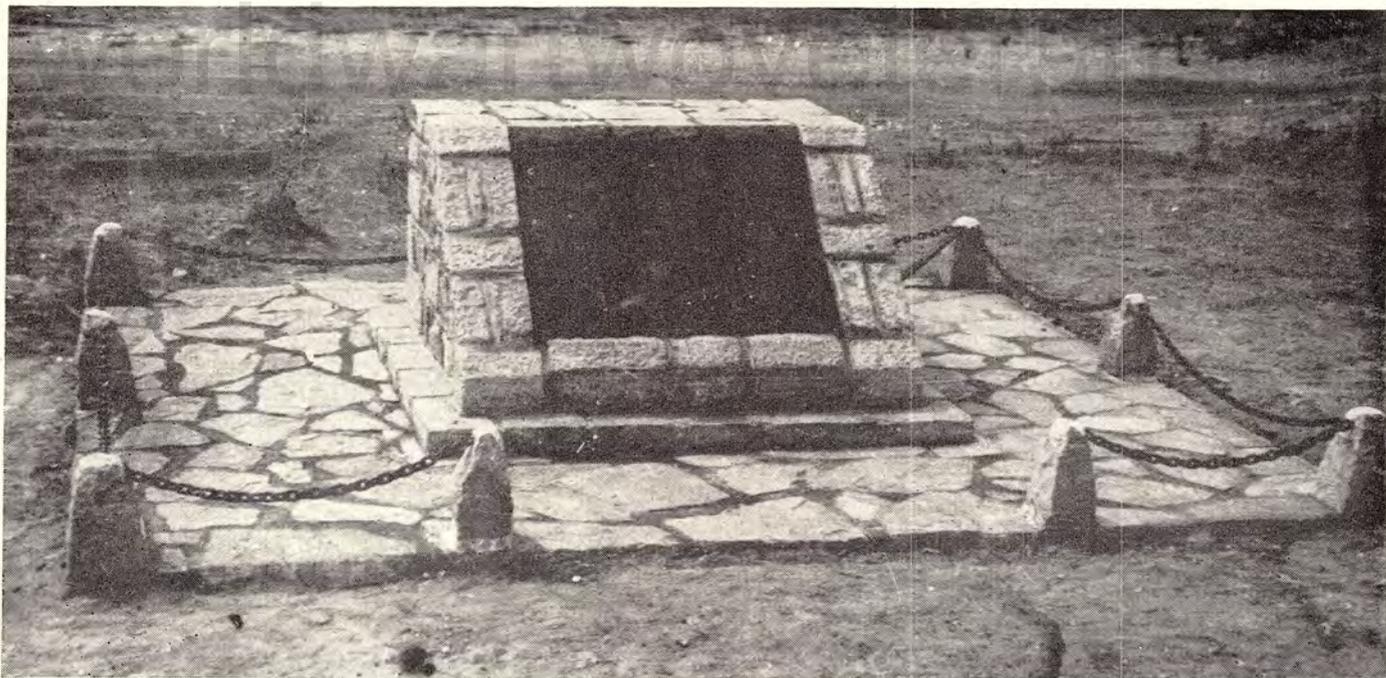


3d INFANTRY DIVISION BEACHHEAD MONUMENT AT ANZIO

Location: The site is located in the edge of a grove of trees on the Anzio-Nettuno-Littoria paved highway adjacent to the site of the old 3d Division rear CP area. The inscription, translated from the Italian, reads:

JANUARY 22, 1944

U. S. THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION MADE AN ASSAULT AMPHIBIOUS LANDING IN THIS VICINITY, ESTABLISHED A BEACHHEAD WHICH WAS MAINTAINED FOR FOUR MONTHS AT GREAT SACRIFICE OF HUMAN LIFE, AND WITH INDOMITABLE COURAGE. IN A VALIANT AND SANGUINARY ATTACK, THE DIVISION LED AN OFFENSIVE THAT DESTROYED THE STRONG GERMAN DEFENSES AND CULMINATED IN THE LIBERATION OF ROME.

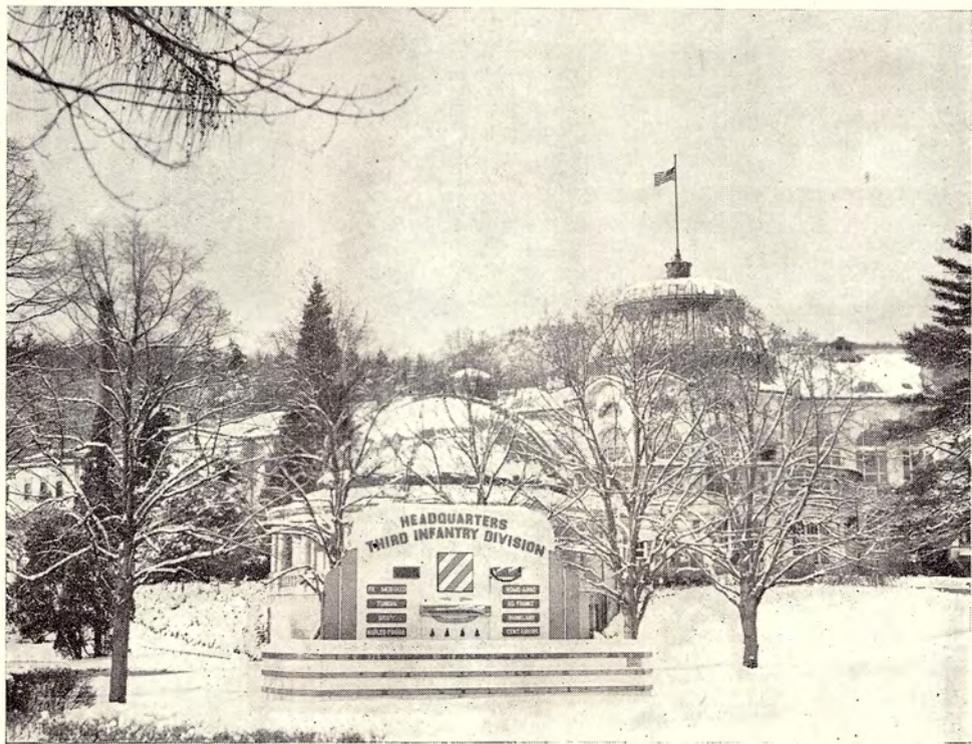


3d INFANTRY DIVISION BEACHHEAD MONUMENT AT ST. TROPEZ-LA CROIX

Location: On Highway No. 559, at an intersection of three roads five kilometers southeast of the town of La Croix and about three hundred yards from the La Croix-Vollmer beach. The inscription, translated from the French, reads:

AUGUST 15, 1944

U. S. THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION MADE AN ASSAULT AMPHIBIOUS LANDING IN THIS VICINITY, ESTABLISHED A FIRM BEACHHEAD, AND TOGETHER WITH ITS ALLIES, BEGAN A RAPID ADVANCE UP THE RHÔNE VALLEY, CULMINATING IN THE LIBERATION OF PROVENCE, THE VALLEY OF THE RHÔNE, FRANCHE COMTÉ, THE VOSGES, AND ALSACE.



3d Infantry Division Headquarters at Bad Wildungen, Germany, 1945-46.

worldwar2veterans.org