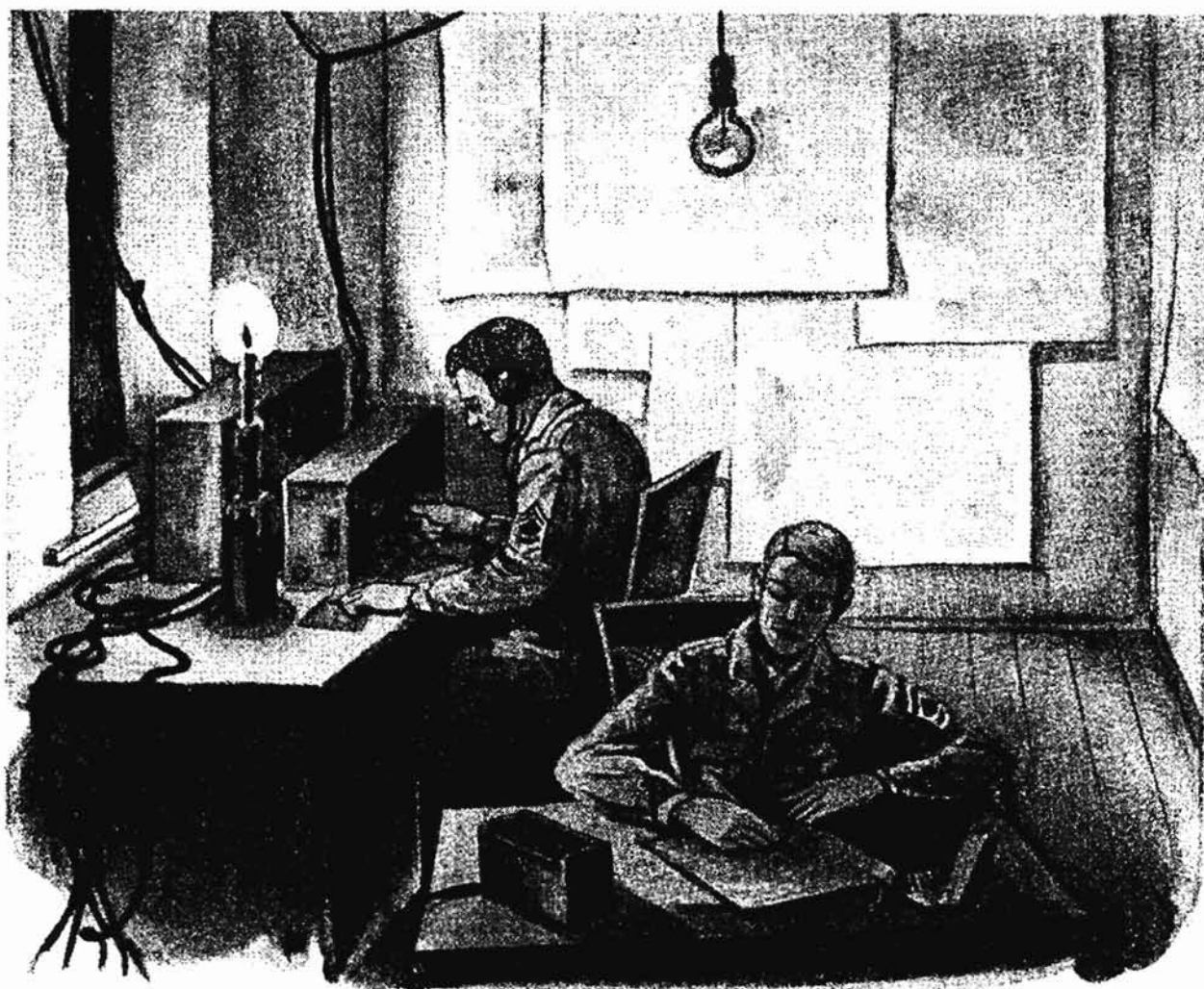


Headquarters

Battery



Headquarters Battery

Scene: - The Savarin Bar at Penn Station while on pass from Camp Kilmer.

The memoirs of a couple G.I. vets from Headquarters Battery, crying over their beers about the good old days, from activation, through training, maneuvers, more training and then the hustle and bustle of P.O.E. and the great event of actually sailing amidst the overflow of latrine-o-grams, the usual luck of the outfit still holding strong, the mud and rain of **Marseilles**.



(A) "Remember when they threw us off that train at **Jackson**, not knowing from nothin? Not caring either. Piling us into trucks to go to the "best battalion in the allied nations", being greeted by the old soldatans — "the June brides", the cadre. Teaching the fine art of hospital corners, left face — right face — attention. Fall in — Fall out — O.D.'s — fatigues — raincoats and shoes. "The Button King" Lieutenant **Gorman** — "You'll be pulling threads out of your arm, if you don't "Button that Button". And after all those hikes the "Button King" found out he's a staff officer. The Jake boys "**Green and Been**" — and of course "Check-Check" **Helwig** and "Swampy" **Curtis**. The "Rooster"

Conover. We had other names for them but all in all they were a pretty good bunch of Joes."

(B) "How about old **Perry G. Sherman**— "You'll be in the kitchen so much you'll think you are the Mess Sergeant. "Asses and elbows every A.M.". **Kentler** with his "Two sizes, boys — too big and too small. It'll shrink when you wash it — Sign here". Danny, the Foremost Almost Ice Cream Man, — **Joe La Rocque** — "Get the hell out of the motor park, — hey Colonel, come over here. These ————— — 90 day wonders". **Mike Kuklinski** — "You gotta clean de grease trap; — go see the First Sergeant. I don't give a damn". **Yosh Swiattouski** — "Hya Butch".

(A) "And then the drill field — "Get at the end of the line so you don't carry a rifle. All the Hollywood Corporals snafuing the whole deal. Calisthenics — Drill — Military Courtesy. **Beach** and his "GAS". **Thomas** and the M-1, take a deep breath and hold



it, then squeeze like a lemon (?) Our introduction to the swamps of South Carolina — with Lt. Curtis in his glory. Lt. Joe McKee at Saturday orientation. Lt. Green at the motor park and Lt. Helwig in the orderly room. "Why don't you get a haircut like mine?" Colonel Liles leading the 374th choir group in "This is the Army, Mr. Jones". "You are the best damn outfit going. I was a Corporal in the last war. I come from Texas".

(B) "Let's leave the brass — How about Joe O'Brien's "This is a dry run?" Monroe — "Go away and let me sleep". Paris going to Miami for a hair cut. Sasser in charge of Sardisco in the latrine. One tooth Mazzara playing the mandolin. What was so dumb about him"?

(A) "Being assigned to sections by the simple method of reporting to Perry G. Having him ask you what you did in civilian life. Telling him you were an architect, his reply — "OK, you're in the wire section". Everybody trying to get in that Grosser racket Medics — Ruled by "Doc" Dawson with an iron hand. Then section training and more section training. The "goldbricks" at radio school, Hakes, Harrison, Malgady, Patti, Margeson, etal. All bucking for the Columbia Army Air Base. The computers learning to add. Lt. "Prince Val" Booth — Major, "Blum, I'll jam that carbine up your a—", Green. "Gadget" Norton, "Frenchy" Haan — "On the way" Sussman — "A" Btry is the best", Sellew. "Strong and Silent" Senf. The surveyors with "W.P.A." Nugent — Bob Goodrich computing with "Whip" Joudrey at the controls. They had a good tape man in "Dusty" Gosnell. "AH rechon Ah'll breeze home this week-end". The wire men with "Scratchy" Chase running it. Corporal Corrigan, "Youse guys gotta get on the



ball". O'Brien and Monroe going out on a line and having a good siesta. Bitz at the switchboard. "Pappy" Dick Ayotte was the chief of the wire ground forces later on. Joe Majors and Charlie Brown the best of buddies. Tlumak and DeSpirt bucking for Bitz's racket. "Mosquito" Sullivan, the representative from Rancocus, twirling his baton, and looking for a 3 day pass. Muddy Buford writing a short note to Carrie. The idolized kitchen crew starring Johann "Givem the Blitz" Myers. — ably assisted by Kuklinski,

John **Urisini** — "You'll make T/5 if you're on the ball". **Fong Jone** — Chiang Kai-shek's good will representative and "**Raus**" **Brown** from Georgia. Old "Joe Efficiency" **Ross**. The motor section — "Check springs and suspensions, grease the balls". **LaRocque** snapping the whip. — **Hermann** giving out trip tickets, **Saltsiak** doing nothing, making it look good, and **Ray Smith** doing all the work".

(B) And don't forget the E.D. mob — Bn Hq. — Message Center and the Medics — **Horn**, **Granoff**, "**Gabby**" **Maconaghie** and **Jake Klingenstein** in Bn Hq — **Leon Bell** and "**Week-end**" **Willis** in Message Center. In the Medics are **Rich Richardson**, "**Oley**" **Olsen**, **Vince Marrone**, **Napoli**, and "**Alcohol**" **Keener**.



And remember how everyone was trying to get into the "lay on your back section". — at least until they got to France! The helmsmen were **Secord**, **Goodwin**, **Shambo** and "**Vas you effer on guard mit Ricci**", "**Schleuter**".

(A) "How about the rifle ranges at **Jackson**? — The coldest place in the summery South. Betting on the scores. The 30 cal. pencil was invented here! Pull and Paste, Maggie's drawers — especially for the officers. And that Sunday they gave us the tin



helmets — **Sussman** calls up his wife — "I'm going over". But it was a dry run and instead of Africa, all we saw was **Kingstree** and railroad cars. We were guarding the President's train. So we progressed, hikes, training and more training until the W.D. saw fit to let us go on our first furlough — civilian action at its best — crowded trains — wrinkled uniforms — sleeping (?) in the aisles — the big city — **Joe Commando**, "I didn't know you were in the Rangers" — The badge was always good for a free beer at the local. After the furlough, back to the old grind.

(B) "Field problems, lines, procedure, target area and computing over and over and over — foxholes. "Not too big, not too small, just enough for a 2½ ton and trailer". Then the biggest mistake of all — **Tennessee** — carrying the frozen guys to the Medics the first morning. The thrill of climbing into frozen shoes and wet leggings — of



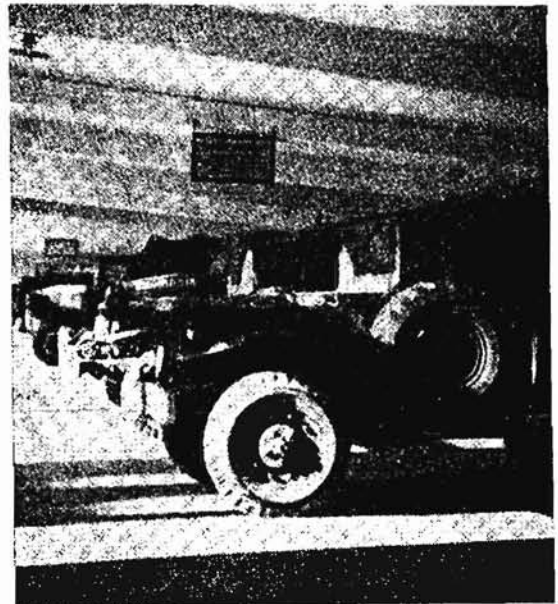
eating mud and being dirty — Nashville — civilization — The Paradise Club, where Headquarters reigned supreme, — bloody noses, bloody blouses, never heard the Star Spangled Banner played so much. Xmas in the field — “Drain the area boys, I’ll be in Nashville if you need me”. Xmas turkey à la mud — seasoned with rain.

(A) “Jeez, don’t forget the malaria problems — army efficiency at its best! And crossing the river and the wonderful work of the 14 A.D. The greatest days

of our army lives — January 17, 1944 when we left this paradise for Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The swell people that were so nice to us in Kings Mountain near our bivouac. The next day saw us in Bragg — how nice it looked. Red roofs, double decker barracks — bunks and showers. PX — movies — plates to eat out of. So we went on — got acquainted with Fayetteville, The Town Pump, the Sanford Commandos were formed here — Montini’s Buick — Hipkens and Cebulski and Nelson. The 13 AB. earned their battle stars here — Old man Davis and his shot gun and the Div Arty PX where the girl was who could dress left and right at the same time.

(B) “How about the infiltration course, the goldbricks on the ends — the uneasy moment when you went over the top — mine training with Chaney at the bat — “Listen you guys, you’ll be sorry later”. And P.O.M.’s till we were blue in the face. “It’s required before overseas movement”, censorship, secrecy. Showdowns, Lt. Slayline and Lt. Lafferty — new clothes, duffle bags

— rumors galore. Bucking for three day passes — and getting them too! Boys back from Sill. The goldbricks at radio school — Captain Curtis, — “You must pass 20 or





else". — Deignan, Dorman, Hakes, Buford, Hobson and Small et al. Everyone blowing their stacks.

(A) "Everyone was saying this outfit will never go over — it's a parade outfit — But this time it was the real thing, the real McCoy, as they used to say. Crating details, TATs and so forth. The band playing down at the R.R. — The PX girls watching — horseshoe rolls and sec-

urity until we reached Kilmer — more security, pac boots and red tape, one measly pass to N.Y.C., which I guess we all made the most of — Looking for a hole in the fence — inspection of tent poles. It was four days at Kilmer. Then the old **Hoboken Ferry** — Pier 44 — looking at the city and the Red Cross girls, who were handing out — guess what — but with a Hershey Bar this time. Up the plank, into the hold of that floating castle, the **U.S.A.T. George Washington**, which was to be our home for the next 14 days. Naturally, the 374th qualified again — 1 day on and 1 day off—real chow lines — "Use the brush, dip for 15 seconds". Crap games and card games — "Wear your life belt, if you fall off we don't stop for you". We really had the rumor machine going full blast — **Max Lewis** getting a baldy from **DeSpirt** and **Lew** getting a real trimming to the tune of a fin. Buying up soap for the mam'sellas — little did we know —"

(B) "How about the storms — "we've lost a rudder". We headed for the **Mediterranean Sea** and **Gibraltar**. The latter was the first sight of land in 10 days or more. The coast of **Africa** —



"Where the hell are we going"? And we finally landed at **Marseilles** on October 20th, 1944. The air raid that night, our first wet run! Finally our turn came and over the



cargo nets — Mr. **Kramer**, the original man on the flying trapeze — Waiting to fill the LSTs — sardines without oil — Touching land and Lt. **Lafferty's**, "It's only a short walk to

the bivouac area — and at the rate of 2 miles an hour". Our first sight of **France** proper — and 'cigarette pour papa'? Little did we know — the bivouac area — C rations — unloading ships, moonlight requisitions — "Who, us?" The hustle and bustle of last minute preparations. **Marseilles**, and **Aix** became **Fayetteville** and **Sanford** all over again — And then came our departure for you know where, on October 29. Then on said date we took off on that fateful motor ride to the front. Up the **Rhone Valley** to **Dijon**, then to bivouac in the vicinity of **St. Hélène**, where the Long Toms of the 976th let loose with a barrage and the combat wise veterans of the 374th dove for their respective foxholes, led by **Marston** and **Robinson**. At **St. Benoit** our first set-up in actual combat with the switchboard starting on its long series of being in the "kellar". Our first experience with Luftwaffe, 2 Krauts coming over and us sticking our necks out to see what it was all about. Then on to **Baccarat**



where the division was formally committed to combat with jump-off to **Raôn L'Etape** — this was some days after CT 7 had been committed. Here Headquarters Battery received a pleasant surprise, in that we were able to take over houses for installations and quarters. Who will ever forget that tremendous hill outside **Raôn L'Etape**, where the doughboys caught beaucoup hell, where **Joe Connolly's** crew laid wire into **Raôn** and when they got there finding out doughboys were coming up in back of them and hadn't even taken the town as yet. A $\frac{3}{4}$ weapons carrier acting as a point for an infantry platoon! It seems as if **Raôn** was to be especially tough for the wire section — Here it was that **Rip Collins** — driving **Muddy Buford's** crew, hit a tank mine — **Jimmy Farrell** on the tail gate took to the air with an RL-31 and a drum of wire for company. **Sully** and **Pohl** for their gallant action in maintaining communication earned the first Bronze Stars for Headquarters Battery. All this proved to be our first real baptism of fire. Really rough. The capture of **Raôn** meant the breaking of the hinge of the German's winter defensive line — stretching from **St. Dié** to **Lunéville**, the gateway to the **Vosges** and the rich lands of the Alsatian plains. This prepared us for the dirty, slogging winter campaign that was to follow — the **Vosges Mountains**. The move from **France** proper to the border provinces **Alsace-Lorraine**. Some of the towns that we took in the **Vosges** campaign were to high military observers mere pinpoints on the map, but to us, hard, dirty, tricky, savage, fighting with the Krauts. It was tooth and nail the whole way. Here our doughboys accomplished the impossible by conquering the impassable **Vosges Mountains**. Never before had this



been done in Military history. **Moyenmoutier**, **Plaine**, **St. Blaise**, **Mouterhouse**, **Hasselthal**, **Peter-Phillipe**. It was outside of **Peter-Phillipe** that we lost our first man. **Andy Servas** was killed by enemy mortar fire. He was then serving as Chief of the Second Liaison Section.

At **Hasselthal** while on reconnaissance, **Bill Chase**, **Roy Beach**, and **Fred Matts** were



blown up by a Teller mine. Of the three, **Roy** was hurt most seriously, for after a lengthy hospital stay, he was discharged. **Bill** and **Fred-die** both returned to the outfit. After losing **Andy Servas** outside of **Peter-Phillipe**, we moved to **Petit-Rederching**, the town that was to be our home away from home. Who will ever forget the reconnaissance to the rear that was made here. There were positions all the way back to **Sarre Union** plus — just in case. Finally, we moved to **Bining**, where we spent a most pleasant holiday season. On Xmas, we had a swell dinner, with **Ocko Lind**, **Curly Slayline**, **John Lafferty** passing out American whiskey at the top of the chow line. *Prima — Prima*. The next six days up to New Year's Eve were spent blissfully dreaming that the war was over and we were home — but this was only to prove the lull before

the storm. On New Year's Eve, 1945 the Germans launched a counter-attack against the 100th with elements of three infantry divisions and one Panzer Grenadiers division. The doughs at **Rimling** took all the hell the Krauts could throw at them, and still they came back for more. The division on our left fell back and this exposed our entire left flank. For eight days the Krauts kept up their counter-attack and then when it was all over the outfit was still in the same place. Here it was that the outfit proved they could take as well as dish it out. And dish it out they did. For proof all one had to do was to look at the evidence in the form of dead Krauts spread all over the landscape in front of **Rimling**. In these eight days, Major **Greene** seemed to have developed radar senses — he'd have a fire mission on the way almost before the damn things were called in. Here at **Bining** some of our own Air Corps had "bombs away" practice at our expense. When those two bombs landed at the intersection near the CP — we thought all hell had broken loose and after that we were quite a skeptical bunch of Joes whenever anything came over that had wings on — be they friendly or enemy markings. It got so we were more leery of our own planes than the krauts'. At **Bining** we also encountered a new friend "Alsace Alice" — her specialty was throwing 170 mm shells in the vicinity of Headquarters





Battery. All in all it was one hot time — we really ushered in the New Year with plenty of noise and fanfare. One thing that stood out was **Ocko Lind** telling **Charlie Brown** and his wire crew to go out and find the 44th Division. The hell of it was that no one knew where the division was. The only thing we knew was that the Krauts were all over the place. The next stop on our tour of **Lorraine** was the farm at **Mittlemuhl**. Here the outfit was split-up with an emergency setup in **Rahling** that soon got the name of "Slayline's Rest Camp". All you could see of life at the farm was snow — snow and more snow — and don't forget the sheep with their pleasant odors. From the farm we went back to our favorite home in **France** — **Petit Rederching** where we were to stay until the big push of March 15th. Not that life in **Petit Rederching** was all peace and quiet — Jerry really knew when we had our chow served. He helped give us many a hot meal. Remember **Aggie**, Lt. **Slayline**

and the times we had to police the area under the laughing eyes of the civilians. **Bannon** and **Marston** with their "on the ball" reporting of the shellreps — It was here that **Gadget Norton** abandoned the Cellar Patrol for the wire section — he made a practice of shooting rats with an M-1. It's a wonder that half the battery wasn't hurt here the way guns were going off in houses The 240 mm in back of the switchboard and **Colonel Liles** blowing his wig about it — that gadget was responsible for most of our trouble in that town. **Major Greene** playing with his favorite toy, **Jolly Charlie**, the radar outfit — **Furman** and **Ragione** serving the officers' mess, "Apfel Kuchen and Schnapps". The glamour kid — his accordion and his "Oh Frankie" voice. **Montini** on the switch — Snafu ask **Capt. Foster**.

The night of March 14th — jump-off time on the local spring offensive — the sky was lit up like **Tommy Southard** on New Year's Eve. Then March 15th





— the Ides of March — when the artillery opened up with a barrage that made **Bining** look sick. We threw everything at 'em but the kitchen sink, and sometimes we threw that. How anything lived through that barrage seemed a miracle — and the next day the push to the **Rhine** started.

The 44th Division and the 71st Division along with Headquarters Battery of the 374th Field Artillery Battalion took off to capture the towns of **Rimling**, **Shorbach**, **Guiderkerch**, **Oldsberg**, **Waldhausen** and other whistle stops in the area. Near **Shorbach** the ground was littered with shu mines, box mines, teller, "S", and all types imaginable. The Jerries had planted them during the snows and with the spring thaws they were lying plainly in view on

top of the ground, for which we were thankful. This area was the no-mans land of the **Siegfried** and the **Maginot** lines. All the towns that were between these two belts of fortifications were ghost towns. At **Waldhausen** where the 71st relieved the 397 CT (Combat Team), it was quite warm. A Jerry SP (Self-propelled) gun had sneaked through the lines and every night of the 3 days we were there, treated us to a nightly barrage at point blank range. After being relieved by the 71st Division the 397th CT took off on a mission — the object of which was the west bank of the Rhine. On March 22nd the outfit crossed into Germany proper. Going through the **Siegfried** line, the dragons' teeth, the tank traps — the forts and guns, the storied entrenchments all underground. Far from the impregnable fortress of Hitler's boasts. Then the first town in Germany where we stayed for the night. After all the stories of the starving Heinies — we never ate and drank so much. Kicking Krauts out of houses — establishing CPs — looking for the correct time — cameras and guns — "lkes" non-fraternization orders — not looting,



etc. **Chuck Nelson's** episode in the brook — the radio section's corpse — "Shall we put him on guard"? — **Frank Woodbury**, "Mr. Westinghouse" — lighting our path thru "Festung Europa" — ably directed by Major **Allen "Edison" Greene**. "Skinny" **Ennis** and the Gadge. Bless em all! Here was born **Ocko "Luther Burbank" Lind's** hybrid

— The 5 telephone bank — lights, flags, tilts — Frog Frog Frog Frog Frog — Germany,
— its vaunted power strewn along the wayside, — silent tribute to the Americans



“automatic artillery”. Then to the west bank of the Rhine where we set up in **Oggersheim** and miracles of miracles — there was hot and cold running water with a bathtub to soak in. After six months it certainly felt good. For an Easter present the powers that be, had us crossing the Rhine into **Mannheim** — then the race was on again. CPs were located in **Plankstadt, St. Ilgen, Heidelberg, Meckesheim** — all this was easy going until we hit the large community of **Sinsheim**. Here the outfit was to suffer one of its worst blows. The loss of Lt. **Slayline** and **Bill Von Hegal** and the severe injuries of **Freddie Matts**, due to mines. For Freddie this was his second encounter with mines. After a long siege of hospitalization both in Europe and America, he was discharged from the service. Polo Baker

— 898th AAA and our own Charlie Battery suffered mine casualties. Our next move was to **Frankenbach** where, too full of confidence, we expected another rat race. We should have been forewarned, for on the way into **Frankenbach** the convoy was shelled while on the road. For a half hour we really sweated out the shelling and finally the convoy, on the move again, made the comparative safety of the town of **Frankenbach**, which was the gateway to **Heilbronn**. **Heilbronn** — should be called another **Cassino**. It was a communication hub to the southern redoubt — From here came some of the best war stories — the attempts to force a bridgehead — fanatic resistance both by the soldiers and civilians — panzerfaust and boiling water — “vanilla wafers on the way” according to **Shorty Latendresse** -- Hell's Corner where the wire always went out because of the constant shelling. Attack mounted on counter-attack — 6th Corps Artillery and the Happy Warriors gave the town plenty. But it remained for the doughs to slug it out, and finally Heil-



bronn was ours. We crossed the **Neckar** River under a protective cloud of smoke, through the courtesy of the combat engineers smoke generating unit. The race was



on again, with Major **Allport**, **Bitz** and **Deignan** in the lead — with **Armor** and **doughs** in support. Our next town was **Weinsberg**. Again beaucoup drinking (ask the survey section), and still the intensive campaign to find out the time. The photography bug had bitten us en masse. Again the rat-race, thru beautiful country prostituted by the Nazi Regime, ending at the town of **Manolzweiler**, where we lost **Jesse Gibson**, one of our best boys, in an ambush, by sniper fire. Engaged in this action were Lieutenant **Johnson**, Captain **Detgen**, **Ralph Scatamacchia**, **Orlowski** and others. This was to be our last day on the line, an ironical twist of fate, after approximately 178 consecutive days on the line, as a new record for Seventh Army troops, we were placed in army reserve. Our rest town was to be **Stuttgart** but it seems the French had other plans and we were forced to move to

the suburb **Sillenbuch**. High politics forced upon us an appeasement policy and our gallant allies, the French, took over the occupaition of **Stuttgart**. It was quite a come-down after the nervous tension of the lines to be able to relax without worrying whether or not we would have unwanted company. From **Sillenbuch** the outfit moved to **Lorch** where on May 7th our worries came to an end. The war in the ETO was over as far as the 7th Army was concerned. Curiously, to us it was not a day for rejoicing, but one for meditation, thinking of what had gone before and more seriously of what was to come. It was the same for us as every GI in the ETO — "Are we going to the Pacific?" If so, when — the rumor mill started working overtime. At **Lorch** the outfit took up in earnest the duties of occupation. Here we really let go — although the non-frat rule was in power — there were always ways and means to overcome obstacles. Our pleasant quarters in **Lorch**



were then changed for the **Gasthaus zum Lamm** in **Welzheim**, we there continued our life of ease. We were busy with the extermination and denazification of this area.



Said duties and others were accomplished through use of a single road patrol jeep. The rest of us were concerned with more pleasant duties, "Haben-zie-chocolat" — "Kau-gumi" and also "Haben-zie-Schnapps" and of course let us not forget the eternal "cigaretten". Again we move — this time to the spaghetti center of **Plüderhausen** — here we really expanded the theory of goodwill. Many pleasant days and nights passed here. But again army routine caught up with us and it was on to **Münsingen** for a week of firing on the range. We go on record as having bivouaced through the coldest week of July 4th that ever was —. Then the command saw fit to send us to the Kaserne in **Böblingen**. Here we took over former French territory, and aided by beaucoup German civils, our quarters were finally made liveable. This spot gave us ample room for rest, recreation and the pursuit of frauleins not to forget the Polish

girls in **Doetzinghiem**. Our stay here was characterized by parties, dances, movies and the I & E school, never forgetting the false alert for home. At this writing we are still sweating out the points, points, points, oh I wish I had a Bronze Star!









