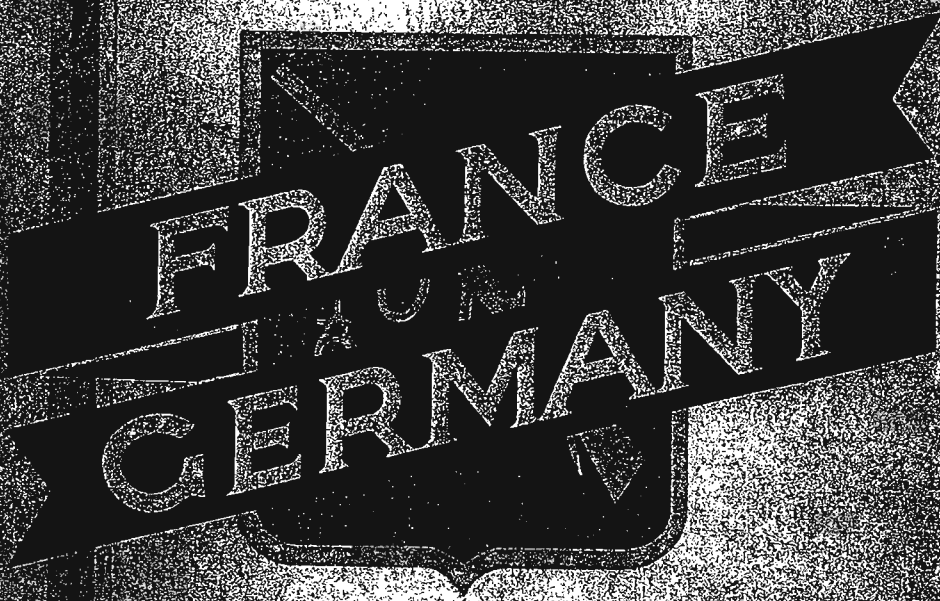
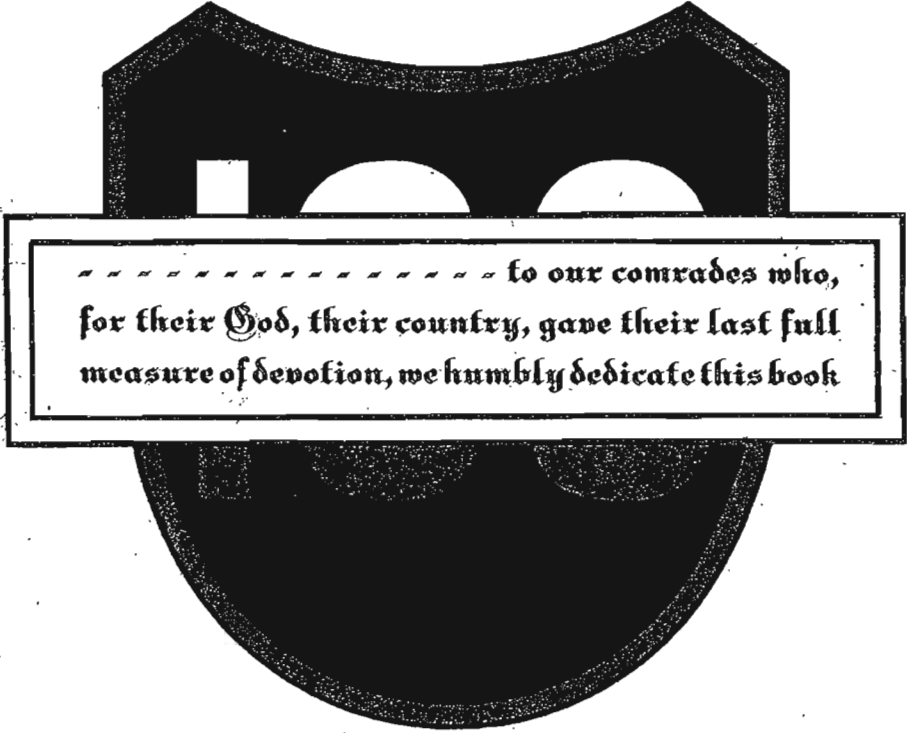


E. Co., 399th INF



Eternal Gratitude



----- to our comrades who,
for their God, their country, gave their last full
measure of devotion, we humbly dedicate this book

CAPT. ALTUS E. PRINCE
COMPANY COMMANDER

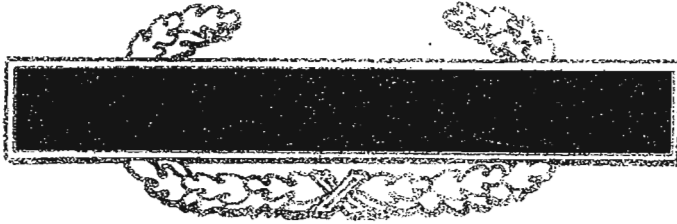
1ST LT. ROGER THORNTON
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1ST LT. JACK REID
1ST PLATOON

2ND LT. DAVID TOTH
2ND PLATOON

1ST LT. HARRY G. FLANAGAN
3RD PLATOON

2ND LT. BEN COHEN
4TH PLATOON



ROLL CALL

20. October 1944

FIRST PLATOON	SECOND PLATOON	THIRD PLATOON
2ndLt Reid	2ndLt Toth	1st Lt Flanagan
T/Sgt Leahy	T/Sgt Kauffman	T/Sgt Bundy
+S/Sgt Vender	T/Sgt Dawe	+S/Sgt Kelleher
+Pfc Briggs	S/Pfc Karas	+Pfc Stephens
C Squillante	♥Pfc Megna	+ Gentry
♥ Falsetto	♥T/4 Lyerly	♥ Bogan
♥S/Sgt Coburn	S/Sgt Watson	+S/Sgt Borders
Pfc Reppert	♥Pfc Jones, R.	♥Pfc North
♥ Warrick	♥ Kimm, H.	Gray
Rust	♥ Kohlbacher	+ Ignatowski
+ Underwood	DiMatteo	♥ Reklinski
♥ Vodicka	Breckenridge	+ Nemitz
♥ Katzenstein	Cpl Shindler	♥ Neville
+ Lee	♥Pfc Jacobson	♥ Meza
LaFratta	♥ Hoilaman	♥ Rossman
Sylvia	♥ Holser	Hedrick
♥ Kahn	Richards	+ Gonzales
Cpl Turk	Sgt Frey	C/Sgt Callahan
S/Sgt James	+S/Sgt Albano	S/Sgt Stefurak
+Pfc Salerno	+Pfc McCreary	♥Cpl Gerzetic
+ Wade	♥ Price	♥Pfc Mitchell
♥ Tomczyk	+ Zuvella	+ Graff

	♥ Cassiani	♥	Donaghey	♥	Powell
	♥ Stratton	♥	Blizzard	+	Scott
♥	Martino	+	Pisowicz	C	Kimm, J.
♥	Hicks		Inman	♥	Jones, C.
	Graham	♥	Richard		Eberson
	McManus		Baker	+	Dickson
C	Matrafalfo		Jones, J. K.	♥	Pike
	Cpl Krut	Sgt	Cote	+	Sgt Cassaro
♥	S/Sgt Persiani	♥	S/Sgt Doak		S/Sgt Cemelli
♥	Pfc Pannel	Pfc	Smythe		Pfc Douglas
♥	Dugger	+	Blake	C	Lowe
	Abraham	+	Halé	C	Porter
♥	Archer	+	Wright		Herzfeld
♥	Allen		Jones, J. R.		Smith
+	Bader	C	Calahan		Delaney
	Cation	♥	Purczinsky	+	Marien
	Bradley	♥	Sinclair	+	Huffman
	Morgan	Cpl	Cramer	+	Graham
+	Blake			+	Johnson
	Sgt Weiss				Sgt Fager

FOURTH PLATOON

♥ 2ndLt Cohen
 T/Sgt Boerstler
 C Pfc Shea
 ♥ Zenar

S/Sgt DeLuca
 Pfc Harlamon

♥ Sgt Finocchio
 C ♥ Pfc Howarth
 ♥ Hass
 Goldberg
 Fulmer

C Sgt Leggitt

HEADQUARTERS PLATOON

C Capt Prince
 1st Lt Thornton
 1stSgt Buck

S/Sgt Libuda
 Pfc Corsiglia
 + Clark
 Wynne
 Gagne
 Derryberry
 McKissick

S/Sgt Natole
 Pfc Kugelmeyer
 Schuman
 Schwartz

C	♥	Pfc	Metro	♥		Cohen
	C	Cpl	Gielerowski		T/5	Hart
	C	Pfc	Collins			Barker
	♥		Barringer		Pfc	Zazulak
						Carlisle
	♥	Sgt	Brygidyr			Rupert
		Pfc	Webb			Catalano
			Forderer			Christensen
	+		Shepherd	♥		Burkhalter
			Dickerson	♥	Sgt	Rafferty
				♥	Pfc	Brayall
		S/Sgt	Hammond			Ruf
		Pfc	Hill		C	Oliva
				♥		Lyden
		Sgt	Adamcek			Bashore
		Pfc	Rooney	♥		Delano
	C		La Belle			DeGarmo
			Cornetta			Hogan
	♥		Reinhard	♥		Rudin
						Trull
	+	Sgt	Grezliski			Gibson
	♥	Pfc	Tepperman	♥		Harshman
	+		Higley	C	♥	Shraffran
	C		Muller			
	♥		Magee			

+ Killed

C Captured

♥ Wounded

CHAPTER I

The Preparation

On November 15, 1942, at Fort Jackson, S.C., a skeleton division, comprising the Division staff and cadre, witnessed the activation ceremony of the 100th Infantry Division. In this new Division was thus born the 399th Combat Team and subsequently Company B. The task of Gen. Burress was to make the new Division the "fighting 100th", and, as we know, that task was thoroughly accomplished. Appointed to the task of organizing, training, and inspiring the rifle companies into top fighting units, were a number of young officers among whom was Capt. J. Whittington, the first C. O. of Baker Company. Among the officers assigned to aid him were 2nd Lieutenants Harry Flanagan and Roger Thornton. During December and January troops for the Division began to arrive. It was among these newly made soldiers that the leaders, who so ably proved themselves in combat, were found. Training began, non-coms were appointed, and the Company began to function as a skilled team. Initial tests were taken and Company B rated high in the Division. It was now time to begin training for the "real thing". In the spring of 1943 the Company received a new officer, a West Point graduate, who was destined to be one of the outstanding leaders of the Company. The new arrival was Lt. Altus Prince. Through the efforts of the officers and men, by the fall of 1943 the Company was in top form and again was confronted with field tests. Here it was that Lt. Flanagan and his third platoon rated the best rifle platoon in the regiment and among the high three in the Division. After these tests the Artillery-Infantry demonstrations took place and preparations were made for the coming Tennessee maneuvers.

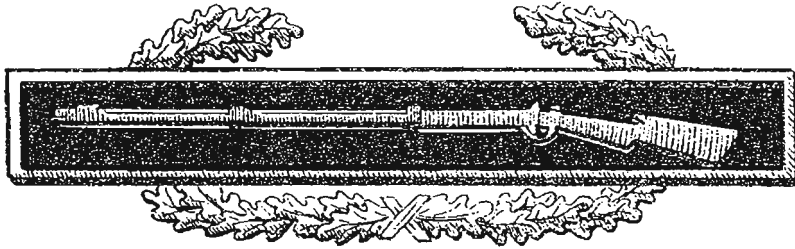
From November 15th to January 17, 1944, the doughfeet of Baker lived in the mud and rain, ice and snow, hill infested maneuver area. Working with other infantry outfits, T. D. outfits, tank elements, and air units, the men slogged their way through this advanced phase

Foreword

To: Officers and Men of Company B,
399th Infantry

Inside the pages of this book is the story of brave young America called to arms to preserve what is most dear to our way of life. To each of you I say that I am deeply proud to be a part of your team, and to have seen, with you, the overwhelming courage and spirit that carried Company B through the struggle to final victory in the highest tradition of our armed might. The story, which no words can describe, is our bond to cherish in the years to come. My best wishes and warmest appreciation will always be with you.

E. M. Zehner
Lt. Col., 399th Inf.
Commanding.



Although this book can't possibly cover all of our activities, personal triumphs, our unit victories, and our many heart aches, still it captures for all time our unusual group spirit, our respect, admiration and love of fellow men springing from combat danger and imminent prospect of sudden and violent death.

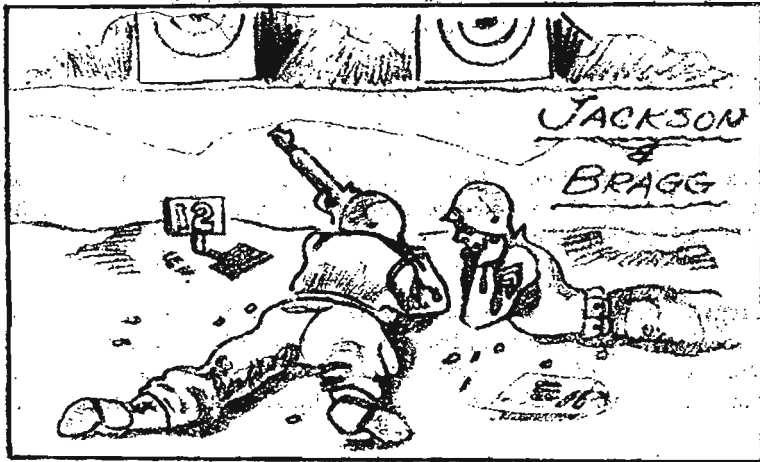
The saddest and most unforgettable day of my life will be that time when circumstance forces us all to part and go our separate ways. Let this book be our common bond, and using it as a medium, continue the deep and intimate relationship that at times has made us seem more like brothers than friends.

Harry G. Flanagan
Capt. Inf.
Co. B 399th Inf.

of training and accustomed themselves to the rigors of combat. After three months of chowless days and sleepless nights, heaven in the form of Fort Bragg, N.C., came to the weary Bakermen. Here furloughs, showers, movies and passes to Fayetteville made the lives of the maneuver-weary men considerably more pleasant. During this time the Division was again brought up to strength. Due to the need of men for overseas duty a goodly number of Century-men were POE'd to supply other outfits engaged in combat. In March 1944, the Company was again brought up to strength by the arrival of some eighty ASTP men. Now the Division was ready to begin its last phase of pre-combat training.

From April till September 1944, the Company received six months of intense training. Combined attack theory, tank training, mine schools, weapons training, artillery-infantry exercises, attack and defense field problems and unit tests put the men on a rigorous diet of concentrated work in preparation for the inevitable journey overseas.

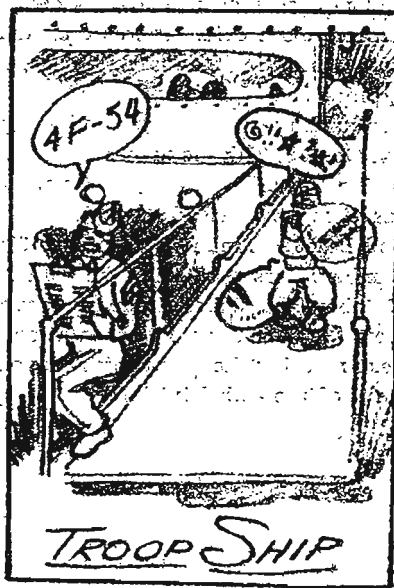
In June of 1944 the Division was picked to represent the Army on Infantry Day and to parade in New York City. A battalion in strength was selected from the various parts of the Division. Lt. Flanagan and ten enlisted men represented Baker Company in Gotham. After two weeks of parades, formations, and drills the high-flying Centurymen returned to earth and again resumed their training.



In late August Division tests were again taken, and once again Baker, 399th, took top honors. The fourth platoon under S/Sgt. DeLuca turned in a top performance and was slated as the best weapons platoon in the Division. The rifle platoons also did well with Lt. Flanagan's and S/Sgt. Leahy's platoons, the third and second, turning in top performances.

In September the Division was given the green light and the Inspector General's Office began its tour of the units in the Division. Baker Company survived the ordeal and made ready for the coming move. The Division was next inspected by the Army Ground Forces chief, Lt. Gen Ben Lear, and officially alerted for shipment. New men arrived from the Coast Artillery and IRTC camps and the Company was now ready for the move. At this time the Company officers were as follows: Lt. Prince, C. O.; Lt. Thornton, Exec. Officer; Lt. Reid, 1st Platoon; Lt. Toth, 2nd Platoon; Lt. Flanagan, 3rd Platoon, and no officer for the fourth platoon. T/Sgt. Boerstler was acting platoon leader for the weapons platoon. Speculation was high and hopeful eyes turned northward. At last came the day of movement and on September 28, 1944, Baker Company said good bye to Fort Bragg and said hello to Camp Kilmer, N.J., Port. of Embarkation.

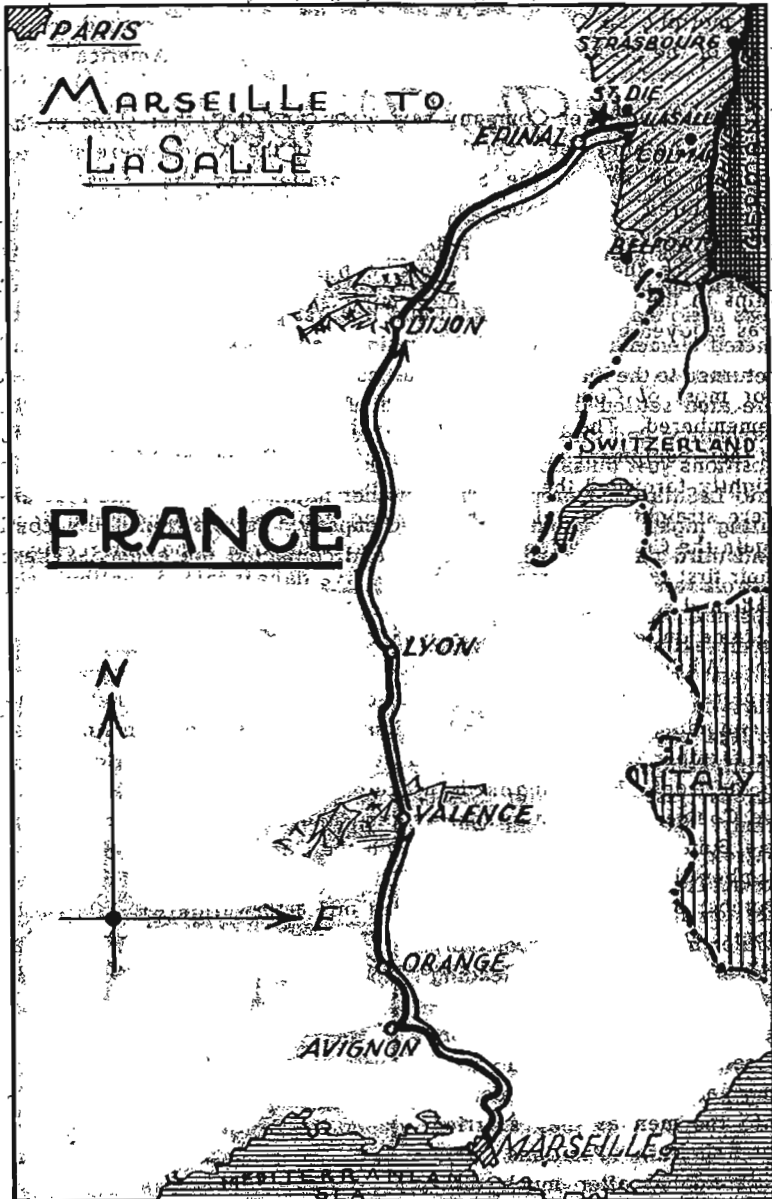
In Kilmer the battle of survival was waged against immunization shots, supply sergeants and their loads of equipment, and a million or so inspections. After being equipped, perforated with hypos, and thoroughly inspected, the men were paid and passes were issued to New York and surrounding areas where the Bakermen took their last fling at the U.S. night life. On October 5th trains were boarded and by late that evening



the transports were loaded and the Division ready to sail. Early in the morning on October 6th the men of Company B rushed to the rails of the SS Mac Andrews for their last glimpse of America.

For ten days Baker Company saw water and the other ships in the convoy, nothing else. On the eleventh day the Azores were sighted, and on the twelfth the Straits of Gibraltar and the "rock" were encountered. On October 20th the Company hit land again when the convoy docked at Marseilles and moved ashore to an assembly area. Except for the crowded quarters, a hurricane, the burning of two ships in the convoy and a loose mine, the trip was uneventful and was enjoyed by all.

For most of Company B, the night of October 20th will long be remembered. The grueling hike to the area, laden down with most of their equipment and the prospect of a night's rest on Mother Earth, slightly tarnished the men's conception of France. However, things were straightened out in the morning, tents were pitched and once again the Company functioned as a unit. In Area 2 the men received their first taste of European mud. For five days it rained continuously and mud seethed in alarming depths. Finally, when it did dry, it became quite cold. It was then that the 399th Combat Team moved up. While in the assembly area the neighboring villages were explored. Aix, Septemes and Marseilles were visited, hikes in the surrounding areas taken, and a light training schedule maintained. On October 27th the men boarded trucks for a three day motor march to the front. Following in the wake of the Seventh Army's advance, the Company passed through Avignon, the outskirts of Lyon, Dijon, and Epinal. Finally on October 30th the Company bivouaced in the Rambervillers area near the 45th Division's CP. In the evening of October 31st, Baker Company moved into a forward area, 1600 yards from German lines, in preparation for its first day of combat. The next morning the Company relieved Co B of the 179th Infantry Regiment of the 45th Division.



CHAPTER II

The Vosges

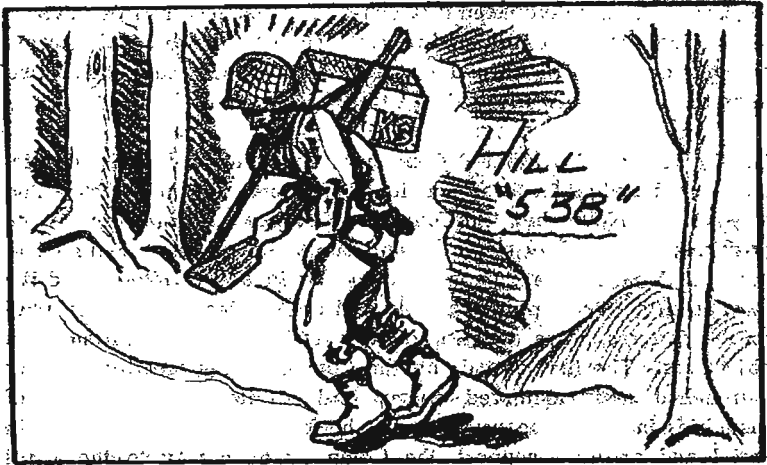
This was it. On November 1st, when the Company took over Baker Company's position of the 179th Infantry, the situation was quiet. At 1000 hours on November 1, 1944, the first patrol undertaken in combat was assigned to Lt Jack Reid and his first platoon. The patrol contacted elements of the Third Division, accomplished its mission, and returned to the lines without casualties. After the first night of combat the men settled down to the grind of warfare. In the afternoon of November 2nd, the Company was alerted and ordered to move into positions just outside of LaSalle. The Company dug in, sent a party into LaSalle, and prepared for another night. This was the first exciting night of combat for Baker Company. Patrols from the second and third platoons were sent out and contacted the enemy. These patrols returned intact and with this the whole company, to a small extent, was battle wise. It was on the next morning that the Company was given its first objective, the town of Saint Remy. Moving into positions just outside of Saint Remy, the men dug in while patrols were sent into this town. The first platoon cleared the town taking two prisoners while the rest of the Company moved forward. As leading elements of the Company entered, disaster struck. From excellent OPs, German artillery and mortar fire poured into the men as they scurried for shelter. Positions were consolidated after much diffi-



culty. During this time snipers and burp-gunners continued to harrass the Baker men. Road blocks were established and contact was made with Able, and Charlie Companies within a short time after the initial action. This was Baker's first real fight and is remembered by all who have survived thus far. It was here that our first battle casualties were received, two men killed and two wounded. After a hellish night of artillery and mortar fire, the men accustomed themselves to the situation and awaited the Company's next move. It was not long in coming. On the evening of November 5th, Baker was ordered to relieve Item Company which had met stiff and powerful resistance. Late in the evening the Company moved into the "sawmill" overlooking Etival, and there took up positions. Again heavy resistance and artillery fire from the Germans greeted the weary men. Finally after two nights of rain, mud, and open foxholes, the Company was relieved and withdrawn to Saint-Remy where the men had their first real rest in their first week of combat. On the morning of 7 November 1944 the battalion moved into a rear area awaiting movement to another sector. Moving up into the woods the men dug in and awaited orders to move. Disaster in the form of mines and booby traps struck. A jeep was blown up, one man was killed and several wounded. This was "Booby Trap Hill", one of the worst experiences the Company was to encounter. The next afternoon, 8 November, 1944, the Company marched to an entrucking point and boarded trucks for points unknown. Just outside of Baccarat, the Company bivouaced in a densely wooded sector of the Vosges Mountains. The second platoon moved slightly forward and took up an OPL on the high ground just ahead of the Company. For two days these positions afforded rest to the weary vets.

On the 11th of November B Company moved forward again, dug in, and stayed a night in these positions before moving up on line. The afternoon of November 12th found the Company slogging its way to positions near the key city of Raon l'Etape. In the snow and mud of the high Vosges, the Company again dug in and awaited the drive on that city. Overlooking the city and cutting the vital supply road to the fortress, were a series of hills assigned to the battalion as objectives. The first assault by the Company was met by a firmly entrenched and reinforced enemy and resulted in a number of casualties in the Company. Moving back in order to allow close-in aerial and artillery support, the Company gave way to the Third

Battalion who stormed and captured the hill. That hill proved to be one of the most strongly defended and best prepared defensive positions yet encountered by the Division. On November 15th Hill 409 was stormed and taken with no considerable trouble. However, in the ensuing fire-fight and artillery barrage nearly a dozen men were made casualties, one of whom died later from wounds. The next day marked the beginning of one of the bloodiest engagements the Company had. It was November 16th and the place was Hill 538 (462.5 in official records). For five hours under heavy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire, the men of Baker Company battled forward up the steep slope and after a bitter struggle secured the uppermost point of the hill and dug in. In taking the hill Baker Company played a magnificent part as the First Battalion cut the German defense line around Raon l'Etape. Casualties in killed, captured and wounded were high, greater than in any other previous engagement. Counter-attacks and barrages were incessant and raids frequent. Accepting raid after raid, attack after attack, all of which were repulsed at a high cost to the enemy, the men stubbornly held their ground and under the leadership of Lt. Prince made possible, by their dogged determination, the capture of Raon l'Etape. After three days of this hell on earth, the Company was relieved and under a terrific artillery barrage took up new positions overlooking the town of LaTrousche. The casualty toll on this move was again very high.



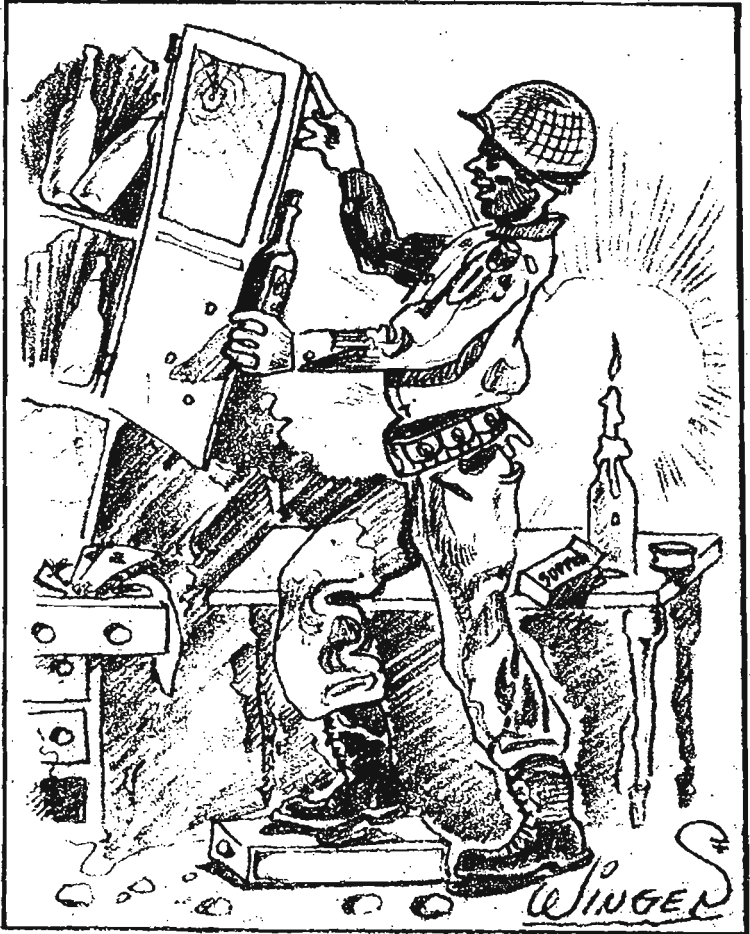
Captured on Hill 538 were S/Sgt. Callahan, Sgt. Leggitt, Cpl. Geilerowski, and Pfc's Collins, Metro and Meza. All these men have since been liberated. Pfc. Meza was recaptured within a few hours of his capture by men of C Company. Sgt. Leggitt, Cpl. Geilerowski, Pfc. Collins and Pfc. Metro were recaptured in Strasbourg while S/Sgt. Calahan was liberated during the last weeks of the war.

Also during the action of Hill 538, Pfc. Robert Barringer's gallantry in action won for him the Silver Star. During the same engagement Pfc. Clyde Magee's heroism warranted him being recommended for the Silver Star.

After a day and two nights in the positions above LaTrouche, during which time the men were continually shelled and during which time patrols were frequent, Lt. Prince led the Company in a dusk attack into LaTrouche taking it without the loss of a man. Here the Company, once again in houses, remained for several days catching up on their mail and receiving the much needed reinforcements assigned to the Company. Thanksgiving Day was observed in the best of tradition, with turkey and trimmings in the battle scarred village. On the 24th of November in the now usual downpour of rain, Baker Company boarded trucks for another destination.

Leaving LaTrouche at about three o'clock in the afternoon, the convoy proceeded north through the city of Senones to the town of Saint Blaise where the Company was billeted for the night. Early the next morning the convoy again set out and proceeded to a detrucking point near the Rabodeau River. From there the race began. Down the valley the Regiment raced capturing numerous villages and towns. At the junction with the Third Division on November 25th, the race then proceeded down the Bruche River Valley with Strasbourg as the goal. First resistance was met by the Company outside of Rotheau where enemy machine guns and 88 fire held up the Company's advance. As the terrain was exceedingly rough and the ground muddy due to the everfalling rain, movement on anything but paved roads was difficult. However, Lt. Prince led his men up the torturous hills in preparation to storming the city. The first platoon by excellent maneuvering wiped out the enemy strongpoint holding up the Company's advance. Up and down the towering hills the men proceeded until in the outskirts of the city they once again

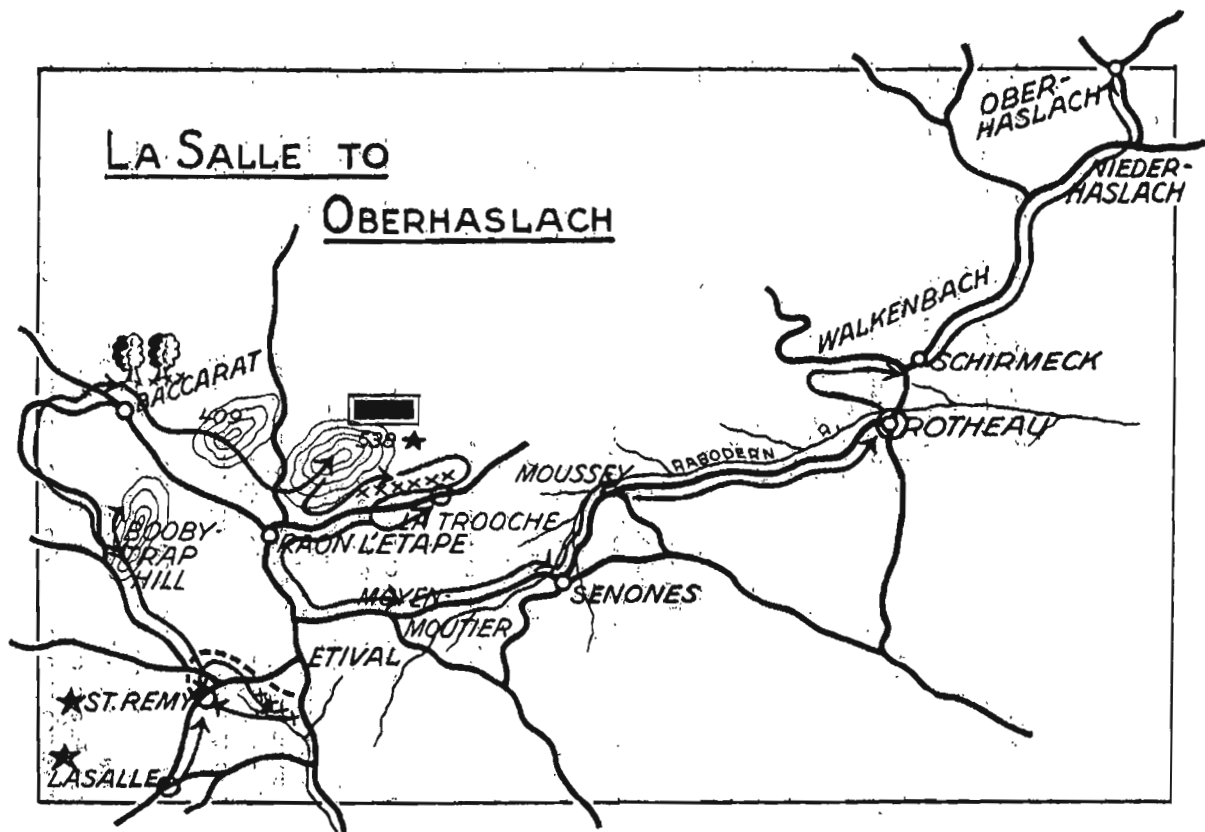
contacted the Third Division. They then proceeded to clear the city together. Shortly after the city was cleared, the enemy threw in a terrific artillery barrage. It was just after this that the Battalion Commander ordered the Company out of town in hopes of surprising the enemy by pressing the attack. In a heavy downpour the men left Rotheau and started a night attack on the town of Netzenbach. After crawling and stumbling over several thousand yards of mud coated peaks, Baker Company moved in on its objective. Forging the river

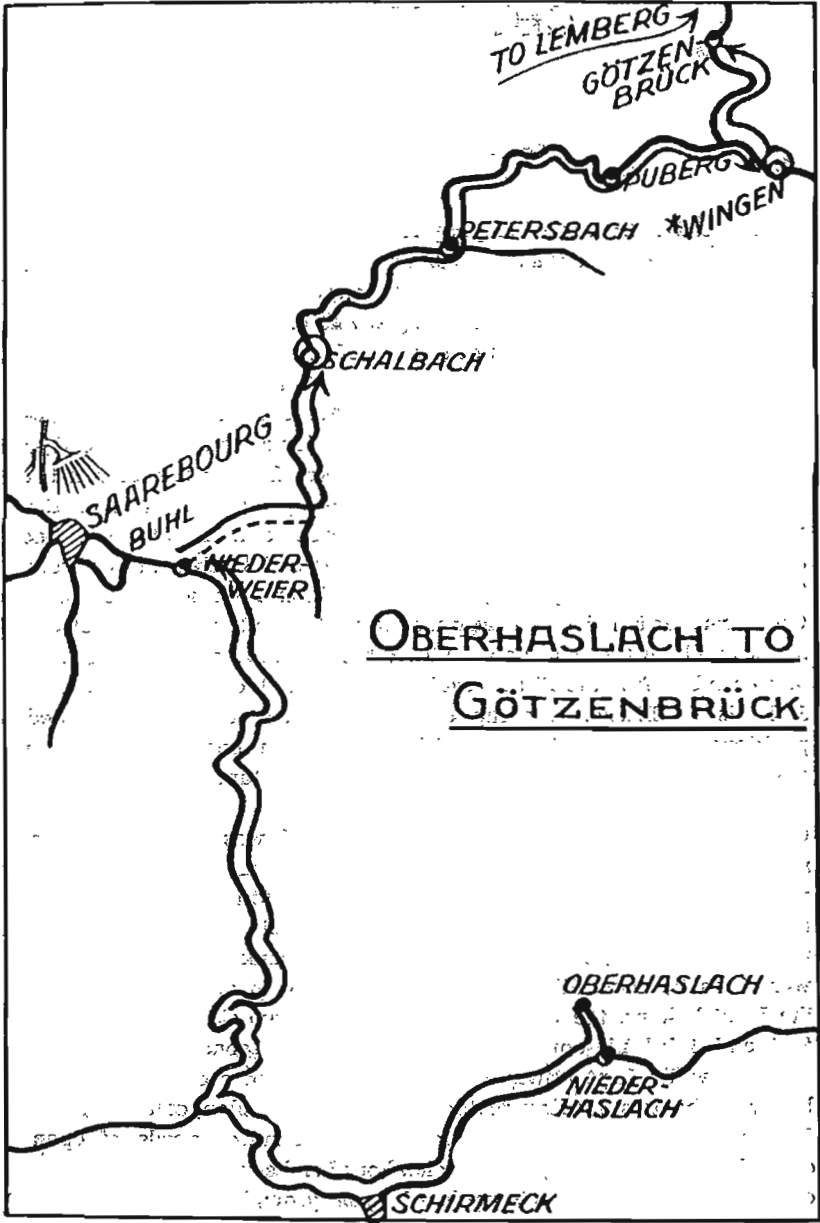


the men entered the rear of the town and captured it with comparative ease. It was learned from the villagers that the enemy and several of his field pieces had evacuated the town only scant minutes before the arrival of the Centurymen. Several prisoners were taken and once again casualties in the operations were nil.

This town will be remembered most vividly by Sergeant Arthur Forderer, who in search of straw for his lodging found himself confronted by two towering Krauts armed with burp guns. The Germans gestured to him to come and one of them said, "Kommen Sie mit uns". However, the surprised mortarman replied, "Nix", and emphasized his reply with several shots from his carbine. The Germans fled and the very disturbed sergeant was forced to sleep without straw that evening.

The next morning the Company again moved out, scaled another peak and captured the town of Wachenbach. The evening of the same day, November 25th, found the Bakermen on a long downhill trend to the city of Schirmeck. Entering the city from the south, the Company proceeded through it and continued the push forward. For nearly eight hours the doughs hiked on, through Urmatt and Niederhaslach, on the heels of the fastfleeing Nazis. Finally trucks shuttled the men into sleeping Oberhaslach which yielded several Germans and marked the end of the long campaign. The Regiment was pinched out of the Strasbourg drive by the 3rd and 45th Divisions and was halted here for orders. This town was one of the key points to Strasbourg and its fall helped to open the Alsatian Plain to the oncoming flood of Allied might. So here at Oberhaslach, twelve miles from Strasbourg, the men of Baker Company ended their long campaign in the Vosges Mountains. The period up until this time is, to the old men of the Company, the days of rain, mud and mire, counterattacks, the GIs and "beaucoup" Krauts, and will generally be referred to by them as the days "back in the Vosges". This also marked for the men of the Company their first real rest, the chance for a glorious shower and the completion of the first phase of combat.





CHAPTER III

Lemberg

On November 28th the Company moved to LaRobedeau near Senone and the Division was placed in Corps reserve. Here the Company was strengthened by more reinforcements, showers were taken, weapons were test fired and the neighboring towns exploited. After a short stay here, the battalion was ordered to Neidersweiler where the men had an opportunity to visit nearby Sarrebourg for movies, showers and sight seeing. After two days here the Company moved to the town of Shalbach and prepared once again for action. On December 3rd Baker Company moved to Puberg where Lt. Prince received his Captaincy. The next day was spent in hiking through towns on the way to Wingen which was reached December 5th. It was here that a large store of cognac, champagne, wines and kitchen stores were "liberated". This supply was distributed later for morale purposes. On December 6th the Company moved up to positions near Goetzenbruck and later that afternoon entered the town. Early on the morning of December 7th, the First Battalion pushed out of Goetzenbruck to St. Louis de Bitche. Moving through St. Louis, the men occupied positions above the town awaiting artillery preparations for the assault on Lemberg and the surrounding high ground.

Our artillery preparation began at 0930 and was to last for five minutes after which a rolling barrage would commence. The attack was to begin at 0935 with the battalion closely following the barrage and taking the high ground beyond that city while the Third Battalion took the city. Baker Company was the left flank of the attack and was given the most difficult terrain over which to operate. Crossing the IP at H-hour, the Company proceeded in two skirmish lines, the first and third platoons in the lead and the second and fourth in the rear, while Capt. Prince and headquarters took a central position between the two leading platoons. The attack plan called for the Company to pass over approximately two hundred yards of open ground before reaching the Enchenberg-Lemberg Highway. After crossing this, another 400 yards of open ground lay ahead before

reaching the railroad tracks connecting Enchenberg with Lemberg. Five hundred yards beyond that lay the woods and high ground which was the Company's objective. In a cunningly executed trap, the Germans allowed the first wave to cross the road while the second wave following a hundred yards behind was yet to cross. When the enemy opened fire, the situation found the first wave—the third platoon on the left, headquarters in the center, and the first platoon on



the right — on the gently declining slope nearly a hundred yards across the road and moving forward towards the railroad tracks receiving enemy fire from the front, the left and right fronts, and the right rear. Charlie Company in failing to push off on time, exposed Baker to the full volume of enemy fire. First fire encountered was from machine guns and 20 mm. cannon. The fire mounted in fury until at least five 20 mm. cannons, several flak wagons, numerous heavy calibre machine guns, and assorted small arms fire was pouring into the men from all directions. After the first burst of fire the weapons platoon made an excellent display of courage when, in an open field, Sgt. Adamcek's section set up a light machine gun and proceeded to duel and knock out an enemy flak wagon on the Company's right flank. At the same time Sgt's Webb, Howarth and Hass put a 60 mm. mortar into action and eliminated another flak wagon firing from the right rear. The men of the third platoon, subjected to the greatest volume of fire, engaged the enemy to their front with rifle fire killing several Germans.

All this had taken place within a few minutes and by 0945 German artillery began dropping in on the trapped men. Direct fire from all types of weapons poured in and casualties mounted. Baker Company was without communications and support in this isolated position. The men of the forward wave could only pray and claw for themselves shallow holes while the torrent of fire fell in among them. The men in the rear wave had two alternatives — to make their way forward and seek shelter in the ditch paralleling the road or to make a dash for the woods from whence they had departed. Most of the fourth platoon made their way to the woods where they dug in and prepared a defensive line. They too were subjected to intense artillery and direct fire from flak wagons in these positions. The second platoon chose to use the ditch and moved forward to that position. The situation became more desperate with each moment. At this time Pfc. Richard Jones made his way back to the woods, located enemy gun positions for artillery observers and then singlehandedly strung a communications line from the woods to Capt. Prince across the road. For his heroism and disregard for personal safety, Pfc. Jones received the Silver Star.

This murderous fire continued all through the day and it wasn't until dusk that Capt. Prince received orders to withdraw the remainder

of his company back to the woods. Under cover of darkness and friendly artillery fire the ragged remnants of the Company stumbled and crawled back. It was a sorry spectacle, the living carrying the half-dead, the lesser wounded struggling back with their more sorely wounded comrades, others dragging themselves out by sheer will-power, the dazed and half-crazed stumbling ahead, all of them leaving this hellish place. Prayers of thanks mingled with curses of hate. This was the worst imaginable. All through the night and early morning the survivors returned. Here at Lemberg, valor showed its face. Lt. Flanagan received the Silver Star for heroism, a number of Bronze Stars were awarded to the survivors who had distinguished themselves that day. The greatest number for Lemberg were the purple Hearts. Our losses that day were seventeen killed and thirty-four wounded. Many others were evacuated for exposure, shell-shock and nervous conditions. Only a handful of those who started the attack were present for the second assault the next evening.

On December 8th the tank-supported First Battalion in a night attack pushed into the town of Lemberg, obliterated the defenders and proceeded to clear the town. December 9th the town was entirely cleared, numerous prisoners taken and defensive positions consolidated. In the evening of that day the Company was relieved and returned to St. Louis for reorganization and rest.

For two days and two nights the men rested, were given showers;



saw a movie and allowed to roam. It was here that on December 11th the Wingen stock was distributed. Several parties resulted, numerous hang-overs, and the memory of the preceding days was somewhat dimmed. On December 12th the rest ended and the recently reinforced Baker Company once again pushed off. Back through Lemberg, down the Lemberg-Bitche Highway they moved. Pausing shortly at Reyersvillers, the men again moved toward the fortress-bastion of Bitche. Taking positions overlooking the city, they again halted to allow the 398th Infantry to bring up the right flank. An enemy pillbox on the road below threatened the advance of Company, so under covering fire from the fourth platoon. With his platoon, Lt. Flanagan stormed an adjoining house neutralizing both it and the pillbox. This place is referred to as "Flanagan's Fortress". During the next few days plans were drawn up for the assault on the city. During this time a temporary line was set up from the "fortress" up the adjoining hill to the left slope where it linked with Charlie Company's positions. The city at this time was being softened by dive-bombers, SP guns, 240's and other types of artillery. It was then that von Runstedt's breakthrough in the North occurred. All available support was pulled to the Ardennes and the siege of Bitche abandoned. Due to the untimely occurrence, the division was ordered into defensive positions. Extending further to the left and covering about a 700 yard front, the Company dug in and took up the defensive role. One of the most thrilling stories of the Company's history was that of the episode of the College de Bitche. Here, five-hundred yards ahead of the main line, six men existed on nerves, ten-in-one rations, and vigilance. Under constant observation and fire, they held to their post for two weeks abandoning it only when the entire line cracked.

II DEC '44

BITCHE

SIERSTAL

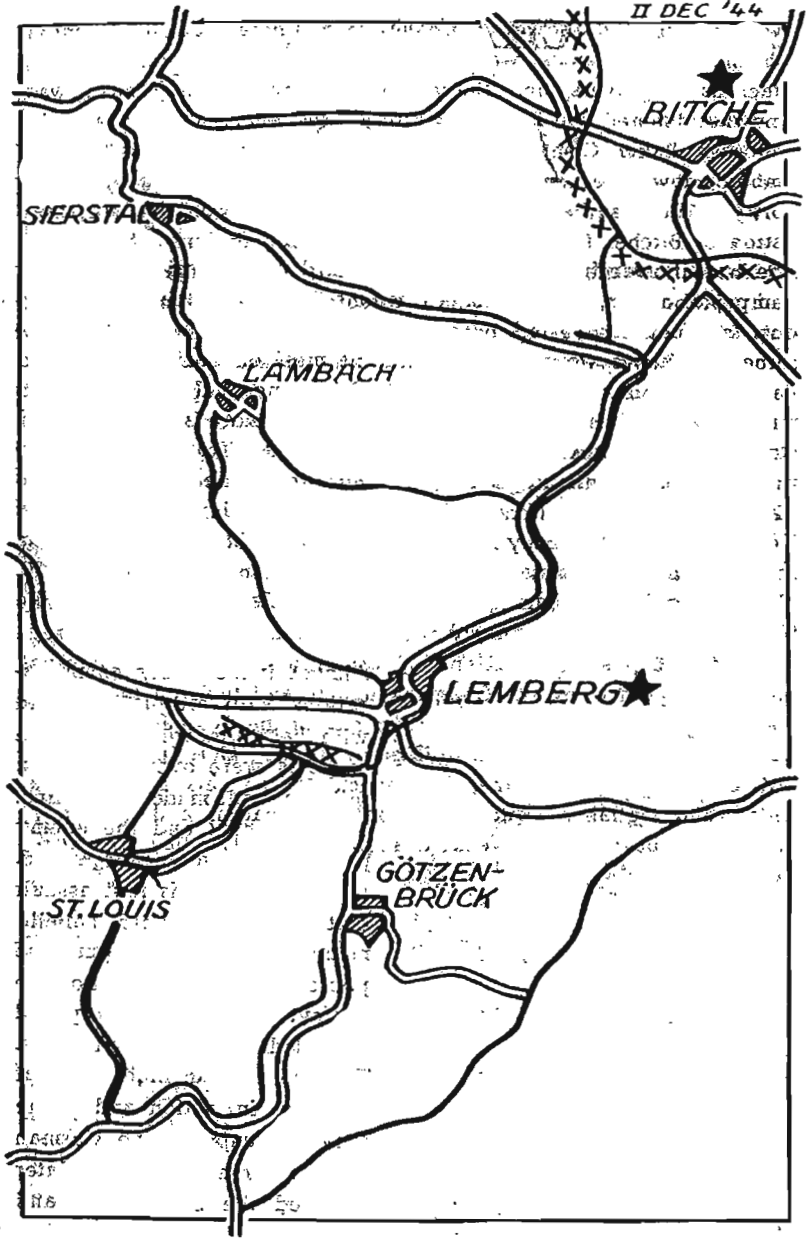
LAMBACH

LEMBERG

ST. LOUIS

GÖTZEN-
BRÜCK

11.5



CHAPTER IV

Bitche Area

Life was uneventful and, except for guard and occasional artillery and patrol action, quite calm. Christmas Day was celebrated in dug-outs and foxholes. The environment was different but the spirit the same. Packages were plentiful and the meal on Christmas was excellent. It was not as bad as expected here now. Just after Christmas, however, German observation planes were more frequent visitors, strange noises heard and movement increased. Trains (which later proved to be phonograph records) were even heard pulling into Bitche. German patrol activity increased notably. It was New Year's Eve. The artillery had prepared to ring in 1945 with a bang, but unforeseen circumstances prevented the "festivities". At 2330, New Year's Eve, a barrage of illuminating flares poured in. The German offensive had started.



Almost immediately communications with all platoons and with battalion went out. The outposts were overrun and an initial assault made on the line. The line held and the enemy pulled back and reorganized. It was during this first assault that Sergeant Clifford LaBelle manned his machine gun and poured deadly fire into the enemy. He killed twenty and wounded half a dozen more. Through out the night he kept his gun in action and alone greatly hampered the German effort. Sergeant LaBelle, later awarded the Silver Star and

recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross (which is now pending), was captured when going to the assistance of one of his crew.

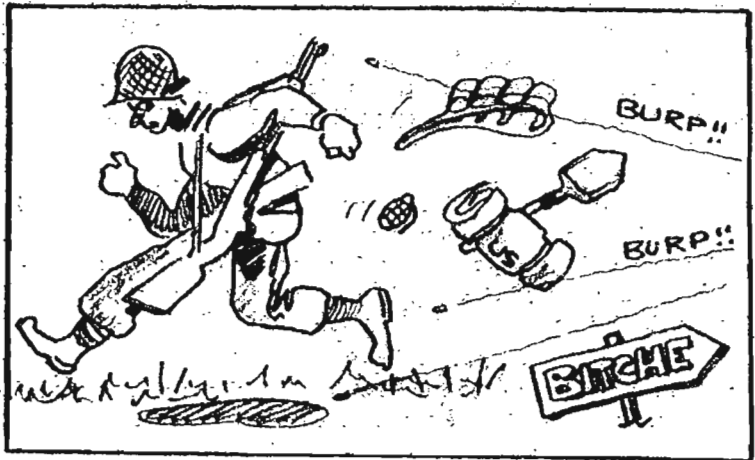
The 117th Reconnaissance Troop was hit with a tremendous attack and forced to withdraw several thousand yards. Being on the Company's right flank, this withdrawal opened the complete right flank of both the battalion and the regiment to attack. Seizing this opportunity the Germans poured in and assailed the Company from the flank. A temporary line was formed along the Bitche Highway made up of men from C Company and the third and headquarters platoons. This line took the brunt of the assault and after a terrific fire fight buckled. The survivors retreated to the Company CP, a group of farm buildings, where the next stand was made.

While the men at the CP were preparing to make the next stand, the other platoons were defending their positions above Bitche from the German frontal assault. These positions held throughout the morning, but becoming untenable, were evacuated through the second and third battalion areas to the towns of Sierstal and Lambach where they reorganized. Meanwhile the situation at the CP was rapidly becoming worse. Subjected to fire from three sides the buildings were evacuated and under cover of artillery a withdrawal made. However, seventeen men who attempted to escape were captured by the enemy who had meanwhile infiltrated to the rear of the CP. Among the ambushed were Capt. Prince and most of his headquarters platoon. It was here that a jeep laden with wounded attempted to run the gauntlet of fire. The last heard of those men were screams of the wounded and bursts of fire from enemy automatic weapons. Nearly a dozen escaped from the CP however, by pulling back through enemy lines. These made their way to the secondary positions occupied by the second and third battalions. By the evening of January 1, 1945, only a handful of the original Company was organized and billeted in Lambach. The nearby towns produced many more of the Bakermen and by two o'clock the next morning some ninety odd survivors under the leadership of Lt. Harry Flanagan, reorganized and prepared to move back into the fray.

Here the six survivors of the outpost in the College de Bitche made their appearance. Without arms, covered with dirt, soot and refuse,

haggard but with undaunted spirits, they once again found themselves back with their Company. Hiding, dodging Nazis at every turn, shooting and pummeling their way out of tight circumstances they worked their way out of the college through the German lines and finally into our positions. During their escape they hid in the chimneys of the college, under tables and piles of refuse, in abandoned foxholes all the time under the very noses of their pursuers. Three over-intelligent Germans, noting their locations, were disposed of and several more are listed as probables. After their experiences the men asked for arms and a little food and took their places with the rest of the Company.

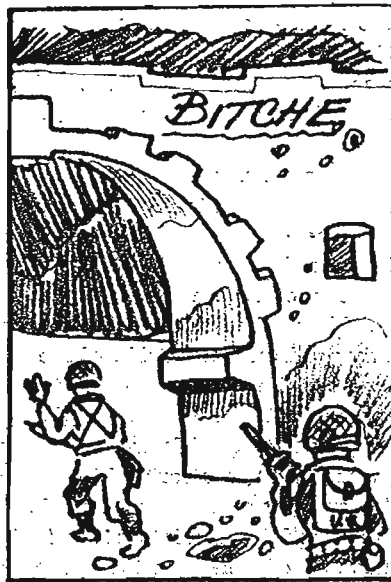
As Company commander, Lt. Flanagan led his depleted company into positions opposite Fruedenberg Farm and Fort Schiesseck in a former French garrison and the surrounding area. Here the next thrust was awaited, received and repelled. For ten days in open positions under the heaviest of enemy artillery, mortar, rocket and small arms fire, the Company held these positions. In the heavy snow and cold weather, the ill-equipped and exhausted men, fed K and C rations only, repelled enemy thrusts day after day, and night after night. Almost suicidal positions were established. Outposts and listening posts in the open field before the "farm" and its network of pillbox were manned. One of these positions, because of the incessant artillery, "meemie", and sniper fire layed on it, became known as "little



Anzio". Finally on 11 January 1945, the Second Battalion took over the Company's front and afforded the men of the Company their first rest in a month. Pulling back to the village of Lambach, Baker Company sought and found its first quiet since the enemy thrust. Even shellfire was experienced here, but after several days the Company was bolstered by a number of reinforcements, issued new clothing and again took shape. After five days of rest the battalion was alerted and prepared to move back on line.

Manning the ridge beyond Glassenberg was the Battalion's next task. Baker Company moved into the furthest right position, adjoining that of the 36th Division; opposite Spitzberg ridge. A mile to the front lay Reyersviller, the former Battalion CP. On the Company's right was the Lemberg-Bitche Highway. In these positions a constant bombardment was experienced and a series of counter-attacks repulsed. Mortar bombardments were so heavy and accurate that it became a risk even to leave one's hole. Patrolling was frequent and very hazardous and sniping became more than bothersome as the fire was deadly. Casualties were numerous during the two weeks that the men occupied these positions. Once again the Company was relieved and again the men slogged their way back to Lambach and a four day rest.

For the next fifty days this procedure was repeated. Every two weeks the Company would be taken off line and given a week's rest. During this time on-line patrols were constant, sometimes with as many as four going out a night. However, enemy fire was encountered less often and in smaller quantities and in all the time passed much faster. The time spent in rest was divided between loafing, lectures, hikes,



weapons firing and recreation. It was not too bad now, even with the patrolling.

On one particular February night, the third platoon was assigned the task of raiding Fruedenberg and one of its adjoining pillboxes. A new experience was encountered when a flame thrower was ordered to be employed in this attack. T/5 Boyd Pike carried this and led the assault on the pillbox. Because of heavy enemy fire from the farmhouse and another concealed machine gun, the raiders were forced to withdraw. Before leaving, however, T/5 Pike accounted for one German crew with his flame thrower. The raid failed and Fruedenberg continued to act as a thorn in the Company's side even though almost leveled by corps TOT's and P-47 missions on it. Fruedenberg, "little Anzio", Schiesseck, and Spitzberg took their toll until the 15 March 1945.

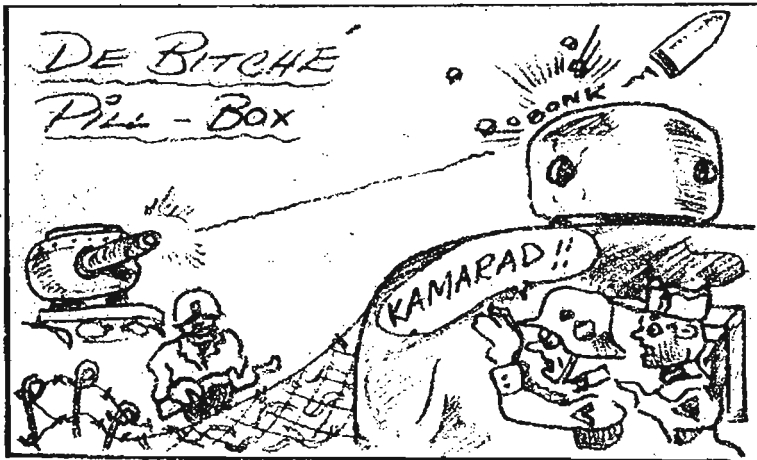
On the morning of March 15th the defensive period ceased to exist. In a coordinated smash the entire Seventh Army jumped off. Tanks, artillery and the doughs of the unit surged forward. The Company's objective was the high ground overlooking Bitche to the left of the formerly held positions above that bastion. Crossing the IP at 0800, the men slashed their way through opposing forces, up the steep slopes and across the mine infested obstacles. By noon the ground was taken, along with several prisoners, the men emplaced, and every inch of lost ground recovered.

Mounting tanks at dawn the following morning, Baker Company proceeded down to Bitche. Because of road blocks the men detrucked, marched out past Fruedenberg, past smoulding Schiesseck and down into the dreaded city. In the shadow of the once mighty citadel the citizens of Bitche heralded the men. Not delaying the Company quickly pushed through the throngs and proceeded toward the military garrison just outside of the city. Near the outskirts of town lead scouts of the Company were fired on by a sniper. By quickly dispatching an BAR and a rifleman, the sniper was eradicated and the Company again moved forward. Leaving the city behind Baker Company approached the stronghold of Camp de Bitche from the right while A Company struck from the left. Midway to the camp, machine gun fire forced the men into cover, inflicting casualties on the point squad made up of men from the Company. On the left of the road a large

pillbox spat out its lethal message, while from the right of the road enemy machine guns and riflemen made it uncomfortable. Almost immediately mortar fire began dropping in on the Company. Sizing up the situation Lt. William Sullivan, in his first attack with the Company, took his first platoon and commenced to flank the pillbox. Meanwhile, Pfc. Lloyd J. Smith ran back to Bitche and returned with two much needed tanks.

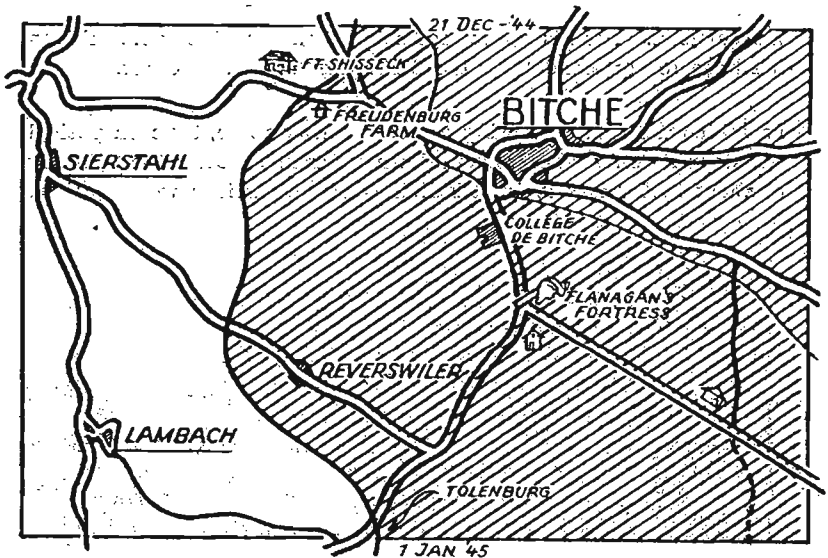
When the tanks arrived, the situation found Lt. Sullivan's platoon nearly surrounding the pillbox while Lt. Flanagan in one tank and Lt. Reid in the other, directed point blank fire from the 76's into the enemy positions. Finally, when in position, the first platoon assailed the pillbox. Directing bazooka, BAR and rifle fire into the turrets Lt. Sullivan's platoon neutralized the position. Then moving alone he personally accounted for two Germans with carbine fire and grenades and called out some eighty-odd prisoners including a battalion commander. Hustling these prisoners back to the tanks and thence back to Bitche, the Company reorganized and again moved toward the garrison. For his action against the enemy pillbox Lt. Sullivan has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross.

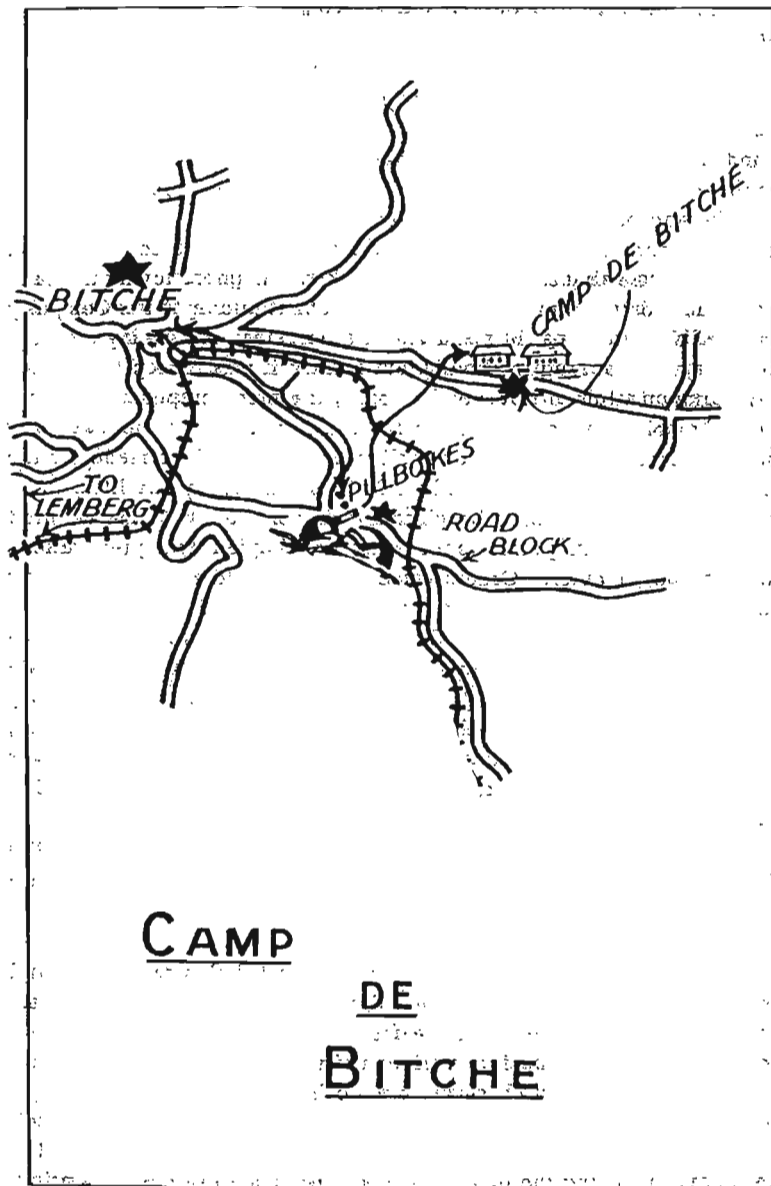
Forsaking the road and using a cross country route, the men pushed on, stopping only when pinned down by enemy mortar fire. Finally at about 1500 hours the first buildings of the garrison were reached.



Moving quickly into the center of the camp (already cleared by Able Company) the platoons of the Company moved out, cleared more area and took up positions awaiting orders. As dusk approached a terrific rocket and artillery barrage started. This continued until nightfall. After the evening meal a quartering party was selected and sent to pick billets in Bitche. Later that evening after being relieved by men of the 398th, the weary doughs plodded back to Bitche and had a well deserved rest.

The next morning after a hearty breakfast, ammunition and rations were distributed and preparations made to continue the chase. Here Lt. Sullivan and most of his platoon, after remaining on line the preceding evening, returned with eighteen more prisoners. This brought the platoon's toll of prisoners to over a hundred in less than twenty-four hours.





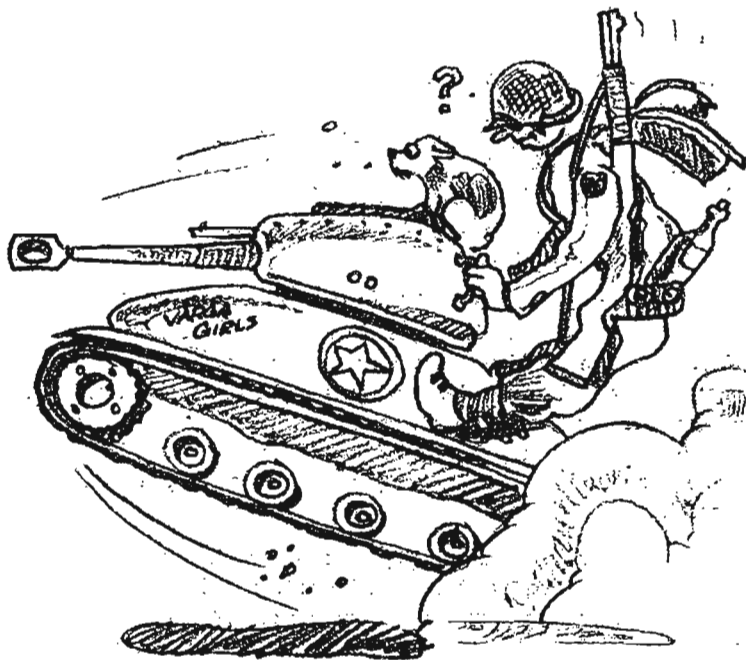
CHAPTER V

The Chase

At 1100 hours the men once again said goodbye to Bitche and started a long shuttle chase. Moving through several ghost towns the race continued for nearly fourteen hours. At about midnight the Company crossed the last phase line and entered Germany. An enemy artillery barrage was not long in coming, but luckily it was inaccurate. With no communication or food or bed rolls, the men scraped themselves shallow holes and settled down for the night. Early the next day wire contact was made with battalion and preparations made for the day's attack. Several hundred yards to the front lay the little town of Hilst and beyond that the gleaming dragon's teeth of the vaunted Siegfried Line. A patrol found Hilst unoccupied and preparations were made to enter. Orders came down to hold present positions and at nightfall to be relieved by elements of the 71st Division. At last it seemed as though "B" Company would be relieved and returned to France for a rest. The shock came soon when word was received that the Company was to march about ten miles to an assembly area where it organized for the assault on the Westwall. That evening found a foot sore Company trudging its way down a winding river valley, past artillery positions and tank parks, through sleeping villages, and finally up the steep incline leading into the heavily wooded assembly area. Not even delaying long enough to scrape out shallow holes, the weary doughs spread their rolls and slept, leaving only a minimum of men on guard.

The next morning immediately after breakfast, holes were dug, and orders were awaited. Maps came down, the officers were oriented, and plans laid for the use of teams in the assault on the Siegfried forts, platoons splitting into various units each of a few men with a specific mission. Church services were held in the open and every thing made ready for the move. Orders were delayed and the attack which was to commence the following day was postponed until the next day. Utilizing the delay the Bakermen used the day in writing,

sleeping or just relaxing. On 21 March, 1945, at 0800 the Company boarded trucks and moved forward toward the line. On the preceding day the line had cracked and broken before the overwhelming forces attacking. The battered remnants of the German defenders were racing back towards the Rhine with the American forces close behind. The orders received were to pursue the enemy until contact was made. Roaring through battered towns, across open fields, past wrecked pillboxes, the Company proceeded towards the Rhine and the next German line of defense. By-passing Zwiebrücken and Pirmasens, the convoy raced down the Hardt River Valley in the



shadow of the towering Hardt Mountains. Scores of abandoned vehicles, dead horses and scattered equipment lay on either side of the road. Passing thousands of liberated laborers and long files of prisoners, the convoy continued until the Rhine Plain was reached. Moving through newly captured Neudstadt, the Company halted at Diedersheim. Early the next morning the trucks were again boarded and the Company moved forward again into the town of Maudach, a suburb of the Rhine city of Ludwigshaven. Clearing the town of Maudach the men settled down and awaited the move to Ludwigshaven. The next afternoon the Company marched two miles into the next suburb. Remaining in Mundenheim for one evening, the next move was into the central part of Ludwigshaven. Taking positions along the Rhine, the Company proceeded to clear their sector of the city, capturing a few stragglers and would-be snipers. Here the Company was subjected to intense direct fire from weapons across the river and heavy sniper and machine gun fire. A few men received minor wounds during this move but by nightfall of the 24th of March the Company was in position and awaiting the next move. Remaining in these positions until March 27th the men continued their mopping-up and awaited the inevitable crossing. At 1330 on March 27 the regiment was placed in corps reserve and B Company pulled back to Moudach.

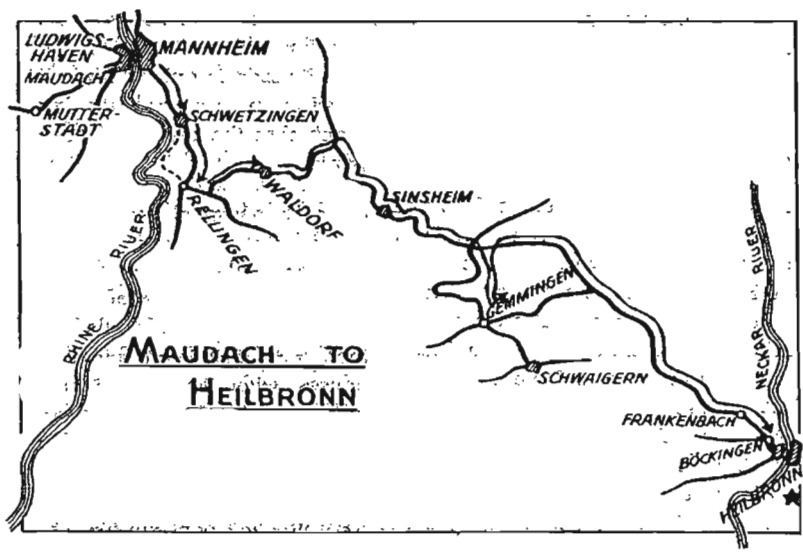
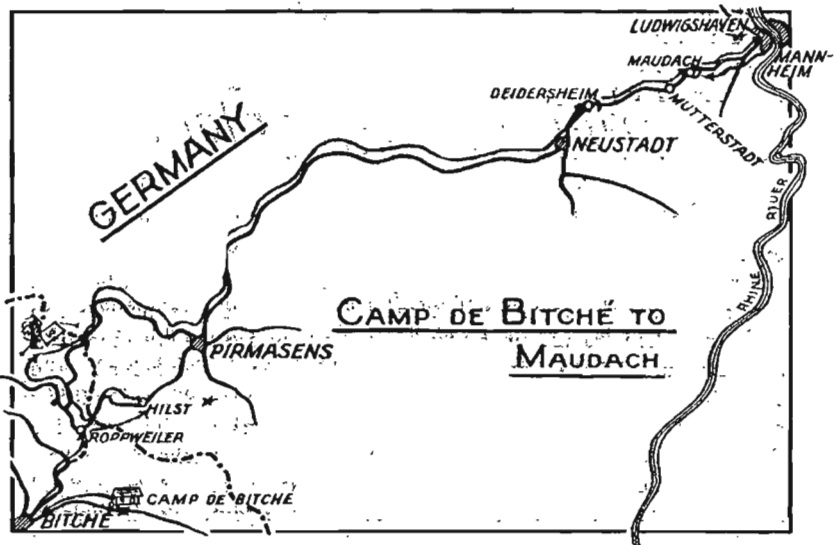
Once again a rest was afforded the battle weary men and the luxury of a shower found. Movies were shown nightly during the reserve period. Practice marches were taken and a light training schedule was maintained. Meanwhile, the Rhine had been crossed at Worms, the city of Mannheim across from Ludwigshaven stormed, and the Germans pushed back and in full retreat. On the 30th of March the Company again boarded trucks and set out after the fast fleeing Wehrmacht.

Racing through Ludwigshaven, across a newly erected pontoon bridge, the Rhine was crossed and Mannheim entered. Pausing only long enough to observe the complete destruction of Mannheim, the convoy raced out toward Sinsheim. Late that afternoon the Company halted in the huge railroad repair yards and the men settled down for the evening. Early the next morning the Company moved out with its final objective the town of St. Leon. After clearing a wooded area, and receiving some artillery fire outside the town, the men discovered that St. Leon had been taken by the French that morning. Pushing

forward the Company took the next town, Reilingen, and bedded down for the evening. During the night French armor and infantry pushed through the town and captured the next day's objective. Remaining in Reilingen that day, the Company was placed in reserve and there awaited the next move. Early the next morning the Company pulled out in convoy. The move was to the to the city of Waldorf which had been taken the preceding day. Here a day's stay was given the men and church services held.

Just before noon on the following day tanks, TDs and trucks were mounted and the Company raced past Sinsheim and into Steinfurt. Several prisoners were taken here and resistance was expected to increase. At 0900 the next day the convoy was ordered to move to Schwaigern. As the Company entered the town of Gemmingen, the town before Schwaigern, heavy enemy fire from SP and artillery guns held up the advance. Taking up positions in this town the Company awaited the new attack orders. That afternoon the first platoon was called upon to cover C Company which had been trapped in the woods between Gemmingen and Schwaigern. By moving to the besieged company's right flank their withdrawal was facilitated and Charlie was relieved without further casualties. The platoon then made its way back to Gemmingen and took up positions there. All through the night the heavy bombardment continued. On the next morning the third platoon was getting its morning chow when it was nearly fired upon by a French armored force that was attacking the town. The platoon informed the French that the town had been taken and then continued with its breakfast.

At 2300 that evening tanks, TDs and trucks were once again boarded and the Company moved again toward the stronghold of Heilbronn on the Neckar River. On the the outskirts of Schwaigern a convoy of French vehicles was encountered. These trucks had their headlights on and were affording the enemy perfect artillery targets. After several minutes of combined sweating, swearing and praying, they were passed and the convoy continued. Moving through sleeping villages, illuminated by burning houses, the convoy raced until the town of Bockingen, a suburb of Heilbronn, was reached. Here the Company raced, detrucked and marched into the town. The area assigned to the Company was the bombed-out railroad section of the city. By 0300 the positions were occupied and the men billeted for the night.



CHAPTER VI

Heilbronn & Flein

On 7 April 1945 the Company moved into positions along the banks of the Neckar River. This factory area was subjected to a terrific volume of artillery fire. Direct fire from tanks, anti-tank guns, and 38 cm. mortars poured in, and small arms fire hit the Company simultaneously. This fire continued all day and night. On the 8th of April at 1100 hours, Company B crossed the Neckar on a foot bridge under cover of a smoke screen which seemed to draw fire, the crossing thus being made under intense bombardment. Several men were hit crossing, one mortally. Moving into a factory, the Company reorganized and pushed out again. Several blocks of houses were assigned to the Company for clearance. This took 'till evening to accomplish. Several more casualties were sustained during this operation. Fire from factory buildings and concealed nests harassed the men. Several



of these were eliminated and by evening the objective was reached. Outposts were established, and preparations were made for the evening. Early the next morning the Company moved out and continued to clear its assigned sectors.

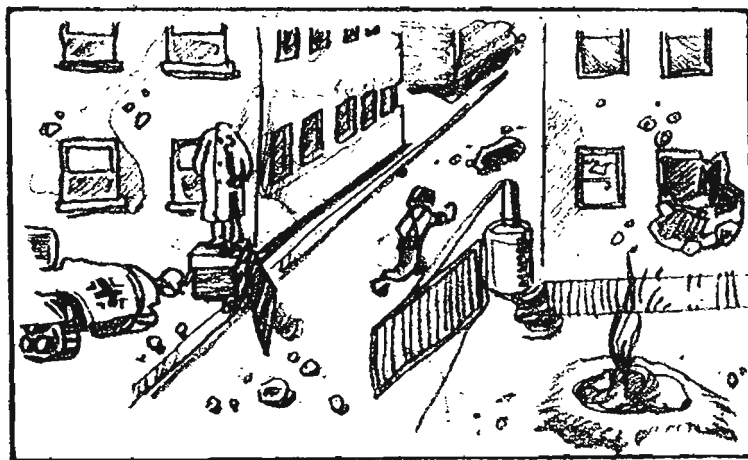
One particular exploit on the 9th of April was the action of Pfc. Arthur Grimm. His platoon was clearing a block of houses when a German tank, not aware of his platoon's presence, roared by them and into the midst of the Company. Seeing this, Pfc. Grimm rushed out into the open and fired his bazooka at the tank. The tank

wheeled around and came storming back toward Pfc. Grimm. He calmly leveled his bazooka and fired. The tank came rushing towards him. Pfc. Grimm fired again. The round hit the tank near the driver's compartment. As the tank rolled to a stop, he again fired, this time a WP round, setting the tank afire. As the occupants spilled out they were mowed down by fire from the entire platoon. For his action Pfc. Grimm has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross. The toll taken by the platoon was one German Panzer Jaguar IV, two enemy dead and three captured. Also on that day S/Sgt. Persiani and Giuseppe Peri, a liberated Italian partisan, nabbed a dozen prisoners after a small fire fight and bitter fist fight. The day's toll was then over thirty captured, one enemy tank knocked out, and numerous enemy killed. Out casualties were light while those of the enemy were comparatively heavy.

For the next two days the mopping up procedure continued. By this time the Company had pushed to the outskirts of the city and was preparing to storm the military garrison. Shortly after noon on 12 April 1945 the assault on Heilbronn's garrison began. Approaching from the left flank, the Company began its attack. Heavy machine gun, sniper and small arms fire was encountered but entrance was finally gained and the clearance of the garrison commenced. After six hours of searching, the last of the Germans were thrown out. Sharp fire fights marked the battle for the garrison with nearly thirty more prisoners being taken. One man was killed and several wounded from the Company in this attack. The next day was spent in reorganizing the Company, issuing equipment and ammunition, and preparing for the attack on the town of Flein.

Four kilometers from the garrison was the small village of Flein. No trouble was expected here but expectations were premature as the town proved to be a hornet's nest. Intense machine gun fire was encountered from the outskirts of Flein and from the high ground beyond. Through the almost single handed efforts of Lt. George Everett the town was entered without casualties. At the same time Lt. Russell Leahy distinguished himself by charging into the town with Lt. Everett and aiding in the capture of eighteen prisoners. These two officers aided greatly in the taking of the town by removing the defense of one of its entrances. Pushing on through the town, taking several more prisoners in the procedure, the men pushed out toward

the high ground beyond Flein. A patrol sent ahead to reconnoiter the area was pinned down by the heavily entrenched enemy on this high ground. Here Lt. Everett brought a tank up and personally manning the 50 calibre machine gun on the tank, led the Company in storming these positions. The enemy was routed and the Company took over these positions. Here the Company was subjected to a terrific rocket barrage. A large number of white phosphorous shells also fell around the men. Casualties were nil and after posting several outposts on the ridge, the rest of the Company pulled back to Flein for the evening. During the evening several more prisoners were taken when they came into the town unaware of the Company's presence. For their action that day Lt. Everett has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross and Lt. Leahy has received the Silver Star.





BÖCKINGEN

NECKAR RIVER

HEILBRONN

FLEN
UNTER GRUPPENBACH

WUSTENHAUSEN

GAGERT
BURG

HEILBRONN TO EBERSBACH

NASSACH

BACKNANG

HERTMANNSWEILER
WINNENDEN

STUTTGART

STETTEN

SCHORNDORF

OBERESSLINGEN

ESSLINGEN

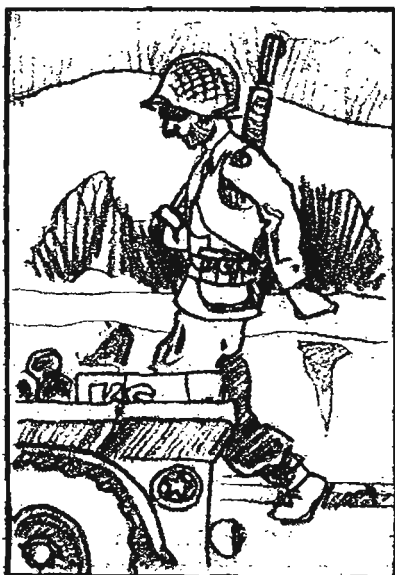
V-E DRV!!

EBERSBACH

CHAPTER VII

The Final Drive

Remaining in Flein for a day, the town was thoroughly checked by the men, ammunition distributed and plans laid for the next attack. After the evening meal orders were received to take the high ground beyond the area taken the previous night. Baker Company was placed in reserve, but when C Company was pinned down a few kilometers beyond Flein, the orders were changed and the Company was committed. Leaving the town at dusk with two accompanying tanks, the men proceeded to the place where C Company was held up. The tanks were forced to abandoned the attack due to numerous roadblocks. Leaving the tanks behind Lt. Flanagan led his men over a heavily wooded hill towards the enemy strongpoint. Several times the men were forced to lay low while enemy barrages fell in among them. Several men were wounded on this hill. Sending these men back to



Flein, the Company moved up again until pinned down by automatic weapons fire. By this time the roadblock had been removed and the tanks allowed to move forward. The tanks destroyed this enemy position and C Company under cover of darkness pulled back into Flein. In compliance with orders the Company pushed ahead until at 2300 the designated objective was reached. With no communication with the rest of the battalion and without bedrolls or blankets the men dug in, established perimeter defense, and got as much rest as possible. During the night more roadblocks

were cleared and by early morning the road was opened. TDs moved into position, wire contact was established, and hot chow brought up to the weary men. On the afternoon of April 16th the Company pulled out of these positions and hiked to the town of Wustenhausen. No resistance was encountered here although later that afternoon one German was captured when he came riding into town on a bicycle. Some enemy artillery fire fell on the town but no casualties were inflicted. When C Company sent a motorized patrol of platoon strength to reconnoiter the area ahead and had it cut off and nearly destroyed, Lt. Flanagan led a platoon of the Company to the trapped men's rescue. After successfully accomplishing this rescue the platoon returned to Wustenhausen and bedded down for the night.

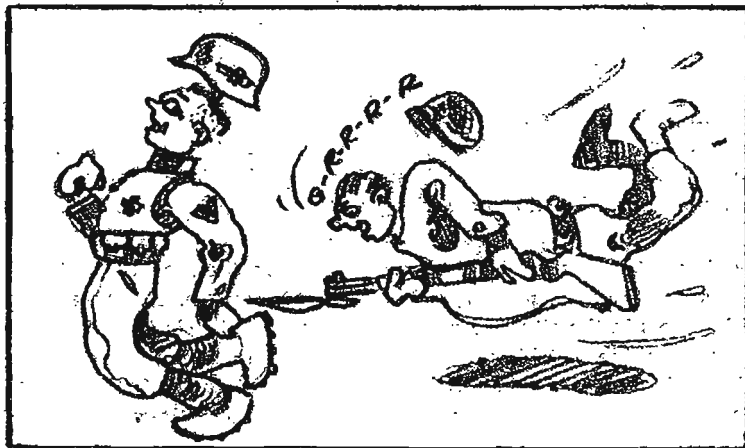
On 17th of April the Company moved back to Unter-Gruppenbach where trucks were boarded. The next move was to Unter-Henriet where the men detrucked and set off on the long and rugged trip to Gagenberg. Marching quickly through the town the men started the trip up the steep incline to the commanding ground above. After several hours of toil the heights were gained. Positions were dug while heavy enemy artillery fire fell among the men. Late in the afternoon orders were received to continue the attack. Pushing out under artillery fire the Company pressed the attack. Somehow the road to Gagenberg was missed and the Company proceeded towards a heavily defended enemy strong-point. The Company moved ahead into a large canyon unaware of the prepared ambush ahead. Before going too far into the canyon, reconnaissance patrols were sent ahead. These patrols discovered heavily defended positions and a multitude of Germans. From several prisoners taken here the trap was discovered. At the same time the Company received orders to withdraw from Battalion. Even as the withdrawal started the Company was discovered and an terrific hail of enemy fire poured in. The 20 mm cannon, heavy machine gun and rifle fire was overwhelming. Finally, after crawling or stumbling, the men made their way back and reorganized. Several more prisoners were taken by the Company and sent back to Battalion. Several men were wounded, two of them mortally. The Company then dug in and awaited the decision of the Battalion Commander on the attack.

"The town must be taken at all costs", was the order from the Commanding Officer, so stumbling forward again a night attack was made

on Gägerberg. Approaching the town from the north, the men proceeded down a narrow road until the houses of the town appeared. The Company then formed a skirmish line and pushed on through the orchard and field on either side of the road. As the outskirts of the town loomed ahead, the line was challenged and fired upon by an enemy machine gun. Pfc. Robert Reynolds distinguished himself by returning this fire with his BAR, killing one of the gun's crew and routing the rest of the enemy. This position destroyed, entrance to the town was gained. As the men closed in on the rest of the town intense fire from a flak-wagon until knocked out by return fire. Some artillery fire also fell in on the town but it was blindly fired and no casualties resulted from it. By 2300 the town was entirely secured, defenses established and the Company settled. For his action during the assault on Gägerberg, Pfc. Reynolds has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross.

Early on the morning of April 18th, a German patrol made its way back into Gägerberg, fired four panzerfausts and pulled back as silently as they had appeared. It was that evening that Lt. Flanagan received a promotion and became Capt Flanagan.

The 20th of April was spent moving to and organizing in the marshalling area at Nassach. Attack orders were received and the next day the Company pushed off with Backnang as its objective. Moun-



ting tanks and TDs the men raced through Sulzbach and Oppenwatern reaching Backnang at about 1400 that afternoon. Delaying only while a bridge was being repaired, the attack continued with Winenden now as the goal. On the outskirts of Hertmannsweiler enemy resistance was encountered. A well concealed anti-tank gun knocked out the lead tank, killing two men and wounding several others. One man died of wounds later. About seven Germans were taken in this town as the Company moved in and settled. About 2300 a night attack was ordered on Winenden. The convoy again moved out and reached the outskirts of Wenenden at midnite. The village priest in order to save the city from further destruction offered to take the Company into the town without arousing enemy suspicion. He led the Company to a bridge on the end of town and showed the men a route into the center of town by which they could capture the defenders. However, a problem was presented when two five hundred pound bombs. The town, illuminated by several burning houses, was entered, and breathless labor, several men of the third platoon removed these bombs. The town, illuminated by several burning houses, was entered, ten German defenders captured and an entire enemy field hospital, staff and patients taken. By 0200 the town was secured, outposts situated and communications established.

On the following day, April 21st, the Company moved to Stetten on tanks and TDs. No opposition was encountered here and twenty-three Germans were taken prisoner. Here the Company settled and prepared for the next day's operation. At 1300 the next day the men started to clear the woods near Hagensberg, later entering the town. By evening the Company had the town thoroughly cleared and the men prepared for a few days stand. For the next few days the surrounding towns were searched for contraband and patrolled. The men received clean clothes, cigarette rations, and made in general more comfortable. Finally the Division was pulled off the line and the Company moved to Stuttgart. This was on the 27th of April.

Seeking out billets in the bomb-shattered city, the men found themselves in one of the most devastated cities in Europe. As there were still snipers in the city and as the French were still clearing the Germans from the outskirts, there was still a considerable amount of firing going on. After a few days these remaining defenders were pushed out and were finally pulled away from the battle-weary Baker-

men. It was difficult to believe that this was so. Here after one hundred and seventy-odd days of combat, the war was temporarily over for the exhausted men.

A bevy of reinforcements bolstered the Company and once again full strength was reached. Occupational duties were expected so the necessary preparations were made. On 1 May 1945 the Company received its first job along occupational lines. Moving to the town of Ebersbach, the men searched it for weapons, established patrols and check points. A training schedule was set up and an athletic program started. Movies were shown for the men for the first time since Moudach. On 6 May 1945 the cease fire order was given to the men and two days later V-E Day was proclaimed. The next day was celebrated with a victory parade after which a holiday for the Company was declared.

On the 10th of May the Company assumed the occupation of Beimerstetten, a small town near Ulm. Remaining here, regular occupational work was carried on while the Company gradually adapted itself to the rigors of peacetime army life. On the 20th of May the Company again moved, this time to the village of Uhingen. From this time on full occupation work was undertaken. From Uhingen Baker Company moved to Nurtlingen, from Nurtlingen to Illingen and finally from Illingen to the Horst-Wessel school in Knittlingen. A regular training schedule complete with hikes, lectures and demonstrations began in earnest. Athletic schedules, orientation periods, movies and plays, an occasional show in Stuttgart and the Company bar provided other diversions.

Rumors had the Division in the ETO until fall, others had it

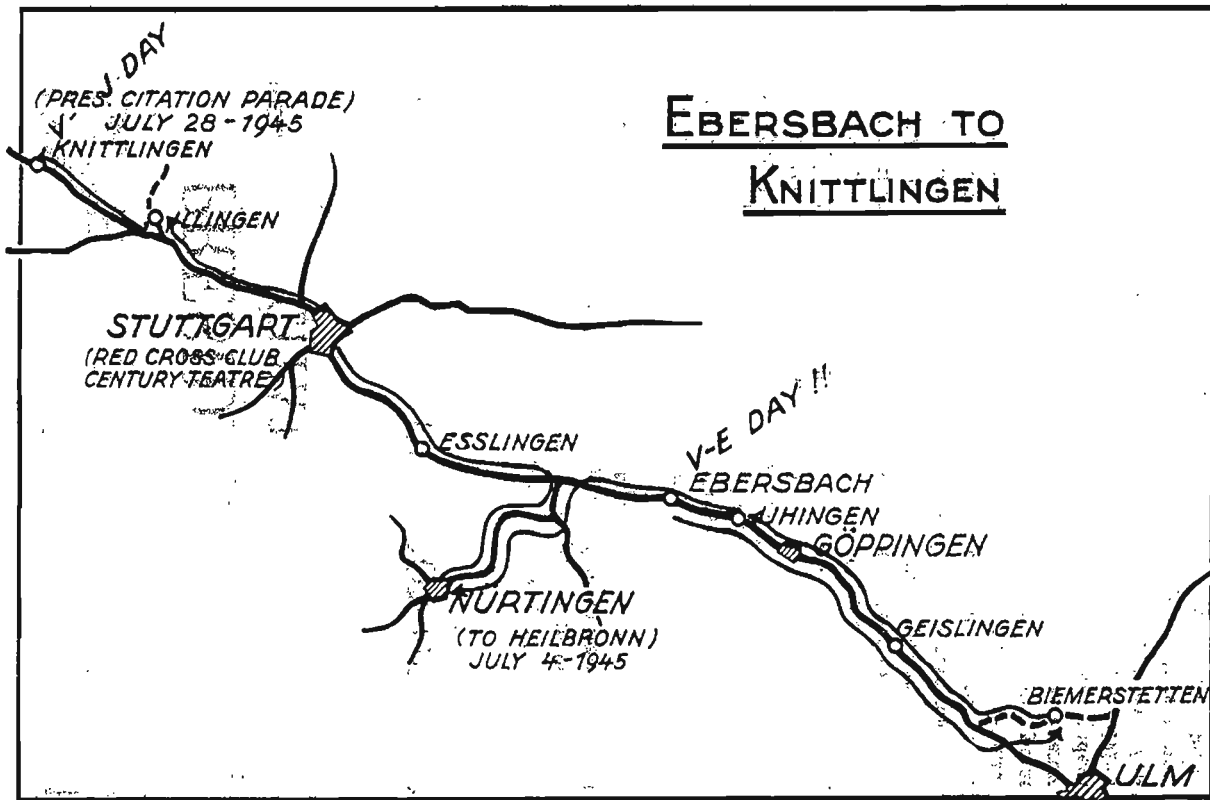


ready for redeployment directly to the Pacific, while still others talked of Christmas at home in 1946. The first two weeks in August brought about considerable changes. First the atom bomb was employed in the Japanese war and then the Division alerted for redeployment home in November. Feverishly struggling through records, piles of equipment and stacks of unfinished work, the men of the Company prepared for the expected and long awaited journey home. After seven days of sweating, the war with Japan suddenly ended. The hopes of many fell along with the thankful relief brought with the momentous news. As expected the dream vanished with the revocation of the alert orders and since then the monotony of occupation resumed.

What future lies ahead for us is unknown but at least a brief look at this unit's history is contained in this book. As brief a testimonial as it is, this book is intended to serve as a memorial to all of those men who have faithfully served in Company B.



VE Day





PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER, 206.

23. July 1945

BATTLE HONORS - CITATION OF UNIT

By direction of the President, under the provisions of Section IV, Circular Number 333, War Department, 1943, and with the approval of the Army Commander, the following named organization is cited for outstanding performance of duty in action:

THE FIRST BATTALION, 399TH INFANTRY REGIMENT is cited for outstanding performance in combat during the period 16 November 1944 to 17 November 1944, near Raon L'Etape, France. Overlooking the important Muerthe River City of Raon L'Etape, in the thickly forested foothills of the Vosges Mountains, is a hill-mass known as Tete Des Reclus. This high ground, affording perfect enemy observation, barred an assault upon the vital communications city. On the rainy morning of 16 November, the First Battalion launched an attack to clear the enemy from these strongly fortified hill positions. Fighting through the dense, pine forest under intense enemy artillery, mortar, machine gun and automatic weapons fire, the First Battalion, after three hours of effort, drove across a trail circling the base of the hill-mass. A withering, forty-five minute artillery preparation at this point proved ineffective against the deep, concrete and log covered enemy bunkers built into the side of the hills, and it soon became evident that basic infantry assault was the only feasible method for driving the enemy from their positions. In a fierce, close-in, small arms fire fight, which increased in fury as they climbed the precipitous slopes, the First Battalion wormed their way toward the top of Hill 462.8, key to the enemy's defenses. Battling against fanatical enemy resi-

stance, they finally reached the crest. Bitter, hand-to-hand fighting developed as the enemy hurled repeated counterattacks against the inspired infantrymen. Once the First Battalion was driven from the hill-top, but rapidly regrouping, they regained their positions. At dark, the enemy finally withdrew, leaving the First Battalion in possession of high ground. Throughout, supplies had to be hand carried up the steep slopes under continuous enemy fire. Only the teamwork, coordination and determination of all elements in this heroic Battalion, made the success of this attack possible, opening the gateway through the Vosges Mountains to the Alsatian Plains beyond.

BY: COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL MURPHY:

I. O. KILGORE

Colonel GSC
Chief of Staff

OFFICIAL:

BYRON C. DE LA MATER

Lt Col AGD
Adjutant General

DISTRIBUTION

"A" & "BB"

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since 6 October 1944:

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Bochniak, Joseph N.	1423 4th St. NE, Minneapolis, Minn.
Borders, John W.	325 McBrayer St, Shelby, N. C.
Boerstler, Montie H.	738 N. Rockford Ave, Tulsa, Oklahoma
Bower, Irving W.	RR #1, McHenry, Illinois
Boyers, Lester J.	RT #2, Morgantown, W. Va.
Bradley, Andrew W.	RT #1, Box 21, Elida, New Mexico
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Bundy, Albert C.	37 Grove St., Norwich, Conn.
Carlisle, William F.	Kadoka, S. D.
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Dickerson, Harvey E.	613 Wilmer Ave, Anniston, Alabama
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Frey, Lewis T.	Slateford, Pa.
Fullmer, Paul R.	215 Southern Ave, S. Williamsport, Pa.
Gibson, Douglas H.	305 Beach St, Chaska, Minn.
Gielarowski, Joseph N.	5149 Henderson St, Chicago, Illinois
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Verhovsek, Frank	914 E. 150 St, Cleveland, Ohio
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Blake, Wilfred K. Jr.	27 Academy Road, Madison, N. J.
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Graham, Edwin F.	RT #1, Raleigh, N. C.
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Hale, Daniel R.	RT #2, Alexandria, Tenn.
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Martinez, Mike A.	2738 W. Holden Place, Denver, Col.
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Sims, George E.	Hughes, Ark.
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Stephens, Joe B.	Box 235, Alto, Georgia
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Velie, David S.	608 1/2 N. Lawe St, Appleton, Wisc.
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Zuvella, Tony J.	RT #1, Box 30, Bellaire, Ohio

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Watkins, Forrest A.	RT #2, Curtis, Oklahoma

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Coburn, Winston G.	RFD #2, Strafford, Vt.
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*) Some of the above men have been liberated since this list was compiled.

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Couch, Ralph N.	Rt. #4, Broken Arrow, Okla.
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Webb, Alvin B.	Rt. #3, Corvallis, Ore.
Wesolowski, Bernard	102 Morgantown Rd., Reading, Pa.
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Watkins, Jack S.	610 Putnam St, Parkersburg, W. Va.
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Hart, Lloyd W.	Shreveport, La.
Heller, Homer J.	535 Church St, Lebanon, Pa.
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 Burkhalter, John Z. Gen. Del., Langdale, Ala.
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Johnson, James E.	Rt. #2, Jasper, Ala.
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