



THE ENEMY SUFFERED PRODIGIOUSLY AT MONTELMAR. GERMAN DEAD LAY SMOULDERING IN THE AFTERMATH OF BATTLE

MONTELMAR

Seven days after the landings the 36th had penetrated 250 miles into France at Grenoble. Down south French forces broke into the two great ports of Marseilles and Toulon, forcing German Field Marshal Johannes Von Blaskowitz to try to extract his Nineteenth Army or suffer being hemmed in by the swiftly-enveloping Seventh Army to the north. The Field Marshal chose the Rhone Valley as a direct route back to Germany. At this time, August 21, with Division elements scattered over four widely

separated sectors, namely: Grenoble, at Gap and Guillestre, at Digne, and still in the Beachhead, the Commanding General of the VI Corps, Maj. Gen. Lucian Truscott, ordered the 36th to block the German retreat up the Rhone Valley and at the same time to block any German reinforcements which might come from the north.

From the hills lining the Rhone Valley north of Montelimar, reconnaissance units of the Butler Task Force watched enemy traffic stream up the main



TWISTED STEEL SKELETONS OF ENEMY TRANSPORT AT MONTELMAR LAY LIKE CAREFULLY-CONSTRUCTED ROAD BLOCKS.

valley road, and blocked enemy armor trying to get there through Puy-St. Martin. Battle was joined on August 23 as a battalion of the 141st Infantry, advancing on Montelimar from the north, was stopped one kilometer short of the town, small-scale counter-attacks developing along its flank. By midnight enemy infiltration threatened its supply lines and the battalion was forced to withdraw.

With increasing fury, as more and more troops were penned in a smaller and smaller area, the Nineteenth Army dashed itself against the thin, tenuous 36th Division line, the only bar across its escape route to the north. Enemy activity was reported around the entire perimeter of the Division sector.

In the early phase both sides alternately sparred for the showdown. More Division troops hastily arrived on the scene and were disposed along a broad

front to hem in and cut off the German lifeline. The 142nd rushed over from Gap and Guillemestre to defensive positions near Nyons. The 143rd hurried down from Grenoble. It was the 24th before the entire Division was in the area.

At first the Germans held the initiative because the 36th, having to cover not less than 25 miles of front, was not concentrated. The enemy's impending power-blow from the south could take any one of several directions. With a bold oblique thrust to the east, the Germans might have disrupted the whole VI corps operations, severing the only artery up from the beaches.

General Dahlquist elected to defend along the little Rubion streambed (in front of a vital supply road) on a flat bowl-shaped plain backed up by a wall of hills. Division artillery went into the hills,



GERMAN VEHICLES WERE SMASHED BY OUR ARTILLERY AND AIR CORPS. THE DIVISION HELD HILLS IN BACKGROUND.

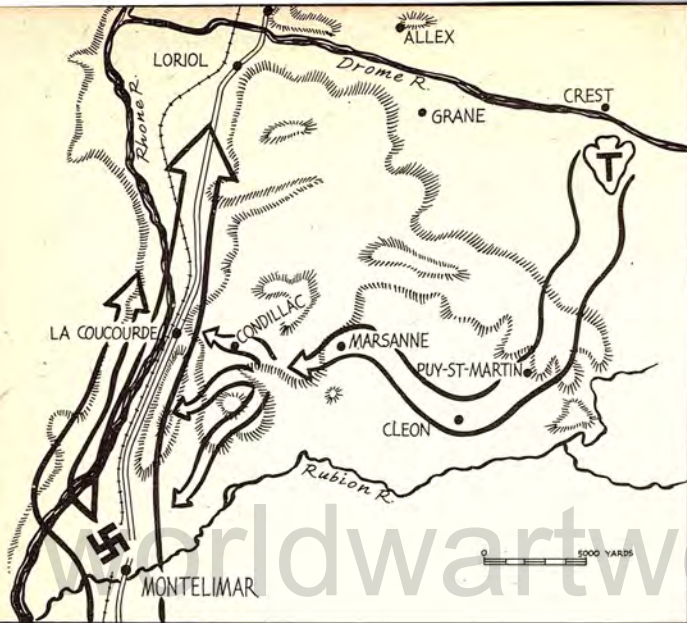
from there began to fire missions in a great arc south, west and north. At the Rhone side of the line Division troops were committed to putting a final seal on the main valley highway.

P-47's swooped in, pounded and destroyed all bridges across the Rhone, forcing the enemy to remain on the east bank.

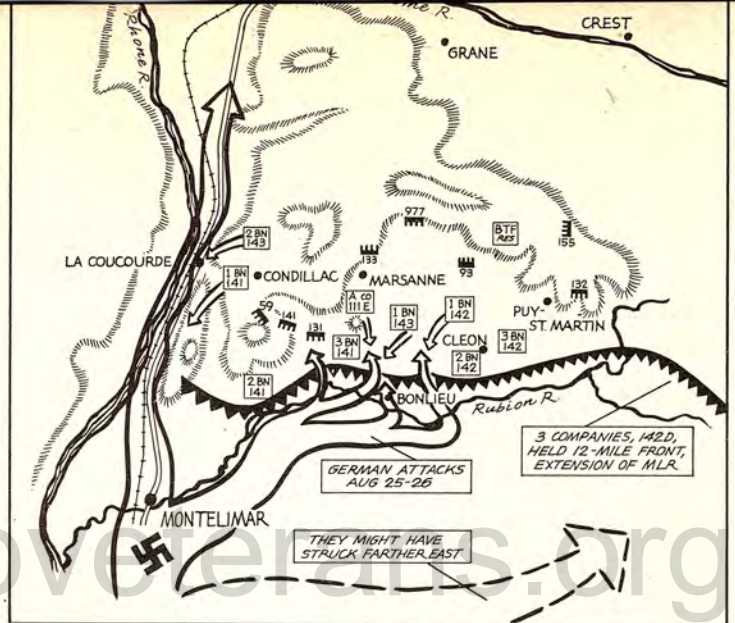
The Germans in the pocket massed about three divisions strong, determined to preserve their escape route. The crack 11th Panzer Division was one of them. On two successive days regiments of the German 198th Division bolted against the center of the Rubion line at Bonlieu and were thrown back in a fury of fighting by battalions of the 143rd and 142nd.

The 141st, in the hot corner near the Rhone, faced incessant enemy attacks striving to brush them away

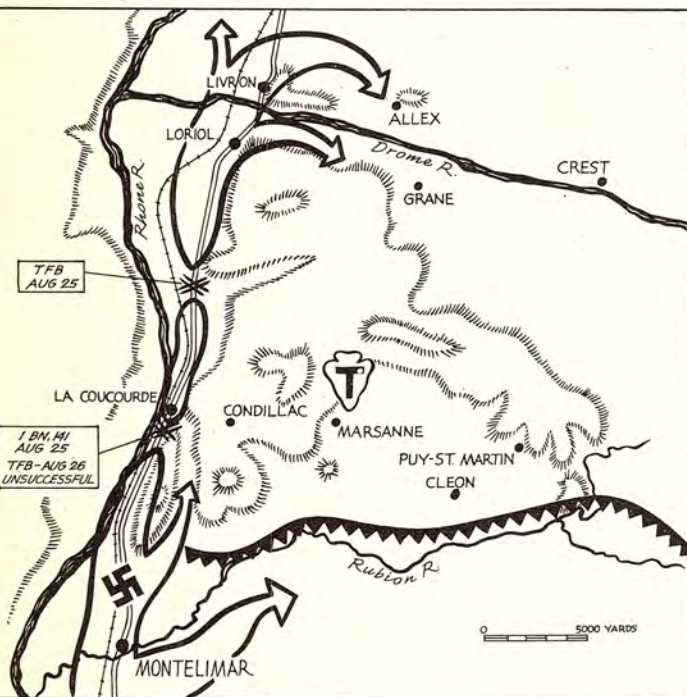
from Highway Seven. In turn, on the evening of August 25, the 141st attacked and cut the valley road at a narrow neck of the Rhone south of La Courcourde. But quickly, the enemy piled more and more power onto the block, forcefully smashing it soon after midnight. The Germans lost heavily in men and equipment, but reopened one narrow floodgate. Our artillery then partially dammed the gate with the wreckage of fleeing vehicles, but still the Germans plunged on. A second roadblock to the north, thrown up by the Recon troop near Allex, was forced at daybreak by overwhelming German power. Now, though the 36th had almost surrounded the Nineteenth Army, the Germans were on three sides of the Division. Artillerymen turned their guns 180 degrees to pummel German armor threatening Grane and Crest on the north.



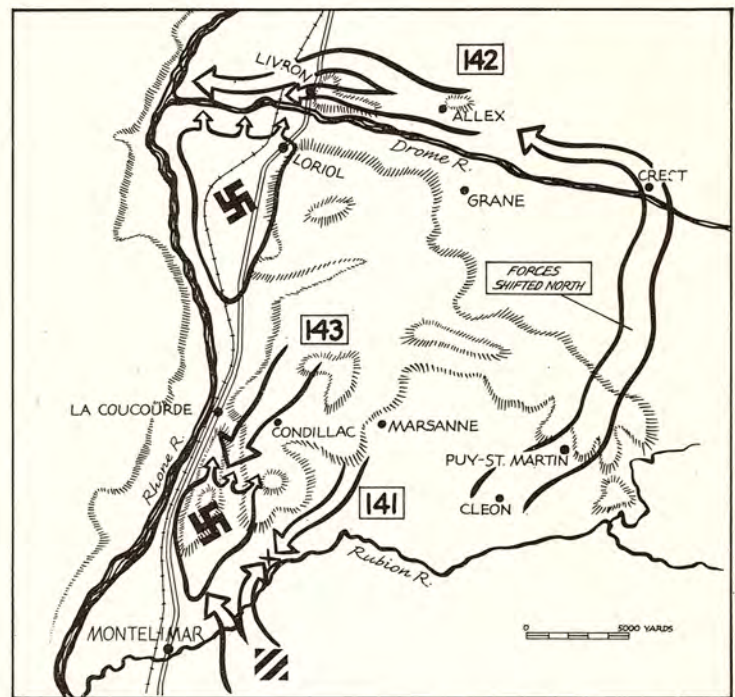
1. THE BATTLE IS JOINED. Elements of the 141st arrive to join Butler Task Force and attempt to enter Montelimar. German traffic pours up both sides of the Rhone valley.



2. GERMAN ATTACKS against the Division main line, established along the Rubion creekbed, were driven off. Eight battalions of artillery raked enemy forces streaming up Rhone valley.



3. HIGHWAY 7 was cut temporarily but our blocks were smashed by sheer weight of enemy attacks. Germans threatened encirclement by driving for Allex and Grane.



4. IN LAST PHASE of Montelimar battle thousands of the fleeing remnant were pocketed at La Coucourde and Livron. The 3rd Division, pushing up from the south, joined with the 141st.

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Heavy fighting raged until the 30th. Further efforts to seize La Coucourde and to recapture and block Route Seven were not completely successful though much damage was inflicted on the enemy. The 3rd Battalion, 143rd, held the vital Magranon Ridge near La Coucourde, overlooking Route Seven, during three days of critical fighting. Cut off and isolated into small groups at one time, the battalion fought on to decisively defeat the German forces. This action won it the Presidential Citation.

Toward the end Division forces were shifted northward to strike again along the Drome River Valley.

On the 29th the 143rd shattered German forces around Loriol, counting over one thousand prisoners in the final mop-up. The 142nd seized Livron on the 29th but straggling groups of Germans resisted strongly through the next day. Then 3rd Division elements, pressing the Germans up from the south, contacted the 141st on the 29th near Clary.

AN ALLIED VICTORY

It was the artillery at Montelimar that counted most and swayed the tide of battle. During the eight days Division field artillery battalions—131st,



THE 2nd BATTALION, 143rd, REVERSED ITS FIELD AND SWUNG TOWARD THE RHONE VALLEY NEAR PUY ST. MARTIN.

132nd, 133rd, 155th—fired well over 37,000 rounds at the confined, retreating army. Supporting fires from attached battalions—141st, 977th, 93rd Armored—brought the total number of rounds expended to considerably more than 75,000. The German losses were prodigious. Key terrain held by the infantry allowed gun positions to be disposed in such a manner that the route of German withdrawal along the Rhone was under fire for sixteen miles. Long convoys were destroyed, and the entire zone was literally covered with a mass of burned vehicles, trains, equipment, dead men and dead animals. Hostile attacks, initiated simultaneously from three directions, were hammered and repulsed by the same paralyzing barrages. Physical road blocks of exploding ammunition trucks and flaming transport occurred so often that long lines of German vehicles were forced to stop, enabling the artillery and air corps to inflict great damage upon them.

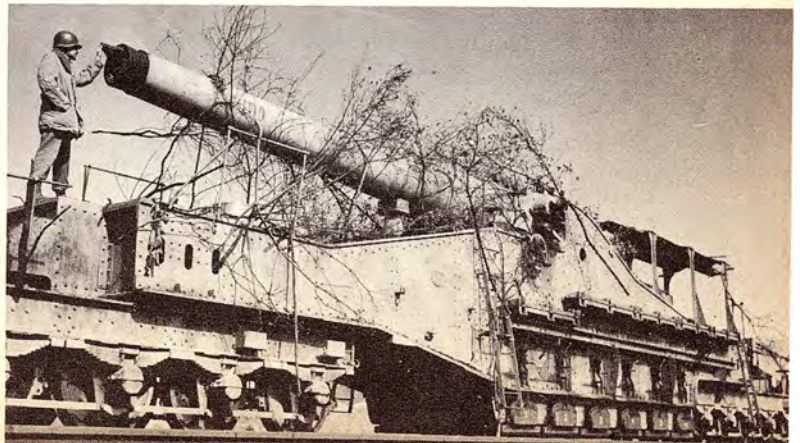
THE BITTER END

There were 11,000 enemy casualties. He lost 2,100 vehicles. 1500 horses perished and the artillery pieces of two divisions were destroyed. The Germans lost six 380 mm. railroad guns—the potent, long-range harassing guns. Yet, with such terrible destruction the enemy fought well. Even on the last day of battle, when the initiative had passed conclusively into the hands of the 36th, and the 3rd Division had linked up with it, Col. Paul Adams, commanding the 143rd, reported to headquarters, "I'm expecting a fight." At six o'clock in the morning, the last German counterattack had formed in the vicinity of La Coucourde, but in an hour the drive had been repulsed and the attackers destroyed or captured.

At Montelimar the German Nineteenth Army was virtually destroyed. As a result the enemy was unable to draw a defensive line until our forces had crossed the Moselle River.



PASSING SEGMENTS of a knocked-out enemy convoy, Division aid men bring back a German who has been wounded. Below: **ONE SCHNEIDER AND CO.** railway gun, 1918 vintage, reached the end of the line in La Courcourde.





THE BATTERED HORSE-DRAWN ARTILLERY OF TWO GERMAN DIVISIONS CLUTTERED BOTH SIDES OF HIGHWAY SEVEN.

'DROME BOWL BATTLE ENDS IN TIE' writes Zeke Cook in NEWSWEEK

ROUT IN THE SOUTH

(Newsweek reported) "The Germans wrote off Southern France as a total loss last week. The badly mauled Nazis fled from the territory from the Lyon region to the Atlantic, including the port of Bordeaux. The mass exodus came after Field Marshal Johannes Blaskowitz's Nineteenth Army had disintegrated under the blows of Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch's Seventh Army of Americans and French.

The main body of the Nazis retreated up the narrow Rhone Valley, where they were made the target for one of the most intensive air attacks ever directed against ground troops. Smashed vehicles, dead horses and Nazi casualties clustered thickly by the sides of the roads. But repeated American efforts to trap the fleeing Germans did not wholly succeed. A substantial portion of five retreating divisions broke out of the trap and pushed up the valley."

DROME BOWL GAME

(Zeke Cook gave this account of the battle): "The heaviest fighting of the South France campaign has been in what I call the Drome Bowl. This area is bounded on the north by the Drome River, west by the Rhone River, south by Montelimar and east by a series of hills stretching north from Marsanne. Route Seven, the main road north, bottlenecks just north of Montelimar where high ground forces it to the river, goes through the valley floor from La Coucourde to Loriol, then bottlenecks again at the Drome because Allied air forces knocked out the bridges. This 10-mile stretch is the field for the

Drome Bowl battle. This week I prowled the field after the contest was over. To my belief, the final score was no more than a tie.

In the kick-off play, an infantry company had failed to establish a roadblock despite a quantity of artillery support. From an artillery observation post on a high hill overlooking La Coucourde I watched a second attempt.

The press party, shepherded by Capt. Joseph Dine, Worcester, Massachusetts, trekked to the top of the hill through waist-high scrub oaks. We crawled over the lip on our bellies, first concealing anything which might glint in the sunlight.

The grandstand seat we reached was a high nose of ground from which a company had been driven the day before. Below, the gently sloping valley was checkerboarded with neat French farm fields. To the right, where the highway disappeared into the mists toward Valence, one bridge still stood.

At H minus 10, the artillery opened up with a terrific barrage. In the eerie silence which followed, there was a brief moment of still life in the valley. Then a carefully spaced convoy, including a dozen vans marked with the Red Cross, suddenly streamed northward.

Watching, we waited for the sound of small-arms fire which would indicate that the infantry was moving down to make the roadblock. It never came. Crawling back to the command post, we learned that the GI's had occupied the road without a fight. But later that night they were assaulted by German tanks and infantry coming up from the south and the block was broken again.



DIVISION AMBULANCE PASSES ANOTHER PORTION OF GERMAN WRECKAGE. ENEMY RAN 16-MILE GAUNTLET OF FIRE.



CMH FOR LT. STEPHEN R. GREGG

Stephen R. Gregg, Bayonne, N. J., ... 143rd L. Co. warrior-buddy of "Commando" Kelly, was awarded the CMH for outstanding bravery at Montelimar. Firing a machine-gun from his hip in defiance of a large body of Germans, Gregg acted as sole interference for a medic who evacuated seven wounded men to safety. At the point of being captured, the technical sergeant, later battle-commissioned, grabbed an enemy machine pistol and escaped to a position from which he managed to either kill, wound or capture every member of the German crew. On the following day, single-handedly charging the Germans with a hand grenade, he drove them out of a mortar position which they had seized in his absence.

143rd INFANTRYMEN BROUGHT IN THIS WOMAN WHO HAD BEEN FIGHTING WITH THE GERMANS IN BATTLE FOR LORIOL.



LYONS LIBERATED



The period of swift-striking, highly-motorized warfare was not yet at an end. After the Montelimar grip had been loosened, the 36th streaked northward 80 miles in three days toward Lyons, largest silk-manufacturing center in the world and the second city of industrial importance in France. Reconnaissance elements led the regiments to the east of the city, instructions limiting entrance only to liaison parties contacting the Maqui within.

On September 2 the 142nd and 143rd closed in on Lyons proper. During the afternoon, Gen. Dahlquist ordered a patrol to scout the town. The patrol reported that the Maqui had cleared the Germans from the areas before the bridge sites of the Rhone river, running through the heart of the city. How many spans remained intact could not be determined at first, but our troops, later sent in to secure the sites, discovered that the enemy had blown every bridge across the Rhone within Lyons.

36th DIVISION MEN, PARTISANS, AND ARMED CIVILIANS FIRE BACK AT GERMAN SNIPERS ACROSS THE RHONE RIVER.



As the Division established roadblocks east and north-east of Lyons, bridge reconnaissance parties from the 111th Engineer Battalion made their way into the city after being delayed by one skirmish. A heated clash was in progress on the west side of the Rhone between the Maqui and the Milice, Vichy police despised by the French Patriots. One whole section of the city, the industrial area, was their battleground.

But on the near side of the river our patrols were greeted by thronging groups of civilians who came out to applaud their liberation. The elderly shook hands and threw flowers; the young sought autographs and climbed aboard jeeps and trucks. That evening Gen. Gahlquist placed a guard of honor at the disposal of the mayor at the town hall.

Initially, it appeared as though Lyons might have to undergo a lengthy siege, but on September 3 it became apparent that the Germans were withdrawing. In several of the factories fires still raged; in some districts the Milice continued to resist extermination. The Maqui were left to the mop-up mission while the 36th moved out, making a 30-mile detour eastward to cross the Rhone and catch the enemy before he reached his prepared defenses.



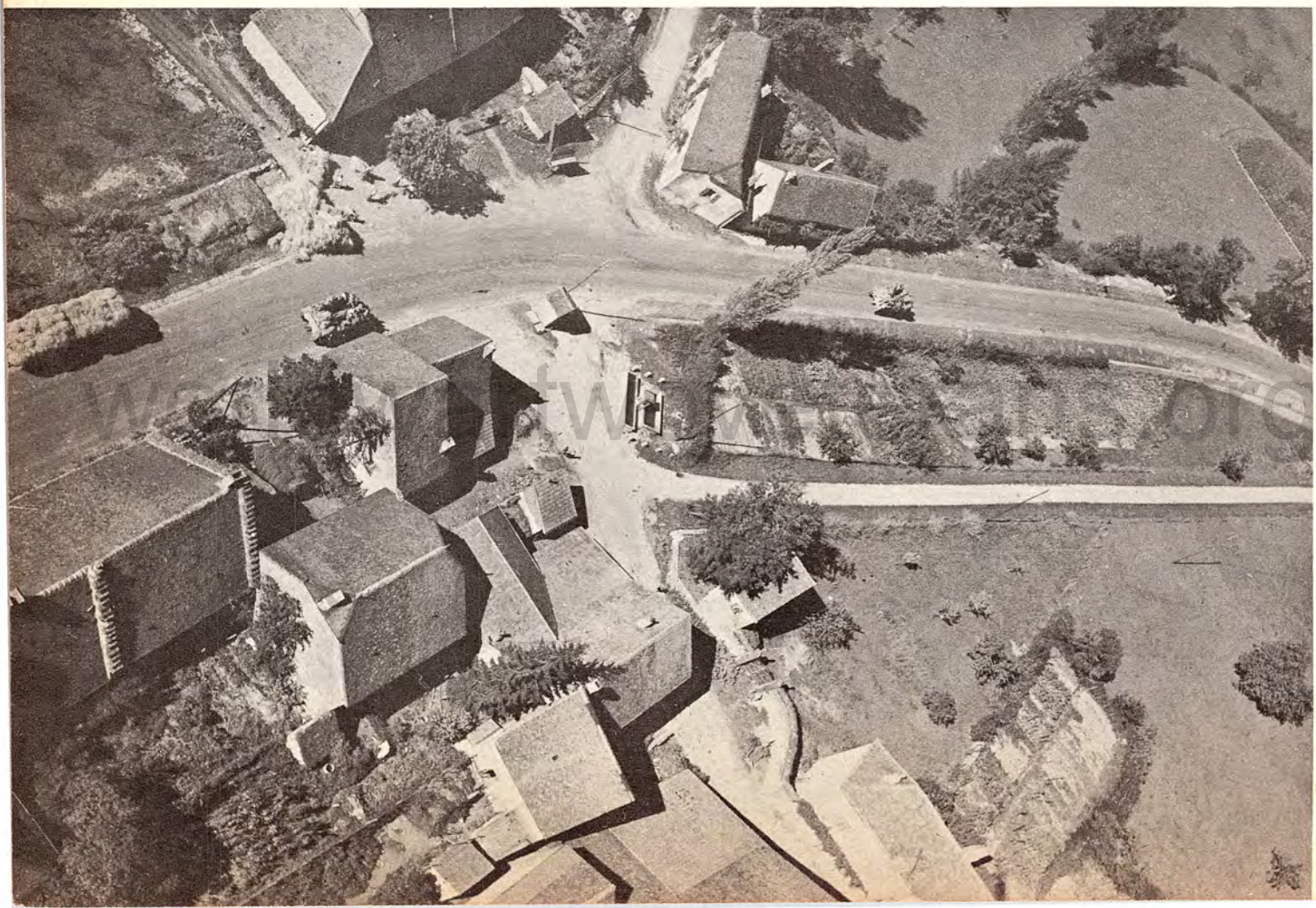
THE FRENCH WOMEN MADE AMERICAN FLAGS.

A MEMBER OF HATED VICHY MILICE, WHO BATTLED WITH THE FFI AND THE AMERICANS, IS CAPTURED AND LED AWAY.





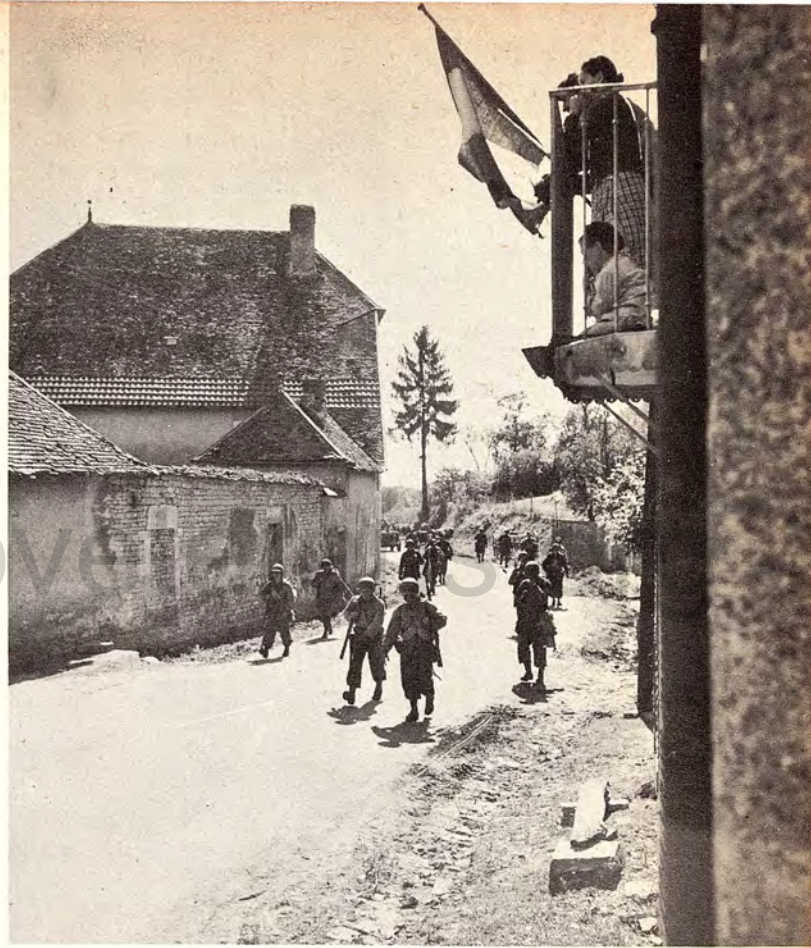
STILL CHASING A RETREATING ENEMY, long columns continued to press toward the north, passing through the tranquil dairying villages above Lyons. Grimy-faced GI's brought their jeeps to a halt to partake of the rich cheeses, creams, butter and eggs offered by thankful French people along the way.



40 MILES A DAY

The Wehrmacht hurried to get back into Germany through the Belfort Gap. To keep the pace our motorized advances netted 25 to 40 miles each day. Convoys, sometimes 13 miles long, raced along often a whole day without making contact. Leading columns lanced out deep to the front, using back-roads and trails off the main highways to avoid enemy blocking devices and mines. Spearheads moved boldly, yet with a certain caution, knowing that hostile forces might be waiting at any turn, or stalking in ambush. As each mile was gained, it added further burden upon supply, still being serviced hundreds of miles from the beaches by day-and-night shuttle transport.

Our snaking columns lined up: reconnaissance elements probing ahead; infantry riding tanks and tank destroyers, alert to deploy at the sign of trouble; more infantry riding 2½-ton trucks; artillery trucks and weapons following, overloaded with infantry again. The Division had only 60 per cent of its organic vehicles; with all vehicles present an Infantry Division has an insufficient number to carry all of its men. But by overloading every vehicle the Division motorized itself. Thus an entire combat team moved quickly, yet was organized and able to meet any serious opposition.



IN BOURG. ABOVE LYONS. IT WAS THE SAME STORY—A WILDLY ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD GREETING THEIR LIBERATORS.





AT VESOUL THE GERMANS TRIED HARD TO MAKE A STAND; THERE WAS BITTER HOUSE-TO-HOUSE FIGHTING.

DOUBS RIVER AND VESOUL

Our advance continued past Louhans; past Arbois, where Louis Pasteur experimented; past Avenne, and swept to the Doubs River near Besancon. The 36th Reconnaissance Troop, feeling out the river bank found all bridges blown, but located one only half destroyed. Doughts were sent over to secure the far side, while 111th Engineers immediately went to work. In 22 hours, engineers fashioned a 120-foot span to the other bank as steady autumn rains began to fall. Troops and armor moved across the completed bridge, forging onto the natural retreat route of the Germans heading from southwestern France to Belfort Gap. Nearly a thousand prisoners were taken in the first day's action. In the Besancon area, the 143rd RCT captured a fuel dump containing 700,000 litres of 80-90 octane gasoline and 4,000 gallons of alcohol.

Pressing north to Vesoul, an enemy force of some strength was met first at Oiselay-et-Grachaux by the 143rd and then just beyond Fretigney on September 10. Fighting advance guard actions, by daylight of September 11 the 143rd had reached its objective, the high ground overlooking Vesoul. The 141st on the right launched a frontal assault at daybreak of September 12. The 143rd moved around its left flank, sending strong blocking parties toward Port-sur-Saone while one battalion seized the dominating heights overlooking Vesoul from its northern edge.

With the 1st and 3rd Battalions abreast, the 141st attacked the town in conjunction with 3rd Division elements on its right. The 1st Battalion on the left was hit by heavy artillery concentrations as it jumped off and the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. William A. Bird, was wounded. Reorganization delayed its advance. The 3rd Battalion on the right pressed over a canal and into Vesoul to engage the enemy in house-to-house fighting. After nine hours of stubborn battling, resistance was overcome and the 141st moved into the town.



THE 111th ENGINEER BATTALION worked day and night to complete this timber trestle bridge across the Doubs in 22 hours. Then tanks and infantry poured across to continue the chase (below).





A FLOUR MANUFACTURER AND 11-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER GAVE A BOTTLE OF WINE TO T/SGT. JOE TREDENICK OF 141st.

LUXEUIL

As the 143rd and 142nd Infantries advanced on the approaches of Luxeuil, the Germans put forth increasing resistance. In the sector outlining the town's airport, our troops ran into a flock of German flak wagons. Flanking well to the east, the attack progressed throughout the night of September 15, until the exits from the city on the east were severed. In the morning at 1000 hours the 143rd

broke into the town and found that the enemy had pulled out. Intense fighting continued with the 142nd in the forests east and north of the city. Luxeuil, with its hot sulphur spas, dating back to Julius Caesar, was a fine spot for the Division to pause momentarily while tired troops alternated in taking breaks and hot showers. Reconnaissance units kept tabs on the fleeing Germans.

IN WORLD WAR I an heroic group of American volunteer pilots, "L'Escadrille La Fayette," was based in Luxeuil. A plaque commemorating the volunteers, and another in honor of the World War II liberation, have been mounted on the wall of the town hall.

ON ARMISTICE DAY, November 11, 1944, the citizens of Luxeuil honored divisions of the Seventh Army instrumental in driving out the Boche. At right the Mayor is flanked by Generals Dahlquist and Patch.





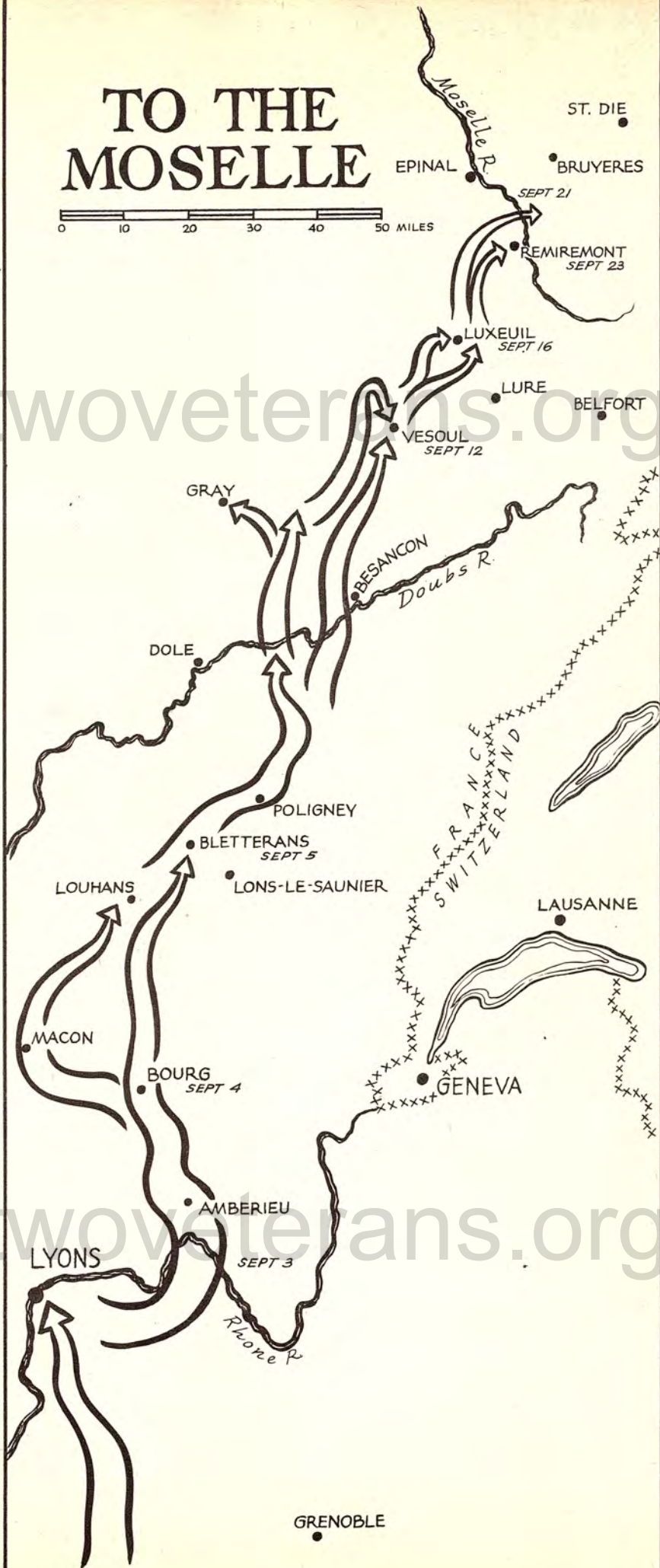
HITLER HANGS AS GI'S TAKE A BATH

After the Germans had gone, the people of Luxeuil swarmed out into the streets and down to the city hall. The FFI quickly rounded up resident collaborationists and shaved their heads to the delight of an unrepentant mob. Giving vent to long-repressed hatred, they suspended an effigy of Adolph Hitler from a telephone pole (above). Several hundred American doughboys joined with the natives in their celebration, but most of them preferred to loll in Luxeuil's warm baths.



TO THE MOSELLE

0 10 20 30 40 50 MILES





AT THE SINGLE CROSSING SITE MEN PRESSED OVER THE MOSELLE RIVER TO CARVE OUT THE INITIAL BRIDGEHEAD.

MOSELLE BRIDGEHEAD

The capture of Luxeuil-les-Bains marked the end of the pursuit of the Nineteenth German Army. Up until this time the VI Corps, with the 36th Division on the left, the 3rd Division in the center and the 45th on the right, had been driving for the Belfort Gap. The First French Army, which had captured Toulon and Marseilles and then moved up the west bank of the Rhone Valley, was given the mission of forcing the Belfort Gap. The VI Corps was ordered to change the direction of its attack and drive straight across the Vosges between the Belfort Gap and the Saverne pass. To accomplish this it became necessary for the First French Army to move across the

rear of the VI Corps, relieve the 45th Division and the right of the 3rd Division. The 45th Division was then to move to the left of the 36th and the 3rd was to come up abreast of it on the right. As this regrouping of forces would require some time, it appeared that the 36th might get a few days of badly needed rest.

Such was not to be, however. Because of the VI Corps' new direction of attack, the 36th found itself well in front of the remainder of the corps and only one day's motor march from the Moselle River. It was evident that the Germans planned to defend this considerable obstacle as far north as possible. Few

usable crossings existed and defensive works on the east bank had been prepared. The autumnal rains had begun and, momentarily, floods which would make any crossing exceedingly difficult were to be expected. Motorized reconnaissance by the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and the Reconnaissance Company of the 636th Tank Destroyer Battalion indicated that Remiremont was held in force and that the Luxeuil-les-Bains-Remiremont road was heavily defended. To the north, however, the road from Luxeuil to Plombieres was open. If the German plan to defend the Moselle was to be circumvented it was imperative to move at once to seize a bridgehead over the river. The 36th, because of its location, was the logical choice to do the job. The period of rest would have to wait.

Therefore, during the afternoon of September 19, General Truscott ordered the 36th to move without delay up to the Moselle in preparation for a crossing. The 3rd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, commanded by Major Everett S. Simpson, and Lt. Col. John N. Green's 132nd Field Artillery Battalion were ordered to move out at once via Plombieres to seize the heights overlooking Remiremont and to prepare to attack the city the next day.

At daylight next morning the Division planned to move out in two columns, capture Remiremont and seize the west bank of the Moselle as far as Eloyes in preparation for a crossing. The 142nd RCT (less the 3rd Battalion and its artillery) on the right was to take the road from Luxeuil through le Val-d'Ajol to Remiremont. The 141st RCT on the left was to take the road through Plombieres to the heights north of Remiremont. The 143rd RCT was to follow the 141st as Division reserve.

The 142nd encountered bitter fighting soon after it left Luxeuil. The 3rd Battalion and its artillery, which had succeeded in making a surprise move the night before almost to the outskirts of Remiremont, was heavily engaged in attacking the heights just northwest of the city. The 1st Battalion, under Major James L. Minor, made contact on secondary roads east of le Val-d'Ajol and was forced to fight two days and nights to overcome the resistance there. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, under Lt. Col. Sam-

uel S. Graham, by-passed the resistance holding up the 1st Battalion and, marching by trails and secondary roads, moved to join the 3rd Battalion. Several miles from the city, however, it, too, encountered strong road blocks, the reduction of which was slow and difficult because of the rugged, heavily-wooded terrain.

The 141st moved without incident and at 0900 had reached the wooded hills between Remiremont and Eloyes. Reconnaissance of the river in its sector was immediately started. When Col. Clyde Steel, the Regimental Commander, told the Division Commander at noon that he thought a crossing that night was feasible, the order to cross was given and this information sent to the Corps Commander who approved.

To attempt to cross without more preparation was risky, as the Germans were still in force on our side of the river and might attack the flank of any crossing operation. It was apparent that the 142nd was not going to be able to capture Remiremont and drive the Germans out for at least two days. Boats for the crossing were not available and would not be until late the next day. Only one practicable crossing site existed, an old ford without adequate approach roads. Detailed reconnaissance by lower echelons would be impossible and supporting fires would have to be extemporized. However, it would also be risky to wait. The speed of our advance from Luxeuil had surprised the German defender. In another day he would be able to move in heavy forces to cover the river at the proposed crossing site.

No roads led from the assembly areas to the river, only small trails. The terrain was extremely rugged and heavily wooded. Guides had to be found. The 70-year-old Mayor of the little village of Raon-aux-Bois, a retired French Naval Officer, extended his services. Starting at midnight he led the regimental column straight across the hills through the forests to a place on the flats opposite a bend in the river where the ford was supposed to be. Veterans who remembered the bloody attempts to cross the Rapido noted the similarity between the deadly S-bend in the Italian river and the curving of the Moselle.

The leading battalion, the 2nd of the 141st, under Lt. Col. James Critchfield, moved downstream on the near side of the river to a point opposite the town of Eloyes which it was to attack as a feint. The next battalion in column, the 1st, under Lt. Col. Victor E. Sinclair, deployed and moved toward the wooded banks of the river where it was to cross. The last battalion, the 3rd, under Major Kermit Hansen, got separated from the others and reached the river about a mile and a half upstream from the ford. With movement through the rough terrain in pitch-black darkness extremely slow and daylight about to break, Major Hansen decided that he would have to cross where he was. He led a platoon of I Company, commanded by Captain Roy F. Sentilies, across the river by fording. As they reached the

**HEAVY RAINS KEPT ENGINEERS BUSY ON THE
BRIDGE APPROACHES.**



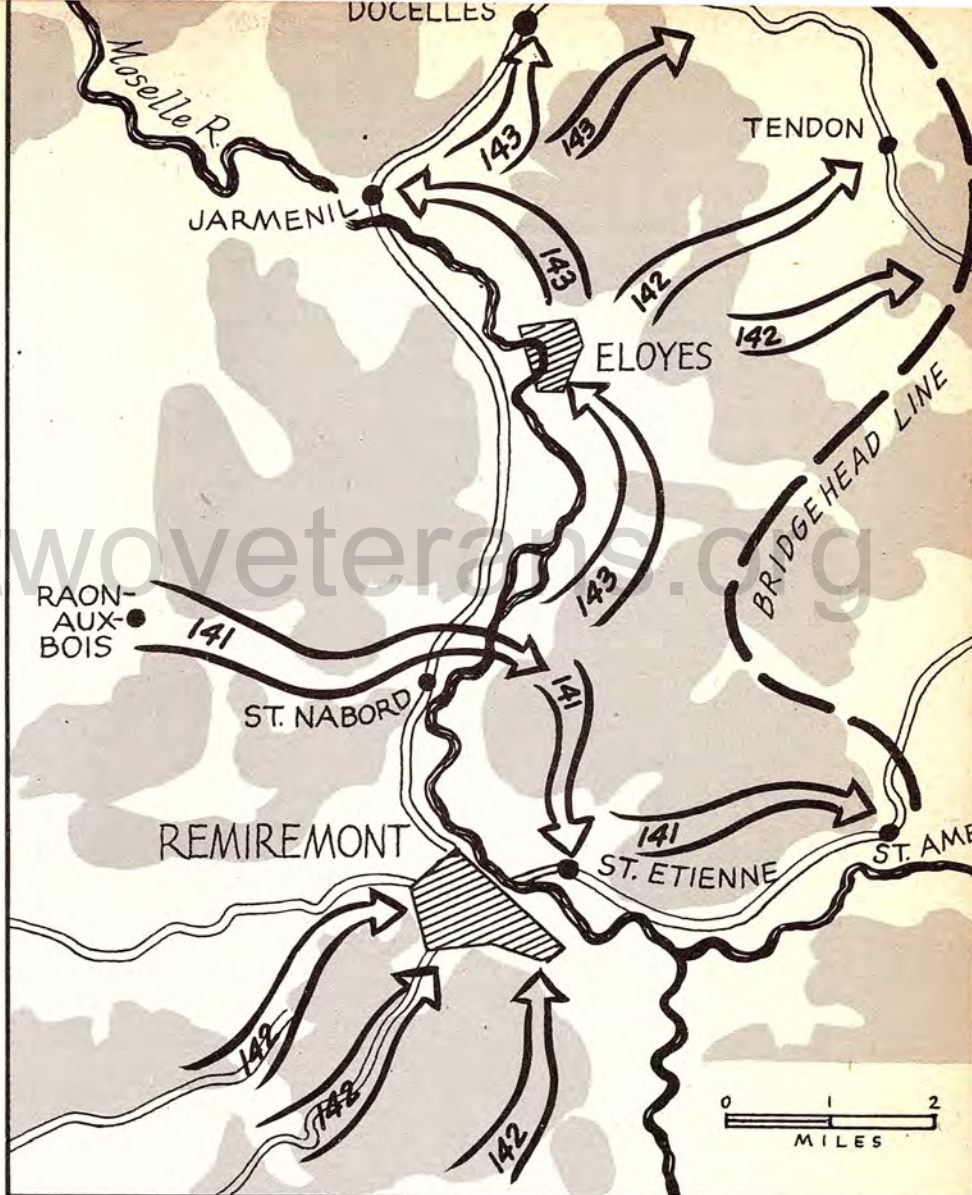
other side and started to fan out they were hit by the fire of eight heavy machine guns centered on the shallows where the crossing had been made. Captain Sentiles and several others were killed, the remainder of the platoon were wounded and only four survived. Before he was taken, Major Hansen managed to send word by radio to move the remainder of the battalion downstream to follow the 1st Battalion.

The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, had reached the chosen ford. It was a ford but it was shoulder deep. An engineer, Cpl. Walter Lindsay, swam the icy river with a rope tied to his belt and fastened the rope to a tree. Using this as a guide, the battalion started across. Their bandoliers lashed on packs and rifles held high, they clung to the guide rope and battled the stiff current to the other side. Ammunition bearers, loaded and soaking wet, made their way across, slipped and fell, but kept on going. This was far different from the usual river crossing where assault wave follows assault wave on a broad front in boats. Here the crossing had to be made in single file.

Soon the alerted enemy opposite this crossing, fortunately not very numerous, turned their mortars on the ford. When snipers from the hills and flanks spattered the water with their shots and almost severed the life-line, another was slung across in a more sheltered spot. The first men over moved out in a semi-circle, gaining the steep bank and a few hundred yards of exposed flank. Slowly the bridgehead expanded, but movement across the river was difficult. It was afternoon before the First Battalion was over. Then came the reorganized 3rd Battalion.

Meanwhile, downstream a couple of miles, the 2nd Battalion, in a splendid coordinated attack, had captured that part of Eloyes on the west bank or near side of the river, and threatened to cross in that sector. The enemy reacted violently and kept the bulk of his forces in that area because it was the logical place for a crossing.

It was apparent early in the morning that the 141st did not have sufficient strength to seize and hold an area large enough to permit a bridge to be built. The 143rd was therefore moved up and ordered to cross immediately behind the 141st and, once over, to strike downstream to capture Eloyes and the hills surrounding it. The 141st (less the 2nd Battalion) was ordered to move upstream and capture St. Etienne, the town opposite Remiremont, to prevent escape of the Germans from Remiremont.



The fight for Remiremont was going slowly. The Germans were desperate in their efforts to hold it. However, the 142nd was not to be denied. The 3rd Battalion seized the ancient stone fort on the high hill just out of town and then started forcing its way into the suburbs, house by house. The 1st Battalion finally crushed the last resistance out of le Girmont-Val d'Ajol and hiked over the hills to the heights southwest of town while the 2nd Battalion inched forward against road block after road block. On the morning of the 23rd the final mop-up within Remiremont cleared the town. Earlier, fleeing German elements had crossed the river and blown the road-bridge.

By this time at the original crossing site near St. Nabord the engineers had installed a pontoon bridge, and light vehicles and weapons were pouring across to the bridgehead. A heavy steady rain seriously affected the muddy, rutted approaches that had had to be routed over soft fields to the river. Engineers worked round-the-clock with shovels, with guide-markers, pulling jeeps out of holes, directing and shouting, urging the traffic across. Near-by artillery howitzers, emplaced along the main road and rail-

road, kept up a clatter to screen advancing troops on the far side.

A rugged, hilly, heavily-wooded obstacle confronted the Division east of the Moselle. After Eloyes, the 143rd moved north to seize Jarmenil while the 141st struck south and east to take St. Ame, widening the salient to ten miles. But in the center only little trails penetrated over the hills on the axis of advance. Here the 143rd, turning northwest from Jarmenil followed the good road to Docelles, beat off a counterattack south of the town and experienced heavy enemy artillery fire before winning it on September 26th.

Increased enemy pressure began to show itself on the Division right flank. The 142nd's advance on Tendon which had cut the lateral Docelles-Le Tholy road, had to be called back temporarily when enemy infiltrations and fresh German strength seriously threatened the security of the bridgehead. On top of this, rain lasting for several days combined with the autumn cold to impose a bitter hardship on the attacking infantry. As it had been in Italy, there were few places of shelter in these scrubby highlands. Extreme fatigue caused more casualties than battle and reduced fighting strengths to a nub.

Moving forward again, Tendon was gained by the 2nd Battalion, 142nd, on September 27th. The fighting moved to the hill mass east of Tendon and to a lengthy road block on the main Le Tholy road. For three long days and nights all three battalions were involved in an exhausting battle about Hill 827, until it was finally secured. The road block resisted repeated efforts to take it until the morning of October 1st. Afterward the Germans poured such heavy artillery upon it that two tank dozers were lost as they tried to clear it.

The 1st Battalion, 141st, captured a German battle group in taking St. Ame on the extreme right of the bridgehead. Elements of the 3rd Infantry Division were crossed into the bridgehead and began relief of the 141st units at St. Ame on September 26. On the 28th the 141st motorcd by way of Eloyes and Docelles to an assembly area between the 143rd and 142nd near Xamontarupt. Bruyeres now became the Division objective with the 141st attacking on the right of the 143rd. At the jump-off up the valley toward St. Jean and Houx, German artillery countered heavily to throw back the first attack. But slowly the 141st ground out gains until an objective line at Herpelmont was reached.

The Moselle Bridgehead, now more than 25 square miles, stood firm. Bridges were well established. Other units, the 3rd and 45th Divisions, were moving across into it and VI Corps operations reached out from it. But it became clear that German resistance had toughened and that a continuous, slow-moving front had been formed.



MINED AND BOOBY-TRAPPED ENEMY ROADBLOCKS IN DENSE

CLEARING THE

Although the Moselle had been crossed and a solid bridgehead established, there was to be no rest for the 36th Division. For seven long weeks it struggled through the tedious, tiresome task of clearing German resistance out of the Vosges foothills between the Valogne and Meurthe Rivers to secure a line of departure for an attack over the Vosges passes. Tough terrain and cold weather collaborated with the Germans who fought bitterly to retain their hold on the hills. The "Forgotten Front" of Italy found a counterpart in the struggle for the Vosges approaches.

No glamor or excitement eased the pain of the doughboy in this period. No single great battle acclaimed in the newspapers was fought. Because of the exposed position of the ever broadening bulge created by the Division, it

ENGINEER HOOKS CHAIN AND CABLE AROUND TREE TO BE PULLED FROM ROADBLOCK.





FORESTS OF THE VOSGES HAD TO BE FLANKED BY INFANTRY THROUGH ENEMY BRUSH BEFORE ENGINEERS COULD REMOVE THEM.

VOSGES HILLS

was a period of battalion and regimental operations, but all battalions were involved and none received more rest than enough to get a bath about once in two weeks.

German resistance at Le Tholy prevented the units on the right, initially the 3rd Infantry Division and later the 3rd Algerian Division of the First French Army, from coming up abreast. On the left there was a wide open flank covered only by patrols between the 45th and 36th Divisions. Thus the Division position stuck like a dagger into the German lines.

While on the left Division units kept pushing forward to close the gap with the 45th, on the right a fifteen-kilometer stabilized flank had to be vigilantly maintained to beat off German attacks and probings. There were no reserves. Battalions which had "rested" in foxholes under the strain of unceasing patrol actions on the front between Herpeltmont and the hills east of Tendon were used to relieve the battalions reduced by offensive actions on the left. These in turn were "rested" by taking up the vigil in the foxholes.

Progress was painstakingly slow, often measured in yards. The fighting was not along roads and in towns. It took place on rugged, heavily forested ridges, in flooded fields, and in mud. By October 12 the area east and south of the curve of the Valogne River between Herpeltmont, Laval and Docelles had been cleared by the 141st and 143rd Regiments. On the north side of the river the Germans had been pushed out of Le Roulier, Deycimont, Le Pangas and Fays. On that day welcome reinforcements began arriving. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team (Nisei, Americans of Japanese descent) was attached to the Division. During their single month's stay they distinguished themselves in the capture of Bruyeres and of Biffontaine and in their gallant fight to relieve the 141st's "Lost Battalion."



CANT HOOKS are used to roll logs off to the side of the road. (Below) 111th ENGINEERS clear remaining brush.





POINTING UPWARD

"A very present help in time of trouble"—such was the duty of the Chaplain ministering directly to the men on the battlefield. Here a Sunday service is conducted beside a 4.2 mortar position in a Vosges clearing.



REHAUPAL OUTPOST KEEPS A CLOSE WATCH ON GERMAN-HELD HOUSES

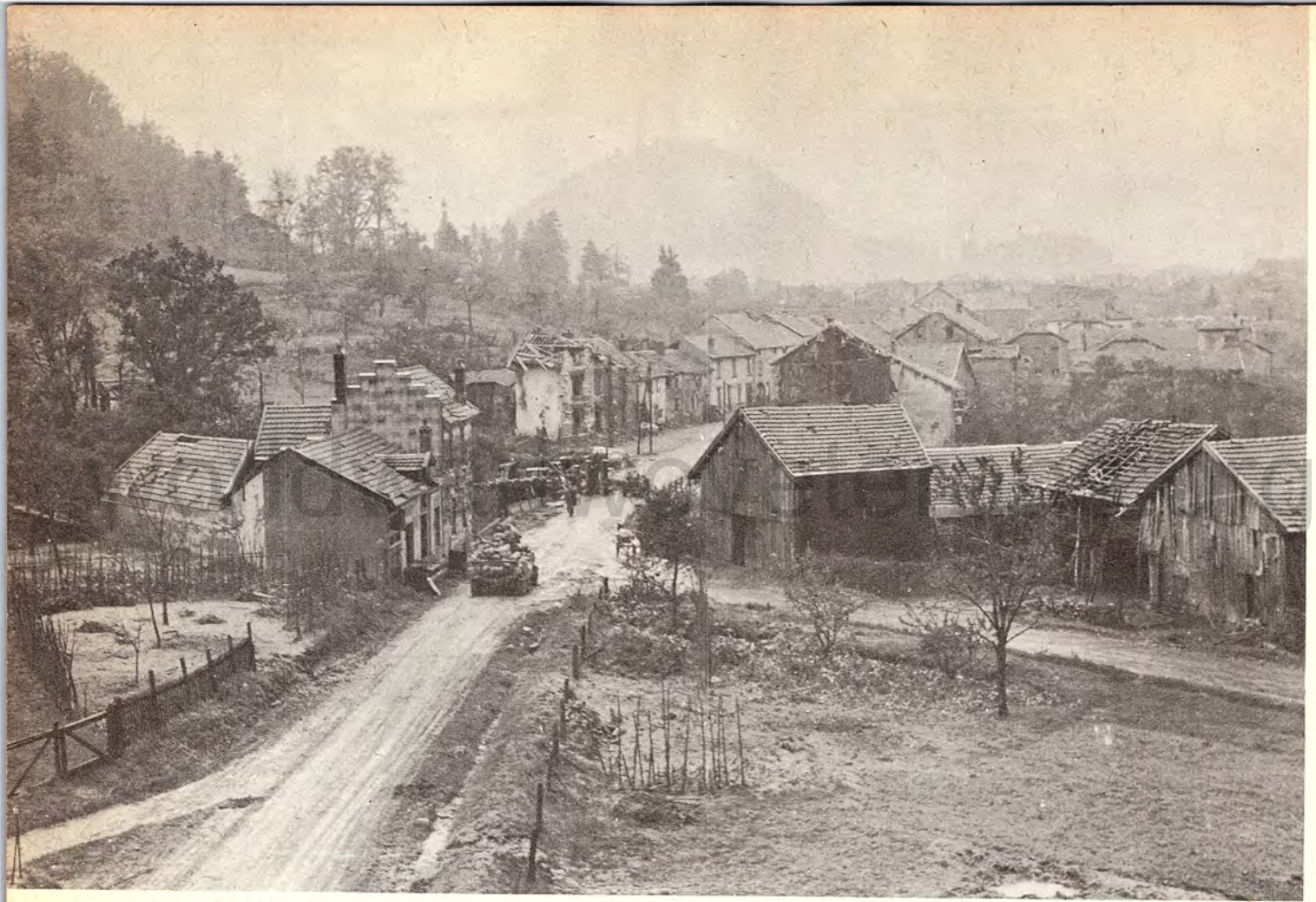
An outpost of the 142nd near Rehaupal watched for 18 days through an open barn window and the door slightly ajar while Germans held the houses across the way, as seen in the pictures. German who approached the small barn one night was shot dead just outside the door. Party could not go out except after dark.



POWDER DRY

Two soldiers from Battery C, 131st Field Artillery, prepare to fire a mission near Tendon. Meanwhile members of the 443rd Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (below) search the skies for German planes seeking to knock out the Moselle River bridges.





IT TOOK THREE WEEKS TO PUSH THE SEVEN-AND-ONE-HALF MILES OF SHELL-RAKED ROAD FROM DOCELLES TO BRUYERES.

BRUYERES, BIFFONTAINE

The additional strength of a fourth regiment (the 442nd) made possible the launching of an attack to seize Bruyeres, important road center and key to the heights overlooking the Meurthe River. The 442nd assembled in the woods northwest of Fays and was given the mission of attacking down a heavily wooded high ridge to capture the north edge

of Bruyeres on the heights north of the city. The 143rd, which had been pulled out of the line on the 13th, was assembled in the vicinity of Fays and given the mission of capturing Laval, Champ de Luc and the southern half of Bruyeres. The 442nd filled the gap between the 36th and the 45th. This was the first time since the August 15 landing that solid con-

ANTI-TANKMEN of the 142nd pause to warm their C-rations before hauling ammunition.

ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF George C. Marshall and French friends at the 36th CP in Docelles. General Marshall had visited the 36th in Italy, too.



tact was established with friendly troops on both flanks of the Division.

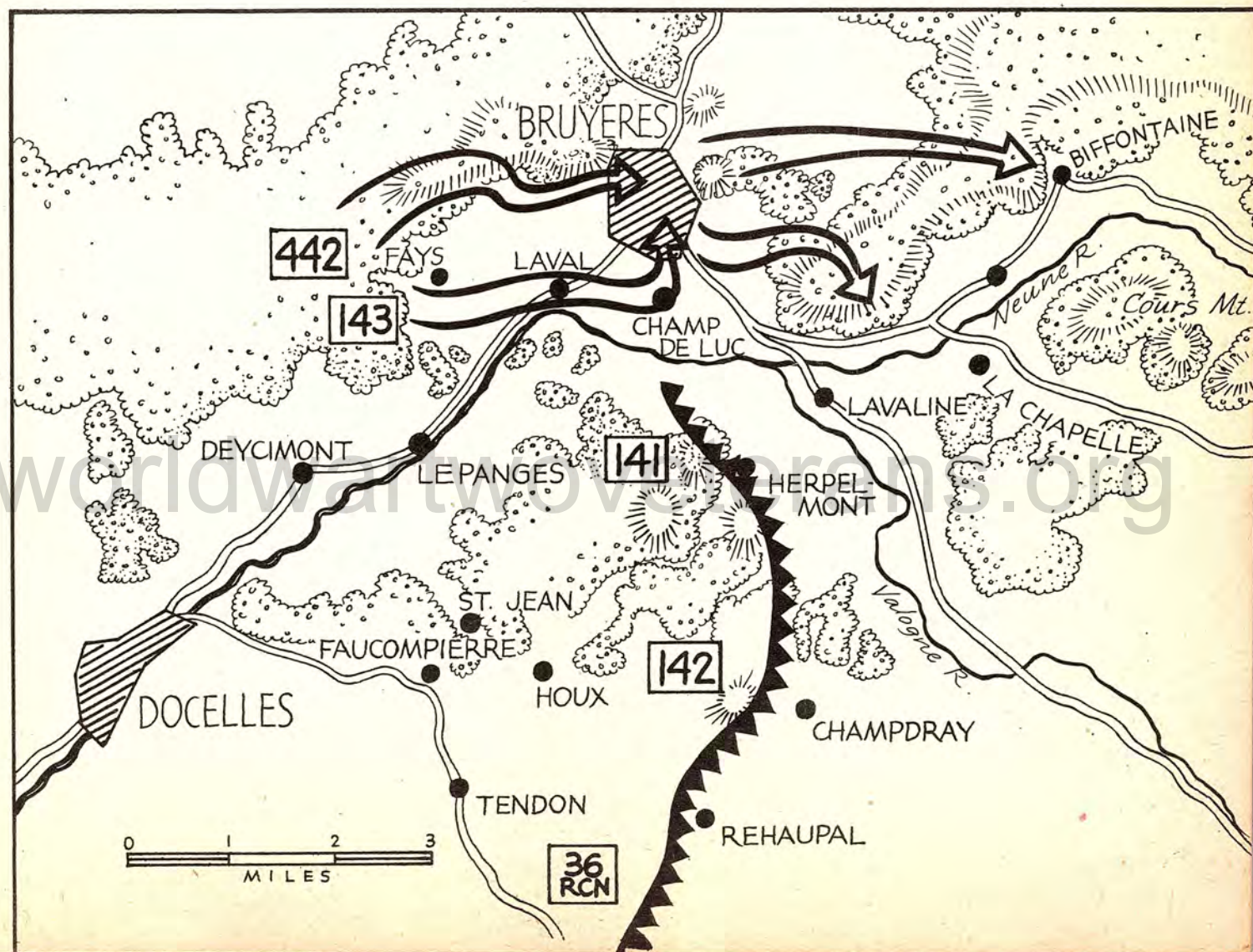
The attack began October 15. On the right, attacking across open ground with splendid artillery support, the 143rd captured Laval on the 15th and Champ de Luc on the 16th. The 442nd, in thick woods, had slower going. For three days it struggled forward against violent opposition. By nightfall of the 17th, however, it was on the heights west of Bruyeres. The next morning a coordinated attack launched by the two regiments swept through Bruyeres, by then a town of battered roofs and debris-strewn streets. The Germans held onto the encircling hills to the east and shelled the town and its approaches in bitter protest over their loss. But the Nisei, not to be stopped, clambered up the almost perpendicular slopes of Mt. Avison, 1800 feet high, northwest of the city and drove through to the railroad east of the height.

THE CAPTURE OF BIFFONTAINE

Although Bruyeres was captured, it was of little value until the enemy could be driven from the heights from which he kept shelling the city. A small task force of the 36th Reconnaissance Troop and a company of tanks from the 753rd Tank Battalion under Lt. Col. Felber was therefore sent to capture

Belmont and protect the left flank while the 442nd was directed to drive across Boremont Ridge and capture Biffontaine. The Germans tried desperately to hold along the railroad track and lower slopes but the 442nd, held up for a day, sent a flanking force around the German left and by the 20th had advanced over the ridge, towering over 1800 feet high, seized Biffontaine, and made Bruyeres secure.

A stinging defeat had been administered to the Germans. In a week's fighting 645 had been captured and at least an equivalent number killed and wounded. The Corps commander decided that German strength west of the Meurthe River had been so badly shattered by the 36th Division attack, that now was the time to make an all out push to reach the Meurthe River from St. Die to the north. The 3rd Division, which had been withdrawn from the line ten days previously, was committed to attack down the Les Rouges Eaux valley toward St. Die. The 36th, holding an ever increasing front from Le Tholy to Belmont, was given the mission of seizing the long spur running in a southeasterly direction east of Biffontaine and north of the Neune River, to protect the right flank of the corps effort. Execution of this mission resulted in one of the most dramatic episodes of the war—the "Lost Battalion" of the 141st Infantry.



JAPANESE-AMERICANS

"Patrols from 442nd here. We love them." That single, terse radio message conveyed all the happiness, all the gratitude 211 survivors of the "Lost Battalion" perceived when a band of squat warriors, Oriental-eyed and diminutive of foot, broke through to rip apart the German wall that had confined them for several days.

Though the message was of a more impulsive nature, it was at the same time indicative of the high regard in

LOVING TRIBUTE OF 141st MEN WENT TO THE NISEI.



which the fighting ability of the Japanese American was held by infantrymen of the 36th Division.

"We men who came off that hill know that the Nisei aren't just as good as the average soldier—they're better," was how one of the 141st lieutenants put it.

In an unprecedented gesture of appreciation several months later the "Lost Battalion" survivors presented their rescuers with a silver plaque. The trophy was received by Col. C. W. Pence, commanding officer of the 442nd, on the Nisei regiment's second anniversary of organization.

The 442nd was attached to the Division prior to the Bruyeres engagement, and played a major role in the capture of that town. The 1st Battalion of the 442nd, designated the 100th Battalion, was first tested in combat shortly after Salerno with the 34th Division. Later it was incorporated into a regiment with two other Japanese American battalions. Their slogan—"Go For Broke," or its equivalent, "Shoot the Works."

JAPANESE-AMERICANS OF THE 442nd INFANTRY PASS THROUGH THE MAIN THOROUGHFARE OF NEWLY-WON BRUYERES.



"LOST BATTALION"

On October 20 the 142nd Infantry, by extending its already widely dispersed battalions, began relieving the 141st from the sector south of Herpeltmont. After only sufficient time for badly needed showers, the Alamo regiment, moving by night, was assembled near Belmont by the 23rd and started reconnaissance for the attack. Except for terrain the task did not appear to be too difficult. The ridge over which the attack was to go was some seven kilometers long but only about two-and-one-half wide. More than a thousand feet above the valley floor, its steep sides were cut by numerous deep gullies. The entire ridge was heavily wooded and badly overgrown. No roads of any kind existed, only one trail. Movement then would have to be in a column of files. The ridge pointed directly into the German position. When it had been taken the 36th would surround on three sides the German Corps mountain position east of the Valogne River.

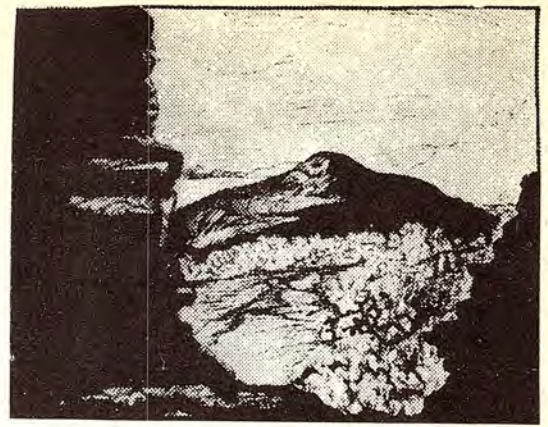
The order to launch the attack came late on October 23. Early next morning the 1st Battalion, 141st, started its trek up the mountain. The 3rd Battalion moved on another trail to the north to protect the left flank. The attack went well, German opposition was quickly overcome and by late afternoon the head of the column had gone seven kilometers and reached its objective.

Then came the counterattack. Striking from both sides the Germans succeeded in severing the thin column. Companies A and B, a part of Company C and a platoon of Company D were cut off from the Battalion Commander and the remainder of the battalion. The only communication existing between the forward part of the battalion and Regiment was through the radio of 1st Lieutenant Erwin Blonder, Forward Observer of the 131st Field Artillery, with Company A.

The 2nd Battalion was brought up that night and launched against the hostile positions on the left of the trail but found itself blocked by superior forces east of Biffontaine. For two days and nights the regiment fought desperately to push its way through, but the enemy, aided by the rough terrain, held the men off. The defense had every advantage: German artillery pounded the ridge unceasingly with devastating effect on the attackers. In covered foxholes themselves, the enemy suffered little from our artillery, the delivery of which was exceedingly difficult because of the denseness of the forest. On October 25 the 2nd Battalion of the 442nd, which had come out of the line only the day before, was committed to protect the left flank and to permit the 3rd Battalion, 141st, to move over toward the "lost" battalion. On October 26 the remainder of the Nisei regiment was committed to force a passage down the main trail while the 2nd Battalion, 141st, kept pushing to the right.

Meanwhile the beleaguered force held on. It was completely surrounded and heavily bombarded by the enemy artillery. Of a combat patrol of forty men sent out to get through to our line, only five returned. Lt. Blonder, to conserve his radio batteries, communicated with Regiment only twice a day. For three more long days, the 100th and 3rd Battalions, 442nd, struggled along the trail. The Germans had to be dug out by bayonet.

The crisis came late on the 29th when a furious counter-attack was beaten off by the 3rd Battalion, 442nd. Early next day the Nisei broke through. The 211 surviving brave men, who had withstood a seven-day siege without food or water and with little ammunition, had been rescued by their courageous comrades of the 442nd, whose companies in many cases had shrunk to 40 or 50 men. No greater example of fortitude and courage was shown in this war.



1—The battalion took its objective and moved past the elbow of the hill.

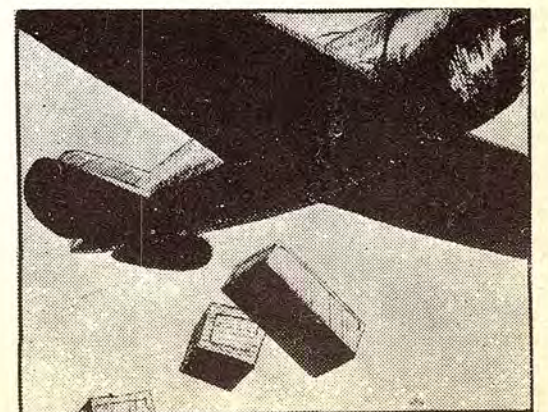


2—Discovering that they were cut off, three officers conferred.



3—Knives were used to fell trees because axes brought German bullets.

4—P-47's dive-bombed the battalion with food, water and medicine.



"LOST BATTALION" STORY

By PFC. JOHN ARTHUR HYMAN

The coded message that came into regimental headquarters that night said simply: "No rations, no water, no communications with headquarters . . . four litter cases."

Not too many miles away, on the bald top of a thickly-wooded hill, a battalion of 275 soldiers were spread out in an area 300 by 350 yards, digging their foxholes deep, using knives to whittle down trees to use as cover, folding blankets around the trees so that they would not make much noise when they came down.

They were quiet because surrounding them on all sides, somewhere among the closely-grouped tall pines were approximately 700 Germans. They were quiet because they knew they were a lost battalion and they didn't want the Germans to know it.

They had already had their first taste of the hell to come. Not only was their CP overrun, but the Nazis had thrown two full companies at them, coming from different directions, followed by an immediate buildup. That, plus heavy shelling, intense small arms fire and concentrated counterattacks they had somehow managed to beat off.

Now they were digging in, tending the wounded, sending radio messages. One of those wounded was the communications sergeant who had composed the first message. Artillery observer Lt. Erwin Blonder, Cleveland, Ohio, took over, hugged the only 300 radio, slept with it, prayed over it, from then on.

From then on . . .

"Do you know what I kept thinking?" said Pvt. William Murphy. "I kept thinking how wonderful it would be to be back on my old job as street car conductor in Chicago. And I kept thinking that now I finally had something to tell my three kids when they grew up. Y'see, I've never been in combat before. I'm a replacement. This was my first time. But I'll tell you something funny . . . honest to God, I wasn't scared . . . I really wasn't."

But a lot of guys were scared. The oldtimers knew what the score was. There's not much you can do when you're cut off like that, with only so much ammunition, with no water, no food, no nothing.

Still, there were simple, essential things to do. The four lieutenants on the hill formed an advisory council with Company A's Lt. Martin Higgins having the final say. A little guy from Jersey City, a 28-year-old cavalry officer who had come to the infantry only five months before, he had a lot of decisions to make.

First came the defense problem. Quickly, the companies spread out in a complete circular defense, with light and heavy machine guns strategically distributed. There would be no surprise attack.

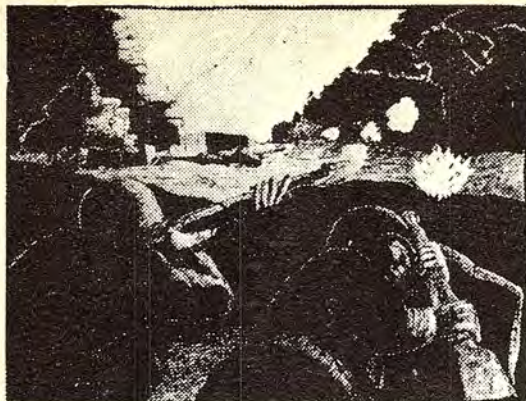
Then came the shakedown. Every soldier emptied his pack so that the battalion could pool everything. They collected everything from small stoves to gasoline and a few precious chocolate bars.

But these things didn't last long. And then, very soon, the water situation became critical, more critical than the food shortage. Finally they found a mud puddle out of their area. It was dirty-stagnant, but it was water. They could boil some of it for the medicos—not much. Even the smallest fires caused smoke, which might give away their position.

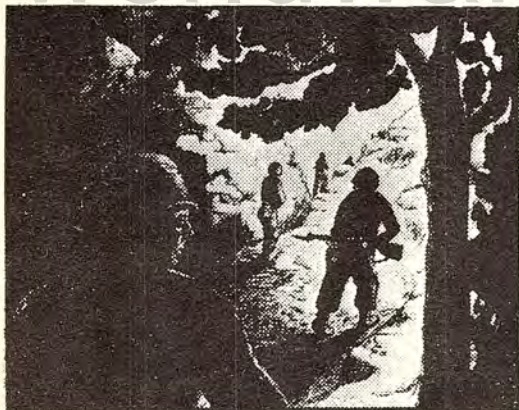
They couldn't get this water whenever they wanted it. They had to crawl quietly during the blackest part of the night, with their fingers itchy on their triggers. The Germans were using the same water hole.

Headquarters understood the full significance. Already different sets of alternate plans were being made, different battalions were pulling into line. Headquarters was figuring out just how much strength was needed to punch a hole and make the junction.

To the 275 lonely men on the hilltop they radioed: "Hold on . . . heavy force coming to relieve you."



5—The Germans watched and picked up the supplies first.



6—The 141st fought to recover the food.



7—Fifty-eight men went out on patrol to make contact; five came back.

8—On the seventh day a Japanese-American of the 442nd broke through.



To the 275 lonely men on the hilltop they radioed: "Hold on . . . heavy force coming to relieve you."

Headquarters threw in crack troops, the men of the 100th and 3rd Battalions of the 442nd Regimental Combat Teams, wiry little men who went into battle carrying twice what they would need, just in case, tough fighters who were fighting a war for a cause, adaptable, certain soldiers. With them S-Sgt. Eino Hirvi, Daisytown, Pa., had volunteered to lead his platoon of lighter tanks, carrying rations and medical supplies. Tank had never fought in such terrain before. Along their flank drove the 2nd Battalion of the 141st.

But the Germans had a heavy force, too. They had self-propelled guns parked all over the hillside, the whole area planted with every kind of mine, they had thick concentrations of mortars and machine guns and supporting artillery and tanks and fortified road blocks.

The first attempted breakthrough was thrown back.

On the hill the men tightened their belts, crowded together to keep warm, to talk.

Behind the lines, every night, trucks loaded with field stoves and rations moved up the broad zig-zag engineer road and waited, just in case.

CHOCOLATE CAKES, FLAPJACKS

"We used to talk about food, mostly," said 1st Sgt. William Bandorick, Scranton, Pa., smacking his lips unconsciously. "We talked about chocolate cakes and bacon and eggs and everything that our mothers and wives used to make for us back home. I remember once we spent a whole afternoon just talking about flapjacks . . . golden brown, with butter."

They starved for five full days. Some of the men grubbed for mushrooms, trapped birds. They had very little luck. There was absolutely no food at all. The shelling got heavier. On the third day up there, they buried three more dead. It was a simple service, just a few prayers. Somebody marked down the location for the GRO.

Nobody talked about it much, but inside themselves everybody kept wondering: How much longer . . . who next . . .

Still morale was high. There wasn't even the faintest whisper of surrender among the men. And anytime Higgins asked for a volunteer patrol, he had his pick of the whole battalion. He sent a thirty-six man patrol out on one flank. It walked straight into a trap. Five men got back to the besieged companies. One, Pvt. Horace Male, a replacement from Allentown, Pa., got through. It took him five days of wandering through German positions, of not allowing himself to relax for a moment, but staying on his feet for five foodless days of anguish. On the fifth day, a patrol found him and brought him in. No one else got out.

Blonder hoarded his radio batteries, only a few messages could be sent each day. These told the story. "Send us medical supplies, rations, water, blood plasma, cigarettes . . . send us radio batteries."

Back at headquarters they tried to use the big guns to shoot shells loaded with D-rations and aid packets. The first attempt didn't do well. The precious packets buried too deep in the ground or the shells burst in the tree tops, scattering the supplies.

PLANES DROP SUPPLIES

Then they tried to use P-47 fighter-bombers of the XII TAC to drop supplies from the air.

THE 1st BATTALION, 141st, after attacking east from Belmont over a thickly forested ridge line, was cut off by German attacks on its flank and rear.

To signal the planes, the doughboys chipped in underwear and the white linings of parkas and maps, all of which were stretched out in a long white strip. As a double-check, they tied smoke grenades to saplings, so adjusted that when the planes came over the doughfeet could release the bent saplings and pull the grenade pins, so that the smoke could explode just as it topped the tall trees.

The first try missed, by one hundred yards.

"We were just praying, that's all," said S-Sgt. Howard Jessup, Anderson, Ind. "We just sat in our foxholes, listening hard, not saying a word . . . and we just prayed."

On the afternoon of the fifth day the food-loaded shells and the belly tanks of medical supplies and rations and batteries began hitting the target at the same time.

They could loosen their belts, but they couldn't relax. They were still completely cut off; they were still the lost battalion.

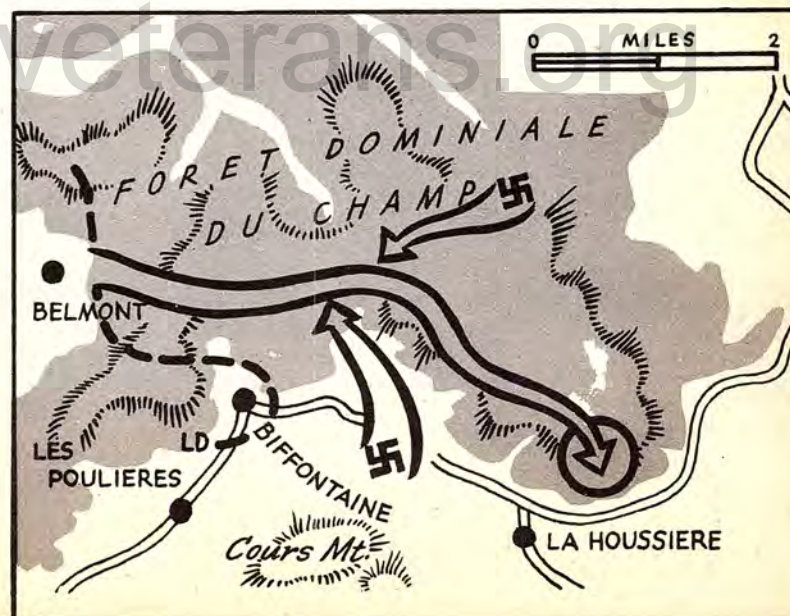
On the morning of the sixth day, Lt. Higgins was writing a letter to his wife when he suddenly signed off. "Time out for a while, Marge, I've got work to do."

LAST BIG ATTACK

It was more than work. It was the strongest attack the Germans had made. The planes and shells had finally told them the story. They attacked, certain of easy meat. As a prelude, they dumped a terrific artillery barrage on the area. Then they rushed one sector of the defensive circuit. Fortunately, the Germans picked the one spot where the battalion had concentrated most of its heavy machine guns. The guns were shooting single fire until the Germans came along close. Then they cut loose with everything. The gunners had been told not to fire until they were sure they had a good target in their sights.

"We weren't firepowering, we were collecting," said Lt. Higgins. The collection was phenomenal. The Germans took an awful beating. In the fringes of the small brush, just where the forest ended, there were dozens and dozens of dead Germans. The artillery made a fine collection, too. Spraying the whole wooded area with tree burst when the Germans left their covered holes, the artillery accounted for one pile which had two hundred and fifty German stiffies in it.

On the afternoon of the sixth day, Sgt. Edward Guy, New York City, was on outpost when he saw somebody. He strained his eyes looking and then he raced down the hill like crazy, yelling and laughing and grabbing the soldier and hugging. Pfc. Mutt Sakumoto just looked at him with a lump in his throat and the first thing he could think of to say was: "Do you guys need any cigarettes?"



ENGINEERS BUILD A ROAD

Success in the rescue of the "Lost Battalion" was due in large part to a military road constructed by the 111th Engineers of the 36th Division. A Presidential citation has been awarded the Engineer Battalion (and Company C, 232nd Engineers, attached) for the achievement herein described.

For nineteen days in October and November the 111th Combat Engineer Battalion with Company C, 232nd Engineers, attached, labored on the construction of a tortuous, seven-and-one-half mile mountain road under the most adverse conditions. The completion of this road, only supply route for nine battalions of infantry, three companies of tanks, one battery of anti-aircraft artillery, and a medical evacuation unit, and the maintenance of another 125 miles of rapidly deteriorating road in the sector, permitted the 36th Division to continue its painful offensive operation in the wilderness forests of the Vosges Mountains and rescue the 141st's "Lost Battalion."

Muggish October weather—rain, mist, cold—covered the front. For nearly a month, since the crossing of the Moselle, troops had slogged about on muddy trails and picked their way through the dense forest preserves of the Vosges, fighting Germans from tree to tree on the highlands off the main roads. Gains were slow and costly, enemy infiltrations on the broad front frequent. Incoming artillery fire, bursting in the tree tops and splintering every way took a heavy toll in dead and wounded and left many a veteran shaken in terror.

Still the attack moved on. It was hard on the men but pressure had to be maintained lest the enemy be given opportunity to solidly close a strong defense on the mountain barrier. In the black forests west of Bruyeres a huge salient began to take form as the 36th, reinforced by Nisei of the 442nd Infantry Regiment, pounded out slow but steady gains.

ENGINEERING PROBLEM GREAT

The engineering problem in support of the operation was immense. Heavy rain and snow waterlogged the trails. Roads had to be built from scratch. The Engineers, whose feats had included helping the 36th across the Doubs and Moselle Rivers, who had removed thousands of mines en route from the Riviera beaches, who had cleared scores of roadblocks, and who had been called upon to spell a turn with the infantry in combat at Montelimar, were again called upon to keep the Division rolling.

Orders to the 111th Engineer Battalion of October 22 stated: "First priority to construction and maintenance of roads along axis of advance of 141st Regimental Combat Team." On the following day the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, started to follow a cart track along the wooded ridge line toward its objective. One platoon of engineers accompanied the assault company clearing mines, removing trees and making hasty repairs on the road. Additional engineer reconnaissance parties searched to the flanks for a better route.

The cart track soon turned from the direction of attack,

the troops following a narrow twisting lane through the trees, barely wide enough for passage of a jeep. Another problem became evident: the soil was a moist, decaying vegetation with an unstable crust of grass and roots. Considerable work would be necessary even to maintain the road for light traffic.

Lead infantry elements ran into enemy resistance as it grew darker. The Engineers, immediately behind, began work on the road. On October 24 the 3rd Battalion, 141st, was committed. It was now apparent that extensive labor would be required to supply two battalions, for the road had started wearing down immediately after it was first used. Then, since the regimental commander wanted tanks up on the hill to blast the enemy from their positions, the Engineers worked incessantly to prepare the trail for tank use.

RESISTANCE STIFFENS

One platoon of medium tanks and a platoon of light tanks joined the 1st and 3rd Battalions high on the ridge northeast of Belmont. By this time enemy resistance had stiffened considerably and German artillery fire came crashing in on the engineers as they worked. While the road had been sufficiently sturdy to allow tanks to get up to the top of the ridge, the heavy vehicles tore out the bottom completely. The trail, already soft and watersoaked, was churned into one continuous mudhole by the tanks. Heavy rains aggravated its condition.

Additional engineers were rushed to check deterioration, cut trees, drain ruts, and remove mines. During the afternoon a furious German counterattack, directed at the supply route behind the Battalion, overran the Battalion command post and drove a wedge between the 1st and 3rd Battalions. This stroke cut off the 1st Battalion and left it isolated. The 2nd Battalion was committed as soon as possible in a counterattack to drive through to the isolated unit along with the 3rd Battalion. At this time the trail was supplying three infantry battalions and a tank company. Rations and ammunition were driven up the steep trail that rose 1,000 feet above the valley floor, and wounded and dead were evacuated from it.

One platoon of engineers, with the battalion that now became known as "the lost battalion," had fought their way back to our lines during the initial enemy assault. They had removed many mines during the advance and patched the trail with rocks and brush.

A constant stream of supplies became necessary to support the drive to the "lost battalion." The initial packing of rock and gravel that had enabled jeeps to pass, either disappeared under the heavy treads of the tanks or turned up between the ruts to damage undercarriages of small ve-



ENGINEERS CONSTRUCTED A PLANK FLOOR OVER SECTIONS OF SEVEN-AND-ONE-HALF MILE ROAD TO "LOST BATTALION."

hicles. Corduroy was placed on the worst patches. But since the surrounding woods had been heavily sown with anti-personnel mines, corduroy was expensively secured.

Timber from all the saw mills in the area was hauled to the top of the road and a plank floor laid perpendicular to the road. Trucks were diverted from the timber haul to secure gravel to cover the boards. Soon splintered under steel tank treads, two gravel pits were constructed along the side of the trail and were worked constantly. Numerous times, while short sections of road were torn up, by-passes had to be built since the tactical situation did not permit traffic to wait for repair.

On October 26 the 2nd Battalion, 442nd RCT, was committed in the attack, with the 100th and 3rd Battalions, 442nd, being committed on October 27. The 2nd Battalion, 143rd Infantry, on the right flank was also using the trail, increasing the total to six infantry battalions and one tank company. Continuous heavy traffic during the day necessitated night work whenever possible. Engineers patrolled day and night to remove trees felled across the road by enemy fire. Bulldozers were spotted at critical points to tow bogged-down vehicles. Luminous markers, made from white paint and tracing tape, marked the road for night driving.

The engineers halted in their work only long enough to eat, and slept only long enough so that they could continue to work. The Germans determined the location of the road and constantly harassed it with artillery. Ammunition, being used prodigiously, had to be moved up over the road, and casualties evacuated.

As the road grew longer, enemy snipers infiltrated behind our lines and wounded several of the engineers. Some men of the 111th engaged the Germans in a fire fight while the remainder continued the work. Extensive labor on the road could never be stopped.

On October 30 the "lost battalion" was finally contacted. At this time there were seven Battalions of Infantry, three

companies of tanks, one company of anti-aircraft artillery, and one medical evacuation unit using the road which was now four and one-half miles long. Ambulances and litter jeeps succeeded in evacuating the wounded and sick of the battalion which had been cut off for a week. Even though progress was being made by our troops, the enemy never diminished the intensity of his artillery barrages, and the engineers, working directly behind the assault companies, continued to lose men.

The 141st Infantry, its average rifle company strength now down to 83 men, was relieved by the 142nd and elements of the 442nd. Though traffic increased during the relief, and the rains and snow undermined sections of the road, it was always kept open.

Angle dozers, working closely behind the leading elements, drew artillery fire; three of these were destroyed by enemy shells, two operators were wounded and one killed.

On November 4 the road was completed and then improved and maintained until November 11 when the 142nd Infantry cleared the last Germans from La Houssiere and Cours Mountain to open the Laveline-Les Poulieries-La Houssiere road as a main supply route. Throughout the nineteen days of this action the 111th Engineers had overcome every conceivable obstacle in constructing a main route of supply for units of four infantry regiments and three companies of tanks engaged in a fierce battle. Part of the cost included 57 engineer casualties.

Said General Dahlquist: "This action by the 111th Engineer Battalion was the most outstanding feat of combat engineering I have seen since the Division came to France."

T/SGT. CHARLES COOLIDGE, 141st, Signal Mountain, Tennessee, dueled two enemy tanks with a carbine and advanced alone to blast a German attack which threatened to turn his battalion's flank. He won the CMH.



DOUGHBOYS OF THE 142nd INFANTRY TRUDGE DOWN NARROW, SNOW-COVERED LES ROUGES EAUX VALLEY. GERMAN BAZOOKA FIRE KNOCKED OUT THIS TD IN VALLEY BATTLE.

LES ROUGES EAUX VALLEY

The campaign in the Vosges was beginning to resemble the fighting in Italy. Rain gave way to snow, and returned to cast hardships on the doughboy. Men of the 142nd took up the Division's attack on November 5 as they edged their way down the Les-Rouges-Eaux Valley, sandwiched deep in the heavily wooded hills of the Forêt Dominiale Du Champ. Progress was slow at first, visibility through the mass of growth very limited. Craftily planted mines in the dense foliage made every step a cautious one. Bitterly it rained again and again during the operation, and at the last a heavy wet snow whitened the battle-scene. Tired T-Patchers, without shelter, rain-soaked and cold, fought on for days without a let-up. The enemy was forced to fall back continually until all of the large forest that had enclosed the "Lost Battalion" was cleared. La Housiere and Vienville, towns at the edge of the Corcieux plain, were captured on November 11.





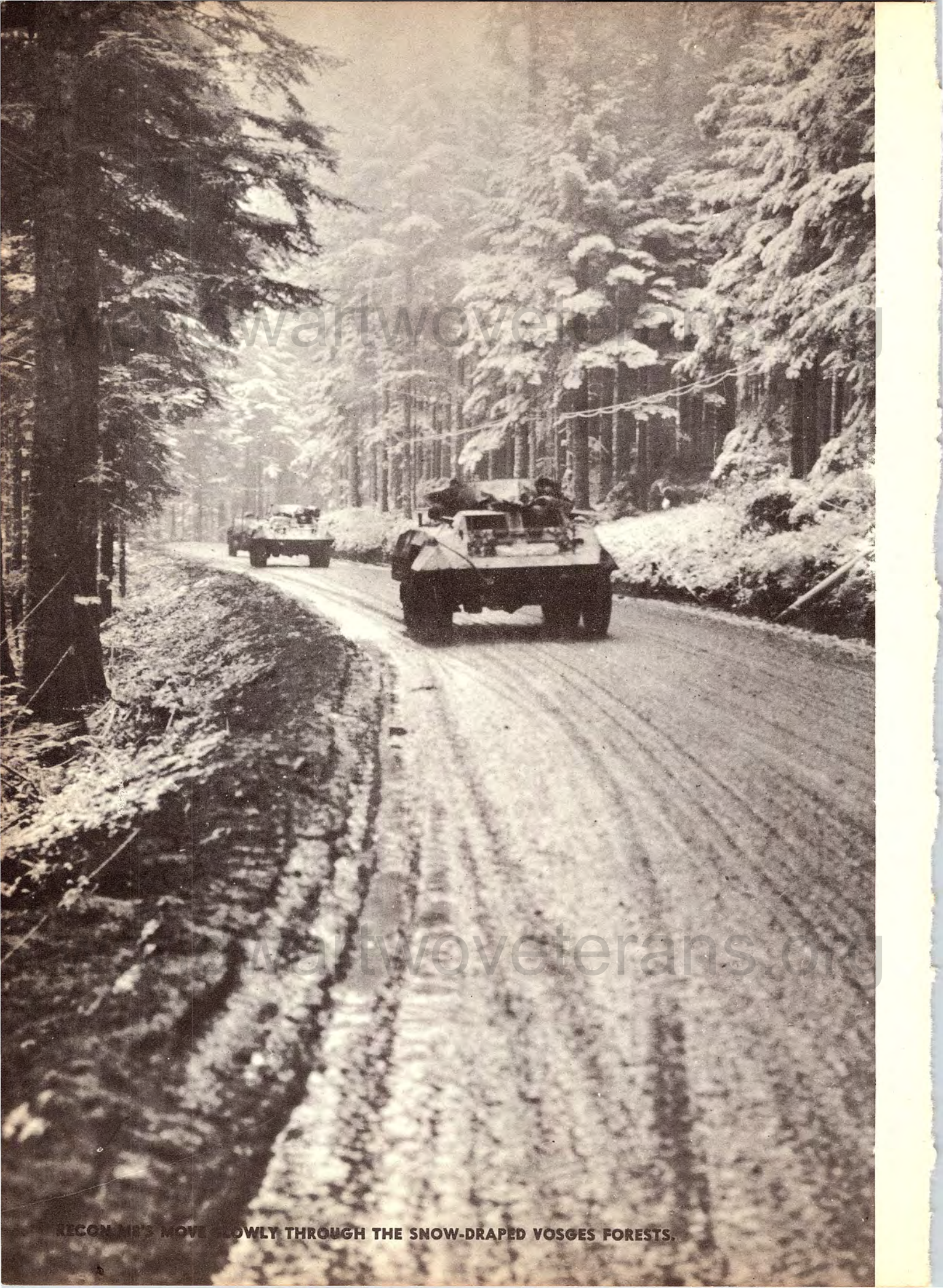
S/SGT. THOMAS E. BOHANNON, 132nd FA, OGLES A CHRISTMAS FRUIT CAKE JUST RECEIVED BY PVT. PLACIDE LaBELLE.

EARLY CHRISTMAS

Back in the States generously-providing parents, wives and sweethearts obeyed to the letter the Postmaster General's order that overseas Christmas boxes be mailed early. The result—yuletide came to the Vosges in mid-autumn. To pupents in Tendon, to humble homes in Herpelmont, and to chateaus in Lepanges, the mail clerk in his traditional December role of Santa Claus bore premature gifts of fruit cake, toilet articles, and woolen sweaters. Beginning the last week in October, the Division Post Office handled many thousands of packages, averaging seven to a man, until by Christmas Eve there was little need for Joe to hang out his water-soaked stocking. Prancer and Blitzen had been too fast this year.

THE 3rd BATTALION, 141st, MOVES UP TO NEW POSITIONS IN SNOW.





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RECON MF'S MOVE SLOWLY THROUGH THE SNOW-DRAPED VOSGES FORESTS.



DOUGHBOYS PACK UP THEIR TROUBLES AND SMILE EVEN IN VOSGES SNOWFALL.



CORCIEUX

As the Germans fell back before the 36th in the Vosges, they carefully prepared a strong line of defense along the Meurthe River. In this they resorted to unusual ruthlessness. Our forces first awakened to the fact when the dark skies of night turned to a glowing red throughout the valley. Patrols confirmed the reports of fleeing civilians coming into our lines—that Germans had set fire to entire villages on a broad path before their Meurthe River line. Civilians were systematically told to leave and their homes stripped of valuables before the torch was applied. Corcieux, fair-sized village in the valley, was an example. Hundreds of French civilians were left homeless.





PILES OF LOGS ARE ALL THAT REMAIN OF THE STRONG ENEMY ROADBLOCK ON THE HIGH MAIN ROAD TO ST. MARIE.

FORCING THE VOSGES PASSES

A great offensive to drive the Germans west of the Rhine surged forward early in November along the entire Allied line. Within the Seventh Army sector, the XV Corps, on the left of the VI Corps, began operations to penetrate the Saverne Gap, leading to Strasbourg. The First French Army, on the right of VI Corps, launched an attack through Belfort Gap paralleling the Swiss border. These two relatively open passes had been the traditional high-ways of invasion for years.

VI Corps troops faced the high Vosges barrier between the two passes on the right of its line, but on the left the principal effort of the Corps was directed into Saverne

A GERMAN ANTI-TANK GUN has fired its last round. The enemy had a powerful network of defenses along the ridge of the Vosges.

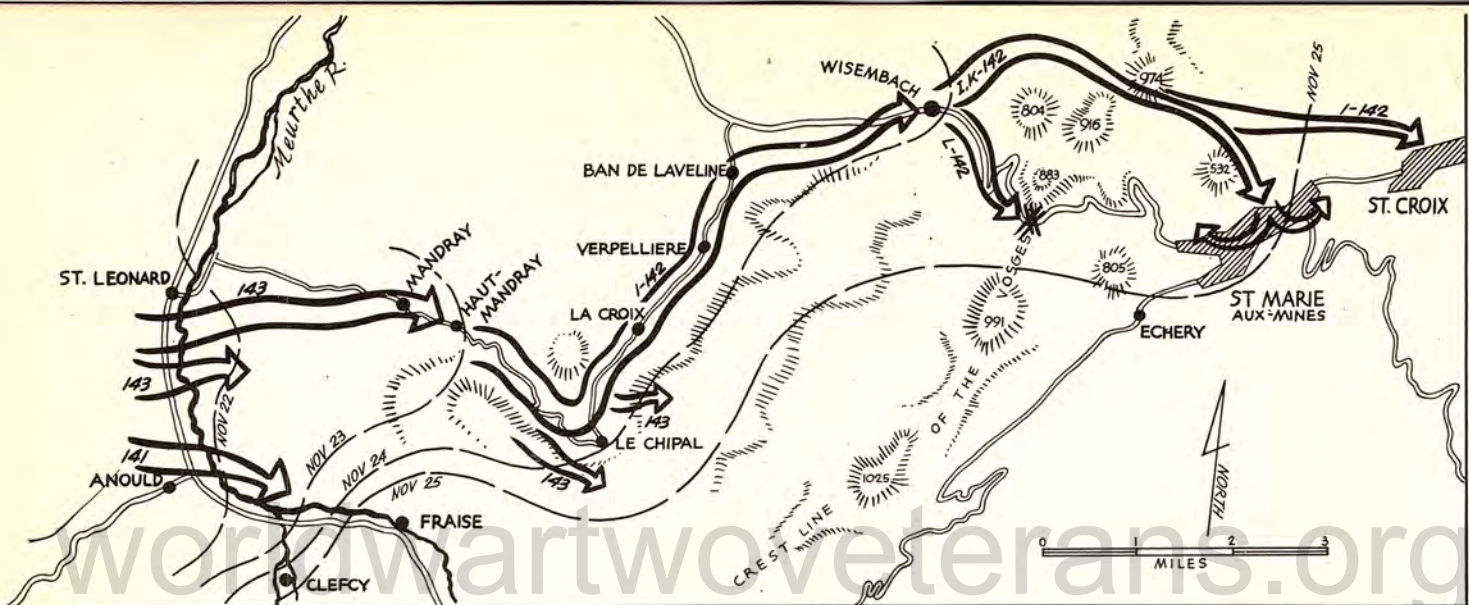


Gap. The new and fresh 100th Division and the 3rd Division, two regiments of which had been relieved for retraining, were to make the main attack. On the right the new and fresh 103rd Division was to cross the Meurthe River, capture St. Die, and then be prepared to follow up the main effort. The tired 36th Division—no relief in 98 combat days—was given a subsidiary and defensive role of protecting the Corps and Army right flank and of taking over ground won by the 103rd.

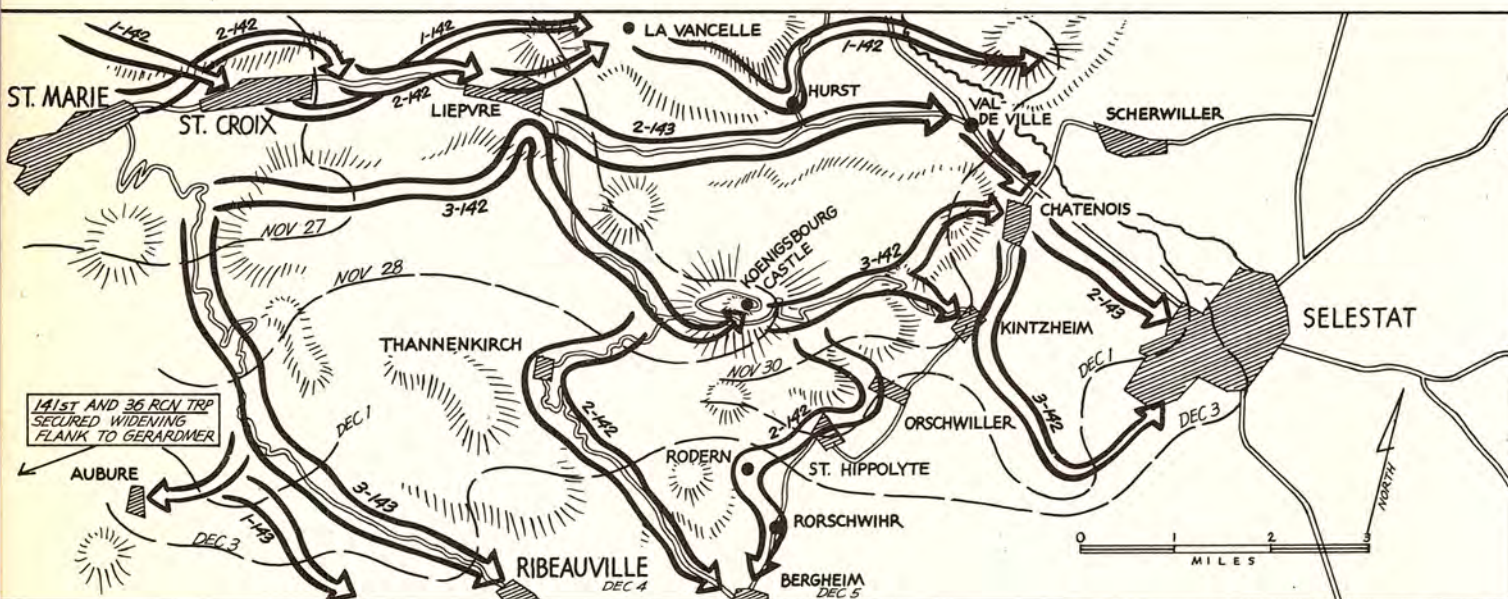
The enemy intended to hold a winter line at the Meurthe River. Elaborate defenses—trenches, tank traps, barbed-wire—had been built during the preceding two months by

WELL-CAMOUFLAGED and heavily-protected trenches were overrun by the Division in breaching St. Marie Gap.





ATTACK OVER ST. MARIE PASS began with 143rd and 141st forcing the Germans back from line of the Meurthe River. Passing through the 1st Battalion, 142nd, reached Wisembach, from where on November 25, the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, made surprise leap on St. Marie.



FROM ST. MARIE, Division columns descended upon St. Croix and Liepvre, gained the dominating Koenigsbourg Castle height, and broke out into the Rhine lowland at Selestat and Ribeauville. Meanwhile, the Division flank trailed off a line of 57 kilometers.

troops, labor units and vast numbers of forced French workmen. On the west side of the river and in front of this defense, all villages and even many single buildings had been burned down so that no shelter would be available to the Allies facing the Meurthe River Line in the coming winter months.

By November 19, the 36th had reached the Meurthe at St. Leonard. From this bulging spearhead its line trailed off on the right (south) to Gerardmer where contact with the First French Army was made. Early on the 20th, patrols from Lt. Col. Theodore H. Andrews' 3rd Battalion, 143rd, crossed the Meurthe at St. Leonard and at Anould. Though meeting opposition, they determined that the heavy fortifications were not well garrisoned. Making a personal reconnaissance, the Division Commander verified this and ordered the 143rd to immediately put over all available troops and establish a small bridgehead. General Brooks, the Corps Commander, was apprised of the situation and told that if he would permit it, the Division would attack across the Meurthe and strike for St. Marie Pass. This would relieve the 103rd Division for operations closer to the Corps main effort and, if the attack through the Pass were successful, would place American troops in the Alsace

Plain far below the Corps main effort and on the flank of the Germans defending against that effort. Approval was granted and orders changing the division boundary were issued the next day.

Acting speedily, the 143rd attacked on November 21st, encountering high water and stiff resistance. Sensing the developing danger, the Germans started shifting troops to that sector. Aided by their fortifications, they were able to confine progress to a narrow area between the river and the hills. Next day all three battalions of the 143rd resumed the attack and were assisted by the 1st and 3rd Battalions, 141st, who changed direction and crossed the river on the right flank of the 143rd. This added weight broke the defense, it becoming apparent early on November 23rd that the Germans could not hold much longer. The 142nd, which had been pulled out of the line on the 20th, was alerted and told to be ready for a breakthrough.

Late in the afternoon the 1st Battalion, 142nd, under Lt. Col. James L. Minor, mounted on tanks, tank destroyers and artillery vehicles, started forward. At Haute Mandray the Germans put up a last-ditch stand. Taking up the battle on foot and fighting all night, the battalion forced its way up and over a narrow, precipitous road through the

villages of Le Chival and La Croix-Aux-Mines into the town of Ban de Laveline, a march of eleven kilometers. The Division front, winding from a point near Gerardmer to the newly-won Ban-de-Laveline, now stretched more than thirty kilometers.

GERMANS HALT MOVEMENT ON ROAD

The Germans that had been defeated at Haute Mandray infiltrated back into the hills and throughout daylight of the 24th succeeded in keeping the road near Le Chival under fire, preventing further movement of vehicles or troops. The 143rd was employed all day in the tedious job of locating and destroying the enemy machine guns and mortars effecting the temporary blockade, a job extremely difficult because of the rough terrain and heavy woods. However, movement toward St. Marie Pass was not held up until the road could be cleared. The 1st Battalion, 142nd, without waiting for support pushed on and captured Wisembach at the foot of the pass. At nightfall the remainder of the 142nd pushed on into Ban de Laveline. The 143rd was ordered concentrated in La Croix-Aux-Mines and the 141st and the 36th Reconnaissance Troop, to keep contact with the First French Army whose flanking elements were still in the vicinity of Gerardmer, extended their lines to a total of twenty kilometers.

St. Marie Pass, at an altitude of over 2,900 feet, was a formidable obstacle. In most places the cleft in the mountains was only as wide as the road which zigzagged through it. The enemy's defensive position consisted of heavy timber road blocks at the high point of the road, elaborate trenches and wire systems on the hillsides flanking the road, and deep dugouts for the garrison, more than a battalion strong. From the height the enemy commanded full observation of the road leading up to the pass. In attacking this position it was impossible to deploy more than a few men, while supporting armor could only move along the road.

The haze of a frosty late autumn morning hung over St. Marie Pass on November 25. Under cover of the misty

atmosphere a small force consisting of Company L, 142nd Infantry, several tank destroyers from the 636th TD Battalion, and a platoon from Company M, under command of the 3rd Battalion Executive Officer, Major Ross L. Young, moved up the road to the pass. At the same time, the Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. A. Ward Gillette, led the remainder of the 3rd Battalion on a circuitous route several miles to the left (north) of the road over terrain so rugged that no artillery, no armor, and no vehicles could accompany them. The men were armed with only what they could carry in their hands. After four hours of hard climbing they approached St. Marie from the rear.

COMPLETE SURPRISE

Racing down from the heights, Company K was the first to strike the town. A complete surprise was effected. German soldiers were captured riding bicycles in the streets. Company I entered the town farther east and met only sporadic resistance but at the railway yard and station one hundred Germans tried to make a stand. On the slopes northeast of town another enemy group held off three platoons until midnight. However, resistance was ineffectual because of the surprise. Eighty prisoners and large stores of booty were lifted from a German barracks in the heart of town. By late afternoon, St. Marie was entirely in our possession. One hundred seventy prisoners were taken in the town while the 3rd Battalion suffered only two minor casualties.

Meanwhile, back at the pass, Major Young's force had struck heavy resistance. Several reconnaissance vehicles of the TD Battalion had been knocked out as soon as the fog shrouding the hills, under which they had been able to approach the enemy positions, had lifted. Riflemen had clambered up the steep slopes overlooking the fortifications but direct assault without artillery support would have been futile and murderous. The radio of the artillery forward observer had been destroyed by enemy fire, cutting off communication with the firing batteries to the rear. After several desperate attempts to reestablish com-

TROOPS MOVING THROUGH ROADBLOCK WITHIN ST. CROIX AFTER IT FELL. HOUSE ON RIGHT BURNED SEVERAL DAYS.





KOENIGSBOURG CASTLE.

munications had been foiled by the heavy enemy fire covering the approaches, a telephone line was finally installed. A blistering preparation of 300 rounds of artillery was then laid on the fortifications and the foot soldiers of Company L rushed the works, capturing the remaining garrison. As the engineers immediately set about demolishing the heavy road blocks, the intervening distance between the two parts of the battalion was closed, Company L moving down the road to St. Marie. Before

midnight the road was open for traffic, and armor and supply vehicles poured into St. Marie.

The highest, narrowest, and toughest pass of the Vosges had thus been breached. This was the one the Germans had thought impregnable. In a whining bleat the German communique reported that overwhelming forces had driven back their defenses at St. Marie. Actually they had not been driven back but destroyed, and by a single battalion numbering less than 500 effectives which had consummated one of the riskiest and most brilliant maneuvers of the war. St. Marie had fallen, the crest of the Vosges had been passed, the gateway to the Alsace Plain swung open.

Many miles of the narrow mountain pass still remained before the plains of the Rhine Valley would be reached, however. There was no time to pause. Even while the 3rd Battalion was mopping up St. Marie, the 1st Battalion, 142nd, pushed on towards St. Croix, next major objective two miles beyond in the pass. The 1st had followed the 3rd over the mountain heights but continued directly on as the latter turned to attack St. Marie. For some seven kilometers its riflemen, machine-gunners and mortarmen packed their loads over the fantastically difficult mountain terrain. No armor or transport could follow them. Blankets had been discarded in order to carry extra ammunition and the battalion faced the possibility of faring on its own for some time, as, when it started, the issue at St. Marie had not been decided. It was after dark before the hills imme-

GI'S AND CIVILIANS attend mass in a St. Marie church honoring the town's liberation.



diately overlooking St. Croix were reached. The attack was launched early the next morning but the Germans, alerted by the St. Marie incident, had rushed reinforcements up from Selestat, and capture of the town required two days. The 2nd Battalion, 142nd, moving in from the direction of St. Marie, assisted the 1st Battalion coming down from the hills, in the reduction of St. Croix.

While the advance through St. Marie Pass was under way, far to the right on the Division's drawn-out flank, the 141st kept up a steady pressure on German elements in the hills along the Meurthe River. They captured Clefey, Fraize and Scarupt and pushed toward Bonhomme Pass. The Germans were shelling Clefey and Anould at the same time. Division spearheads fought into St. Croix. The 143rd, committed to clearing the ridges east of Ban de Laveline and La Croix, was brought up to St. Marie soon after the town fell, relieving advance elements there and then pushing southeast on the much-blocked road leading to Ribeauville.

ANOTHER SURPRISE WINS

From St. Marie on the 27th, with only one day's rest, the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, started out on foot again to climb the mountains, this time to the right of the road, and to bypass the opposition occupying the 1st and 2nd Battalions at St. Croix, prepared to attack Liepvre, the next large town. By ten o'clock on the morning of the 28th, however, the 2nd Battalion, after the enemy's St. Croix stand had been broken, had battered its way through Muslock and was in Liepvre. The 3rd Battalion, therefore, kept on going, its movement shielded in the wooded hills. Late in the afternoon it sprung another surprise assault and took Chateau Koenigsbourg, an ancient citadel commanding an invaluable view of the entire Alsace Plain, the Rhine and the Black Forest of Germany beyond.

The enemy was now frantic in his efforts to halt the Division advance. He had failed to hold the pass. To the north the Alsace Plain had been entered and Strasbourg taken. To the south the French had come through the Belfort Gap. A sudden debouchment at Selestat would mean ruin for the German forces in the Plain. The enemy therefore tried to hold the exits of the St. Marie Pass while at the same time harrassing the lengthening flank of the 36th.

He failed in both efforts. To speed the outlet from the pass the 2nd Battalion, 143rd, was attached to the 142nd Infantry. Continuing to strike the enemy in flank by sending battalions over the steep ridges on foot, Liepvre and the surrounding hills was cleared by dark of the 29th. One German battalion sent in to reinforce the garrison was caught and completely destroyed by the 1st Battalion. While the 2nd Battalion, 142nd, shifted to Koenigsbourg to protect the right flank of the regiment, the 3rd Battalion took Chatenois and Kintzheim in the Rhine lowland. The 1st Battalion, 142nd, at night waded a stream shoulder deep, and, leaving its dead and wounded behind, climbed the last ridge north of the pass overlooking the valley. At the same time the 2nd Battalion, 143rd, drove along the main road and captured Val de Ville at the mouth of the pass. The 36th Division was in the Plain on November 30th. This was the goal. Previous orders from Corps limited any further advance.

However, on December 1 General Brooks called the Division Commander and ordered the 36th to move out to capture the southern half of Selestat, the largest city in Alsace between Colmar and Strasbourg. The 103rd Divi-

sion farther to the north was given the job of taking the northern half. Reconnaissance was started at once and the 2nd Battalion, 143rd, and 3rd Battalion, 142nd, moved into position. Under cover of a heavy fog the attack was launched at four o'clock in the afternoon. Across three miles of open flat vineyards the assault moved forward. By ten at night a foothold had been gained in the western and southern edges of the city and the Selestat-Colmar road cut. All the next day the fight for the city continued and by early morning of the 3rd the assigned objective was completely in Division hands. The 103rd, with a longer distance to go, completed their mission on the 4th, when the 36th assumed the defense of the entire city.

FIRST TIME IN HISTORY

St. Marie Pass had been forced for the first time in history. Though the 142nd Infantry had played a brilliant role (the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, received a Presidential Citation for the capture of St. Marie) as the cutting edge of the Division, all other elements had done equally important work in preventing the German attempts to break open the overextended Division flank. When Selestat was taken the Division had a front of 57 kilometers. The 36th Reconnaissance Troop with less than 150 men covered the area from Gerardmer to Fraise. The 141st kept moving its elements to take over larger and larger areas until by December 2 its line extended 21 miles from Fraise to a point near Aubure, south of St. Marie. Innumerable clashes had been fought but all attempts to interrupt the Division line of communications were defeated until finally 141st troops held the heights dominating the Bonhomme Pass.

The 143rd (less the 2nd Battalion) was moved up through St. Marie and given the task of preventing enemy incursions from the direction of Ribeauville. The 1st and 3rd Battalions tediously pushed down the winding road from St. Marie toward Ribeauville. Here the Germans had prepared repeated abatis, mined and booby-trapped. Engineers worked night and day following the advance to open the road.

The 1st Battalion cleared Aubure in sharp fighting and



MEN OF THE 111th ENGINEERS removing one of the many roadblocks that slowed the drive into the Rhine Valley.

the 3rd Battalion drove on into Ribeauville on December 3. 143rd elements then fanned out in the Rhine lowland and contacted the 142nd at Bergheim where hundreds of the enemy fleeing before the Division advance, were overrun. In the period from November 20 to December 4, in forcing St. Marie Pass, over 2,200 prisoners were taken by the Division.

CMH FOR SERGEANT ELLIS A. WEICHT



At St. Hippolyte, Sgt. Ellis A. Weicht's action won the CMH, posthumously. When the Germans counterattacked, Sgt. Weicht led his squad in clearing the enemy from several houses. The advance held up by a German machine gun, Weicht scaled a wall, flanked the position and wiped out the gun with rifle fire.

Further along the street a 20mm gun opened up. As friendly artillery concentrated on the target, Weicht remained in a close position to snipe at the crew and force them to abandon their piece. Later, at a German roadblock, he killed three Germans and wounded several others while the enemy raked him with machine gun fire. Weicht was killed when the enemy turned an anti-tank gun upon him.

THE FLOODED ILL RIVER HALTED ANY ADVANCE BEYOND SELESTAT. ARTILLERY FIRES ON GERMANS ACROSS RIVER.





SELESTAT, IMPORTANT LINK BETWEEN STRASBOURG AND COLMAR, CAUGHT FULL WEIGHT OF GERMAN ATTACK.

GERMANS STRIKE BACK

On December 2, when the 36th Division entered Selestat, the enemy's situation in the Alsace Plain was critical. The Germans had been hemmed into a pocket with only two bridges remaining across the Rhine by which to withdraw (see map). South of the 36th Division there were still German forces facing the II French Corps in the Vosges mountains. All intelligence indicated that the Germans were making desperate efforts to get as much as they could back to the east bank of the Rhine.

At that time the general situation of the Sixth Army Group (including the Seventh American and First French Armies) was: The IV Corps of the Seventh Army had turned north after capturing Strasbourg and was moving toward the Maginot and Siegfried Lines. Its deployment over too wide a front, however, affected its ability to launch an offensive. The 3rd Infantry Division was committed to holding Strasbourg and the Rhine river bank for several miles on either side. The 2nd French Armored Division was moving south in the Plain from the direction of Strasbourg. The 103rd and 36th Divisions had just emerged from the Vosges passes and were in a position to capture

Colmar, the key to the remaining German holding. The II French Corps, hampered by extremely high and rugged terrain in the Vosges, had been unable to advance and was deployed over a very wide front reaching from Gerardmer to the Belfort Gap. The I French Corps, through the Belfort Gap, faced north from Mulhouse to the Rhine. In order to force the defenses of the Maginot and Siegfried Lines before the Germans could get set in them, it was decided to concentrate the entire Seventh Army north of Strasbourg, leaving the First French Army plus the 36th Division to complete the job of clearing the Colmar pocket. Orders attaching the 36th Division to the II French Corps were issued on December 4.

NO LETUP

Turning of the VI Corps to the north took pressure off the Germans in the Colmar pocket. The disposition of the First French Army was such that, before an offensive could be resumed, a shifting of forces was necessary. The Commanding General of the II French Corps, General de Goussard de Montsabert, thought this might be accomplished in time for the attack to begin again on the 6th. The plan called for the 36th to attack east from the vicinity of Ribeauville toward Neuf-Brisach while the 2nd French

Armored drove south for the same objective. This involved a crossing of the Ill River for the 36th. Before that could be done the entire area between the Ill and the slope of the Vosges had to be cleared as far south as Kaisersberg. For the Division, therefore, there was no letup in offensive operations.

The 142nd, after securing Selestat, began aggressive patrolling for Ill River crossing sites while its 2nd Battalion pushed from Koenigsbourg down the mountain trail to take St. Hippolyte and Bergheim.

The 143rd had the hardest task, in clearing the St. Marie-Ribeauville road and the area on both sides of it. The terrain was extremely rugged and heavily wooded. Road blocks of huge felled trees had been placed in every defile through which the road passed. Over 1,500 yards of this abatis, mined and defended, had to be cleared. Fighting day and night Lt. Col. Theodore H. Andrews' 3rd Battalion and a large detachment of the Company C, 111th Engineers, forced their way into the open and captured Ribeauville by the 4th. On the right of the 3rd Battalion, Lt. Col. David M. Frazier's 1st Battalion went cross-country to isolate and clear out pockets of the enemy.

MINEFIELDS HINDER ADVANCE

The 141st, far to the south, moved east of the Bonhomme Pass, rendering it useless to the Germans, and kept pushing toward Aubure and Kaisersberg. It was hampered by extensive minefields and small detachments of enemy. On the 5th, Lt. Col. Benjamin W. Hawes, commanding the 3rd Battalion, and Col. Charles Owens, the Regimental Commander, were both wounded by mines.

By December 6 the Division had accomplished its mission of clearing the entire Vosges in its sector as a prelude to the big attack. In addition to Ribeauville the towns of St. Hippolyte, Bergheim, Rodern, Rorschwihr, Ostheim, Hunawihl, Riquewihl, Zellenberg, Beblenheim and Mittelwihl had been captured.

On December 5, the 5th Combat Command of the 4th French Armored Division and five tabors of Moroccan Goums, under the command of Brigadier General Guy Schlessler, were attached to the Division. This force moved into the Aubure area, east of St. Marie, and relieved the 141st Infantry which was then moved north to the area occupied by the rest of the Division. On December 6 the Division front line ran from Selestat on the north to Guemar and Ostheim, thence to Mittelwihl and to Hill 351 south of Riquewihl, a front 20 kilometers long, flanked on the right by an open stretch covered only by the 36th Reconnaissance Troop.

After all the preliminaries had been completed, it was the weather that defeated the planned attack. Winter rains caused the Ill to flood its banks, the entire Alsace Plain becoming a vast swampland. Crossing the river was out of the question—nothing could move off the roads in the valley. Furthermore, the movement of French troops from the south had been slower than anticipated. The Corps commander therefore decided to postpone the attack until December 15 and swing the main effort to the 36th Division right

with a view of attacking Colmar from the west.

From the 2nd of December to the 6th the only pressure on the Germans had been exerted by the 36th. Their debouchment out of Ribeauville and seizure of the vineyard-covered hills overlooking Colmar so alarmed the Germans that they began moving considerable forces to oppose the Division. On December 7 they began countermeasures, particularly against the center and right of the line. Stiff fights occurred at Guemar, Bennwihl and Hill 351. The 2nd Battalion, 141st, was moved in on the right of the 143rd. More German attacks followed the next day but were driven off. Enemy artillery fire increased in intensity each day, striking at every town in the Division area. Ribeauville, the Division CP, was regularly plastered by 380mm. shells thrown from the far side of the Rhine. It was apparent that the Germans had stopped their withdrawal and were determined to hold Colmar.

In light of the mounting German opposition and will to attack, the Division situation was not good. It was overextended and deployed with the Vosges Mountains at its back—only two precarious mountain roads traversed this obstacle. Its position lacked depth. To improve this, particularly on the open right flank, the 141st was given the mission of taking Kientzheim and Sigolsheim. The attack started off well, Company B capturing Hill 351, which had been lost the day before, and the leading platoons of Company A getting a foothold in Sigolsheim. The 2nd Battalion, however, could not get into Kientzheim. A tragic mistake by our own Tank Destroyers who fired into Company B from the rear forced them off Hill 351, leaving the two platoons of Company A cut off in Sigolsheim. All day on the 10th the fight raged. Hill 351 was retaken but the detachment of Company A was lost.

Fatigued to exhaustion by its continued struggle, the Division nevertheless had practically no reserves. The 2nd Battalion, 143rd, had been assembled in Ribeauville and the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, was in Bergheim and St. Hippolyte. All other elements were in contact with the enemy and large stretches of the front were covered only by patrols.

DEFENSE OF SELESTAT

Before dawn on December 12, Selestat, which the 1st Battalion, 142nd, under Lt. Col. James L. Minor was defending, received a heavy enemy artillery bombardment. At dawn a full-scale enemy attack drove deep into the northwest corner of the city surrounding several of the defending strongpoints. The unit on the immediate left of the 142nd withdrew, leaving a large gap through which the Germans poured their forces. The 132nd Field Artil-

ENEMY LOST HEAVILY IN HIS FRUITLESS ATTACK TO SEIZE SELESTAT ON DECEMBER 12



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SMOKE OF BURSTING SHELLS FROM DIVISION ARTILLERY RISES ABOVE MITTELWIHR DURING THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE.

lery Battalion, in position just to the rear of Selestat, was in danger of being overrun. Meeting the challenge, men of the 1st Battalion held their ground and fought back feverishly, gradually reducing the German offensive. By midafternoon the tide of battle had turned and the infantry, with tanks and tank destroyers, was driving the enemy out of town. Determinedly, the Germans struck again at dusk, to the south of their original penetration, but a deadly curtain of artillery fire abruptly stopped them. Late at night when the battle was over, all lost ground had been regained. The enemy had paid a heavy price: 333 were captured, more than 100 dead littered the streets, while an estimated 600 were wounded. Four German regiments were identified in the attack. For its outstanding performance the 1st Battalion received the Presidential Unit Citation. Another citation, from notorious Henrich Himmler, who had come to Alsace to take personal command of what was to be the battle to disrupt the 36th Division, paid tribute to the defenders of Selestat. In an order to his own troops Himmler stated: "Build up immediately Sigolsheim's defenses by all available means. Resolute troops cannot be thrown out of a village when every house becomes a strongpoint. What the Americans could do in Selestat, I expect you and your men to do also."

But the battle at Selestat was not a local or isolated attack. It was only a part of the onslaught which hit the entire division on that date. Shortly after daylight a full-scale attack was launched in the center against Mittelwihr

and up the draw behind nearby Hill 251. This attack struck the 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry and the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry. The German main effort, however, was directed at the Division right flank. Here a large force, the entire student body of an officer candidate school, at least 100 strong, attempted to envelop the Division flank and reach the Ribeauville-St. Marie road. Had they succeeded in this the 36th Division would possibly have been destroyed.

CRISIS AT RIQUEWIHR

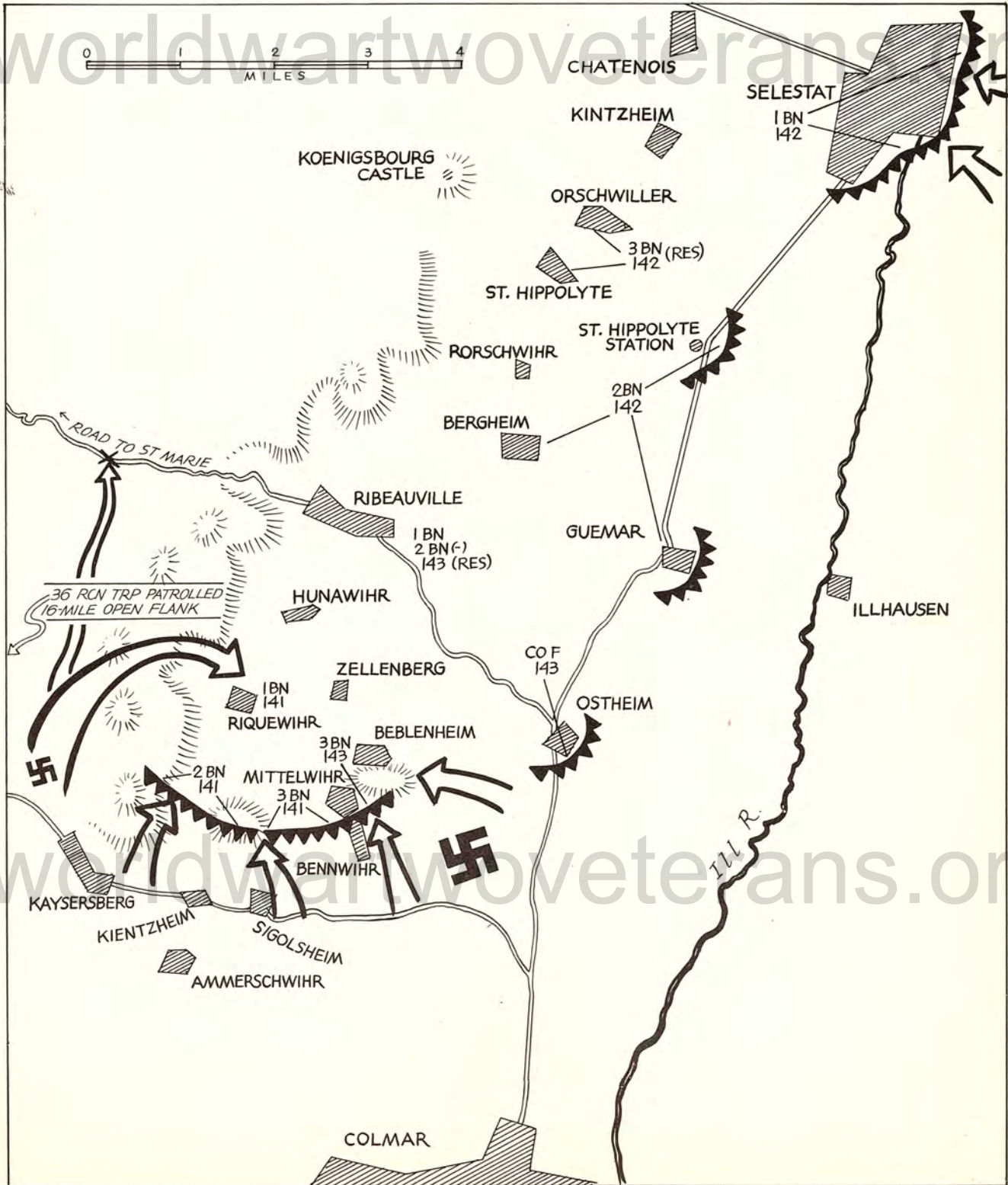
The main attack struck the 2nd Battalion, 141st Infantry, at 0900 hours. Platoons and companies were temporarily surrounded. Men used bayonets and hand grenades to kill Germans at the edge of their foxholes. Everyone was committed, even headquarters personnel. The Battalion held, however, and finally forced the attackers back. For this sterling defense and the action that followed it the 2nd Battalion received the Presidential Unit Citation. Though the German attack was broken, a large force of the enemy succeeded in getting around the 2nd Battalion line to hit at Riquewihr where the Regimental CP was located. The mortar positions of Company B, 83rd Chemical Battalion, were overrun. Two and one-half companies, greatly reduced in strength, of the battle-weary 1st Battalion just relieved from the line was all that was available. It counterattacked sharply, drove the Germans out of town and restored the flank.

Enemy artillery, increasing toward noon, laid counter-

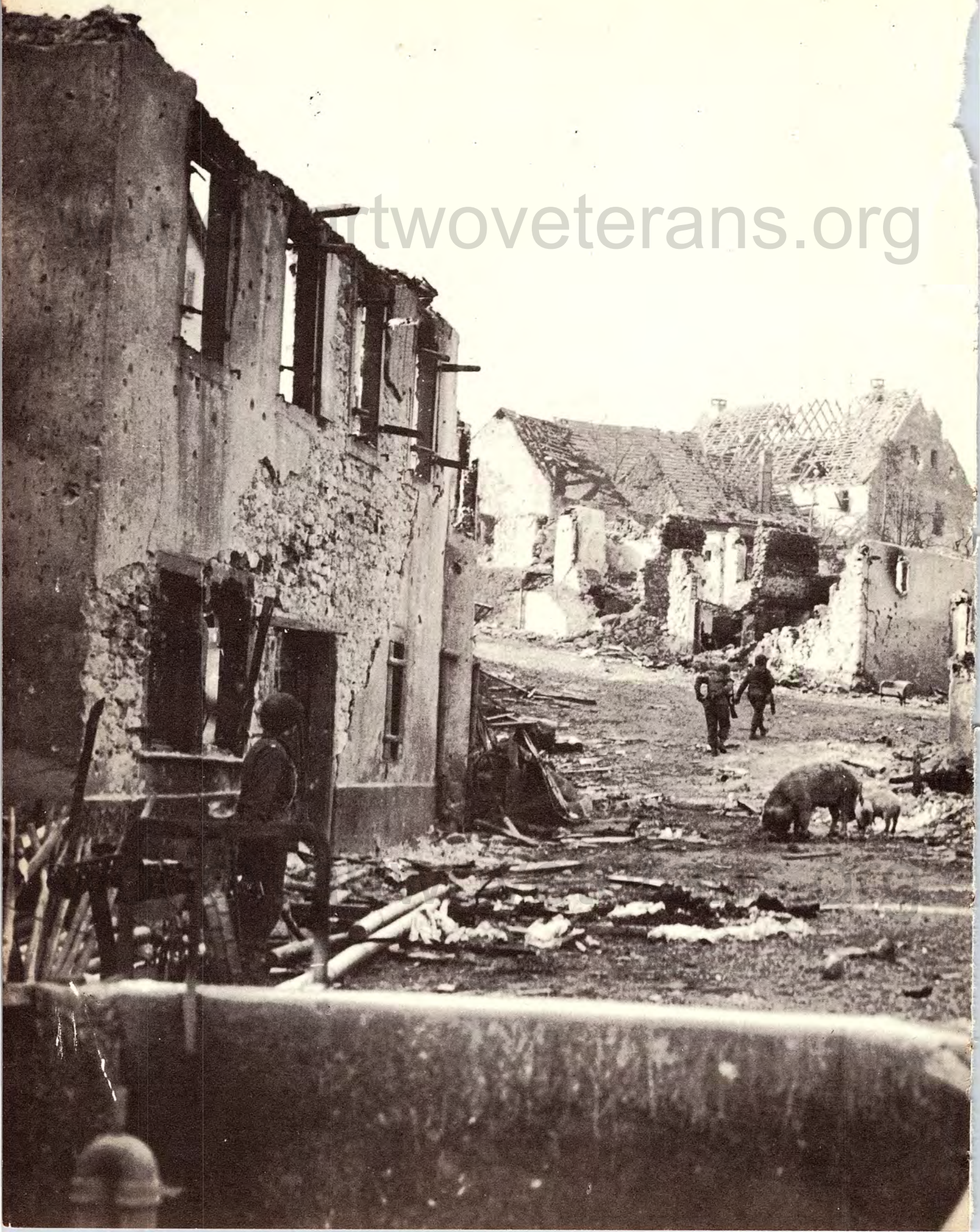
battery fire heavily onto several of the artillery battalions. Along the entire front friendly chemical mortars, tanks, tank destroyers and artillery fired furiously. By midafternoon the attacks had been repulsed all along the front. To the right of the Division, however, several groups of Germans did succeed in getting as far back as the artillery positions. One piece in the 133rd Field Artillery Battalion was blown up but the attempted raid was beaten off by the prompt and effective work of attached gunners of the 443rd Anti-Aircraft Battalion who turned their flak wagons loose on the attackers.

The slaughter of Germans, in places covering the vineyards in the center and right flank of the Division, was very great. Next day the enemy attacks were resumed but with less vigor and no success. December 14 saw the end of the German effort. The enemy plan to break through the 36th had been frustrated, and a terrific casualty toll inflicted upon them. Prisoner identifications showed that at least 6,800 infantry had been brought across the Rhine for this effort. Prisoners taken by the Division during this period, December 6-14, totaled 1,360.

SUDDEN STRONG GERMAN ATTACKS against the long 36th Division line narrowly missed succeeding. Aroused T-Patchers fought back furiously, won a decisive victory.



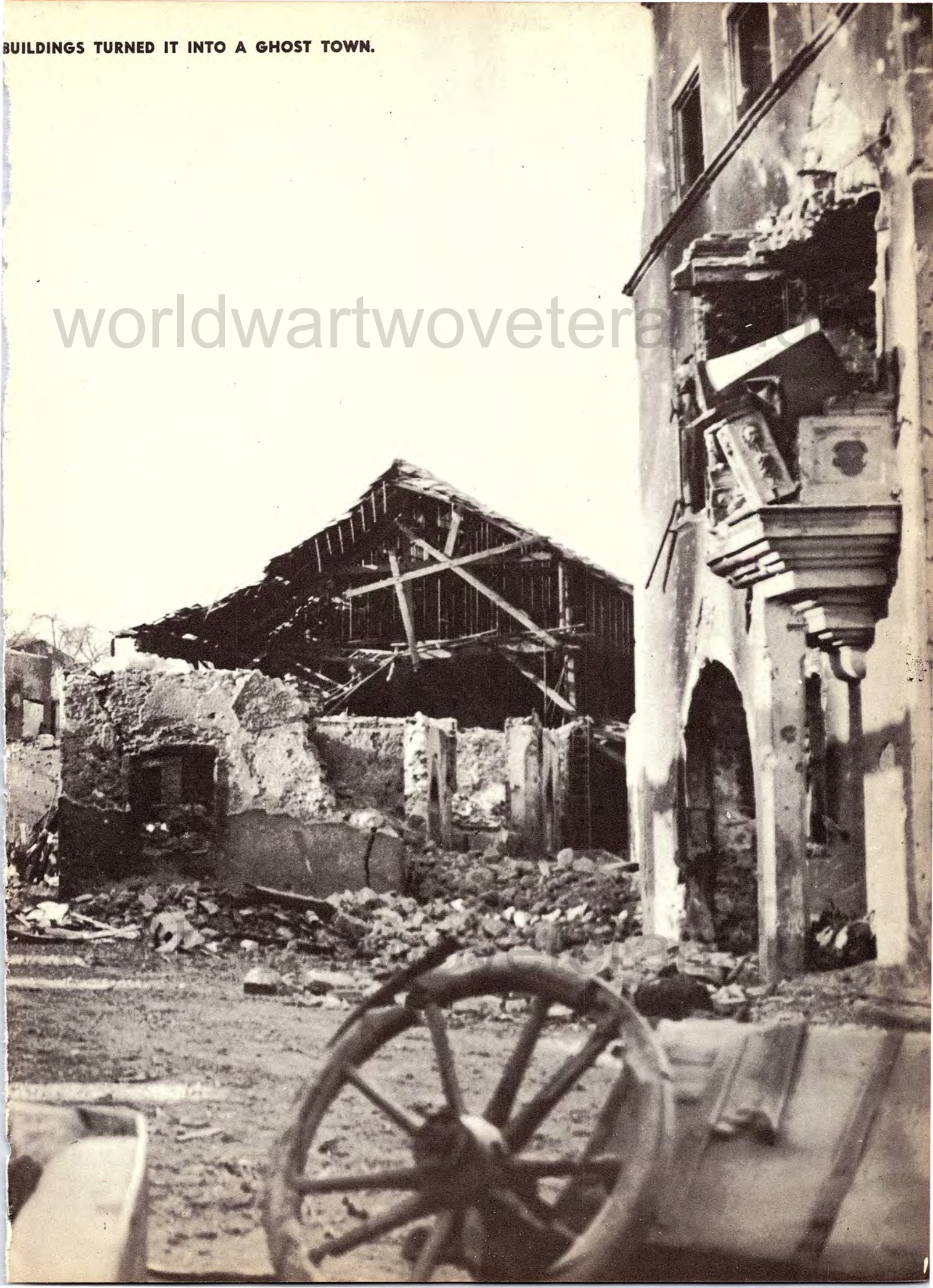
MITTELWIHR — AFTER THE BATTLE. ITS SCARRED



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BUILDINGS TURNED IT INTO A GHOST TOWN.

worldwartwovetera





HITLER'S BEST SS TROOPS FORMED BACKBONE OF THRUST IN THE RIBEAUVILLE AREA. THEY FOUGHT TO THE DEATH. GERMAN MOBILE FLAK wagon blasted by American fire power. Dead Nazi lies amid heap of scrap iron.

FOR THE FATHERLAND

LOSERS: The enemy had been thoroughly beaten. His casualties were high and loss in materiel extreme. In addition to the elements of three divisions already protecting the sector, seven battalions of young and well-trained officer candidates and SS Non-com troops took part in the battle under Himmler's personal command. The SS Chief's own escort battalion was thrown in. But it meant nothing in the way of success. By December 15 they had been turned back with more than 1,300 casualties in three days of fighting. The best the Germans had was not good enough.

WINNERS: **PFC. GERALD GORDON**, with the medics attached to the 143rd, in the heat of the German attack at Mittelwihr, ripped off the red-cross arm band, grabbed a rifle and tore the German line apart when he saw that the krauts were about to overrun his company. Reported missing in action, Gordon was found at the end of the war—in a hospital in England. His home is in St. Joseph, Missouri. **T/SGT. BERNARD BELL**, platoon leader of "I" Co., 142nd. Holed-up in a wrecked schoolhouse with five of his men, Bell held out against repeated enemy infantry-with-armor attacks at Mittelwihr. His action in defense of a key position helped stem the German advance. President Truman awarded Bell the CMH in a special ceremony on the White House lawn.

GORDON

BELL



RELIEF FROM THE LINE

The Division had now been continuously in the line 122 days. Its infantry strength was reduced so that many companies had only 70-80 combat effectives. On December 13 the Sixth Army Group decided to relieve it, but, with no reserve division available, a switch of positions with the 3rd Division was arranged. The 3rd had been garrisoning Strasbourg and patrolling the Rhine for two weeks, a relatively easy task. Though not a relief from contact with the enemy, it at least meant a quiet sector.

The task of shifting two divisions, both in contact with the enemy, one of them actively, posed a difficult problem, one probably never before attempted in the history of warfare. Only one or two battalions could be switched at a time, for the 3rd could not shorten its front either. Some 35 miles separated the two divisions. At a conference between Brigadier General Robert Young, commanding the 3rd Division, General Montsabert, commanding II French Corps, and General Dahlquist, it was decided to bring the 30th RCT, then in 3rd Division reserve, down from Strasbourg first, and to use it to attack on the left of the 36th to capture Kaysersberg and close the gap between the 36th and the French forces. This would not relieve any 36th Division troops but it would give the 3rd Division a much better position. Kaysersberg having been captured, relief of the 36th would start, one or two battalions at a time.

SWITCH BEGINS

The 30th arrived on December 14 and attacked from the vicinity of Aubure at noon on the following day. Gaining surprise, Kaysersberg and the hill south of it were captured on the 16th. That night the 1st Battalion, 141st, started for Strasbourg. Early on the 17th the Germans struck back furiously at the 30th Infantry, retook the hill south of Kaysersberg and a part of the town. By noon a critical situation had arisen. The 2nd Battalion, 141st, and a detachment of the 5th Combat Command of the 4th French Armored Division, which had that morning arrived in Riquewihr, attacked Kientzheim in an effort to turn the German flank. This attack, made without preparation, was a great success. Kientzheim was captured but darkness halted fur-

ther progress. At daylight the next morning Company G and the French tanks moved against Kaysersberg and succeeded in bottling up the Germans fighting the 30th Infantry. The city was again taken and the hill south of it recaptured by the 30th Infantry.

Late at night the French armor and the 2nd Battalion, 141st, moved into Ammerschwihr. On December 19, the 141st, less the 2nd Battalion, motored to Strasbourg and the 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry, arrived in the Colmar sector. An attempt to take Sigolsheim by the 3rd Battalion, 143rd, the 2nd Battalion, 15th Infantry, and French armor failed but a solid line from the hill south of Kaysersberg to Selestat had been established. On December 20 the remainder of the 15th Infantry arrived and the 143rd started for Strasbourg. On the 21st the 3rd Division took command of the Colmar sector and the 36th the Strasbourg sector. Next day the 142nd moved up and the relief was completed.

QUIET STRASBOURG

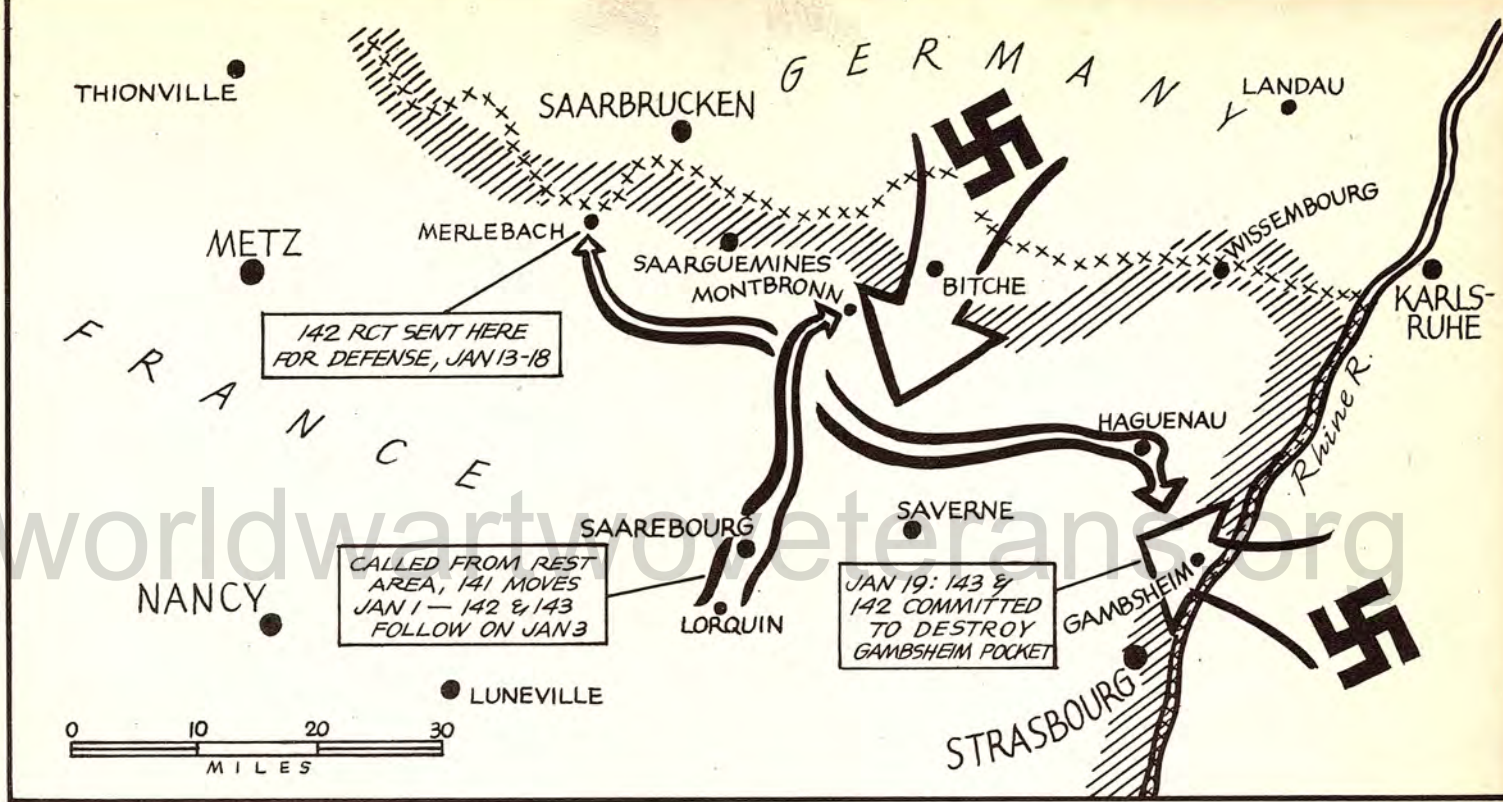
For the first time since August 15 the Division was not in direct contact with the enemy. Now the Rhine River separated it from the Germans. In the battle just concluded on the outskirts of Colmar the Division had come through its greatest crisis with flying colors. A serious attempt to separate the First French Army from the Seventh Army had been frustrated and a stinging defeat administered to the Germans.

Since August 15 the Division had been in the line continuously. It had made its second landing on a defended beach, defeated the Nineteenth German Army at Montelimar, crossed the Moselle, fought over the high Vosges barrier, and finally prevented an enemy breakthrough just before the Von Rundstedt offensive in the Ardennes began. On December 25, when the Division retired from the Strasbourg sector and officially closed its lengthy stay in the line at 133 days, 19,751 prisoners had passed through its cages since the Riviera landings, and a greater number of the enemy had been killed and wounded.



CATHEDRAL

Its masterful Gothic form tarnished by the pock-marks of several wars, the Strasbourg Cathedral still stands as one of the world's most beautiful examples of ecclesiastical architecture. Most famous object of a less-interesting interior is the astronomical clock. Moving discs on the clock show the day of the month, eclipses of the sun and the course of the planets. In 1870 the Germans used the cathedral's towering spire as an artillery registration point when they shelled the city. From the top of the platform it is possible to look out over the Black Forest, Rhine River, and the Vosges mountains.



THE WINTER MONTHS

Strasbourg, an Alsatian Mongrel of both French and German influence, founder of the Christmas tree tradition and possessor of one of the world's finest cathedrals, was a far more pleasant spot in which to spend the Christmas holidays than had been San Pietro a year before. The 36th remained in Strasbourg only five days, patrolling the medieval streets in search of German stragglers and agents, who had never left the city even after its capture by French forces under General Le Clerc one month before. Down on the river banks, bordering Germany itself, men of the 36th stood the watch on the Rhine.

Uncle Sam's Christmas present to the 36th Division was relief from the line, whole and without condition. By Christmas Eve the Division had set an endurance record for continuous combat days (with infantry elements in the

line), 133. Dating from the August 15 invasion, it had rushed up from the beaches, plodded on without rest through the bitter Vosges foothills, forced high St. Marie Pass, and stopped the fierce German attacks from the Colmar pocket. Quiet Strasbourg itself was a decided change after all this, but now the Division would move to a rest and training area near Sarrebourg, fifty miles to the rear through Saverne Gap. It started moving on Christmas Day, the day the Division Chaplain, Lt. Col. Herbert E. Mac Combie, gave a party for the city orphanage, and all the G. I.'s chipped in from their Christmas packages.

The relief was short-lived.

In order to contain the Von Rundstedt offensive that had ripped into the First Army line in Belgium and reached its high-water mark on December 24, the Allied Command

STRASBOURG, from the pilot's seat of a Piper Cub. Moat-like canal to the right is not to be confused with the Rhine River (not pictured).

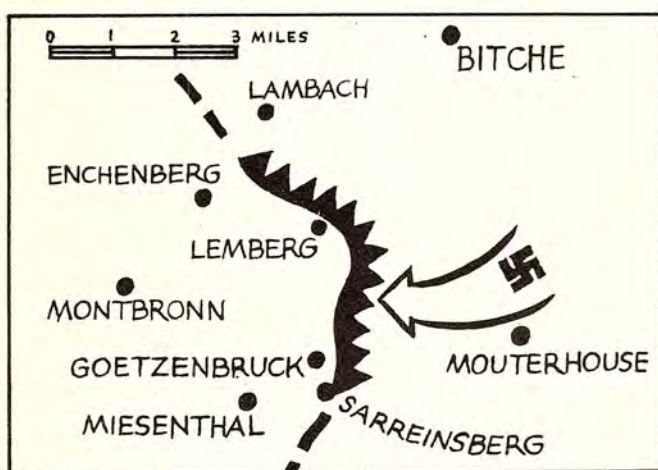
ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1944, members of the Division gave a party for the children of the city.



was compelled to draw troops from the Seventh Army, proportionately thinning out the dispositions in its sector. The Seventh Army line was widely extended to the left to a point near Saarbrücken, leaving units which had reached the German border on the right, near the Rhine, in an exposed position, defensively.

When failure in the Ardennes Offensive became apparent and Allied troops began to bite away at the flanks of the Bulge, the Germans turned their attention to the Seventh Army sector and seized the opportunity to stage a major attack, both in the hope of gaining a psychological advantage and to offset any further shifting of Allied forces to the Belgium battle. They chose for the point of their assault, the area at Bitche, in the center of the Seventh Army line, and struck boldly for Saverne to close the pass there to Strasbourg. Success would have boxed in the whole VI Corps on the right, and imperiled the loss of all Alsace.

Days in advance of the German attack, a feeling of sullen



expectation permeated the chill December air, penetrating even to the rear where Division men, now in SHAEF reserve, started their training. There were several alerts—alerts to be ready to rush to either XV or VI Corps on short notice, alerts for enemy paratroopers supposedly dropped in rear areas.

UNEASY FEELING

At midnight of New Year's Eve, traditional hour of celebration, the Germans launched their attack south of Bitche. Before the day was out the 141st had hurriedly departed from Saarebourg, moved forty miles to close a gap on the right of the 100th Division, caused when the Germans filtered through on the left of the VI Corps sector, 141st infantrymen immediately upon arrival took up positions in an eight-kilometer arc to protect the towns of Enchenberg, Lemberg, and Goetzenbruck, with Montbronn at the center of communications. This was on the flank of the German penetration, which in another several days reached its peak at a depth of six miles at Wingen, in the 45th Division sector.

Confusion, near-panic and wild rumors were circulating freely when Division elements arrived. The Germans did what they could to heighten deception by using captured equipment, in wearing Allied uniforms and infiltrating "jeep parties" under the guise of American soldiers. By noon of January 2 all units of the 141st were in contact with the enemy, and a critical situation obtained as the Germans plucked away at Lemberg in the center of the line and threatened encirclement on the south flank at Meisenthal and Sarreinsberg. Part of Company I was cut off in the fighting north of Lemberg, but the enemy did not get through. Next day Germans dented the line between Lemberg and Goetzenbruck, but the loss was restored before dark.

INTENSE COLD

The remainder of the Division travelled the icy roads to Montbronn in a snowstorm after dark of January 3, the 142nd and 143rd backing up the 141st Army orders specified the employment of only one RCT at a time, even forbade the stirring up of a fight by any direct offensive action. Because of the intense cold, regiments rotated on line duty for three-day periods. Companies A and C of the 142nd Infantry, in an attack that required special Army permission, sliced off an enemy bulge and netted 50 prisoners on the morning of January 8. Next day the Germans threw a battalion against Lemberg, which, after initial surprise, was driven off under heavy artillery concentrations. On January 11, the 3rd Battalion, 143rd, pulled off a "Chinese" or mock attack that produced a violent German reaction and a heavy shelling of Lemberg.

A very distasteful job during this period emphasized the seriousness of the general situation. With pick and shovel, reserve 141st and 143rd elements and the 111th Engineers hastily prepared a secondary or switch line several miles to the rear. Certainly the Germans had been compelled to do this type of thing all along, but to Division troops this was an entirely new military method. The full weight of a German attack was still anticipated but never developed at Montbronn.

An Army order sent the 142nd Infantry west to the XXI Corps to back up the line before Saarbrücken while a relief of the 103rd Division was carried out, January 13-18. Such quiet prevailed in this sector that hardly a shot was fired.

STRASBOURG THREATENED

After January 6 German attacks in the Bitche salient were contained. Gradually the pressure wore off and the enemy retired, discouraged at what little success he had attained. Over on the right of the Seventh Army line however, persistent armored attacks hacked away at the VI Corps positions north of Haguenau. Early in January a large force of Germans had ferried the Rhine and seized a small bridgehead ten miles north of Strasbourg at Gamsheim. Efforts to dislodge the enemy proved futile, and, as

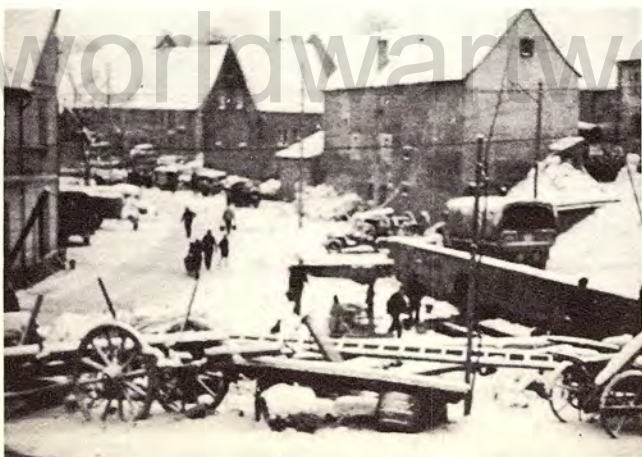


IN THIS FROZEN HILL-COUNTRY NEAR BITCHE (center) THE GERMANS LAUNCHED A POWERFUL ATTACK NEW YEAR'S DAY.

the Germans poured into the small bridgehead, it developed into a prime threat to the city of Strasbourg. An attack of the 12th Armored Division on January 12-14 to destroy the Gamsheim pocket was thrown back with considerable loss. The 79th Division, on a front east and north of Haguenau, likewise was rapidly tiring under the re-

peated strain of German attacks. To bolster and save this critical situation, the 36th was ordered from Montbronn. The 142nd, due to return to Montbronn from XXI Corps near Saarbrücken, was waved on to Haguenau, an 80-mile total. The 141st remained in the line at Montbronn attached to the 100th Division.

MONTBRONN WAS CENTER OF COMMUNICATIONS



CIVILIANS FEARFUL

A bleak, cold Haguenau greeted the 36th. Civilians which a few weeks before had hailed liberation now gloomily considered evacuation and the return of the hated Boche. Hospital and supply installations had departed or were moving back, streets were deserted and an occasional incoming round of heavy artillery emphasized the city's danger.

A few miles southeast of Haguenau the German build-up in the Gamsheim-Herrlisheim pocket had reached alarming proportions. The 36th was ordered to attack to wipe out the German bridgehead, but as the infantry moved up to assembly positions on the morning of the 19th, the Corps Commander directed instead that relief of the 12th Armored Division be effected immediately.

The 143rd happened onto the stage just at the right



WINTER CRISIS

When the call came vehicles and troops poured over the slick, icy roads to meet the German challenge. (Below) General Patch, Seventh Army Commander, stops to talk to a 141st detachment on way to the front.





READY FOR MORE

For the first time in Divisional history a secondary or "switch" line was constructed to back up the MLR. (Below) An AA gunner at Montbronn scans the sky from his well-dug-in position.





IN WINTER'S COLDEST WEATHER THE ENGINEERS CONSTRUCTED BARBED-WIRE BARRIERS FOR SECONDARY DEFENSE.

moment, for, during the afternoon, German armor broke out on the flat ground east of Herrlisheim and crossed the Zorn Canal, the main obstacle before Weyersheim, with twenty tanks and 500 infantry. The presence of the 143rd elements in Weyersheim and the arrival of other Division reinforcements in the sector averted a clean breakthrough, and turned about and rallied the 12th Armored elements falling back before the enemy assault. Very quickly a line of defense along a small stream running southwest from Rohrwiller was selected. As darkness closed in, 143rd troops moved to dig in and firmly establish it, knowing that the Germans could be expected to follow-up with an even heavier attack.

WITHDRAWAL ORDERED

To the left of the new Division line enemy pressure was accentuated by the loss of Drusenheim during darkness of the 19th where a battalion of American infantry was cut off. The Rohrwiller-Weyersheim line was stabilized and

strengthened on the 20th, but that evening a general VI Corps withdrawal to the Moder River north of Bichwiller pulled in the Division left, the 143rd abandoning Rohrwiller and withdrawing behind a line of the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, at the forward edge of Bischwiller.

Outposts of the 2nd Battalion, 143rd, holding the large patch of woods east of Kurtzenhausen in the center of the Division line, reported contact with groups of German infantry before midnight of the 20th. By morning close-in fighting had developed and the Germans had seized the small patch of woods to the rear of the bigger one. At noon waves of enemy tanks, 20 in all, with more infantry approached from Herrlisheim. 636th TD gunners took careful aim from the woods and from Weyersheim, knocked out six of them. 133rd Artillery Battalion destroyed at least one other. In the fighting that lasted throughout the afternoon, Lt. Col. Marion P. Bowden led his 2nd Battalion in a counterattack that killed 83 of the enemy and captured 176—some of the best of German troops, the 10th SS Panzer



IN DEEP SNOW DRIFTS TANK DESTROYERS WAITED FOR THE ENEMY'S PANZER ONSLAUGHTS FROM GAMBSHEIM POCKET.

Division. Acknowledging their Colonel's part in the battle, men of the 143rd have since called the scene of action "Bowden's Woods."

RUSSIANS MOVE

After this turning point the enemy made few other probings of the Bischwiller-Weyersheim line. Quiet came over the sector as the defense was daily improved. Snow fell to a heavy 12-inch covering. Novel searchlight defense was introduced—artificial moonlight illuminating on the darkest nights any slight movement to the front. In a week sweeping Russian gains on the Eastern Front forced the Germans to withhold further offensive operations in Alsace. Noticeably, enemy initiative died out and movement of troops away from the Gamsheim pocket was spotted. By the end of the month there was very little action anywhere along the line. The Germans had been prevented from making any inroads on the territory taken over and held by the 36th. Now they would feel the sting of another full-scale T-Patch attack.





A COMBAT INNOVATION introduced by the 36th in the Seventh Army sector, anti-aircraft searchlights, emplaced several thousand yards to the rear, cast synthetic moonlight over the immediate front and aided doughboys on defense by showing up any moving object. The lights could be turned on or off as the situation warranted.

AFTER SNOWS MELTED, SCORES OF KO'D TANKS DOTTED HERRLISHEIM BATTLEFIELD.





DIVISION INFANTRY UNITS IN RESERVE TESTED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CAMOUFLAGE CAPES AND WHITWASHED TANKS.



IN AN ACTUAL COMBAT position near Weyersheim the bed sheet blended well with the snow. In one week while on defense snow piled to one-foot depth.

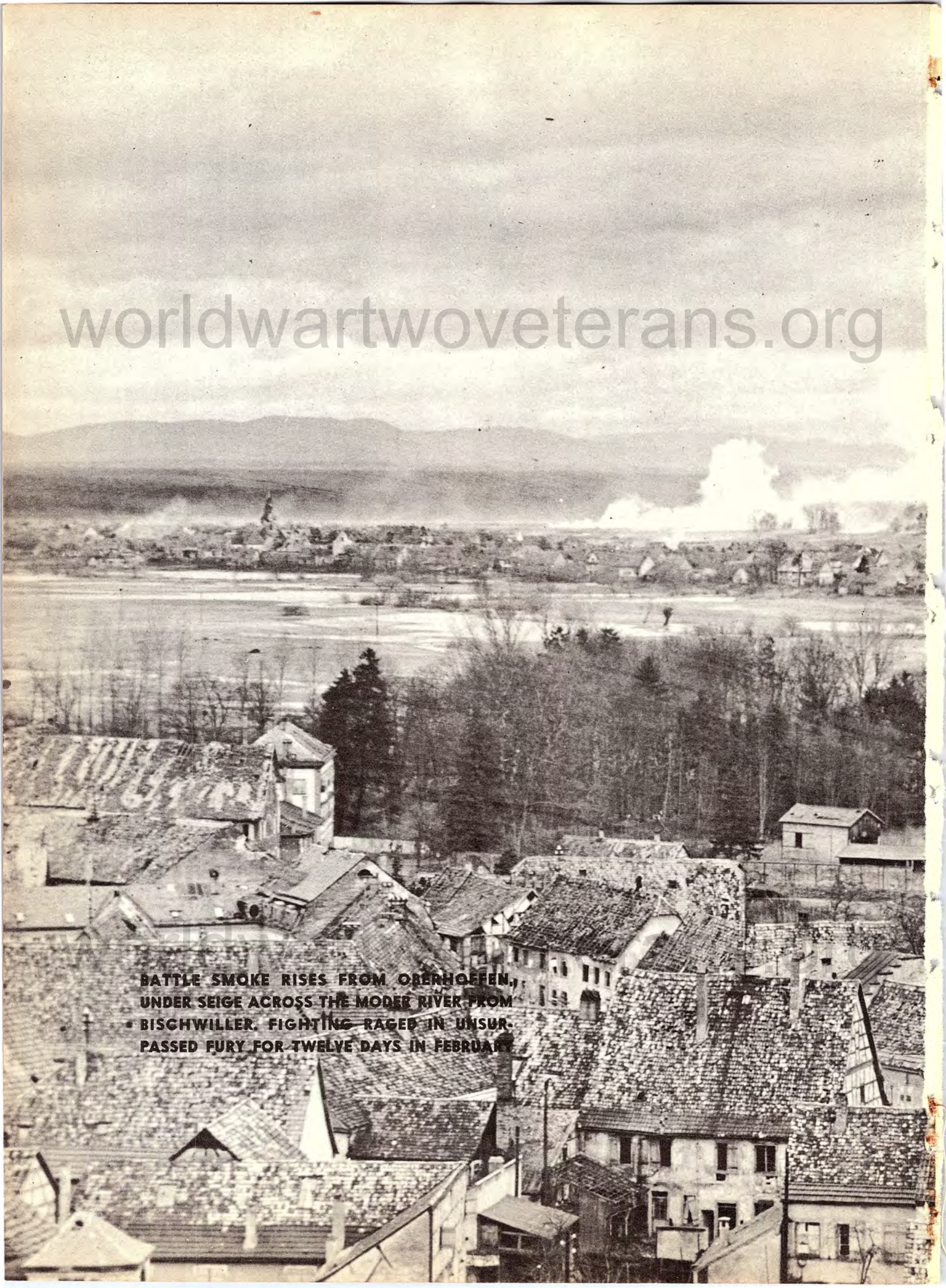


LANKY, SS LIEUTENANT HELMUT KUNTE, was the 20,000th prisoner taken by the Division after the Southern France landings. He was captured by the 143rd.

HOLDING THE LINE, TOO, were the 36th's smiling, doughnut serving Red Cross girls. Left to right: Dorothy Boschen, Virginia Spetz, Jane Cook, Meredyth Gardiner. A captured German vehicle became their supply truck.



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BATTLE SMOKE RISES FROM OBERHOFFEN,
UNDER SEIGE ACROSS THE MODER RIVER FROM
BISCHWILLER. FIGHTING RAGED IN UNSUR-
PASSED FURY FOR TWELVE DAYS IN FEBRUARY

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WHITEWASHED TO BLEND WITH THE SNOW, OUR TANKS CROSSED THE TREADWAY BRIDGE OVER THE MODER.

ATTACK TO THE RHINE

Planning for an attack eastward to the Rhine to smash and clear the enemy salient south of Drusenheim began on January 26. By the time the first phase of the broad general attack jumped off, a sudden thaw, melting the foot-deep blanket of snow, had intervened, jeopardizing the fulfillment of a swift armor-infantry-team assault.

On the night of January 31, the 2nd Battalion, 142nd Infantry, moved out across the Moder River with the mission of seizing Oberhoffen, a small town upstream from Bischwiller. Stealthily flanking the triangular-shaped village on the open ground to the east, the battalion worked into town and seized first objectives with easy success. But at dawn, before armor-carrying bridges over the Moder could be completed, German tanks and infantry lashed back in wild fury and threw out the 2nd Battalion infantry. By noon our forces had lost all objectives in Oberhoffen except a small foothold in the southern extremity. With

bridges in, the fight for Oberhoffen had to begin all over again.

TIGER TANKS

Armor was brought across the river and thrown into the second assault but the situation changed very little. By late afternoon the 1st Battalion moved up to pass through the 2nd. While Company A attacked frontally a German strongpoint at the main road fork, Company C skirted the town from the south after dark and delivered a stunning blow to the rear. The pincers snapped the resistance before Company A, and soon both companies had consolidated a new line 300 yards above the fork. For another forty-eight hours the 1st Battalion continued a slow, methodical advance clearing Oberhoffen house by house, and driving off the enemy's mammoth Royal Tiger tanks sent in to stop it. On February 3, with all the northwest corner of Oberhoffen won, the 1st Battalion turned over the sector to an armored infantry battalion for a three-day interval.

Failure to win Oberhoffen in twenty-four hours and the appearance of strong German forces there cost a one-day delay in the Division attack for Rohrwiller and Herrlisheim. The decision to proceed after dark of February 2 on this second phase was taken as the extreme thaw entered its fourth day. By jump-off time, the flat ground, criss-crossed by numerous streams and canals, had turned to swelling pools of water. The Moder River overflowed its banks, and its icy torrents washed away all the footbridges at Bischwiller. It covered the treadway bridge where foot soldiers crossed and waded through 300 yards of flooded ground to reach nearby assembly positions.

FOUR BATTALIONS IN ATTACK

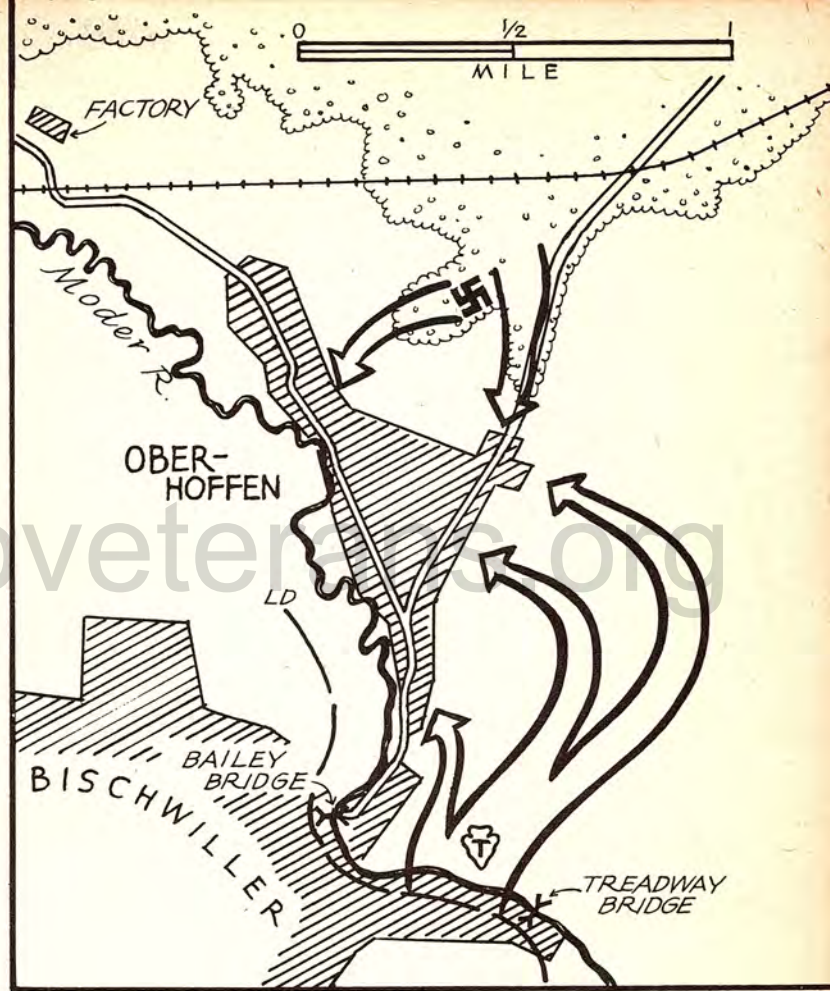
Four battalions figured in the sweeping Division attack: on the left, the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, moved out to seize the Drusenheim woods; in the center, the 1st Battalion, 143rd, had Rohrwiller as its objective; the 2nd Battalion, 143rd, on the right of the 1st, after cutting the important Drusenheim-Herrlisheim road link at the junction east of Rohrwiller, would then turn south to hit Herrlisheim from the north; on the Division right the 3rd Battalion, 141st, had the difficult mission of taking Herrlisheim on a barren approach from the south.

Infantrymen of the 143rd plowed through knee-deep mud and water, stumbled over many a quick-running ditch to close in on Rohrwiller. Happily a flight of friendly bombers roared overhead to drown out the noise of approaching troops. When the 1st Battalion broke into town it was evident that the enemy had been caught napping. Radios were still playing, field phones connected. In one house were freshly-dressed ducks and a newly-slaughtered pig. Before daylight 120 prisoners had been rounded up in the town.

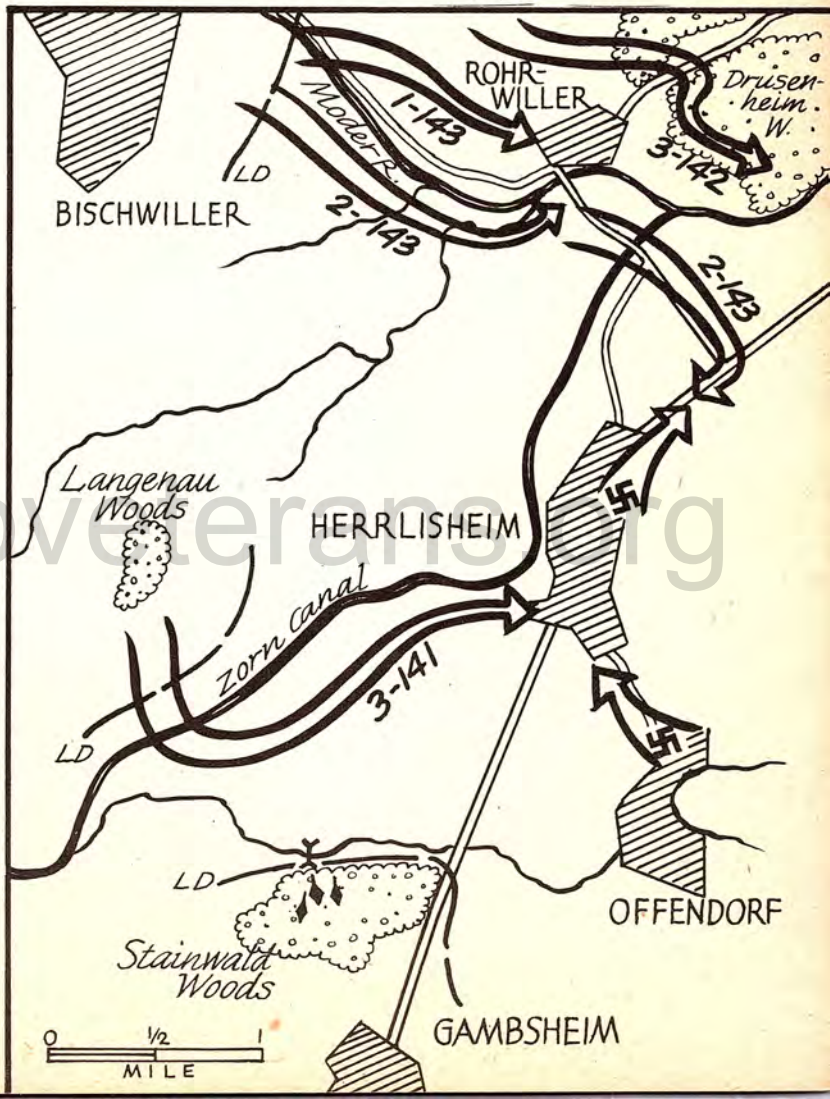
Tanks and weasel tractors, following the infantry and bringing up bridging materials, early bogged down in the mire. By hand, men dragged the heavy bridge parts cross-country to the sites where they were to be used. Southeast of Rohrwiller two vital bridges were seized intact by the alert 2nd Battalion, which pushed on to gain its objective at the road junction by dawn, February 3.

The 3rd Battalion, 142nd, walked to within 100 yards of the dark line that marked the edge of Drusenheim woods, when five enemy machine gunners broke the silence. A whooping I Company Indian-style assault chased the enemy gunners. But the Germans, after being aroused, concentrated five tanks for an attack that sent K Company streaming back across the Moder. By morning, however, elements of the 3rd Battalion were holding water-filled fox-holes on their objective, the south portion of the woods.

Companies I and K led the attack of the 141st for Herrlisheim. Both had to cross a canal by footbridge, then make a two-kilometer approach on open terrain to the objective.



FAILURE TO GET supporting armor over river obstacles early, thwarted opening attacks on Oberhoffen (above) and Herrlisheim (below). Both towns were eventually taken.





INFANTRYMEN MOVE "ON THE DOUBLE" AS THEY PASS KO'D TANK DURING THEIR ADVANCE THROUGH OBERHOFFEN.

Enemy-held Offendorf closely flanked the attacking parties on the east. The troops, crossing the line of departure at 0300, were beset by similar mud-and-water lagoons sorely affecting the advance. When within 400 yards of Herrlisheim, German weapons sounded the alarm. Soon a heavy fire fight flared up until, at daylight, some 175 of the Battalion broke for the shelter of the town buildings. A great deal of confusion occurred after reaching the buildings when regular fighting teams were split and reorganization could not be effected. The Germans had strong points in eight houses on the edge of town. Though attacking troops took up firing positions within buildings and in foxholes around eight other houses, many of the men woefully learned that their mud-caked weapons were of little use, hopefully waited for reinforcement and for tanks which

could blast the enemy opposition. The tanks never appeared, as flood conditions which caused the canal to rise four and one-half feet in six hours delayed completion of a necessary bridge. Two German tanks came up the road from Offendorf and were able to drive out a platoon of Company I after 45 minutes exchange of fire. Finally Company I and K commanders ordered withdrawal from Herrlisheim.

Spurred on by this result, the Germans rallied north of Herrlisheim and drove the 2nd Battalion, 143rd, off its objective, the road junction. Rohrwiler came under shell-fire but was firmly held. Further Division attacks during the day cleared the Drusenheim woods.

Two days later the result of this difficult four-battalion attack was more fully realized when the Germans, faced

AFTER 48 HOURS OF CONTINUOUS FIGHTING WITHIN OBERHOFFEN, MEN OF 1st BATTALION, 142nd, WELCOMED REINFORCEMENTS.





HOUSE TO HOUSE

GERMANS fired heavily at the bailey bridge linking Bischwiller and Oberhoffen but it remained intact.

Oberhoffen yielded a large number of enemy prisoners. Germans had to be dug out of cellars at bayonet point or flushed out with grenades. The two pictured above surrendered only after they had received this treatment.

SMOKE from a German mortar shell envelopes an already battered house in the town.





GERMANS IN THE WOODS. The enemy took full advantage of the wooded area north of Oberhoffen to launch his counter measures. Despite artillery concentrations and bombings carried out on their positions, the Germans attacked from the woods to overrun the northeastern and central portions of the town on February 11. (Below) With an American tank still burning in the foreground, two litter-bearers pick up the body of a dead American.





ATTACK ON HERRLISHEIM BY 141st WAS THROWN BACK, BUT GERMANS WERE EVENTUALLY FORCED TO EVACUATE IT.

with encirclement on the north, abandoned Herrlisheim and Offendorf. On February 6, after these towns were occupied, patrols of the 141st were posted along the Rhine.

On January 10 the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 143rd, from the new line at the forward edge of the Drusenheim woods, attacked to seize Drusenheim. Elements of Company E and Company K got into town past anti-personnel mines, machine-guns and barbed wire entanglements. A strong road block south of town on the right held up Company G. By late afternoon, however, when the cost of the effort became bitterly high, troops were ordered to return to their former positions.

OBERHOFFEN FIGHT CONTINUES

Meanwhile, at Oberhoffen heavy fighting had been going on continuously since the first entry into town, February 1. The northwest corner remained to be cleared when the 1st Battalion, 142nd, came back to Oberhoffen on February 7. For two days Company C aggressively hammered out gains in an action that won it the Presidential Unit Citation. Into the flattened, rubble-strewn blocks of this section the Germans poured hundreds of reinforcements in a vain attempt to alter the decision. Company I made a river crossing

north of Oberhoffen on the night of February 9-10 to strike at the German resistance from the rear. Company I had not linked up with the friendly elements in Oberhoffen when the Germans, on the hazy morning of February 11, committed a fresh battalion with three heavy self-propelled guns in support and sliced through Company E positions in the center of town. Bounding back and attacking from two sides, the 2nd Battalion nipped the German success and cut the enemy's escape routes. Two of the SPs were **TWO CHILDREN**, too young to realize the wrath of war, calmly play with German "toys" left in their yard at Oberhoffen.



knocked out by infantrymen with bazookas. The same day Companies I and L linked up, erasing all enemy holdings in the north. More than 200 prisoners were taken on this one day. The German 257 VG Division in seven days' commitment at Oberhoffen lost over 500 men and two battalion commanders to Division prisoner-of-war channels alone.

QUIET AGAIN

Throughout another month the 36th held a static defense line along the Moder River from Oberhoffen to a point west of Haguenau. Extensive patrolling, often resulting in sharp clashes, featured this quiet period. Regiments were rotated for rest behind the lines. The Engineers busily laid mile after mile of board planking to keep the flimsy road network open. Artillerymen conserved their ammunition requirements as they did not have as many targets to shoot at. After dark a pattern of blue-white searchlight beams hung out over the front. Bright colored flares sometimes punctuated the stillness of the night. Within Haguenau, C Company, 143rd, crossed the Moder on March 3 to secure a small bridgehead. In heavy fighting eleven houses were seized before the company was relieved by the 1st Battalion, 141st. In violent counter action the Germans forced evacuation of nine of the buildings. But by 0600 of February 7 all the houses were retaken and the bridgehead became a stepping stone for the next major attack.



DAHLGREN



DELAU

In the bitter battle for Oberhoffen two individual actions were cited for the Nation's highest award: 2nd Lt. Edward C. Dahlgren, a T/Sgt. at the time of his action, destroyed two German machine guns, killed at least eight of the enemy, wounded an unknown number, and captured thirty-nine in leading his platoon to rout German forces which had penetrated the northwest corner on February 11.

Sgt. Emile Delau, Jr., a squad leader, during the first attack for Oberhoffen, rushed an enemy-held house to capture ten Germans, later took two snipers. The following day, he silenced a machine gun after crossing a fire-swept open field. A few minutes later, as he worked his way toward another strongpoint, Sgt. Delau was killed instantly by enemy fire.

ROHRWILLER WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY THE 143rd INFANTRY. T-PATCHERS FOUND RADIOS STILL PLAYING.



worldwartwoveterans.org



THIS LONE "MINEN" SIGN IS THE ONLY WARNING OF A GERMAN MINEFIELD COVERED BY FLOOD WATERS OF THE MODER.

SPRING THAW

After a prolonged period of bitter cold and snow, the winter snapped suddenly on January 19. Bright, crisp sunshine poured over the Northern Alsatian plain, the snow melting into rampaging waters. The Moder burst from its banks to cover miles of the adjoining battlefield. Roads thawed into a quagmire and washed away under Army use. T-Patchers waded in hip-deep water to attack over the flatlands to the Rhine. Before Drusenheim could be won, boggy fields forced a halt.

ENGINEERS built miles of wooden platforms to make road passable.



TREES WERE THE ONLY MARKERS ALONG FLOOD-COVERED ROADS.





A GERMAN 88 CAPTURED AT OFFENDORF IS TURNED ACROSS THE RHINE. SGT. ALBERT R. WALDHUBER LOADS SHELL.
AN AMERICAN TANK captured earlier by the Germans at Herrlisheim was abandoned when the enemy evacuated the town.



POCKET CLEARED

After four days of hard fighting, the Gamsheim pocket ceased to exist. The 143rd's well coordinated attack on Rohrwiller gained a decisive advantage. With Herrlisheim and Offendorf threatened by encirclement, the Germans were forced to pull out. From the Drusenheim woods, cleared by men of the 142nd and 143rd, the enemy fell back into Drusenheim. Soft ground and flooded fields foiled the 143rd's attack on Drusenheim, a bitter effort across open terrain. The 141st outposted the Rhine River south of Drusenheim. Earlier the French had moved into Gamsheim, original point of the German threat to Strasbourg.

AT DRUSENHEIM, on the Rhine, the Germans held fast. Our attacks were discontinued.





INFANTRYMEN OF THE 143rd RCT STALK THROUGH THE STREETS OF HAGUENAU IN FILE. THEY ARE GOING ON PATROL.

The Division's fifteenth Congressional Medal of Honor was awarded posthumously to **T/SGT. MORRIS S. CRANE**, who was killed while performing his deed at Haguenau on March 13, 1945.

GERMANS fought with drunken violence to prevent the Americans from taking eleven battered houses across the Moder.

"C" COMPANY'S 2nd PLATOON took eight of the houses, lost five, and then regained all of them.





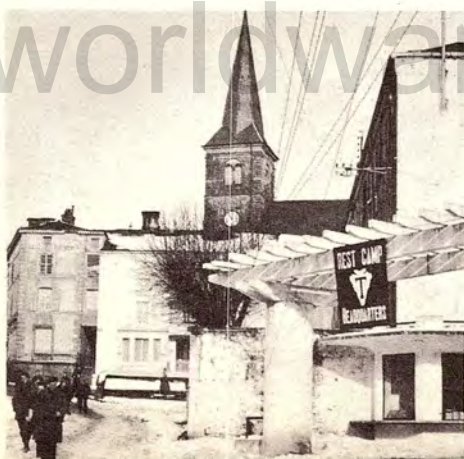
COMPARATIVE QUIET. In Haguenau there was comparative quiet, but *(above)* running civilians have heard the whizzing of an incoming shell. *(Below)* Capt. Alban E. Reid, Jr. *(left)* and Pfc. William C. Mech, I Company, 142nd, question two women who are suspected of communicating with the Germans outside Schweighausen.





THE CIRCULAR SULPHUR SPRING POOL WAS THE MOST POPULAR FEATURE OF THE REST CAMP. WATER WAS WARM.

BAINS-LES-BAINS



There was no finer rest camp in the ETO than the one operated by the Division in the French village of Bains-les-Bains, between the Meuse and Moselle Rivers. While rest camps in more exciting metropolitan areas allowed combat troops to schedule days of unending sightseeing and night-clubbing, at Bains-les-Bains the accent was on much-needed and well-deserved rest.

The first contingent of restees, with more than 100 continuous days of combat behind them, arrived at Bains-les-Bains for a week of relaxation on December 7. Four months later when the camp was officially closed, the Special Service Officer determined that 5,533 enlisted men and 401 officers had been quartered there.

During their stay troops were billeted in five of the town's hotels, each one of them named for a Congressional Medal of Honor winner—the Hotels Kelly, Logan, Crawford and Wise for enlisted



men, and the Hotel Bjorklund for officers. After a hot shower, men shed their mud-stained combat clothing for a complete new uniform. Dinner, prepared by French chefs, followed in the

Hotel Kelly, with china replacing mess-kits and with waitresses to serve.

Special Service Section, headed by Captain Theodore J. Nykiel, Assistant SSO, aided by two Red Cross hostesses, the Misses Kay McDonald and Candy White, arranged for and supervised a wealth of entertainment throughout the four months. In the ARC corral there were reading and writing lounges, a snack bar, two dances weekly, and special programs; in the Casino theater two movies daily. Hard-working hosts and entertainers were men of the 36th Division Band, who in addition to playing a variety of music at meals, for shows and dances, managed the hotels and fulfilled many of the work details to accommodate the visiting troops. Most of the recreational facilities for the officers were in their own club at the Bjorklund.

Mindful of the poverty of sanitation during the preceding months, GI's by popular demonstration selected the Roman Baths as their favorite spot at Bains-les-Bains. In them they bathed for hours and then crawled between white sheets, the first for many of the men in over a year.



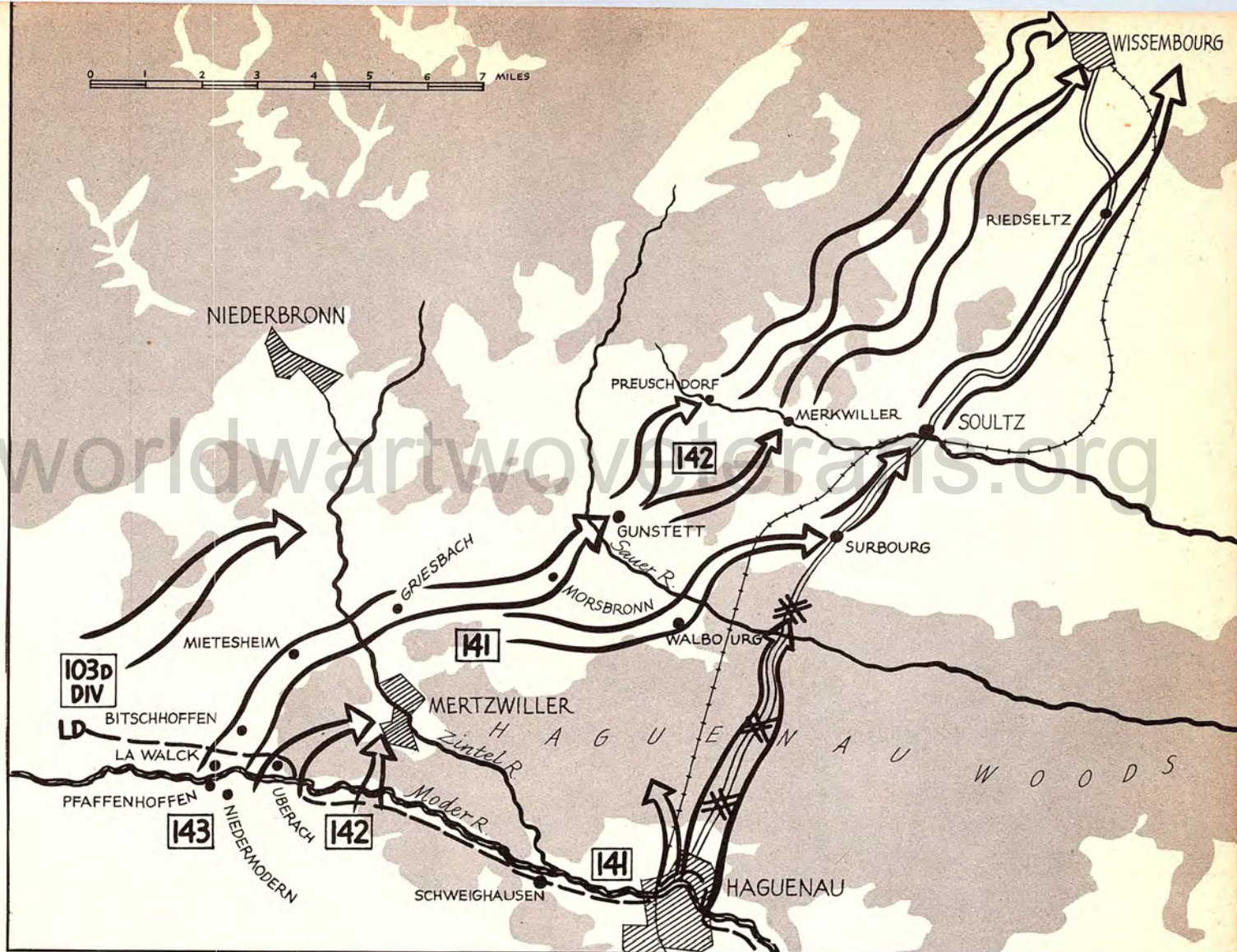
INFANTRYMEN brought the snow and mud of the front with them. (Below) After a hot shower and trip to the PX, fatigued fighters felt like new men.



GOING WHICH WAY?

AT LEAST TWO DANCES were scheduled each week. The 36th Division Band provided music.





WITHOUT A SOUND, at 1:00 A.M. of March 15, the 36th launched a major attack. After breaking the Moder River defenses, it swept around Haguenau Woods and sped to the Siegfried Line, above Wissembourg.

JUMP-OFF AT THE MODER

Up in the north the American First and Ninth Armies reached the Rhine. The Allies, capitalizing on a fateful German blunder, made the first crossing March 7 over the Rhine-spanning Ludendorff at Remagen. Even as the bridgehead was secured, Field Marshal Albert Kesselring, replacing von Rundstedt as top enemy commander in the west, watched for follow-up crossings in other army sectors. In early March the American Third Army, after reaching the Rhine turned south, enclosing a large body of Germans in the Saar-Palatinate. On March 15 a general Seventh Army offensive opened in conjunction with the Third Army attacks to destroy all German forces west of the Rhine in the Saar-Palatinate.

The 36th Division in the Haguenau sector, part of the VI Corps, was the right flank division of the Army. On its right, between it and the Rhine was the 3rd French Algerian Division, and attacking abreast on the left was

the 103rd "Cactus" Division. Two tasks were assigned the 36th: to break the enemy's Moder River defense line, allowing the 14th Armored Division to roll through; then to breach the Siegfried Line, seize Bergzabern and flank that portion of the Siegfried facing the French forces on the right.

The Germans had been organizing the Moder River Line since early February. Opposite the Division this position included the northern section of Haguenau and the broad Haguenau Forest, with open ground only on the left. Before a real breach could be made so that the 14th Armored could operate, three rivers—the Moder, the Zintel and the Sauer—had to be crossed and bridged. In addition, the highway from Haguenau to Sultz had to be cleared as it was to become the Corps main supply route. However, for miles this road cut through the deep Haguenau Forest, and air photographs had disclosed many long stretches of pre-



THROUGH LEVELED BITSCHOFFEN (below) K Company, 143rd Infantry, opened a supply road (above) vital to the Infantry units of the entire Sixth Corps.



66 PRISONERS were taken by K Company at Bitschoffen.



pared abatis on the road. As a push aimed straight through the Forest would have been too slow, the Division's main effort was placed on the left in the open ground to the west of the Forest.

Lt. Col. Charles Denholm's 143rd Infantry was chosen for this task. He assembled his regiment, three companies of tanks and tank destroyers, and an engineer bridge train near the village of Pfaffenhoffen where a small bridgehead over the Moder already existed. The 3rd Battalion led off at 0100, morning of the 15th. To obtain surprise, no artillery preparation was permitted. Lt. O'Dean Cox's Company K, attacking over terrain offering no concealment or cover and over ground heavily sown with anti-personnel shu mines, captured Bitschoffen and opened the Bitschoffen road early in the morning. Repulsed three times, the company had reformed and captured the town although one third of its men had been killed or wounded. For this action Company K received the Presidential Unit Citation. The Division Commander in presenting it later said, "I know of no action in the war by any unit which so deserved a citation."

36TH BESTS GERMAN 36TH

While K Company was engaged in Bitschoffen, the remainder of the 3rd Battalion had attacked cross-country to seize Mietesheim, and the 2nd Battalion was clearing the western edge of the Haguenau Forest. As soon as the 3rd Battalion had won the Bitschoffen road the 1st Battalion was committed to keep the breach open. It forced the Zintel River by wading the stream near an old mill. All night troops over the river fought off counter-attacks, one launched by the reserve battalion of the 36th German Division, led by tanks. Morning found the bridgehead holding firm. Before noon a bridge had been built and Griesbach entered. Without stopping the Battalion raced for Gunstett on the Sauer River, in an effort to capture the bridge intact. But as the leading elements came down the hill before the river the bridge was blown and another fight for a bridgehead became necessary.

One more day of hard struggle passed before Gunstett was cleared. While the 1st Battalion fought from house-to-house (its spearheading drive through Mietesheim and Gunstett also earned a Presidential Unit Citation), the 2nd Battalion had cleared the western edges of the Haguenau Forest and the 3rd Battalion moved up to cross the Sauer east of Gunstett. By dark the town had been taken and engineers were working on a bridge. With the first of the Division's missions accomplished, the 14th Armored Division was alerted for its advance.

While the 143rd was forcing three rivers, the 142nd on its right captured Mertzwiller and opened a second road. Led by Lt. Colonel Everett S. Simpson's 3rd Battalion and Lt. Col. Marvin J. Coyle's 2nd Battalion, the Regiment jumped off at 0100 in the morning. The 2nd Battalion partially across the Moder was hit by intense artillery preparations and forced to withdraw. The 3rd Battalion, however, regardless of the mines, pressed on through the forest, and by daylight had gained a foothold in Mertzwiller. While the 2nd Battalion was being reorganized, the 1st

Battalion was committed to fight through to join with the 3rd. Though the Germans fought stubbornly to hold Mertzwiller, by the 16th it was in our hands and a bridge spanning the river within the town started. The 142nd was then reassembled and prepared to move through the 143rd as soon as the latter had captured Gunstett.

On the Division's extreme right the 141st had the task of clearing all of Haguenau and then opening the Haguenau-Sultz road. On March 13 some preliminary stabs were made across the Moder to enlarge the Haguenau bridgehead and to put in a bridge. At 0300 on the 15th the 1st Battalion moved out of the east end of Haguenau while the 2nd cleared the remainder of the town. The 3rd Battalion was held in reserve covering the left flank while the 36th Reconnaissance Troop kept contact with the French on the right. Though progress was slow, all of Haguenau was cleared on the 15th and the defenses in the edge of the Forest breached. Next, the 3rd Battalion was committed on the 16th to clear the road—mainly an engineering job, but a nasty one because of the mined abatis. Early on the morning of the 17th the 1st Battalion was loaded on trucks and left Haguenau, moving through Mertzwiller to make an end run around the Forest and attack the last block in the woods from the flank and rear. That night the Sauer River was crossed and Surbourg taken, opening the main road to Sultz.

GERMANY ENTERED

The bridge at Gunstett was finished at midnight of the 17th. Immediately the 142nd, mounted on tanks, tank destroyers and artillery trucks, started across and headed due north for Wissembourg. At daylight the leading Combat Command of the 14th Armored followed across the one bridge and turned east toward the Rhine. As soon as they had cleared, the 141st moved into Sultz and started reconnaissance for the Lauter River, the last obstacle before the Siegfried Line. With opposition slight, the columns of the two regiments moved fast. Early the next morning the 1st Battalion, 142nd, entered Wissembourg, throwing rocks into the Lauter River there to make their own crossing. An hour before, the 2nd Battalion, 141st, had forced a crossing several miles to the east. Thus on March 19 the 36th had crossed the last barrier to Germany. By early afternoon both battalions had entered Germany and were face to face with the Siegfried Line.



Pfc. Silvestre S. Herrera, 142nd CMH holder, lost both feet from German-laid mines in the Haguenau Forest engagement. As his company sought cover from enemy fire, Herrera dashed toward a German strongpoint and pinned down the enemy crew with grenades and an M-1.



CIVILIANS COME OUT within Haguenau, after 141st had cleared it. Below: The French return to Mertzwiller, 142nd objective.





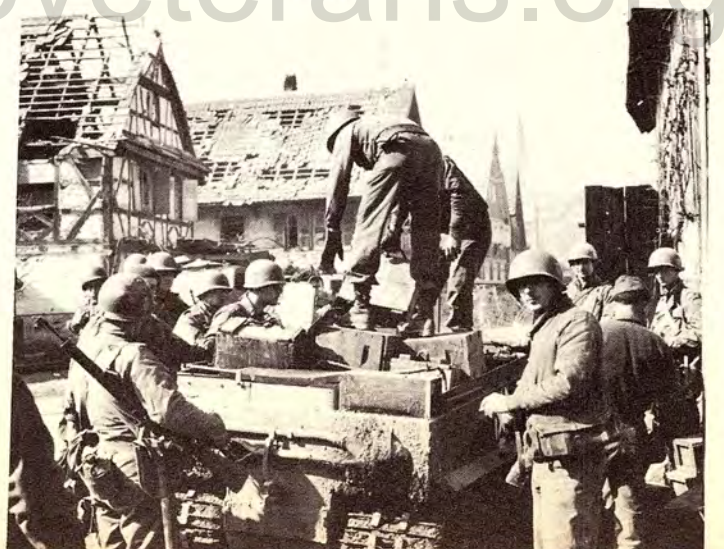
ATTACHED 36th ENGINEERS (NOT ORGANIC DIVISION UNIT) LAY A TREADWAY BRIDGE IN ATTACK TOWARD SIEGFRIED.



GERMANS ABANDONED this wagon-load of bazookas. MORE PRISONERS were taken in Mertzwiller by 142nd.



INTERROGATORS of 143rd question a prisoner near La Walck. THE NEW "WEASEL" brings up ammunition to be unloaded.





JEEP, CARRYING MEMBERS OF 111th MEDICAL BN., KEEPS PACE WITH ADVANCE AS IT ROLLS TOWARD WISSEMBOURG.



LAST TOUGH NUT to crack before Siegfried was at Gunstett.
K COMPANY MOVES ON up the road after action at Bitschoffen.



IN SURBOURG some buildings were still smoking.
INFANTRY PASS ko'd German 120mm self-propelled.





LOOKING OVER WISSEMBOURG, BATTLE-SMOKE RISES IN HILLS WHERE 36TH STORMED SIEGFRIED. SCHWEIGEN AT RIGHT.

THROUGH THE SIEGFRIED

Little more than two miles north of Wissembourg the main line of German heavy fortifications—the Siegfried Line or Westwall—faced the Allied invaders as they plunged into Germany. As they had done all along the western border of Germany, German engineers at Wissembourg Gap had arranged a formidable defense, heaviest in the entire Seventh Army sector, to block this natural gateway to the Fatherland. Here the country is but slightly rolling and open, excellent for armor, flanked on the west by a jumbled mass of sharply rising, forested hills. The 36th Division, farthest in point of distance from the Siegfried on the March 15 jump-off line, and not provided with armored siege guns, was expected to do little more than make a serious demonstration upon reaching the obstacle—to uncover the Siegfried defenses—while the Army's main effort was delivered at closer range many miles to the Division left. But, after planting the Lone Star flag on the Schweigen customs house, T-Patchers smashed on through this hard core of the Westwall, taking to the hills in a strenuous pillbox-to-pillbox advance, and reducing the enemy's most violent opposition.

The main defense belt in the flatland at Wissembourg, the familiar Westwall pattern of pyramided concrete obstacles, stretched across the plain from Ober-Otterbach to Steinfeld in the path of the 36th. It was further covered by fire from the overlooking heights west of Ober-Otterbach. In the hills a complex network of heavy concrete pillboxes, set into the ground and carefully camouflaged, with interlocking schemes of fire, elaborate trench systems and wire obstacles constituted the bulwark of the enemy's vaunted line.

Three months earlier other troops of the Seventh Army had first driven into Germany along this same approach. They spent three weeks in the hills near Rechtenbach and

Ober-Otterbach, trying to force an opening, but it was not enough to gain success. Then for security reasons, a general withdrawal of the Seventh Army line to the Moder River was ordered.

As the 36th drew near to the Siegfried Line on the crisp, clear morning of March 19, the 142nd Infantry on the left moved into Wissembourg at noon. Enemy contact was spotty. The Germans had failed to show any strength in front of Wissembourg—only bridges blown and the remnants of a forced labor battalion, quickly seized. Though already worn from the previous day's long pursuit, the 1st Battalion, 142nd, because of its lead position, was ordered immediately on up the main road toward Bergzabern, and into the Siegfried Line.

Schweigen and Rechtenbach were both passed without drawing German fire. Then suddenly, as lead elements came into view on the down-slope before Ober-Otterbach, the German guns spoke, raining heavily upon the 1st Battalion, shelling Wissembourg, and covering the road from Wissembourg to Ober-Otterbach. Any thought that the Germans might have fled the Westwall or were ill-prepared to meet the assault was buried under the volume of shellfire now streaming forth from it.

C Company grouped three times before pushing down into Ober-Otterbach where, even after the town was cleared, the enemy continually strafed the streets from pillboxes on the nearby hills. The remainder of the 1st Battalion closed into Ober-Otterbach soon after dark and hastily prepared for a direct assault through the dragon's teeth to the front.

Meanwhile, other battalions of the Division were moving up to strike at other points along the Siegfried belt. The 2nd Battalion, 142nd, veered to the left of the 1st Battalion, clambering over the line of hills until heavily engaged in the mass of pillboxes west of Ober-Otterbach. Deep into



TEXAS FLAG FLIES OVER GERMANY. At the monumental customs house gateway at Schweigen, the Texas Lone Star flag, sent by Governor Coke Stevenson, was planted by Division MPs. The hastily chalked sign credits the 142nd as first unit through the archway.

the hills on a wide sweep to the left went Lt. Col. Everett S. Simpson's 3rd Battalion, 142nd.

In the flatland on the Division right, the 2nd Battalion, 141st, had crossed into Germany southeast of Wissembourg at 1100 hours of March 19—first unit of the Division over the border. By nightfall the 2nd Battalion had formed a line in front of the dragon's teeth one mile east of Ober-Otterbach and in early probings uncovered an array of 15 enemy machine-guns alert to meet it. During the night the

3rd and 1st Battalions, 141st, hastened up to move in alongside the 2nd on the 2nd's right. Six battalions, reading from left to right: the 3rd, 2nd, and 1st of the 142nd, the 2nd, 3rd, and 1st of the 141st, now lined up before the Siegfried. The 143rd remained, for the time, in Division reserve.

Next morning it became certain that a penetration would not be made in the lowland. The 1st Battalion, 142nd, found the enemy forces at the dragon's teeth beyond Ober-Otterbach too strong for any quick overthrow, withdrew to the cover of the town before daylight. The three battalions of the 141st lunged forward on a broad front at noon but soon were pinned down by heavy concentrations of nebelwerfer fire and of crossed machine-gun fires in the open terrain. Leaving only a token force to maintain enemy contact, the main body of the 141st was then withdrawn and turned to support the Division effort in the hills.

WAY OPENED

A break by the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, in capturing the Grassberg height, a critical feature in the enemy's defense, paved the way for the eventual collapse of the Siegfried Line in the Division zone.

A twelve-hour march uphill west of Rechtenbach brought the 3rd Battalion in position before the Grassberg height at noon of March 20. A deep draw running west from Ober-Otterbach formed a moat-like barrier to the base of the Grassberg ridge. In the draw and on the slopes of the objective, the Germans had felled large numbers of trees to provide ample fields of fire and to erect another obstacle. Men of the battalion scampered across the draw at its narrowest open stretch, dodging the long-range shots of a single enemy machine-gunner taking aim from the head of the draw.

While the Battalion was thus hoping to effectively attain surprise, an incident occurred that should have touched off the whole German defense. Unknown to the Battalion commander, the leading platoon of the Battalion, from I Company, attacked the Grassberg hill before the main body was able to follow up in strength. The platoon succeeded in gaining the top but was driven off by fierce counter-action after the platoon leader was killed. The result was learned by Colonel Simpson as he directed the infiltration of the main body across the draw.

Yet, after the 3rd Battalion had struggled up over the log

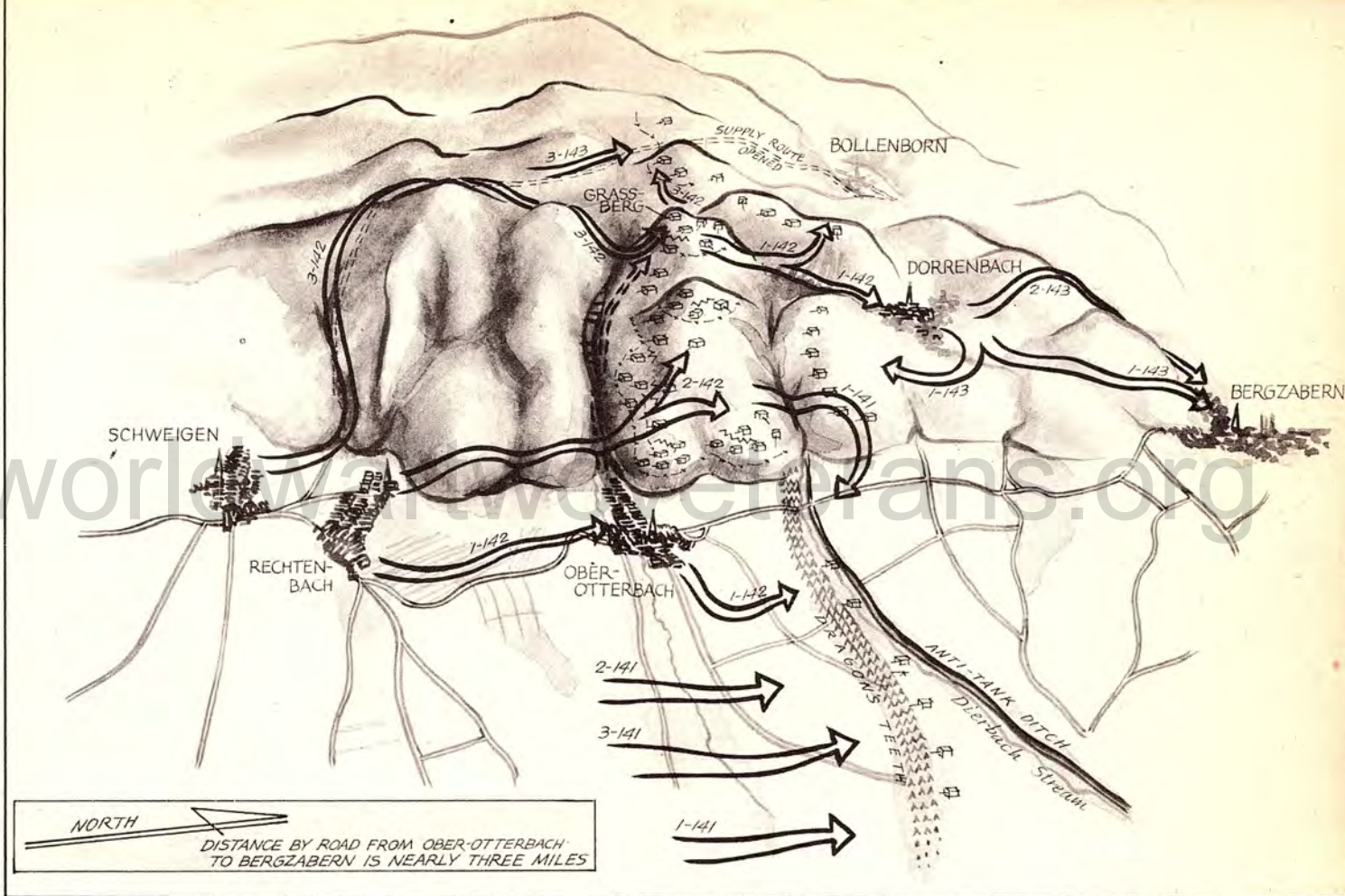


ENEMY PILLBOXES were hidden in the foliage on Grassberg height across gully. Felled trees were another obstacle. (Below) Troops pause at one of the pillboxes after its capture.



IN THE FLATLAND THE GERMANS POUNDED THE ATTACKERS WITH FIERCE NEBELWERFER AND ARTILLERY CONCENTRATIONS.





SKETCH approximates terrain which figured in battle through Siegfried. The 36th's lead columns, approaching from Schweigen and Rechtenbach, first tried for a quick opening in the flatland but were strongly rebuffed. Other elements took to the hills and began slow reduction of hidden pillboxes. Then the critical Grassberg height was seized and the attack pressed until Dorrenbach was entered, at the rear of the enemy's main line. Bergzabern fell on following day. Long supply route across mass of hills had to be cleared and built.

barriers and the steep slope, the men were able to drive the Germans from the forward edge of the top and establish themselves in the trenches about the pillboxes. Fighting was brisk until Grassberg was secured by late afternoon. After dark Germans attempting to filter back onto the hill from a nearby ridge were severely cut down.

Now it was imperative to exploit the advantage won, but the 3rd Battalion, still engaged and short on ammunition, could not move. The route that the 3rd Battalion had taken to reach its objective was a matter of 12 to 16 hours' march. For the nearest available battalion, the 1st, the round-about way from Ober-Otterbach would have required at least 20 hours, and exhausted the men before fighting.

SHORT ROUTE SUCCEEDS

At 2200, Colonel Lynch ordered Lieutenant Colonel James Minor, commanding the 1st Battalion, to move to Grassberg and pass through the 3rd Battalion. But the move was to be made boldly up the deep draw due west from Ober-Otterbach under the very eyes and ears of the enemy in his defenses north of the draw. This short route, covered without stirring the enemy, enabled the 1st Battalion to arrive on Grassberg and jump off through the 3rd Battalion at 0715 on March 21.

The fighting was bitter all during the day as successive pillboxes were slowly reduced. Suddenly, during late afternoon, Company B broke loose and crashed down into Dor-

renbach, a town at the rear of the German line, routing surprised kitchen crews and artillerymen. Following the 1st Battalion, 142nd, the 1st Battalion, 143rd, passed through to attack toward Bergzabern. Pushing on in the deep woods during the night and meeting continued resistance, the battalion at daylight found itself 1,500 yards south of Dorrenbach, 180 degrees off-course. They had been fighting the German main line from the rear! In the morning the 2nd Battalion, 143rd, joined in the advance on Bergzabern. It fought to cut the Bollenborn-Bergzabern road, then with the 1st Battalion on the right, pressed into Bergzabern after dark. By morning the outer defenses of

HOT COFFEE revives radio team in Siegfried operation.





THROUGH THE BROKEN SIEGFRIED ...

the town had crumbled, the enemy's artillery fire over the Siegfried had ceased, and the Germans who had not been able to flee were giving themselves up by the hundreds.

Though a description of the breakthrough pattern deserves special attention, other battalions on the Division front contributed powerfully to the over-all success by whittling down German forces adjacent to the penetration. Men of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd, awoke on the morning of March 20 to find themselves locked in the midst of a maze of related pillbox fortresses on the hills west of Ober-Otterbach. Through the entire operation the battalion was engaged in clearing them one by one until fifty-four had been captured. Infantrymen and engineers tackled the pillbox problem in careful coordination. Tanks could not come within range because of the steepness of the slopes on which the defenses lay. Infantry cut the wire that

TROOPS MOUNTED TANKS and tank destroyers at Bergzabern.



...ROLLED A VICTORIOUS 36th. DASH TO RHINE FOLLOWED.

hemmed in the defenders, chased the Germans from their trenches into the cover of the concrete enclosures, then kept these buttoned-up under fire while the engineers crept up to lay special demolition charges at doors and apertures. A sharp blast and the enemy might come running out in surrender. Or, safely under cover, he might counter by calling down mortar fire on his own position. Each strong-point presented its own trying problem. The 1st Battalion, 141st, moved in on the right of the 2nd Battalion, 142nd, on March 21, and had cleared thirty-five of the strongboxes by the time opposition ceased.

SUPPLY TRAIL NEEDED

The 3rd Battalion, 143rd, and the 3rd Battalion, 142nd, fought to open a supply trail to Dorrenbach after the breakthrough at Grassberg had been achieved. When the main effort of the Division was directed into the hills it necessitated the opening up and construction of a supply route for the troops advancing on Bergzabern, as none other existed in the Division sector. When completed the trail wound seven and a half kilometers from Rechtenbach to a point near Bollenborn. Over it all of the Division armor and transport passed until the main road through the dragon's teeth to Bergzabern was cleared.

Enemy artillery, rocket fire, and six-barrelled mortars were very active during all of the Siegfried operation. Two nebelwerfer regiments showed up in the prisoner toll. Our own artillery countered just as heavily, but the Germans were relatively secure in their heavy emplacements.

With the Siegfried floodgate opened wide, our forces rushed into Germany to rapidly mop up remaining resistance west of the Rhine River. The 143rd, in the lead, thrust due east from Bergzabern early on the morning of March 23, seizing Kappellen and Barbelroth. Leap-frogging through the 1st and 2nd Battalions, the 3rd Battalion,



ON MARCH 23rd TANK COLUMNS RACED 25 MILES TO THE RHINE, ROUNDED UP HUNDREDS OF FLEEING GERMANS.

143rd, first to be motorized, opened the road to Winden. By this time straggling groups of Germans were being overrun in great numbers. Resistance was negligible and, if at all, only hastily organized. The 4th Provisional Battalion (Colonel Denholm's specially created task force made up principally of Cannon and Anti-tank company elements) rolled through the 3rd, destroyed more serious German opposition at Minfeld, then pushed another fifteen kilometers beyond to reach Neupfotz at 1645 hours. Here a large body of the enemy was overtaken before they could escape across the Rhine. Some 700 prisoners were rounded up, a battery of 170mm. horse-drawn artillery, a light tank, scout car and other equipment captured. Before dawn of March 24 the 143rd had seized Leimersheim, on the Rhine, and the ferry sites which were its objective.

Meanwhile, on a parallel route to the north, the 142nd, which had hastily removed from its Siegfried positions and had motorized the 1st Battalion at Bergzabern, moved out at 1330 to race to the Rhine in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. At Rohrbach, the column came upon a 14th Armored Division team on the same road and heading for the same objective, Hordt. But it was then held up by enemy resistance before Herxheim. Turning southward to by-pass both the resistance and the congestion of friendly elements on the same road, the 142nd drove twenty-five kilometers to gain its objective, ahead of the friendly team, soon after midnight, with one sharp skirmish in the dark at Kuhardt.

The Division was now drawn up along the Rhine. The clearing of the marshy, wooded fringes of the west bank occupied another two days. Within a week other Allied troops would be storming across and driving deep into German heartland. The battle at the Siegfried was the last great battle the 36th would have to face.



THE 143rd WAS FIRST to reach the Rhine at Liemersheim (*above*). Soon outposts were established, and Division Artillery scored hits across the river (*below*).





BEDSHEETS AND PILLOWCASES WERE HASTY SURRENDER SIGNS IN HERXHEIM AND OTHER CONQUERED GERMAN TOWNS.

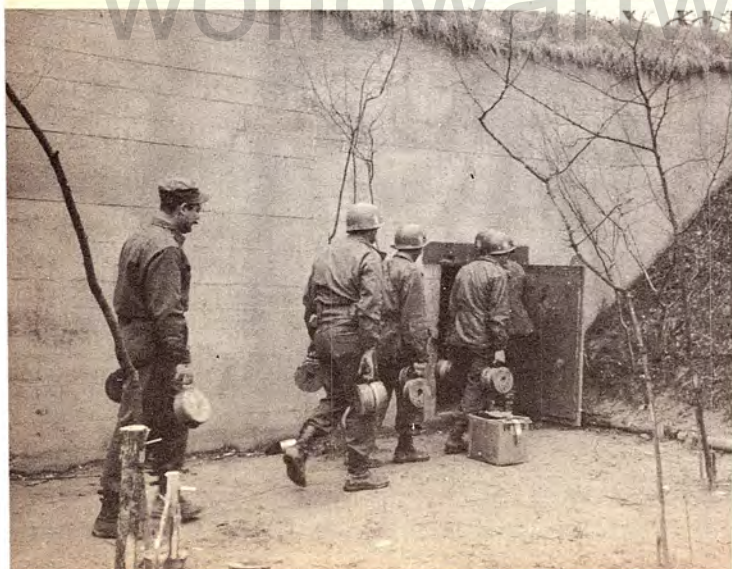


WHITE FLAGS

Village after village in the Reich presented this solemn, ghost-like spectacle to conquering T-Patchers rumbling over the ancient cobblestones of the Palatinate main streets—a white flag flying from every house, a few stunned, gloomy-eyed civilians watching the parade of Allied armor. After each fresh entry civilians were ordered confined to their homes for 48 hours. Under non-fraternization orders, the Americans—for the first few days, at least—ignored German wonderment and attempts to talk friendly-like to them. (Left) Troops line up for chow at a Rhine River outpost.

ENGINEERS SYSTEMATICALLY DESTROYED ...

... EACH OF THE CAPTURED HEAVY FORTIFICATIONS.





KAISERSLAUTERN CIVILIANS PAUSE TO READ LATEST REGULATIONS POSTED BY THE ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT.

KAISERSLAUTERN

It was April 1. Incoming orders were tinged with suspicions of the day. To the north other divisions were exploiting their Rhine crossings and knifing into cancerous Germany. And now veteran infantrymen of the 36th were being handed their first rear area assignment, occupation of the Palatinate.

General Patton shook loose his Third Army until it was reported only 90 miles from a Russian-American junction. GI observers predicted that after 19 battle-crammed months, the 36th would not be in on the final kill.

The Division took over the Kaiserslautern-Zweibrucken area. Units were spread thinly to blanket wide areas, battalions of the same regiment sometimes 25 miles apart. Motorized patrols wound about through the many villages covering the intervening distances. Check points were established to keep German travel at a minimum and patrols went about collaring German soldiers who had dis-

carded their uniforms for civilian attire. Screening was exercised to the fullest extent, uncovering tremendous amounts of enemy materiel and ammunition.

In Kaiserslautern and in Ludwigshaven and Worms, also occupied by Division troops, Allied bombings had left blocks of the industrial areas little more than heaps of rubble.

Morale zoomed. Few could deny that this was a more pleasant way to wage war. Troops were billeted in spotless German houses, and though fraternization was still forbidden, spring sports were popular and shows more frequent. Mickey Rooney toured the area with his "Jeep Company," and Marlene Dietrich returned to the 36th for her second visit. But when the dull drudgery of training cut in on the fun, some were heard to clamor for a return to the line.



DIVISION VEHICLES SPEED OVER GERMAN AUTOBAHNS. FINE ROADWAYS WERE USED BY ENEMY JET PLANES.

ON TO VICTORY

On April 24 Division elements left the Kaiserslautern area, traveling 150 miles to an assembly area east of Heilbronn, preparatory to re-entering the swift-moving Seventh Army line. Before the Division could collect its many units in the assembly area, the Army line had moved more than 100 miles beyond. When the 12th Armored Division seized

a bridge over the Danube, the whole structure of German resistance crumbled.

After being attached to the 21st Corps, the 36th caught up with and relieved the 63rd Division at Landsberg, some 300 miles from Kaiserslautern. Following and mopping up behind the fast-moving 12th Armored, a combat technique both novel and pleasant to the 36th, the Texans initiated an attack to the south from Landsberg.

Weilheim was cleared by the 2nd Battalion, 141st Infantry, which continued to move on into Penzberg. This was rampaging warfare. Resistance stiffened only sporadically, but for units who sped forward there was ever imminent the threat of ambush by fanatical storm troopers.

BAVARIAN ALPS REACHED

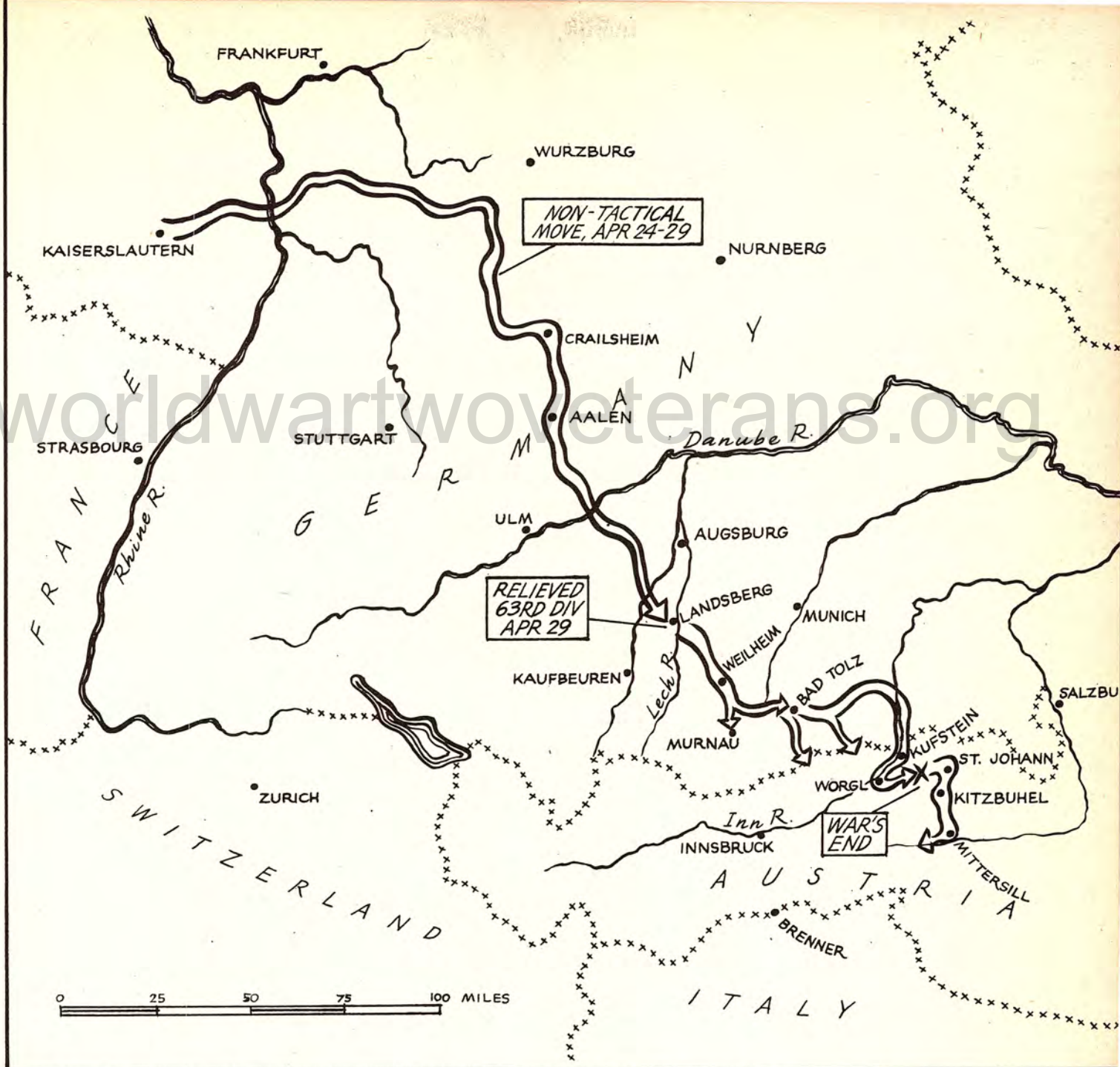
Moving eastward, the 141st Infantry captured Bad Tolz, engaging German stragglers fleeing into the Alpine retreat, while the 142nd swept the woods to the east and west of Murnau in the direction of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, site of the 1936 Winter Olympic games. At this time the 143rd assumed the police and patrol of the Murnau-Issingen area.

Attacking south from Bad Tolz, the 141st mounted the high Bavarian slopes to capture Tegernsee, Hohenburg, Lendgries and Wolligan. Huge snowdrifts in the mountain passes slowed the movement, but on the morning of the 5th the 141st cleared the last obstacle and entered the Inn River Valley.



LATE IN APRIL the 36th crossed the Rhine near Frankenthal. Broken railroad bridge paralleled pontoon span. (Below) Crailsheim's pulverized buildings were left behind.





WHEN THE 36th moved from Kaiserslautern to rejoin Seventh Army, it took three jumps and five days to catch the rapidly advancing Army line. Six days later, in Austria, final victory came.

Meanwhile, in what was to be the final action of the war, the 142nd Infantry on May 4 was sent 50 miles around the heights, through Raubling to relieve elements of the 12th Armored Division in the Inn River Valley at Kufstein. The Division had now entered Austria. One day later the engagement at Itter Castle provided a melodramatic finish. At 1830 of May 5 troops were ordered to halt in place and await further instructions. Down the line passed the good word, "HEY, JOE, THE WAR'S OVER." Joe rubbed his eyes, even cried. . . .

THE BLUE DANUBE was muddy and green where 36th crossed it, following up the Seventh Army advance.





TWO JEWISH GIRLS, DRESSED IN STRIPED-PRISONER GARB, LOOK DISTASTEFULLY AT CAR LOADED WITH NAZI VICTIMS.

DIVISION MEN SAW NAZI BRUTALITY AT FIRST-HAND.

LANDSBERG

To the 143rd Infantry befell the task of guarding Festung Landsberg, the prison in which Adolph Hitler spent 14 months in 1923-24, writing his infamous "Mein Kampf."

Landsberg prison under the Nazis confined both criminals, as judged by German law, and political prisoners, indiscriminately. When the Yanks arrived, the fortress, built to accommodate 500, was crammed with 1,400 pathetic prisoners of many nationalities.

The American Control Commission separated political prisoners from the criminal cases and returned many of them to their homelands. Some of the latter had experienced indescribable privation in other camps and were confined to the sick bay.

Doughs rated as most pleasant in the prison, the steam-heated room in which Der Fuehrer dictated to Rudolph Hess.





GERMAN CIVILIANS IN WEILHEIM GREETED THEIR CONQUERORS WITH CHEERS AND WHITE FLAGS OF SURRENDER.

THE REDOUBT FOLDS

Before an immediate victory over Germany could be foreseen, Allied strategists (and columnists) pointed with certainty to the mountains of Southern Germany. There, they predicted, Adolph Hitler would gather his élite SS guard for a last stand. High in his mountain retreat at Berchtesgaden, the Fuhrer might hold out for many months, possibly a year.

While an all-out German withdrawal to the Redoubt area would not pave the way for an Axis victory, at the same time it would impede Allied chances for a clean-cut final victory. With Allied troops trying to force the SS bands from the sharp Alpine slopes, German propaganda would

have another try at splitting the Allies, and Dr. Goebbels' endless chatter might solidify heralded werewolf (sabotage) gangs into forcing the occupation forces to give up in despair.

The myth of the National Redoubt was shortlived. In mid-April a double-pronged stab by the Third Army on the right and the Seventh Army on the left sliced deep into the territory previously supposed to be Hitler's invulnerable Inner Fortress. The junction of the Russians and Americans in the First Army sector farther north prevented any further transfer of enemy troops, supplies and communications to the Southern Redoubt.

CAPTURED WEHRMACHT HORDES, DAZED BY SUDDEN REALIZATION OF COMPLETE DEFEAT, STREAM TO THE REAR.



PRIZE CATCH

As noteworthy as the Division's battle feats over a period of twenty months was the magnitude of the enemy leaders it captured during the last few days of the war. Three of these captives, Reichsmarshal Hermann Goering, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, and Dr. Hans Frank, were later destined to face war criminal charges at the combined Allied trial at Nurnberg.

Germany's Luftwaffe Chief and No. 2 Nazi, Hermann Goering, surrendered to the Assistant Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Robert I. Stack, on V-E Day, following negotiations by his personal adjutant, Col. Von Brauchitsch, son of the German field marshal.

Von Brauchitsch arrived at the Division CP early in the morning of May 7 with a message to Gen. Eisenhower and Gen. Devers, Commanding Sixth Army Group. He explained his mission to Gen. Dahlquist and Gen. Stack, offering to send his driver with the latter to Goering's secret hideaway. Gen. Stack accompanied the driver and intercepted the pompous Goering on a road near Radstadt, about 35 miles southeast of Salzburg. The marshal understood some English, spoke very little. He was accompanied in his Mercedes Benz by his Frau Emmy, daughter Edda, several military aides and personal retainers.

Because of the darkness and the presence of SS troops

CROOKED-LIPPED, CATTY HERMANN GOERING, NO. 2 NAZI, TALKED FREELY OF HITLER'S ORDERS TO DO AWAY WITH HIM.



in the area, it would have been dangerous to have returned to the Division that night, so the entire party went with General Stack to a nearby castle which had been occupied by elements of the Florian Geyer S. S. Cavalry Division. The capture of this castle had been accomplished by General Stack and a platoon from the 636th Tank Destroyer Reconnaissance Company and the I & R Platoon of the 142nd Infantry earlier in the day.

In the morning the German leader was taken to the 36th Division CP in Kitzbuhl's swanky Grand Hotel. There Gen. Dahlquist questioned him, particularly for Heinrich Himmler's whereabouts. Goering talked freely but gave no specific tactical information. He explained in detail his quarrel with Hitler on April 23 when he had called the fuhrer in Berlin. As soon as the interrogation was over he was placed in a cub plane and delivered to the Chief of Staff, Seventh Army.

VON RUNDSTEDT

Field Marshall Gerd von Rundstedt, brilliant Prussian military strategist, and acknowledged dean of Junker generals, surrendered to 2nd Lt. Joseph E. Burke and a ten-man patrol from Company A, 141st Infantry, on May 1, during the battle for Bad Tolz.

A prisoner taken by the 1st Battalion, 141st Infantry, first revealed that Von Rundstedt was in the area. When further questioned, he told of the house in which the marshal's party was quartered. As Lt. Burke entered the hospital residence, Von Rundstedt, his wife and son, jumped up from their seats before the fire. Said the field marshal, "It is a most disgraceful situation for a soldier to give himself up without offering resistance." The son, Lt. Hans Gerd von Rundstedt, stated that his father had last seen Hitler on March 12 when he had been relieved of his command of all German armies on the Western Front. The aging Rundstedt had been taking a bath cure at Bad Tolz in an effort to heal a leg ailment. Despite a noticeable limp he retained the traditional Junker austerity.

The third of the Nurnberg defendants was the infamous Reichsminister Dr. Hans Frank, Gauleiter of Poland and perpetrator of Jewish extermination pits. Frank was trapped in his office by Maj. Phillip Broadhead of the Division AMG team.

Admiral Nicholas Horthy, the Hungarian regent who consorted with Adolph Hitler, and who is credited with establishing one of Europe's first dictatorships, was found by an advance headquarters detachment led by Maj. Arnim F. Puck in the palatial Schloss Waldbichl near Wielheim.

Max Amann, stodgy Nazi publicist, and the third man to join the National Socialist Party, was seized by security troops of the 141st Infantry on a SHAEF warrant, charging him with war crimes. Amann had been living in seclusion at his summer home near Tegernsee.

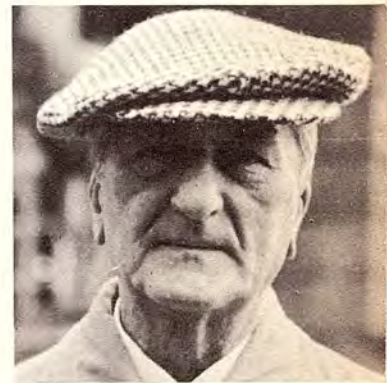
The 36th Division bag included 22 other influential Nazi commanders. They were: Air Marshals Ritter von Greim, who succeeded Goering in command of the Luftwaffe, and who committed suicide in captivity; Hugo Sperrle, who invented dive-bombing tactics, planned the London blitz, and defended the Normandy coastline in 1944; SS General Sepp Dietrich, the defender of Vienna against the Russians, and one of Von Rundstedt's cruel fledglings in the Ardennes; and 19 lesser generals.



VON RUNDSTEDT bore his self-termed disgrace—that of a soldier giving up without resistance.



HUGO SPERRLE.



ADMIRAL HORTHY.



GOERING'S CAR, a high-powered, new Mercedes-Benz, featured six-ply glass two inches thick.





REYNAUD



GAMELIN



DALADIER



BOROTRA

FRENCH LEADERS FREED



ITTER CASTLE

liberation an attached tank crew of the 12th Armored Division and four infantrymen of the 142nd Infantry released from German captivity much of the glory that had been France in the personages of two former prime ministers, a former chief of staff, a leading general, a tennis star, and a labor leader.

The French were rescued when a task force, commanded by Captain John Lee, climbed the mountain to Itter in a midnight ride past parked hostile German vehicles, and reached the twelfth century Alpine castle of Itter. There the German commandant offered the castle in surrender, freeing the notables.

But all around the castle at the time were other German troops, retreating before the American advance. When they learned what had happened during the night and how insignificant was the American force, they

GERMAN "88" firing from below, blasted holes in the rear of the tower.



Even as the last cylinder of the German war machine burned out, the Division was tracking down big-name Nazis and rescuing prominent Allied leaders. In one forceful stroke of

attacked strongly in the morning, attempting to retake the castle and kill their former prisoners. An "88" firing from a railroad tunnel below, knocked out the lone American tank and blasted gaping holes in the old stone building.

captain Lee organized his

meager force for defense. The German major who had surrendered the castle likewise placed his men to ward off the fanatical, attacking storm troopers. Even the French leaders took part. Daladier was reported to have returned to the castle arsenal for ammunition more than once. The "Bounding Basque," Jean Borotra, famed tennis player of former years, slipped out in peasant disguise, ambled down the road to contact men of the 142nd's 2nd Battalion, already on the way to help.

The castle being well-sited on a high knoll, the few defenders were able to withstand at a minimum loss the repeated SS assaults. At the height of the action, while yet wondering if assistance would come, the German major was killed by a sniper's bullet.

At 1500 in the afternoon, long after the defenders had run out of ammunition, Lt. Colonel Marvin J. Coyle's 2nd Battalion of the 142nd drove through the SS ranks and opened the road to the castle, this time for good.

Those liberated included: Eduoard Daladier and Paul Reynaud, former prime ministers; General Maurice Gamelin, former commander of the French Army; General Maxime Weygand, commander of the French Army at the time of the German defeat, and his wife; Mme. Alfred Cailliau, sister of General Charles de Gaulle, and her husband; Michel Clemenceau, son of the French statesman; Jean Borotra, tennis star; Leon Jouhaux, secretary of the Confederation General du Travail; and several secretaries.



WEYGAND



HIMMLER'S HOME

Whatever the other interests of Heinrich Himmler, the Reich's hatchet man and a subsequent suicide, members of the 36th who inspected his summer home at Tegernsee found that he had an eye for art. On Heinrich's radio (below) infantrymen of the 143rd heard the V-E Day celebrations.





IN CARRYING OUT SURRENDER, GERMANS STACKED ARMS AT POINTS DESIGNATED BY LOCAL ALLIED COMMANDERS.

SURRENDER

Inevitably the day-to-day headlines in late April and early May foretold what was coming: Berlin Falls; Munich Taken; Mussolini Executed; Himmler Makes Capitulation Move; Adolph Hitler Dies; Germans in Italy Surrender. The 36th was driving deeper into the narrow Alpine valleys of Austria and Southern Germany. Soon the battered, straggling groups of Germans falling back before them would have no place to go but the snowy crags of lofty mountain ranges.

On May 5 at 1830 hours came the message from Seventh Army Headquarters that signalled the end of hostilities, "German Army Group 'G' has surrendered, effective 1200B 06 May 1945. All units halt in place. Do not fire unless fired upon." Excited doughboys, unable to control repressed enthusiasm and relief, fired M-1's into the air. That night German emissaries contacted both the 141st and

142nd Infantry commanders. Arrangements for the carrying out of the surrender terms, prolonged over another two days, were complicated by the dispersion of German troops and lack of communications resulting from their hasty retreat. Many stray fanatical SS groups roved the hills out of touch with any command.

The Germans assembled at selected places as directed, stacked their arms, ammunition and motor transport. On May 8, in a day-long convoy, T-Patchmen streamed in to accept and control the surrender and to occupy St. Johann, Kitzbuhel, and Mittersill, in the heartland of a tourist's paradise. The same day simultaneous announcements from Washington and London proclaimed the final surrender of all German forces. There in the Austrian Tyrol the 36th realized the victory it had fought so long to achieve.



LAST PLAY. Col. Lynch, 142nd CO, and Gen. Dahlquist check situation during last day's fighting in the Inn River valley.



LAST SHOT. Even as news of surrender came, German 88 fire disabled this tank. Division was told to stop.



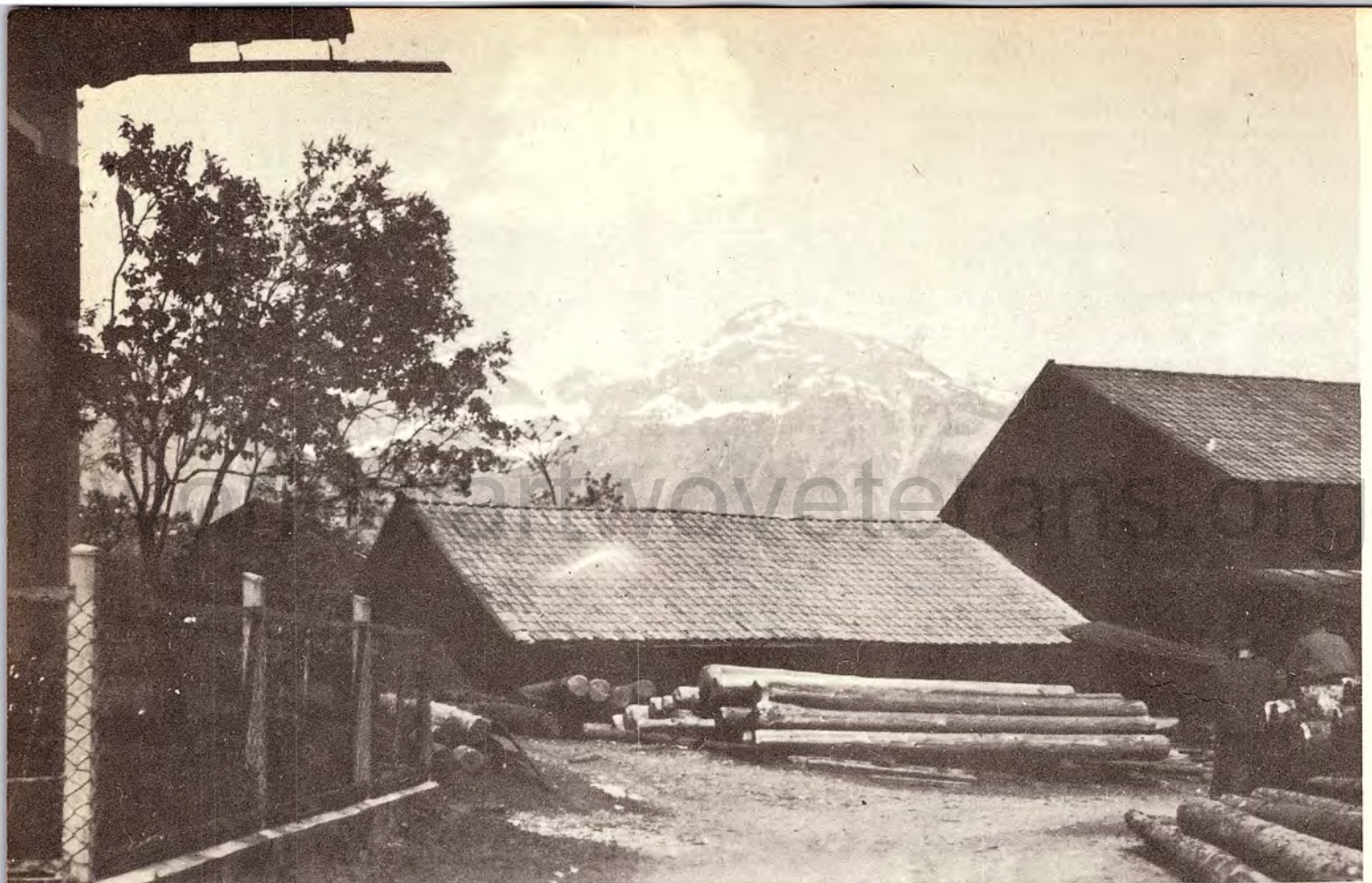
LAST SPAN: Engineers opened the road to Kufstein with speedy timber-trestle construction after Germans had blown bridge.



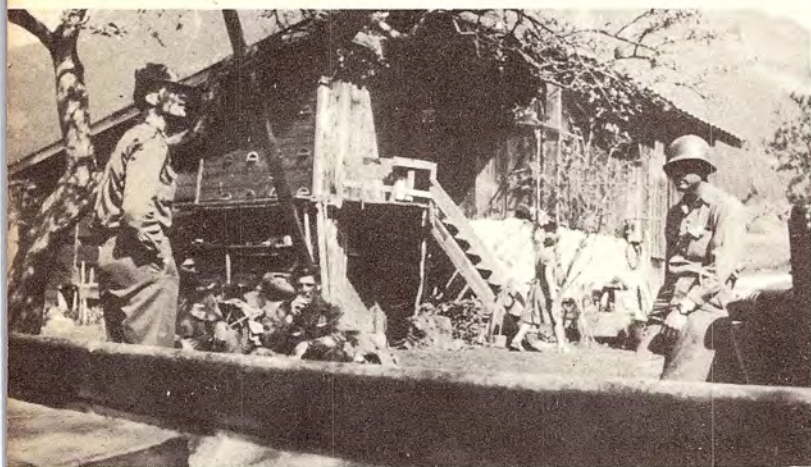
LAST ROUNDUP. Thousands of prisoners were guarded by the 141st in Division pen at Rottach.

COL. JOHN J. ALBRIGHT, CO OF 143rd, WITH BATTALION COMMANDERS, RECEIVES SURRENDER OF ENEMY XIII CORPS.





SNOW-CAPPED TYROL SPURRED GI INTEREST FOR CAMERAS. AUSTRIA SEEMED TO BE THE IDEAL VACATIONLAND.



BOTH the end of hostilities and the beauty of the Alps seemed unreal to Joe. His mind wandered back to death and mud.

WAR'S END, AUSTRIA

When T-Patchers crossed into Austria it marked the sixth country that the 36th had entered. From a scenic viewpoint, Austria stood out as the most striking. In early May massive snowdrifts still remained in many mountain passes, while down in the valleys Austrian maidens bronzed themselves in a blistering sun. At the swanky Grand Hotel in Kitzbuhel curious infantrymen scanned through a pre-war register that included signatures of such notables as Jimmy Walker, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, Sara Delano Roosevelt, Neville Chamberlain, Edda Mussolini.

1945

THE MAJESTIC white-coated Alpine peaks dazzled in the warmth of May sunshine.



In Austria

T-PATCH

36TH DIVISION NEWS

Vol. 4. No. 1

SPECIAL EDITION

8 MAY 1945

VICTORY

Lt. Burke, 141st, Captures Field Marshal von Rundstedt

Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, the brilliant Prussian military strategist, the designer of the Ardennes bulge, last week became the 30,000th prisoner to be taken by the 36th Division since the Riviera landings. The Reich's leading Junker surrendered to 2nd Lt. Joseph E. Burke, St. Petersburg, Fla., A Company, 141st Infantry, at Bad Tolz. When Lt. Burke entered Rundstedt's hospital residence, the field marshal, his wife and son had just finished dinner and were sitting before the fire.



After discussing the final stages of the European war with Maj. Gen. John E. Dahlquist, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, the dean of Junker generals, picks up a copy of the T-Patch.

Von Rundstedt revealed that he knew the Americans were near, but that he hadn't expected them until the following morning. Lt. Hans Gerd von Rundstedt, his son, spoke freely of his father's military career. The lieutenant said his father had last seen Hitler March 12 when the field marshal was relieved of his command of all the German Armies in the west. They were not nearly so surprised at the announcement of Hitler's death as they were at the appointment of Doenitz to succeed him.

The aging marshal had been taking a bath cure at Bad Tolz in an effort to cure a leg ailment. In spite of a noticeable limp he retained the traditional Prussian arrogance and the staid posture in walking.

In addition to von Rundstedt three others were taken as prisoners, the son, a chauffeur, and a medical aid man. The following events led to the capture:

Leading a night attack on Bad Tolz, the First Platoon, A Company, 141st Infantry met only scattered small arms fire. As they approached the outskirts, a German medic came out to surrender to Lt. Burke. Through force of habit (Lt. Burke was formerly a battalion interrogator) he started to question the excited prisoner.

The German mentioned von Rundstedt and mentioned that he was in town. The lieutenant, without hesitation, called upon ten men from his platoon to accompany him and radioed for a tank to lead the way. The captured Jerry led them to the hospital residence.

Halfway down the approach of the house, a hostile soldier popped his head out of the door. One member of the platoon took a shot at him but missed.

Lt. Burke ran for the front door. It was locked. Then he ran to the side entrance which led to the cellar. He

Rundstedt Enters CP (Con't On Page 6)

Truman, Churchill, Stalin, De Gaulle Proclaim Victory-Europe Day-May 8

Troops of the 36th Division received the news of victory on Austrian soil. The official announcement was broadcast simultaneously from Washington, London, Moscow and Paris by President Truman, Prime Minister Churchill, Marshal Stalin, and Gen. DeGaulle at 1300 hours Greenwich time today. Actual cessation of hostilities was to be effective at 2201 hours.

First news of Nazi Germany's surrender came yesterday, May 7, from a United Press correspondent. The unconditional surrender was made at 0241 hours in the schoolhouse at Reims, Gen. Eisenhower's headquarters.

The surrender was signed for Germany by Col. Gen. Gustave Jodl, the new German Chief of Staff. Gen. Bedell Smith signed for General Eisenhower. Maj. Gen. Suslapatov signed for Russia, and Gen. Francois Sevez for France.

Repeatedly asked if they understood the significance of the terms, the Germans answered, "Yes," and said that they would be carried out.

A preliminary instrument to surrender in 15 pages took care of every contingency likely to arise out of the laying down of German arms. It gave directions for the formal handing over of the German Navy with its great fleet of U-boats and dealt with the dispositions of the German Armed Forces as a whole.

So after five years, eight months and four days, the most devastating war in the history of Europe came to an end. Speaking almost five years to the day since he became Britain's wartime leader, Prime Minister Churchill told the world, "The German war machine is at an end. Hostilities will cease at one minute past midnight. Nazi Germany exists no longer. Its once mighty forces on land, sea and in the air have surrendered unconditionally."

36th Arrests Publisher Of 'Mein Kampf'

Max Amann, dumpy Nazi publicist, the third man to join the Reich's National Socialist Party, was arrested by security troops of the 36th Division last week on a SHAEF warrant, charging him with war crimes.

The publisher of 'Mein Kampf,' and former cell mate of Adolph Hitler, Amann has been out of headlines for years now and was living in quiet seclusion in his summer home overlooking the lake at Tegernsee.

What is written on his charge sheet was not revealed, but it is a common knowledge that his press was the mouthpiece of the Nazi Party.

A major in the last war, Amann tossed his business and personality behind Hitler. He participated in the famed Beer Hall putsch, and was elected to the Reichstag where he served as Press secretary to the government. He is listed in the German counterpart of Who's Who as a renowned writer, editor and publisher.

His last journalistic effort was to offer the facilities of his Munich plant to the 36th Division for the publishing of the T-Patch.

36th Promises Tojo For 36th

The Division's British counterpart, the British 36th Division, has cabled the following message to officers and men of the 36th "Texas" Division:

"The British 36th Division extends heartfelt congratulations on your capture of von Rundstedt. We hope to have Tojo for you shortly..."

Admiral Doenitz, Hitler's successor, told the German people, "The foundations on which the German Reich was built are a thing of the past."

As Churchill was speaking, President Truman proclaimed to the United States the complete, unconditional surrender, but both leaders pledged their countries to unremitting warfare against Japan.

"Japan with all her treachery and greed, remains unsubdued. We must devote all our strength and resources to the completion of our task," said Churchill.

"Our blows will continue until the Japanese lay down their arms in unconditional surrender," said Truman.

The Soviet announcement of Germany's surrender was made for the first time in a Moscow broadcast.

With the surrender, the German Government, her military leaders and all her armed forces still at liberty became legally in the same category

(Con't On Page 6)

Austria Marks Sixth Foreign Country Entered By Division

When the 36th Division crossed into Austria, it marked the sixth foreign country that the T-Patchers had entered; Morocco, Algeria, Italy, France, Germany, and Austria.

The 36th has fought on one continent, Europe, but it has trained on three, North America, Africa, and Europe.

On September 9th, 1943 the 36th Division became the first American Division to invade continental Europe. On August 15th, 1944 the 36th Division invaded the French Riviera.

In France the 36th Division established an American Army record for consecutive days in contact with the enemy—over 200. In 25 months overseas the 36th took over 50,000 prisoners.

Internationally Prominent French Group Liberated By Four 142nd Infantrymen

After two years of captivity in an Austrian castle, a prominent French group, Premiers Daladier and Reynaud, Generals Weygand and Gamelin, the sister of General DeGaulle, and Borotra, noted tennis star, were rescued by four infantrymen of the 36th Division.

The four men were from Easy Company, 142nd Infantry. They had been sent forward by Lt. Col. Marvin Coyle, their battalion commander, who had been offered the castle in surrender by the German major of the garrison there.

Riding a tank, the four doughboys reached the castle in the early evening, accepted the major's surrender, and stayed there while waiting for the rest of the battalion to come up.

On the following morning they were attacked by desperate SS troops, attempting to retake the castle and perhaps kill their former prisoners. The four men stood them off for a while. Then the tank in the castle gate was knocked out.

The German major armed his men



Daladier



Reynaud



Weygand



Gamelin

to aid the 142nd men in holding off the SS troops who were trying to storm the castle. The German major was killed during the defense.

At 1500 hours the next afternoon the battalion drove through the SS ranks and opened the road to the castle for

(Con't On Page 5)

The Ghosts



For the deceased Axis—Adolf and Benito, No Glory, No Spoils, No Victory.

T-PATCH, THE DIVISION NEWSPAPER—a light localized weekly—was aimed at bolstering troop morale. Founded during the fight for Rome, subsequent editions were published in Naples, Frejus, Grenoble, Besancon, Strasbourg, Kaufbeuren and Geislingen. Over 40,000 copies of the Victory Edition (above) were printed for distribution to the men.

MEMORIAL DAY, 1945, GERMANY

On Memorial Day, 24 days after the Victory, composite battalions of troops representing all units of the Division, stood formation before the City Hall in Kaufbeuren to pay honor to the memory of their fallen comrades.

General Dahlquist summed it up this way: "Americans have gathered each Memorial Day for years to pay tribute to their soldier dead. And in all parts of the world today such meetings are being held. But to no other group and in no other place can the day mean as much as it does to us, members of the Division which has just finished 20 months of combat through Italy, France and Germany.

"From September 9, 1943, on the beaches of Salerno, Italy, to May 8, 1945, deep in the Austrian Tyrol, this Division spent hundreds of days in battle. Over 6,000 of our comrades gave their lives during that period for us, for their nation, for the world. There is not one among us who has not lost cherished and dear friends. We cannot, so long as we live, forget these men because we lived with them and fought with them. They are, in fact, a part of us.

"We who have participated in this war in Europe, have seen with our eyes the human degradation of the Nazi system. Our world, our American way of life, could not have continued if Naziism had been permitted to exist.

"But stop them we did. No nation in the history of the

modern world has been so completely defeated. Their entire country is under our complete domination. The rats who were their leaders have either killed themselves or are in custody awaiting trial. We took one of those leaders. Instead of the strutting, vain, head of the air force who had boasted that Berlin could never be bombed, we found a flabby, sweating weasel, who was only too anxious to squeal on his pals in the vain hope that his own neck might be spared.

"We know, therefore, that our cause was just and that our honored dead did not die in vain. The struggle is not over. On the other side of the world thousands of our comrades are still locked in a life and death fight with another enemy, as cunning, as bestial, as cruel, as was the German Nazi. But Victory here made certain Victory in the Pacific. Only when Japan lies prostrate as Germany will the task of the soldier be done.

"When that task is done, there will still remain one, a continuing one, the task of seeing to it that Naziism can never rise again. That is the task which we as citizens who are also veterans of the world's greatest war, must never forget.

"Only thus will we really honor those men to whom we pay homage today, our fallen comrades."

SHOULDER TO SHOULDER, THE LIVING PAY TRIBUTE TO FALLEN COMRADES IN A CEREMONY IN KAUFBEUREN SQUARE.





KAUFBEUREN

The citizens of Kaufbeuren, bearing out pronounced reverence for military ceremony, lined both sides of the street to see what was going on. Their curiosity about the Americans continued unabated throughout the period that the 36th occupied the town.





SOLDIERS RIDE A FIACRE ALONG THE CHAMPS ELYSEES IN PARIS. STOCKINGLESS BICYCLERS WERE NUMEROUS.

PARIS

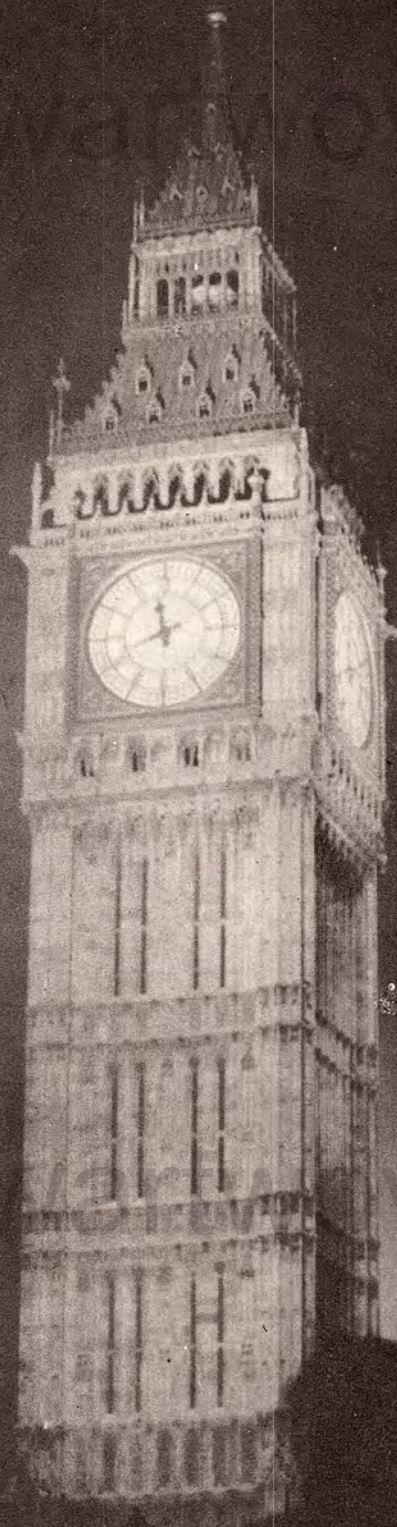
Glittering pre-war Paris had all sorts of reputations; to scholars, it was the most civilized and cultured; to the American colony, it was the gayest; to Parisians and their converts, it was the most beautiful city in the world. Slightly less alluring after four years of German occupation, the French capital, nevertheless, served well many thousands of American fighting men. Handicapped by a 48-hour time limit, T-Patch tourists budgeted their minutes cautiously, learned that the Yanks of 1918 were not kidding. In one large two-hour gulp, bus guides pointed out the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Napoleon's Tomb and comparable sights. Men strolled the Champs Elysees, viewed the Louvre's depleted collections, motored out to Versailles, dated vivacious Parisiennes, took in a performance at the Opera, had a wonderful time.



THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE, started in 1806 by Napoleon to commemorate his victories, was high on sightseeing lists.

WHEN THE STAGE DOOR CANTEN WAS OPENED IN PAREE, MAURICE CHEVALIER WAS ON HAND TO SING "MIMI."







LONDON'S PICCADILLY CIRCUS WAS MORE LIKE MANHATTAN'S BROADWAY THAN ANY OTHER PLACE IN EUROPE.

LONDON

Probably the luckiest break a man overseas could hope for was a 30-day furlough to the United Kingdom. On this leave he might choose to remain in London or travel through other sections of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

It was a London in battledress, not the London of Christopher Wren, Queen Elizabeth, Goldsmith or Raleigh. Famous structures were sandbagged and battle-scarred. GI's loved conversing with cockneys and sipping ale in ancient pubs, seeing a Terry Rattigan play, frolicking in Piccadilly, taking a boat ride on the Thames, or slipping away to Bournemouth for a dip in the ocean.

Meanwhile other Americans preferred the vales and cliffs of Scotland, Princes' Street and the castles and University of Edinburgh, or the good food to be had in Dublin.

The United Kingdom was a good deal more like the United States than the rest of Europe, and it was good to talk English again.

IF A GI tired of London's hub-bub, he went down to the seashore and stayed at a Red Cross boardwalk hotel in restful Bournemouth.





ALONG THE PROMENADE DES ANGLAIS IN NICE, VACATIONING GI WARRIORS FOUND A LONG AWAITED PARADISE.

RIVIERA

More than Paris and London, some soldiers favored as a rest spot the internationally storied Riviera. The Cote d'Azur had much to offer; a swanky boardwalk promenade, sprawling hotels and casinos, the incomparable Mediterranean and spacious beaches.

RED CROSS CASINO CLUB WAS ONE OF MOST BEAUTIFUL SERVICE CLUBS OF THE WAR. IT CONTAINED AN 850-SEAT THEATER.





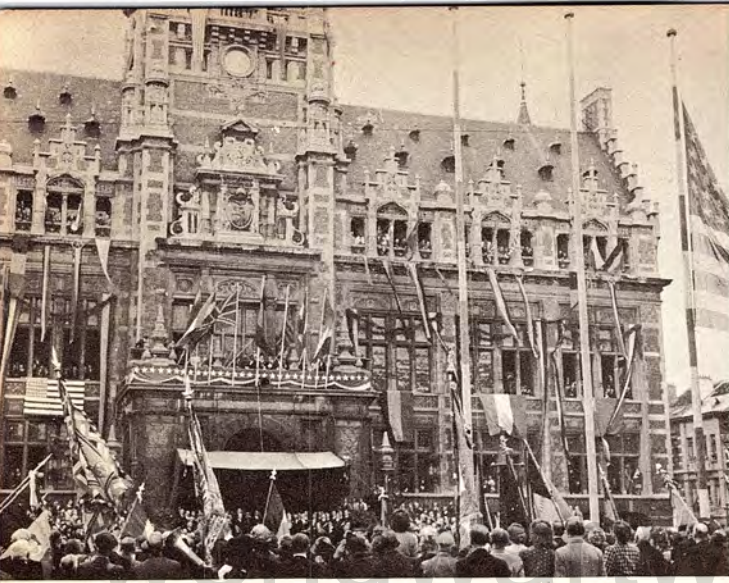
RESTEES ON THE RIVIERA ENJOYED WATER SPORTS. IN LIGHT KAYAKS THEY FREQUENTLY FISHED WITH SPEARS.

With the officers billeted in Cannes and enlisted men in Nice, a time-worn Army custom, saluting, was discarded. On the Riviera the men were served their morning newspapers, if not their breakfasts, in bed. At luncheon and

dinner, orchestras played in the dining rooms of the better hotels. During the day there was swimming, fishing, tennis, bicycling and roller skating. Throughout Nice there were theaters with moving pictures in both English and French.

IN A FLORIDA-LIKE GROVE OF THE HOTEL HERMITAGE TERRACE, GI'S CONGREGATED FOR OPENING NIGHT FESTIVITIES.





BRUSSELS. Americans found bilingual Brussels (French and Flemish) an exciting and charming city, compared it favorably with Paris.



NANCY. Closer to the front than either Paris or Brussels, a stay at the Nancy Camp afforded the advantage of a large city and real rest. Both VI and XV Corps established rest centers there.

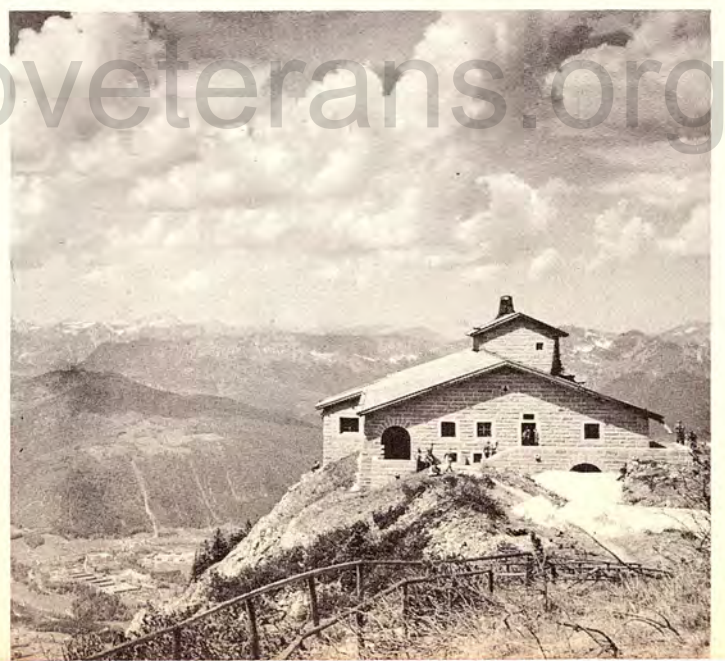


SWITZERLAND. At the war's end when Switzerland's neutrality could no longer be violated, tours of the country for American soldiers were begun. On this trip GI's paid 35 dollars, had to take whatever itinerary was planned. Soldiers were charmed by the Alps and the snow. They liked the orderliness of the cities and the curious gifts they purchased, and they liked the winter sports.



MUNICH. A group of 36th Division men tour Munich, cradle city of Nazidom. In photo (below) they view the rubble Siegestur, built by King Ludwig I, 1844-1852.

BERCHTESGADEN. On the patio of Hitler's "Eagle's Nest" high above Berchtesgaden in the Bavarian Alps, American soldiers survey the magnificent view of surrounding countryside.



OCCUPATION

Six impatient months as an occupation garrison followed hard upon the winning of the war in Europe. New duties and policies carried out the denazification of the Reich and controlled the economies of defeated Germany. A vast horde of Displaced Persons became the immediate No. 1 problem.

In Kaufbeuren, Mindelheim, Blaubeuren, Geislingen and Goppingen — toy-like 15th Century towns — through their quiet twisting streets, and in the lush green countryside that encircled them, grumbling GI's went about their routine tasks with loud-voiced aversion and a prolonged hankering for home. Even in the wake of victory, before Cassino, the Vosges and the Siegfried Line could be forgotten, the combat soldier deplored his figurative countryside existence and the static duties of occupation.

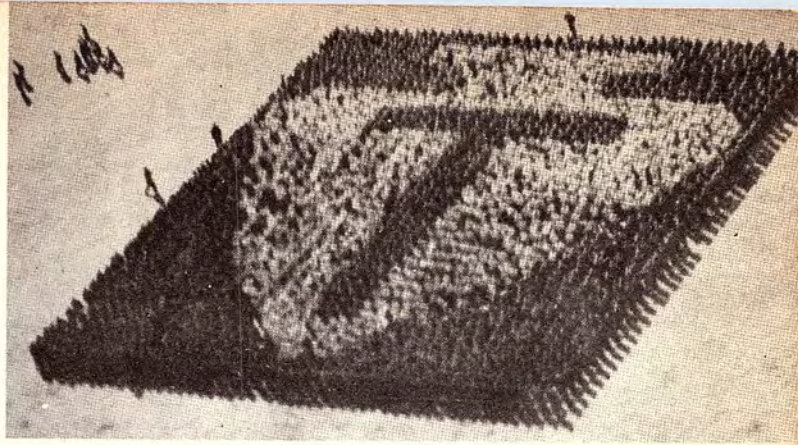
The Army and the Red Cross offered some compensation to appease him. In less than a month towns like Geislingen were transformed into would-be replicas of Kalamazoo. Clean German homes became his billet; the most impressive structure in town, his ARC club; the village fuszball (soccer) platz, his diamond and gridiron; the local cinu, his nightly theater. Unit publications provided him with a morning newspaper; the PX became his corner drugstore.

Special Service brought such creditable entertainers as Ingrid Bergman, Raymond Massey, Jack Benny, Martha Tilton, and Shep Fields to alleviate the monotony of humdrum evenings. Nearly everyone had a chance at a summer tour: the Riviera, Switzerland, Brussels, London or Paris. If he wanted to go to school, the Information and Education Section informed him of the Army's learning centers at Biarritz, the Sorbonne, Shrivensham, and at Cambridge.

But more than anything the average Joe wanted to go home.

Throughout the six months there were a lot of them who did go home. Six days after V-E Day, a happy five-hundred high pointers left the Division, flying home on the famous Green Project. By July, fifteen hundred more had departed. Before V-J Day the Division had

OLD LANDMARK, GEISLINGEN.



FOUR BATTALIONS FORM THE T-PATCH ON SALERNO DAY.

been listed as a part of the permanent occupation force and an exchange of personnel with the 63rd Infantry and the 12th Armored Division took place to start old-timers on their way. The end of the war brought a change of category and alerted the 36th for shipment home. Wholesale shifting of troops from one division to another accompanied redeployment preparations, not once but several times. There were many delays, all of them in turn sorrowfully lamented by the waiting men, and by "T-Patch," the Division newspaper.

Two celebrations of especial significance occurred during the occupation period: the August 15 anniversary ceremony at San Raphael, France, in which high French and American officials participated, dedicating a memorial to the Green Beach invasion; the Salerno Day festival, September 9.

By the first of December elements of the 36th had set sail from Marseilles bound for Wonderland. First unit debarkation on the Division's greatest D-Day followed on December 14. Beachheads at Hampton Roads and New York were established with little difficulty.

IN SHATTERED ULM THE WORLD'S TALLEST CATHEDRAL SPIRE STOOD SERENE.





HOME

Sweet Home! The Texas Division's third D-Day was its happiest event. America looked rich and prosperous, a little tired, perhaps, but distant from the ravages of war. There were many new problems to greet the soldier returned to mufti. He would need the courage born of the battlefield and the patience learned at war.