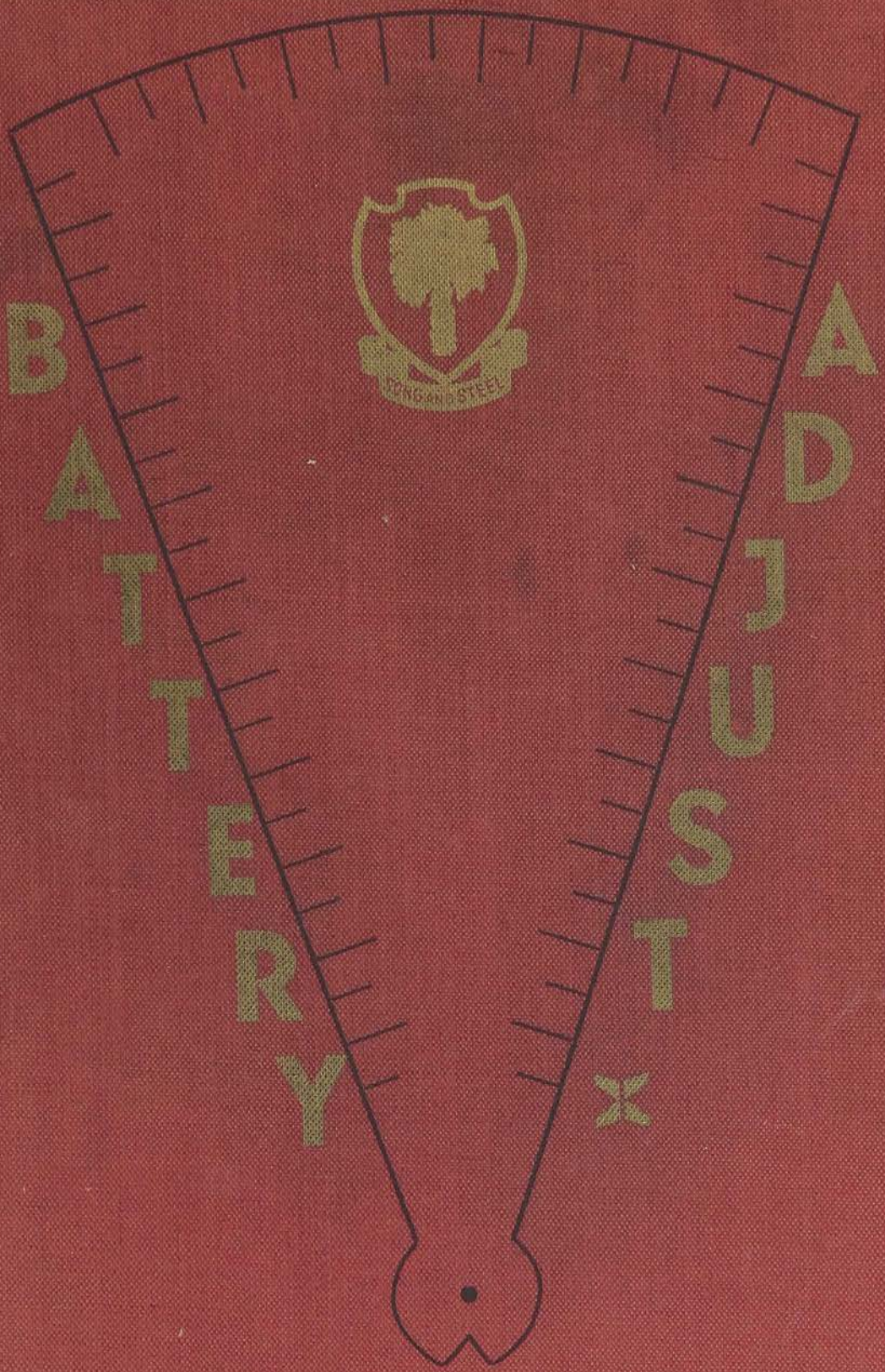

BATTERY
ADJUST
x

C. P. IN GUISBERG

C. P. IN NEUF ETANG

THE BOWLS IN MONTBRONN

LOADING UP

BATTERY ADJUST

THE STORY OF FRASER FIRE DIRECTION IN COMBAT

Printed by Karl Scharr, Wörner & Mayer
Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany

INTRODUCTION

When asked to write an introduction for this book, I was, probably for the first time, at a loss for words. However, I think that it should be dedicated to those, without whom it could not have been written. Let us dedicate it then to Headquarters Battery ... to the fire direction center for a magnificent job in combat ... to the radio section that helped us immensely with communications and gave us the metro messages ... to the gallant, fearless wire crews who, with danger lurking on every side, kept the ever-important wire lines intact ... to the peerless survey section for their numerous, accurate surveys ... to the motor section that kept the vehicles running in spite of bad weather and roads ... to the machine gunners for their protection ... to the hard-working kitchen crew ... to the medics for their medical care and their heroic services in the month of November ... and to Sgt. Campbell, the finest leader of men it has ever been my privilege to know.

Ordinarily, it would not be proper to gloat over a job well done, for it was only a matter of duty, and duty is man's common lot. St. Francis used to say: „When you have labored all day, say to the Lord: I am but an unprofitable servant."

But on this one occasion, I think you have reason for elation. The job in Europe was, probably, the most important task you will ever be called upon to perform. Your work in Europe was not of your choosing, but you did it nobly. And now I can only say to each of you, „Well done; you should be very proud."

BUD YEHL

„We were living in perilous times." Perhaps never before in history had men been asked to live in a more cruel age. Truly the whole world was at war; half the peoples of the earth were engaged with the other half in a bloody battle, in a battle as cruel as mankind had ever seen.

There will probably be many stories written about World War II. Surely there are enough to be told. This is a story about a small group, merely an infitesimal part in the vast allied fighting force, rather like a lone grain of sand at the seashore. This is a story of a few men who had never met before in civilian life but became molded into an ever-enduring friendship as close as that of any family for their friendship was made beneath the whine of enemy shells, in the sweat of battle, and under the most trying of circumstances. It is a story that brings back many fond remembrances for those of us who took part in it. Things are told here that we will never forget. For those of you who were not there while the tale was being enacted may find it a bit uninteresting. To you, many of the instances that are related here will have no meaning and will seem unimportant, but to us they will always be vivid; the slipping sands of time will never dull them.

So if you have a few moments, we would be delighted if you would come along with us while we re-live those exciting, those heart-stopping, those never-to-be-lived-again days that we spent on the continent of Europe as we took up our task, doing our part in the second world war.

Let us take a look at the individuals who make up the cast for our little story.

Since, for some reason that no one has been fully able to explain as yet, the Army is organized by rank--the word is used here to denote authority

and is not to be confused with a foul odor - - - let us introduce the big brother of our family. As he is a bit sensitive about the use of his Christian name, we will refer to him thruout this diary of typical Joes as Capt. Yehl. Hailing from a small town in upper New York State, a community hardly known to any other member of the Empire State, „the coach" proudly boasts of Olean, New York. The daily paper, which he receives quite regularly ... about the size of an addition to the Beachhead News .. is all we need, with a stretch of the imagination, to get a full picture of Olean. It is his job to supervise all the rounds that land in Hitler's victory garden and to keep all the crew busy. The latter he accomplishes with a mixture of „Oh, come on, let's go you guys," threats, and the swishing overhead of the cat-o-nine-tails, the emphasis on the swishing of THE WHIP.

Down on the next rung of the ladder, we find T/Sgt. Leicht ... known to his friends as Walter ... who is the Operations Sergeant. His is a job that requires full acquaintance with all the functions of fire direction as he is the good right arm of the S-3. Most people agree that Sgt. Leicht is not only the good right arm but most of the body as well. Being born in Austria and well acquainted with German domination, he finds all this quite interesting. He speaks German very well and is often called from his work to interrogate a German prisoner or inform the burgermeister that about twelve German families will have to move in with Uncle Herman until we move on in pursuit of their soldiers in arms. Though born in Austria, he called New York and vicinity his home for six years before entering the service. One of his foremost post-war plans includes the State of Massachusetts and something of a nurse in one of New York's leading hospitals.

The subordinate Staff of fire direction includes Sgt. Ernie Johnson, a Yankee from Connecticut who's favorite indoor sport and livelihood in the Army is plotting the given target on the map to obtain the data for the guns. One of his side lines labels him a judge in the channels of vintages and cognacs. Everyone quite agrees that a little gal by the name of Janet will have her hands full straightening out his sheaf after the war.

Artie Gonzales, his assistant on the map board, sings high praises to a town in Massachusetts, named Malden ... not from the cartoon of the same name.

Malden's claim to fame, as we have heard it too many times, is the fact that at one time some character had the ingenuity to compose a recipe for ice cream cone crackers. It can't be a very large town for, if you will look on the map, the B in Boston seems to obliterate it very thoroughly. Known to the fire direction crew as „Route Order", Artie has been said to be the only soldier in the new army to draw overseas pay before he left the States.

Now, on to the computers department, whose job it is to compute data for the guns after the information has been given to them from those working on the map boards. „A" Battery first, and here we find Sgt. Seymour Liebermann, recently made Sergeant at which time everyone sighed, „Well, about time." Lieb hails from Brooklyn, which is good. Able Battery is to Lieb what Heinz is to pickles. No matter how bad things get at times you can always look to able computor for a cheerful note... a good boy at parties if cigars and the beverages are plentiful enough to make the occasion worthwhile.

Baker Battery is handled by the chief computor, Sgt. Aaron Ray. No matter how rough the going, he has never been known to complain. The patience of Job is not his only good point, however. A master of electronics, his has been the job of furnishing the command post with lights from the generator... no mean task when it is either the wire or the generator which is always „kaput."

T/4 Max Barth of Patterson, N. J. considers it quite matter of fact when his Charlie Battery is continually commended for its speed and accuracy. Aside from reading book after book, Max sweats out the chow line and mail from Angelina, the one who waits. Strictly a cigar smoker, Max has two passions, that is aside from Angelina, books and cigars. Unable to obtain the favorite stogies in the first part of the campaign, his morale went up one thousand percent the day Headquarters Battery liberated twenty-seven thousand cigars when we entered Germany. As the old proverb says, „Still water runs deep," and it surely does with Max. On a long winter eve, after all the metro messages were computed, it was a common occurrence to hear him and Sgt. Ray discuss anything under the sun.. from who was going to be the next alderman in the sixth ward in Brooklyn to a living wage for the workers in the rice fields in China.

Radio communication is an integral part of any fire direction center and radio operators are all-important. We were indeed lucky to have a top notcher, one Charles Joseph Rose, Corporal junior grade. Charlie was known to all the people in fire direction as „Butch."" Just why he should be called „Butch" would bring sixty-four dollars at any „Take It or Leave It" program. Ordinarily when one hears the name, Butch, he visions a robust, muscular specimen. But our Butch stood approximately five foot three on tiptoes, and approximately one hundred and twenty pounds after a hearty chicken dinner ... rather like something on the left hand side of a Charles Atlas advertisement. To this day his cohorts are amazed at the fact that one could remain so small getting as much sleep and eating as much as our radio operator did... the only man who could squeeze twenty-five hours sleep out of a twenty-four day. Of course this accomplishment could only occur when we changed time zones; on other days he had to be content with twenty-three, or perhaps twenty-two if his buddy, Artie Gonzales, forgot to bring his meals back to the bed roll. His waking hours were spent in heckling the „coach", dreaming of his wife back in Jersey City, and thinking of the day that he would return to the drapery counter in the Royal Furnishing Company.

Then there was Stanley Bly. His friends used to call him „Anzio" or „Beachhead" because of the fact that he came to us from the 3rd Division and had considerable time spent on the Anzio beachhead ducking the German hardware. Anzio came to us about half way thru the campaign in France. We soon came to respect his ability to detect the closeness of incoming freight. When Stanley reached for his helmet, it was time to progress to the „88" clubroom in the basement.

Next there was Theodore Beck, affectionately called „Deacon." The Deacon hailed from Bradford, Penna., about twenty-five miles from Capt. Yehl's home town. Between the two of them, they held off all comers on the arguement as to the merits of the „garden spot of the US". But Ted's claim to fame was the fact that he could stay even with Sgt. Johnson when it came to drinking the spirits. On only one occasion did the „Deacon" forget the way to his bed roll, and that time he claimed that the drinks were spiked.

The last one to join us was Bob Boyle, a reformed agent from A Battery. Bob had had considerable training with the instrument section of A Battery

before comming overseas and fitted very well into our little group. He proved a welcome addition to the section. and the packages he received, which varied from two to ten per day, were looked forward to by all. His letter-writing abilities were second to none in the group, but no one became jealous as all conceded they were probably package requests.

That was the section, eleven of us, eleven men who came to know each other very intimately, eleven of us who became very close friends ... friends that will never forget each other because the friendship was cemented in a time of war and during experiences that none will forget if we live to be one hundred. It was a friendship that developed over a period of three years. Three years ... it didn't seem that long; but it was; three years we had been together. As we look back on it though, the time seems to stretch out like a road in the valley as we view it upon approaching the top of a hill.

Remember those first days in the service? How can we ever forget? There was the day that we received our „greetings from the President," and we counted the days, then the hours, then the minutes until we would finally have to leave our homes to enter the service. As we look back on it, a hundred thoughts flash through our minds ... the heart-rendering good-byes at the station; perhaps we would never be back ... the grinding of the railroad wheels on the rails; each squeak carried us farther and farther from home ... our arrival at the induction center and the interview; he wanted to know more about us than we knew ourselves ... the shots, those horrible shots; we finally felt like a cross between a seive and an India rubber man ... our arrival at Ft. Jackson in the Carolinas; we suddenly wondered why they closed the schools on Lincoln's birthday, a man who had fought a war to save this God-forsaken place ... our assignment to the Infantry; this recalled all sorts of horrors that we had seen in the movies: hikes, big packs, and obstacle courses ... then our shift to the field artillery of the 373 d; what a relief, at least it was rumored that the artillery used trucks which ought to relieve the walking situation some what. Yes, they are indelibly stamped on our memories, these first thoughts and impressions; they were thrills and horrors that we shall never forget .. never.

After a few weeks of basic training, we were told that we would have to be in some section in Headquarters Battery. We were placed in the operations

section, which didn't sound too bad, but really it didn't make much difference what section we were in. The rumor was that we would be in all of them before we were through, and it didn't make any particular difference to us where we started. Then the classes began. Both the survey and the fire direction personnel took the same subjects in those first early weeks. One day Capt. Russell told us that our operations section was to be divided. Lt. Knauff, head of the survey section, would have some of us, and the others would be in the fire direction center with Capt. Yehl. After looking at the two gentlemen above mentioned, we rapidly came to the conclusion that we were definitely between the devil and the deep blue sea. All wondered how hard it would be to convince Lt. Bower that we were interested immensely in communications . . . anything but this. But with typical G. I. determination, we stuck it out through all the classes that were to follow. Sgt. Leicht, of course, was tagged from the start, as he had been doing some drawing in Capt. Russell's office and could adapt himself very readily to work on the map board. Sgt. Johnson, because of his neatness, was also slated to the werk on the boards. Sgt. Ray made a hit the first day as did Lieb and Max; all were to become computers. Five of us there were; five of us who were later to land on the soil of Europe fight half way across it, right into the „Festung Europa", and one day to see victory for our United States.

Those early days were trying days; so much had to be done in such a little time. The XII Corp was to test us at the end of twelve weeks of our training. Comprehensive indeed were those twelve week tests. There was the formal camp to lay out with all the tents lined up with aiming-circle straightness and with all the personal equipment such as blankets, ropes, spoons, mess, kits, razors, and what have you, in front of each tent. Then came the field problem at which we didn't fare to well. The fact that someone forgot to send for the batteries which were parked in a rendezvous area, until three-quarters of the problem was over, didn't help matters at all. Major Blake, who was pinch-hitting for Col DeLange, aged ten years that afternoon, and his two remaining black hairs turned grey before night fall.

The D Exercises were next on the program, the D Exercises in which we traveled from one end of the Carolinas to the other and back again. The red

dust of the Carolinas was terrific, and because it was, of course, all windshields and tops on vehicles were ordered to be kept down. Every man in every vehicle looked like Barney Oldfield after a photo finish. It was the first time that we had operated tactically in the field, and many mistakes were made. However, this was the time in which the groundwork was laid for a smooth-working battalion, that was later to do its part in the world conflict. It was here that the command tent begain to get exercises that were to become full time workouts on maneuvers.

One of the biggest events in our early army life was to come now, namely, our Corp Tests. It is on these that Battalion commander's insignia rides or falls. The mistake of one man can spell disaster. Considering the fact that all the traffic in one of these tests comes through the fire direction center, one can see why we stayed just a little bit soberer on the night previous to one of these tests. Our tests were taken in Ft Bragg, out on the range which recalls many a fam iliar name, such as, Telephone Road, Weirs Tower, Cox Tower, Ancrum Ferry Road, and many others. The tests were divided into three seperate tests. The first test was the test for speed, and it went along without any mishaps. Capts. Keller, Leet, Humphry, Lts. Tvedt, and Speer fired the problems, while we in the fire direction center built up the observed fire chart and fired the two bracket problems.

The second problem consisted mostly of survey on the photo map. A registration was made, and then four problems were fired... two that were surveyed ourselves, and two that were marked on the map by the umpires. We took this test amongst the pines just off the far side of telephone road. It was a fine day in April 1943. Eerything went along very well as we ran thru the four problems and came very close on all targets. One thing remained... the air problem. Lt. Hanner, who was later to become a cub pilot, was the air observer at the time. Lt. Walters was the only pilot assigned to the 373rd, for the tactics of the liasion plane with the artillery was in its infancy. Lt. Walters was with his plane back at the air field on Ancrum Ferry road and was becoming a little impatient to fly the problem and return to camp for dinner. Lt. Hanner, sitting at the command post, was also becoming a little impatient to fire his problem and return home to the same repast. The result was that Lt. Hanner went to look for Lt. Walters,

and Lt. Walters took off from the field to come up to the command post and pick up Lt. Hanner. The time came to fire the problem and each was half way back to where the other had just been. To add to the confusion, Col. DeLange called up from the OP at this point to inquire as to the progression of the air problem. When he heard of the situation, the wire between the command post and the observation post, began to get warm, then hot, then steaming, and finally melted.

Test number three was almost all survey. Of course we fired from a grid sheet firing chart, computed some metro messages, and computed K-changes to set on our sticks. We occupied position, in our CP tent, after the hours of darkness. The thing we will always remember about this test is putting up the tent after dark. We had practiced for days in the art, and it was an art-putting up that tent. Things went along fairly well. There was the usual amount of confusion, the usual, hot, gasoline-smelling Coleman lanterns, and the usual hot interior of the tent. The main event of the evening, however, had to do, not with the fire direction, but with the kitchen truck. Col. DeLange had ordered that hot coffee and sandwhiches be served to members of our section before midnight. The kitchen truck came up Telephone Road from the south with Ingersoll at the helm. Halfway up the road, for reasons that we will not discuss at the present, the kitchen truck somehow was located in the ditch, half turned over. Gerhardt Potts, a fugitive from Bn. headquarters and on detail as K.P. for the evening, came near to collecting his ten thousand dollars. Kitchen ranges, pots, pans, and utensils were in utter confusion that night. At ten o'clock, the mess Sgt., Sgt. Mulligan, rushed into the tent, saluted, and said, „Sir, it was a rough trip, but come hell or high water, we made it." To which the Colonel promptly replied, „And come hell or high water, I want some coffee up here by midnight." There was coffee at midnight.

The tests over, rumors began to fly thick and fast as to when the 100th Division would go overseas. The more gullible members of the outfit even began to send home the radios, but the larger percentage were army-wise by this time and took it as another rumor.

As it turned out, it was just another rumor, for in November of 43, we closed down our barracks in Ft. Jackson, that had been our home for nearly

a year and started for the maneuver area of Tennessee. Most of us had never been to Tennessee. The extent of our knowledge of tne state came from the Hillbilly cartoons about the place that appeared in „Esquire". It was just like leaving home again. As the old army saying goes, „any place you hang your helmet is home", and we had hung our helmets, or rather, thrown them on the bunks, for nearly a year here.

The trip from Ft. Jackson to Lebanon, Tennessee required three days. Athens, Georgia was the stopping-off place the first night. Georgia, and it's praises sung by Johnny Finch, a native of the state. As most of us were from Brooklyn, he was just wasting his time. Athens furnished a nice red cross club, complete with shower, where most of us made our way. The next night, it was Ft. Ogelthorpe, still in Georgia. Ft. Ogelthorpe was the biggest WAC camp in the country. After stopping here for one night, we all agreed that General Burress had all the confidence in the world in his men. Chatt-a nooga, Tenn. was only a stone's throw from our camp, but no one seemed very interested in geography that night. The third day brought us to Lebanon, Tenn. where we pitched our formal camp prior to the beginning of maneuvers. All tents were lined up with precision-like effect. The weather was fine as we spent our time attending movies on the rather cold nights, and eating ice cream and candy in the day time from all the vendors that came into the area.

The maneuver was divided into eight problems, each of four or five days duration. Each problem began on Monday morning and ran into Thursday or Friday. The weekends were to be used for rest periods, but as is customary in the Army, were used to regroup the divisions for the next problem.

Our life, our trials and tribulations on maneuvers could fill a volume. However, it is the purpose of this narrative to relate our experiences in combat; hence we can not linger long on this phase of our experiences. But we will always remember some of the incidents of our „Tennessee Campaign".

There was the time that we made the seventy mile motor march and returned to exactly the same spot from which we had started. To add to the discomfort of all concerned, the temperature hovered around the zero mark. It was at this point that our opinions of the Army's method of doing things were verified. That was the night that Ding Ding Normandeau got sick in the rear of the CP truck. Finally we spead out our bed rolls on the frozen ground

and covered ourselves collectively with a tarp to keep out the bitter cold.

Still fresh in our memories, and always fresh it will remain, is Christmas, 1943. We rolled into our camping area on the weekend . . . a beautiful area it was then, down in a valley with gentle rolling hills all around. Immediately it began to rain, and soon the whole section was a quagmire. Puptents were moved, moved again, and still again, until everyone gave up for the mud was everywhere. Mud, mud, knee-deep in mud. Sgt. Hoagland, our operations sergeant, took off his shoes; they sank in the mud, and he never did find them again. To this day, they probably remain buried in Tennessee. Bedrolls literally floated on the sea of mud and water. We were told in the midst of all this to cheer up; the USO girls were going to pay us a visit. Pay us a visit they did, but they took one look at the place and spent the aftermoon in the CP tent. General Buress also visited the command post that day, but we just caught a glimpse of him.

The highlight of the day, tho was the return of Capt. Churchill from Nashville. Our executive furnished us with material that day which we can use round the fireplace for years to come

On the last three problems, Col DeLange went to Division Artillery, and Major Steuding assumed command of the battalion. He promptly got captured on the first day of the first problem, but escaped by a little deft footwork and a little persuasion. Some of those latter problems were a bit on the rugged side. For instance, there was the one where Baker battery was detached down by the Cumberland river, and Sgt. Leicht ran the fire direction down there.

At last came the day, when the maneuvers were over and we were to leave the 87th Division, the 35th Division, and the 14th Armored. There would be no more standing around the umpires car on the last day of the problem „sweating out" the end of problem to come over the radio. It was off to Ft. Bragg for us to take over the old Ninth Division Area, just vacated by the 13th Airborne Division.

We arrived at our new home on the 15th of January, 1944. The barracks on top of the hill were in pretty bad shape, and it was out with the mops, buckets and soap. It a week or so, everything was spotless, but one can't win in the Army; the training schedules were not long in putting in an

appearance. It was hut! two! three! four! at eight o'clock, military courtesy at nine, chemical warfare at ten, orientation at eleven. A new policy was put into effect in the Army ground forces that required us to take the AGF tests over again. Practice began in earnest. We covered every conceivable situation in all three tests on the Ft. Bragg range . . . test number one in the Longstreet area, then the Gaddys Mountain area, then the Coleman Area. All tests went well, as far as the fire direction center was concerned, for we were more or less veterans at the game by this time. The tests over, we all knew that it was now only a matter of time before we would be engaged in the work for which we had been training and training, namely, combat.

But there was one more pill to swallow, before we would be allowed to partake in our mission, and that was a few demonstrations. The demonstrations generally consisted, first, of a firing part where all the artillery was massed in front of the advancing Infantry, second, of a parade of foot troops, vehicles and our airplanes.

Our Division had many of these for many more or less famous personalities. The 100th passed in review for news reporters of the Allied nations, for the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, and for General Leslie McNair, then commander of the Army Ground forces, who was later to lose his life in France. These demonstrations and reviews were just a bit on the rat-race side, but we enjoyed it as we literally tore up Gaddys Mountain and Coleman Ridge.

Spring passed into summer, a hot, very hot summer at Ft. Bragg. It was only a question of time now until our Division would leave the States for foreign service. Everyone worked feverishly trying to get POM (preparation for overseas movement) qualified. There were carbines to be fired, grenades to be thrown, examinations to be taken, and equipment to pack. We worked hard packing our fire direction equipment, waterproofing our computers boxes, and stowing away all our essentials.

Time was running out, running out just like the sand in an hour glass. The biggest jolt of all came when we had a class one day on the packing of our U roll. The thing started out simply enough, but by the end of half an hour, the roll had assumed tremendous proportions. It seemed that we were to carry everything but our footlockers on our backs. Some joked that the roll was as big as Folliard; how was he ever going to carry it. But the

situation ceased to be funny when we asked ourselves how we were going to carry our own.

At last it came... the inevitable moment, the time to close our barracks, adjust the U rolls, and take the last march to the train in back of the motor park. The thoughts we had as we stood there in the Carolina sands in the motor park waiting for the arrival of the train that would take us to the port of embarkation. We thought and thought, mostly about the things that have been written in this narrative, some about the events that were to come, and some about how good a coca cola would taste right now.

Then it was there, the train that was to take us to our destination. Sergeants shouted; men began to move; the battalion flowed down to the tracks and aboard the train. It was only a matter of minutes. Slowly the wheels began to grind, and the train moved past the Division Band as it played „Roll out the Barrel", and „Over There". Col. Feigin and General Murphy were there to see us off. The train rolled on, thru Fayettville, the town of many a nocturnal repast after which we needed route markers to find our way home. On it rolled, all thru the night and well into the next morning. Finally we arrived at Camp Kilmer. Capt. Cornelius and all the advance party were there to greet us. Then it was on with the U rolls again and a two block walk to our barracks in which we were to spend our short stay here.

We occupied the barracks on the end of the street next to the football field. The first thing to impress one there was the marvelous efficiency of the place and the limited personnel to accomplish the work. Everything went according to a very definite schedule and the schedule was very rigidly enforced. The Bn. was given a list of classes for us to attend that pretty well occupied our entire day. We had training in abandoning ship, what to do in case of capture by the enemy, and similar subjects. Our service records were thouroughly checked for the last time; of course no one thought that they would get out at this late stage. Lectures were given on allotments, insurance, etc. until Mr. Frankfater, the personnel officer, was sick the last two days there. However, we had time for a few touch football games in the afternoon. The meals, which were served in a mamouth mess hall at the opposite end of the street, were wonderful. We had to furnish K!P.s for the mess hall but the cooks belonged to the camp. If any HQ. cooks read this

SOME COTTON PLEASE
"SCOOP"

DRY RUN
EAT AT ED'S PLACE

last line and misconstrue the meaning, they are entirely mistaken and must be suffering from a guilty conscience.

The physical inspection was indeed a rapid affair. When the information was passed along that another physical exam would take place, it was naturally assumed that it would be very complete. After all, weren't we being examined to see if we were qualified to be shipped overseas? However, Sea Breeze didn't finish faster at the Derby than we did at that physical. Then we remembered that first one at the draft board, and being normal human beings, we put two and two together.

Another ordeal was the session at the aid station getting typhus shots. For it was at times like these that Sgts. Delaney and DeFalco were in their glory . . . standing at the door with a smirk on their face and needle in hand . . . remarks like, „hand me that rusty needle, here's where I even up the score." and, „Don't give me that bent one this time; this guy always treated me allright".

But the thing most of us will always remember about Camp. Kilmer is the opportunity that it gave us to get to New York City. Most of us were able to get in on only one night. The towers and lights were ablaze on Times Square and over the rest of the city. We had been northern refugees in a foreign southern land for two years, and it was mighty good to get back in the old element again. We spent the night in varied ways. The married ones of course had wives at the bus station. The single members of the crew went their ways, which of course all terminated at the same sort of establishment, known as a bar. One member of the organization, whose name we won't mention because he may be reading this in post-war life, wandered a bit, quite a bit, off the beaten path that night and nearly missed his true love, who fortunately was a very broad-minded person.

A total of four days were spent at Camp Kilmer. No one knew exactly when we would go, but everyone had a good idea that it wouldn't be long when the telephones were restricted after the third day. At ten O'clock on the 5th of October 44 we harnessed up those horrible U rolls again, and made our way to the train at the bottom of the hill. It was a short ride to the ferry. We unloaded, with U rolls on our backs, duffel bags in hand, and made our way to the ferry. It was a superhuman task; now we realized what

a pack mule felt like, and will always have a soft spot in our hearts for our longeared friends. On to the ferry where we had one of the longest waits of our lives. It wou ldn't have been long if it weren't for those infernal rolls and duffel bags. There were three positions to assume aboard the ferry, namely, the standing, stick-it-out stance with the duffel bag in hand, the leaning one where the individual leaned his U roll against the side of the boat and spread his feet wide, and lastly, the sitting position with the duffel bag for a seat and let the U roll fall where it may. The disadvantage, if it can be called such, of the last position, was the fact that it took twenty minutes and a friend on each arm to regain ones feet. Incidentally, friends were hard to find in a situation like that.

Finally, the motors on the tug began to grind; the ferry began to move. The Statue of Liberty began to loom up in the horizon. All eyes were focused, then glued, to the Lady in the Sea. The realization of what she meant to wayfaring Americans was brought home with an astounding impact. Ships began to become visible on the other side. Of course all began to wonder which one would be ours-to carry us across the Atlantic. As is customary in the service, many bad guesses were made before we came alongside a ship that undoubtedly was ours. As the ferry came closer. we could distinguish General Buress, General Murphy, and Colonel Prather, the chief of staff. A long corridor led away from the dock. Again, we adjusted rolls and started the trek toward the boat. My, but those packs were heavy; surely this was the last time that we would be compelled to carry these infernal things. Then, suddenly, it was in the air... the unmistakeable smell of doughnuts and coffee. As we rounded the curve in the corridor, the red cross girls came in sight, and at the same time, the gangplank. There it was. How often we had heard of it and all the stories connected with the gangplank. However, the donuts intrigued us much more at that particular time. It took a certain amount of time for Mr. Frankfater to get his rosters and battery clerks together, and in that time, we consumed some of those delicious donuts served by some of those gorgeous girls. Little did we know how gorgeous they would look six months from then. It wouldn't be too long before even the rectangular-shaped German girls would look charming.

At last the time came. Up the gangplank, we went. Mr. Frankfater called our last name... and we answered with our first. Leicht... „Walter G.", Johnson... „Ernest", Barth, „Max", Lieberman... „Seymor", Rose... „Charles J.", Ray... „Aaron".

At the top of the gangplank, Lt. Knauff met us and said that he could direct us to our new quarters. While on board, we had a brief glance at our ship, which was to be our home for the next two weeks. In the first place, it wasn't as large as most of us had expected. Everything was gray in contrast to the olive drab to which we had been accustomed in the Army. There wasn't much to see on the deck except a lot of ropes and buckets laying around. There weren't many sailors around on the deck... After a quick glance, we were on our way down to our new quarters. Double loading had been the theme of the training film, „Troopship";, and all wondered if this particular scow was equipped with some of that. And indeed it was. After twisting and turning down a circular stairway with our U rolls and duffel bags, a feat which can not be explaned to this day, a sight met our view which lowered our morale about one thousand percent. ..bunks, hammocks, call them what you will, stacked row on row, from the floor to the ceiling. They were stacked so close together that one couldn't get thru the aisles with all the equipment. The problem of whose bunk was whose, was solved very adeptly by Lt. Knauff when he said, „Headquarters Battery over in that corner". Just drop your equipment over there. „They gave me twenty minutes for a reconnaisance of this scuttlebuggy. Someone will have to rearrange this thing later." Someone mumbled something to the effect that this was the typical Army way of doing things while we all unloaded our equipment with a sigh of releif. If we ever picked it up again on this voyage, it would be by the „piecemeal method."

After unloading equipment, we all just laid on our bunks, thinking about nothing in particlar. The ship wasn't rolling or tossing much, which was probably due to the fact that the ship wasn't moving. At least that sounded logical at the time.. Finally the Headquarters Battery officers invaded the domiclile in force. This didn't help matters much, as no one seemed to know where anyone was supposed to be. Finally everything was more or less settled as things generally are in this institution.

Life went on very peacefully, well at least life went on, in our little craft. Our ship was small compared to the others in the convoy, but large enough to buck the waves, or so the sailors told us. Little did we know. The ship, which, by the way was known as the „Mermac Moon", stayed in the port all that Friday night. As soon as things settled down a bit, an officer, who was evidently in charge of the ship as far as the army troops were concerned, made his appearance. His name was Captain Johnson, a short, rather stoutish man with grey hair and a moustache. He was in charge of all military personnel on board, and was to later get in our hair hollering about blackout restrictions on board, wearing the lifebelt, and staying away from the sides of the boat. We soon came to like the old codger tho, especially when he opened up the PX on the main deck.

Fire drills were the order of the day initially. This drill consisted of the loud blowing of many whistles which meant something or other... no one seemed to know just what. Finally someone would get a hot tip that a fire drill was in progress, and everyone would stream up on deck to wait a few moments and then stream back down again to the bunks... those spacious bunks. The first day on board, Lieb had edged toward a little alcove down in the sleeping quarters and said, „Well, I guess I'll hang my coat in here," to which Lt. Rommelle replied, „What do you mean, hang your coat in there. Twelve men have got to sleep in there."

Now let's talk about the mess hall for awhile. As in most mess halls, the last part of the double noun could well be omitted. People stood at the tables while eating. We wondered why, but not for long. It was to facilitate getting to the stairs and the exits about half way through each meal. In fact, the man who could last half a meal in our „black hole of Calcutta" was held in high esteem by all concerned. The first day, all the chow hounds, which was synonomous with the total strength, turned out for supper. The crowd dwindled from day to day though, until the place looked like the Philadelphia stadium on Wednesday afternoon. Two meals were served each day, which was quite sufficient as far as the atmosphere in the dining hall was concerned, but grossly insufficient as far as appetites were concerned. Rumors began to circulate that the officers were eating chicken every day up on the quarter deck dining room and that coca cola was being served up there. No

one was ever able to find out, but looks of covetousness began to appear on all faces. Capt. Yehl, for instance, began to gain weight by leaps and bounds, that is, up until the time that the sea started to get rough.

The training schedule, oh, that training schedule. The 373rd would train come hell or high water... and there was both. Have you ever tried to do calisthenics on board a rolling ship? Well, well, you haven't lived. Many was the day that what started to be a full-knee-bend ended up a push-up of some sort by force of necessity. Then there were the movies about air craft identification that were held down in the mess hall. It wasn't enough that we had to suffer the horrors of that infernal place sweating out breakfast and supper, but to listen to someone say, „Now this is a P-38." That was the limit.

A loudspeaker system was set up on the quarter deck. Sgt. Edwards and Artie Gonzales played records on it all day long until blackout time at night. They had a goodly supply of command performance records which they didn't have to play over too many times. There were a couple of nights that some of the boys from the battalion went up to the loud speaker to put on a little show, mainly to help the supply of records to hold out. It was on one of these occasions that Lt. McQuilton got up and sang, „A Bird in a Guilded Cage", and „When Irish Eyes are Smiling" in his best Irish tenor.

The weather for the first week was marvelous. The salt air was new to most of us, and we thoroughly enjoyed those warm sunny days. But then came the storm. The sky darkened, the waves grew in size until they assumed tremendous proportions. The ship began to rock and roll. One by one, the passengers began to get seasick. Schreiber had long ago hit the skids, but now there were plenty to follow his footsteps. The mess hall was just a ghost place on those stormy days; it just wasn't worth the bother going down there. Before we entered the Mediterranian, the sea calmed and everyone began to feel much better.

The showers on board, all two of them were unique. They were of the salt water variety. After a brisk session under the nozzle of one of those, one felt like either an eel or a salted herring, all depending upon whether he was dry or wet.

Probably the highlight of the trip was the French classes that were held by Lt. Bookbinder. None of us is liable to forget him standing by the rail of

the quarter deck behind the microphone saying „ray - - pay - - tay", repeat after me. French booklets on the language and customs of the French were given out, which made it a lead pipe cinch that we were going to the European theatre and would land in France, but there was plenty of money that said we were going thru the Suez. Lt. McQuilton and his friend were among those who took the latter view, and, in the end, had to mortgage the old homestead. Another very enlightening highlight of the trip was the talk given by Sgt. Leicht on the conditions inside Germany and the rise of Hitler to power. Sgt. Leicht had formerly lived in Vienna, Austria and had seen the Fuhrer march into his homeland. Now he was on his way back to Europe to do his part in liberating his former Austria. We all felt with him a pride that we were in the same little team, and that we could do our small part in freeing homes for him and millions like him. We had read about most of all this in the papers, but Walter brought it home to us as he had a way of doing. Hearing it from him, the Nazi party was a strong machine, a thing to be feared, a thing to be defeated. Loud indeed was the applause that rolled up from the deck as he closed his two day lesson. Then Capt. Yehl held forth for an hour on the political philosophy of Germany, something which read like the congressional record and about twice as dry. Finally, it was over and we went to supper, in shifts, as usual.

On the tenth day out at sea, word was passed around the ship that we would pass the Rock of Gibralter that night. Most of us stayed out on deck during the clear nights, but few if any of us saw the rock that night. The next morning we were in the Mediterranian. It wasn't long before we could see the coast of Africa. The coast of Algiers loomed up and we remembered all the movies that we had seen and all the stories we had read about the French Foreign Legion. Then Oran, and we remembered the fighting that the Troops ahead of us had done in Africa. We had come a long way since then; now we were to add our share to the huge effort that had already been put forth. The coast was beautiful. The mountains rose sharply from the coast and assumed a bluish, purple, hazy color in the distant sunlight. Cities lay nestled in the rocky coastline. We were getting a glimpse of Africa, our first foreign country.

Soon we turned away from the coast of Africa. The anti-aircraft guns on the upper decks began to practice more. We knew that we were now in the danger zone. We were getting near to combat, within the range of German planes. More and more officers began to walk up and down the ladder to the control room on the upper deck. Everyone was anxious to know where we were going to land, everyone, from the tall, white-haired skipper, whom we seldom saw, down to the K P s in the kitchen.

Soon it was a fairly well established fact, as well as anything is ever established in the Army, that we were going to land at Marseille. The Seventh Army had invaded the coast of France from the south not long before and had driven with lightning-like speed to the foothills of the Vosges.

The last day or two was spent by all in trying to get clothes together. A pair of socks for instance that had disappeared about the first two or three days of the trip was now impossible to find. In some cases, complete duffel bags were missing, as they had been kicked under a strange bunk. It was more or less of a relief to get off the ship and set foot on land again. Ed Schreiber declared very vehemently that he would never leave Europe now that he was here unless it it was by air. The convoy, which included about fifteen ships, gathered together to dock at the port. All across the ocean we could see no more than three or four ships at one time; now we were able to see how large the convoy actually was. The convoy had come over without mishap. True we had passed two burning tankers that had been torpedoed by submarines. One of our destroyers acting as part of the escort for our convoy dropped off to pick up any survivers that they could.

All the ships in our convoy lined up outside the port to await orders to sail in. The day was very clear; not a cloud was in the sky. It was one of those periods of waiting that was very relaxing. No one knew exactly what the situation was. It was said that it would take most of the day to get the whole convoy inside the port as the Germans had destroyed the harbor to a great extent. All the duffel bags were brought up on deck. The U rolls, those detestable things, were once again brought up on deck and placed on some hook or box so that we could put them on our backs with a minimum of effort.

Little did we realize then how much of a headache, or more properly, a back ache, those rolls were going to cause us.

It was a time of uncertainty. All felt that confusion would reign supreme once we started to unload, for a whole division was about to unload on a small dock. Everyone seemed to be looking for Colonel DeLange. He had come over on the advance party to represent the artillery. Later we were to learn that he had flown to England, but had a change of orders, flew to Africa where plans were again changed, and was now in southern France. But he was no where around, for General Miller, the assistant Division comander had taken sick on the way over; Col. DeLange was the quartering officer for the entire Division. Everyone waited.

It was shortly after dinner, or rather, the time that we would regularly have had dinner if we had more than two meals a day. Word went around the boat that we may have to debark today, and that it might be before supper. A mass invasion of the kitchen took place, and the store of oranges, bread, and such rapidly dwindled.

Then the one came on board who was to give us our orders to unload ... a private in the transpotation corp. A private to unload a whole battalion and its equipment. He walked briskly up to Colonel Keithly and Capt. Johnson, who were standing with others on the upper deck. He gave the information to them and left after things had been straightened out.

By the appearances of the upper deck, things were about ready to get into motion. Soon Sergeant Cambell informed us that we were to hike about ten miles to a bivouac area, to a place called Septemes which was on the other side of Marseille. Headquarters battery was the first to leave. The gangplank was lowered again. We put on our U rolls, grabbed our duffel bags, and made our way laboriously down the gangplank to the cement dock. All duffel bags were piled in a row to be picked up later by a truck. Someone apparently had a soft spot in his heart; at least the duffel bags wouldn't have to be carried by hand for ten miles. We formed in three ranks as instructions were given. It was a queer feeling to be standing on the soil of France; we were in a foreign land. Somehow we didn't feel homesick for the States at the time, although all knew that it wouldn't be long before we were. „Right Face! Forward March!" suddenly brought us from our reverie. We were going to march through Marseille.

Slowly we made our way up the dock to the first street in the town. Personnel from the Transportation Corp were greatly in evidence. Truly this was the melting pot of southern France, probably the most cosmopolitan port in all France. Many, very many German prisoners were helping to move crates and baggage from pile to pile. It seemed curious then to have soldiers from the same army that had wrecked this port, now working to rebuild it. On our right could be seen the remains of the submarine pens, which had housed the U boats roaming the Mediterranian. Frenchmen were everywhere. The government paid them to help with the vast incoming cargo being delivered to the newly-opened port of Marseille. Trucks, both American vehicles and French jalopies, formed a never-ending stream through the gate to the port. Soon we reached the gate and turned left along an asphalt road with a barbed wire fence on the left hand side, the fence that enclosed the port.

It was getting cool after a warm afternoon. The weather was perfect for a hike, but no weather is perfect if there is a U roll to be taken along on said hike. Moving along, we noticed Frenchmen wearing the customary blue berets, and suddenly we remembered having read about the berets in grade school. Suddenly we noticed some Egyptian soldiers with their light brown frocks and red turbans, picturesquely dressed to say the least. It wasn't long before the port was in the background, and we were passing through the edge of the town.

Marseille was built on hilly ground. As usual when walking thru hilly country, we were walking up hill most of the time. It is a proven fact that every hill has two sides, but one side, the uphill side, seems to always predominate on a hike. The streets were n arrow; the fronts of the houses were built very close to the street. The streets seemed to wind around the town as they have a habit of doing in the countries of Europe.

The „breaks" were frequent. One thing that will always remain familiar to us is the small children running along side as we walked and gathering around as we stopped, chanting the old familiar phrase, „Choc-o-lat, cig-a-ret." „Cig-a-ret for pa-pa", „Choc-o-lat for seester." The French families standing in the doorways waved to us as we passed. It was, for the most part, a one-sided greeting, for we didn't have the strength most of the time to wave back.

The long trek toward Septems had started at about five o'clock, and it was now getting dark. Soon it was hard to distinguish where we were going. Soldiers and jeeps of all sorts passed us, but no one knew who they were or where they were going. The rests along the road were frequent, for the packs were getting heavier at every step. Tired as he is the American soldier never lacks at least a bit of humor. Sad indeed is the situation in which GI Joe can not see some humor. „I don't think this outfit will go overseas" was a common crack to which the reply was „I surely hope it goes overseas sometime. I want to get home".

The march was getting to the stage where people were no longer traveling on their stamina but wholly on their inner courage. The packs became unbearable. There was absolutely no way which the packs could be adjusted comfortably as all portions of the back were equally sore. A major came along looking for his unit. All we knew was the fact that we were 2206-N and could give him no help. Then a German plane flew high over the port of Marseille, obviously a reconnaisance plane as it dropped no bombs. The Germans evidently had been tipped off that we were coming. Two days afterward, „Berlin Sallie" who had been broadcasting on a German station ever since the African invasion, welcomed the 100th Division, General Burress, and General Murphy to Europe and promised that Germany „would give them the same hospitality that she had shown other American Divisions in the past."

Soon the units in front of us began taking some of the side roads which led to their bivouac areas. We took one last break, leaning against one of the stone fences which lined the streets all the way up from Marseille, gritted our teeth, and started on the last lap. At last we turned right off the main road and down the little dirt road to the field full of pyramidal tents so familiar to us all. If there was one thing that all agreed upon, it was the fact that we couldn't go another one hundred yards. All agreed that we came the last three miles on our guts. We must have had more guts than Dick Tracy to carry all that baggage from the coast. Packs were dropped with all possible speed, and we merely ... sat. Few believed at the time that they would ever get up again, and what is more, few seemed to care. Soon, however, the K rations began to put in an appearance; small fires started to blaze, and

supper, such as it was, began to get under way. Then we slept... heavenly sleep on the cold, hard ground which that night felt as soft as anything the Simmons people put out.

The next morning, there was an opportunity to better examine the area into which we had marched the night before. It was a rather large, flat field covered with pup and pyramidal tents, bounded on one side by the main road, on another by a smaller dirt road which led to some houses, on another by a small hill covered with trees, and on the remaining side by the 374th Bn. The French civilians had already gathered around the camp for a variety of purposes... to sponge meals, to sell five cent post cards for fifty cents, and some merely to gaze on the American Army which had moved into their quiet, little neighborhood.

In a day or two the equipment started to arrive from the dock. It was a rather messed up affair. Nearly everyone in the battery had to go down to the docks to help unload the cargo from the ships out to the docks where it was transported to the Division area by trucks. We unloaded equipment for all units in the Division. Everything was put on one big pile and unscrambled later. How could it be done any other way... in the Army. If the good war-bond-buying citizens back home could have seen what went on at the dock of Marseille. Whole cases, yes, carloads of equipment went via the moonlight requisition route. No one could keep track of all the equipment assembled at that port when it was in such a confused state as newly-established ports must be.

The boxes were brought up to the Division Artillery area, which was across the road from our camp. Boxes from all units in the Division, and some not in the Division, were piled helterskelter. Truck after truck rolled into the area and dropped its load. The pile got bigger and bigger. Gradually the big pile was segregated into smaller piles, and each unit began to collect its equipment. The boxes for our battalion were piled at the end of the street between our tents and the kitchen. Each section began to collect its equipment while the individual members in the section held their breaths as the boxes were being opened. The cranes had treated most of the boxes none too lightly while unloading them from the ship.

A word about Marseille. We had just passed through the outskirts on our trip from the coast. It was a typical seaport town and afforded but little of

the culture that belonged to France. The people spoke terrible French or so they told us; none of us could tell. One gets along just as well with either type if all he is able to use is the sign language himself. The street cars were running, and the whole city had electricity. The stocks in most of the stores were depleted as most everything of any value was taken back to the Vaterland by the Germans. There was not much evidence of bombing or destruction except in certain scattered parts of the town. The outdoor and street-corner cafes intrigued the visitor to Marseille. Besides being intriguing, most of them served a brand of Vermouth that was very pleasing to the palate. It was interesting to note the French population. They seemed to be a frivolous lot rushing helter skelter about their business. They seemed to smack of the American in their carefreeness. However, one wondered how they managed as well as they did with the utter lack of organization in anything they seemed to undertake. The buildings were built very close to the streets as is the custom in all European countries. The streets were winding affairs that often crossed one another, which was a bit confusing to the tourist to say the least.

Another word about the other towns around our camp. There was Aix, a town about ten miles north of our camp. It was a nice little town with „beaucoups" wine establishments. Many of the fellows preferred to go there rather that Marseille. Then there was the little town of Septems about a mile down the road, whose chief claim to fame was the fact that it was close to the camp. The town boasted about three, let us say wine selling establishments, some of which boasted seats for the customers to sit down and some which did not. There were other stores, where the chief and only one product for sale, was grapes. And so we went to Marseilles, Aix, and Septems to purchase „Vino rouge", „Vino blanche" and a little snort of vermouth if one knew enough French to get on friendly terms with the local bartender. Those were the days when we tried to display our knowledge of French which we had picked up from Lt. Bookbinder on the deck of the Mermac Moon. It soon was quite evident though that all the time was not spent adventageously. It was a considerable time before some learned that beaucoups did not mean good morning and that bon jour didn't mean plenty. Those were the days too that our cigarettes so generously donated by the Red Cross the day we

left the boat were soon traded for liquid refreshment. Chocolate bars went the same way. The wine may not have furnished as many vitamins as the chocolate, but it was a good trade as far as quantity was concerned.

The days went rapidly ... cold, rainy days they were for the most part. In fact, some of the days were so rainy that our camping area became a veritable sea of mud. The streets became small streams down which a tent floated at quite regular intervals. C battery which was located on the down-hill side of the camp, was almost completely washed out. Pete Peterson, who was the recorder in the battery and who had attended most of our classes at Bragg, had all his equipment and his bed roll under at least six inches of water. Suddenly his tent floated away revealing a maze of socks, shoes, and shorts floating merrily on the surface and Pete sitting not quite so merrily in the middle.

As time went on, more and more of the big boxes were opened and the contents checked, counted, and stored in the proper vehicles preparatory to the trip up to the front lines and into combat ... a day which was not now far off. Our fire direction equipment had stood the trip quite well, and was soon packed away in our two and one-half ton truck and trailer. Each computer checked his box and the equipment that went into it. Sgt. Leicht and Sgt. Johnson checked their boards, their deflection fans, coordinate squares, pins, protractors and all the rest. The day came that fire direction was ready to leave when ever the battalion would give the word.

There were a few more days to be spent in Septems, and we made the most of them speaking to the French people and absorbing some of the local color. Of course there were a few who weren't able to come home by the straight and narrow path. There was the night that Bob Boyle came home, didn't see the six foot deep sump hole filled with water, and fell in up to the neck. If it hadn't been for some friends of the kind hearted type, he would, no doubt be there yet. Then there was the time that a beautiful green, palm plant was left in the kitchen one night with the note attached „To the finest first sergeant we know". Of course no one signed it, but Sgt. Campbell knew that it could be only one man in the battery, one answering to the name, Charles J .....

The toughest part of the Army is „sweating out" the situation. This time, however, destiny was kind to us and the order to „march order" came much sooner than anyone expected. Everyone was filled with excitement; we were going up where the Krauts hang out. The battalion was soon on the road, and a beautiful sight it was to see. To see one's battalion marching on the road gives one a feeling of proudness, and makes one glad he is a part of the organization.

All along the road we met the welcoming waves of the French civilians. Each time the column stopped, the women would run to the vehicles and throw in flowers, bread, and wine. Everyone was kissing the French girls, or vice versa. It resembled a bond selling drive on Broadway. The route to the front was plainly marked by the knocked-out German tanks and vehicles. Occasionally there was a destroyed American vehicle beside the road giving evidence that the Germans weren't the only ones that suffered from the battle.

The three light battalions were in combat team formation and marched in front of us. It was over three hundred miles from Septems to the front lines ... a trip that took us three days. After covering about one hundred miles the first day, we bivouaced outside Lyon, one of the largest cities in France. Before any bed rolls were opened, or any chow eaten, the security guards were posted. As we came nearer to combat, the guard became increasingly more important. Everyone who has „been there" knows what a sentry goes through during his first nite of guard in a combat zone. Every noise or suspected movement is a target for a carbine. Consequently everyone became a bit cautious about moving around after dark.

On the last night of our trip, we stopped at DiJohn, a town quite close to the front lines. On the last day of the trip, confusion reigned supreme. When we were about five miles from our destination, seven vehicles became separated from the rest of the column. Ordinarily, taking a „wrong left" isn't too serious, but we were dangerously close to the front lines. The shell bursts could be heard quite distinctly; the glare lit up the rapidly darkening sky. The roads were all unfamiliar; each one looked about the same. Major Hill took off in his weapons carrier in an effort to rescue the „lost battalion". Butch was his radio operator and tried in vain to contact the missing vehicles. After a time the other outfits began to peel off the roads. Our vehicles

became suspicious, and stopped to examine the situation. A sigh of relief arose as Major Hill arrived and led the vehicles back home.

Moving into the bivouac area was a hazardous task. The area was heavily mined, and of course no one knew where the mines were located. Twelve pounds of T.N.T set off by a vehicle, or one-quarter pound set off by ones foot proves disastrous.

Finally everyone was ready to retire for the night after a truly trying day. Just to the rear of us was located a 155 „long Tom" outfit. Suddenly the number one men on the lanyards decided to send their personal gretings to Adolph. Many of us thought that they were coming in and immediately dove underneath the vehicles and into foxholes. The situation sounds humorous now, but it wasn't then. Gradually we regained our composure, and finally, we did get to bed that night.

The battalion stayed in its assembly area at Fremifontaine only one day. On the 4th of November we left our muddy, wooded area and proceeded to our first position in combat in St. Benoit. The tractors, guns, and ammunition had been unloaded at the rail depot near Chatel on the third of November. St. Benoit was a little town, very typical of all the French towns that we were to see later, typical because there were numerous holes in every roof. The ride up from our assembly area to St. Benoit was one, the like of which we never had before and are not likely to have again. As we rode from the assembly area to St. Benoit, we were bridging the gap between being outside of and now entering combat. We had been getting closer to it each day, but now we were to actually be in the fight, participate in the battle of Europe. It was not without some feeling of fear that we made our way toward St. Benoit. The battalion commander of the 189th field artillery, who we were going to relieve, had been over at our command post and told us of his driver, who had been with him in battle since Sicily and had never been hurt, had steeped on a shu mine in the hay loft as he was looking for a place to sleep. This story and the constant booming of the guns played on our minds as we went along.

Our command post was a two story affair, combination barn and house, which definitely had the marks of battle upon it. The roof had a few holes as we found out in the rain storm that was to come. In fact, we soon came

to the conclusion that perhaps there was no roof at all. Our equipment was soon set up in one of the four rooms up stairs. Our choice of a room was governed by the fact that this one showed less light thru the roof than the rest. However, we were soon to doubt this fact as soon as old Jupe Pluvius opened up. The rest of the rooms were used for sleeping quarters. The S-2 section and the Colonel stayed downstairs. The rest of the house was the barn half of the combination in which no one was too much interested after the experience of the 189th.

It was afternoon before anyone realized that it was Sunday. In the afternoon, an observer on the 189th registered us on a church steeple in the town of Raon L' Etate. General Murphy came to the C.P. later that afternoon and told us that the church steeple had been by the Germans for an observation post and that we had destroyed it. It was ironic, to say the least, that on Sunday, our first day in combat, we should fire our first round on a church steeple. War throws many things out of focus and makes them distorted to the mind; this was one instance.

Our kitchen was located a short distance up the road in the shelter of a rather beaten-up barn. Many a jittery step was taken up that road. No one wanted to venture too far from the protection of the building, even for meals. Every distantly booming shell had evil forebodings to our then-unexperienced ear. The first day was full of nervous tension. In days to come, a day like this would merely be routine, but now we were jittery to say the least. Every swish of a branch in the breeze was a German behind a bush; every crack of a twig was an infiltrating enemy patrol.

On the 6th of November, A battery sent a registering gun forward to our new positions that we were to occupy shortly. The rain which had been coming down for days made registration impossible. We had tried in vain to stem the flood which had flowed thru the roof on our map boards and radios to say nothing of bedrolls. It seems that there were no dry spots to be had. Sgt. Ray moved his bed innumerable times the first night and gave it up as a bad job on the second. Sgt. Leicht used his handerchief continually, not for the usual purpose, but to wipe the map boards. After a time, we erected shelter halves inside the room which made things considerably more livable.

SCOOP AND BUTCH
ON TO THE RHINE

CHOW IN BOUSEVILLER

It was on the 8th of November that we moved to our positions in Neuf Etang, a place that will always be remembered by all of us for reasons that we will relate presently. The batteries were close, very close, together because it was the only clearing in the vicinity. The enemy wouldn't have to do any exceptional deduction to suspect that artillery would occupy these positions. And apparently they did just that. Our command post was put into a lone house at the side of the road near some high pine trees which covered the hillside. The kitchen was located down the road in the shelter of a rather dillapitated looking barn. There was nothing exceptional about the house where we were. The operational part of our section was located in what was probably the front room at one time. We slept upstairs. Sgt. Kelly and Roland Benson, his right hand man, slept in the hallway so that their beds became convenient sofas. Then there was the cellar, but more of that anon. Most of our important scenes in this position were to take place there.

On the 9th of November we suffered our first casualties. Cpl. Izzo, a tall, dark, likable chap and Cpl. Pete Leardo, a short, also likeable comedian, were riding along the road in their medics jeep. They happened to spy an Infantryman along the road who had been injured by a shu mine. They stopped to help him and themselves stepped on a similar mine. Cpl Izzo lost a leg and Leardo was very seriously injured in the eye. The accident struck home very hard. We had heard much about the dreaded shu mine, a quarter of a pound of dynamite concealed in a wooden box, so as to escape the detection of our mine detectors. The impact of what war could mean was striking home.

Then came armistice day. It was on armistice day that we received our first counterbattery. During the day one hundred and four rounds of 88 and 105 mm shells landed in our area with pinpoint accuracy. We shall never forget those first shells that came over. Our batteries were so close that at first we thought it was one of our own batteries firing until we happened to think that we weren't sending down any commands over the telephone, and therefore they weren't our guns. Then we knew that they were enemy shells landing in A battery's area, about five hundred yards from where we were. Then the mad scramble to the cellar began. Rank and prestige went with the winds and wasn't worth the price of a glass of lemonade at the north pole.

Speed was of the essence at a time like that. The cellar was made to accomodate about ten persons, but there were at least five times that many there on this particular occasion. The telephone upstairs rang and reported that Sgt. Knoeblock, the mess sergeant in A battery had been killed by a shell. Cpl. Tobelman the driver of the mess truck was seriously injured. Capt. Speer the battery commander, and Capt. Prince, our surgeon, did heroic work, utterly oblivious of the incoming shells.

Later in the day, more shells came into the area. Dave Wyant and Red Hazen were injured up in headquarters motor park. Red had driven our truck on maneuvers and we all knew him very well. Everyone became more nervous as time went on and the shells kept coming into the area. Faces became whiter and hands grew less steady. We were new to combat and this was the first time that we had come face to face with the fact that war can be a living hell at times. It is rather peculiar, though, how even in a situation like this, human nature can see the humorous side of things. Jokes immediately came to the fore about decorations being awarded to some of us because of our ability to reach the cellar first, about how large a shell would put one on sick call, and how short the Germans were of artillery ammunition.

Our command post was placed alongside the road in such a way that the steep bank on the side and the high trees afforded us some protection from the shells. However, at one time, one landed in our latrine which was about ten yards outside the window sending showers of dirt and fragments into the C.P.

At night every shell sounded like it was coming in on the wings of the silent darkness. A trip to the latrine after dark could truly be classed as heroic action. Guards became jittery at night. If an enemy 88 didn't get you, the chances were that an guards 30 cal. would. It was during this time that Sgt. Campbell pulled many, many shifts on guard with those who were a bit jittery at times. Many heroes there were in those few days, and he was one of them. The work of the medics was superb. From Doc Prince down to the lowest ranking aid man, we had nothing but praise.

As the first stages of fear wore off, a feeling of anger began to take its place. The gun crews became belligerent as they returned fire on the German batteries. Shells were rammed just a little bit harder and with much more

determination. Radio messages became clear and precise so as not to waste time. Pins in the plotting boards were jabbed in with a felling of resentment toward the Krauts. Commands of computers were made just a little bit faster and were given over the telephone in a curt, clipped voice. In other words, we all had the idea that we were taking out our own personal revenge on the enemy. We learned the hard way, but we became, on the whole, a better battalion by being shelled that first day.

Because the enemy fire was so accurate, the suspicion arose that some of the liasion aircraft hovering overhead might be enemy. However, a check with Francis 14, the air field, proved that this was not the case. The Infantry scoured the surrounding hills for enemy forward observation posts but could find none.

On November 12th at ten o'clock in the morning, nine more rounds of shells landed in B and C battery areas. The first shell that came in killed Pfc. Bishop in C battery. Another shell wounded Pfc. Gold in B battery.

The next day three of us went over to the small stable next to B battery for church. Father Buckley, an Irish priest from the 398th Infantry, was there. Although we had all attended services in great cathedrals, and had heard Bishops splendid in colorful vestments chant the Tantum Ergo, never had we witnessed a more impressive scene than this, as we all knelt on the straw in the stable. And as Father Buckley said, „It is significant that we should be gathered here in a stable as we begin our stuggle in Europe, so reminiscent of a stable in Bethlehem where He began His struggle." We remembered the shelling of the day before; we remembered, and we would never forget.

Two days had passed and the shelling had stopped. We walked more serenely now on our way to the mess hall, and we ventured a bit further from the command post. However, a sniper took a couple of pot shots at one of our guard outposts and at Lt. Knauff from the edge of the woods. Lt. Knauff started after him, pistol in hand, but the sniper had disappeared in the underbrush.

About the middle of November, the line along the Meurthe River around Raon L'Etape, which the enemy had held for a month, began to crack. The whole Division began to shift up north and prepare to cross the River at Raon L'Etape. Our battalion was informed that we would remain with one

battalion of Infantry, the 2nd Battalion of the 398th, and defend the west side of the river while the rest of the Division crossed. However, a reconnaisance proved that there was only Company E left with a few reconnaisance elements of a Recon. Troop. Upon notifying Division Artillery of this fact, we were notified that we would be in direct support of this company which was spread out thinly over a front of 6000 yards. Our local security was doubled that night.

It was while at Neuf Fontaine, that we added two members to our little band, Butch Rose and Artie Gonzales. They had previously been in the radio section, but the need was so great for communication with the airplanes that they were transferred to our section. And welcome additions they were. Besides being crack radio operators, they were a couple of comedians to say the least, and humor was what was needed at this particular time. They had a line of chatter all their own, but it wasn't long before every one had additional words in his vocabulary, such words as „bee-you-fi-tal", „boysh, oh, boysh", „Califlonia", and „Mire Fissions".

On the 18th we moved north a bit to better support the crossing of the Division. Our new establishment was a lone house in the middle of a clearing, a house that had previously belonged to a forest ranger. The kitchen was located in the corner of the woods and the switch-board beside the house with plenty of logs covering it.

Nothing out of the ordinary happened to us while we stayed at the forest rangers' house. The house was the best one in which we had stayed up until that time. The former owner evidently was a Nazi of high repute in the area and did his forest ranging only on the side. Also, the house was rather secluded and well protected by the surrounding woods. Papers and pictures identifying the owner with the Nazi party were in evidence everywhere. Sgt. Leicht found some letters written to a German soldier who had left them on the hill behind the house. They were written to the soldier by his sweetheart back in Germany and told of the fierce and intense bombings of the German cities back home. They urged him to have courage, that the war couldn't last much longer at the rate it was going now, and that perhaps soon they would be together again even if it were in a defeated Germany. The various letters intrigued us for they gave an insight to the thoughts of the soldiers that

we were fighting. On the whole they seemed much like our own thoughts; soldiers everywhere seemed to agree on one point... to get home again.

A donkey wandered around the area from time to time. It was inevitable that the crowd should have their picture taken with the donkey. Soon everyone was gathered around in straw hats and with pitchforks while someone snapped the shutter. Of course the classic remark as to which one was the donkey might be inserted here as it might be appropriate, but we will pass up the opportunity.

While we were here, the Division pressed rapidly beyond Raon L'Etape. The Germans had held a firm, dug-in line around the city. Now that they had been driven from their positions, they were pulling out wholesale and retreating full-flight through the Vosges. A lot of our doughboy's blood had been spilled on the hills outside Raon L'Etate; our first month in combat had been a little bit on the rough side.

The Germans had retreated so far that our observation post no longer was an asset to us. Therefore, the Battalion Commander decided to a bandon it. As the O.P. party was leaving the hill, the jeep hit an R mine blowing the jeep completely off the road. The driver, a lad named Greene, was injured and a passenger, Murray Simon, who had gone to some of the Fdc classes at Bragg, was killed. This accident brought the total of killed to three inside of two weeks and the toll of injured to well over a dozen.

On the 22nd the battalion moved to a place between Moyenmontier and St. Blaise. Again we were in a house. An elderly couple and a small child were the only occupants. They remained in the cellar and took care of the house. They were extremely glad to see us, as the Germans had been there forty eight hours before. They told us of how the German soldiers had stayed in the house and had stayed awake all night nervously drinking coffee, for they feared that the Americans would come at any time.

There was a little church not far from us with a cemetery adjoining, as it did with most churches in France. A Nazi soldier had been killed in the battle which had raged in the valley, and someone had taken his body and laid it beside the cemetery. Some of us let our curiosity get the better of us and went over to see the soldier in green. Later, dead soldiers along the road were to become a more or less common sight.

Thursday came and Thursday was Thanksgiving. It was a dreary, rainy Thanksgiving day. The rain poured down continually. It would slacken up at times but never stop. The weather was cold which added to the miserableness of the day. Sgt. Daisey started cooking the turkey bright and early in the morning, and at breakfast everyone had great anticipation for the noon meal. The battle had been progressing rapidly and the enemy had gone out of range. Reconnaisance parties went out before noon for positions further up the road. We fired no missions diring the day as the no fire line was way out at our extreme range. Business was slack for us and we spent most of our time talking of other Thanksgivings that had been spent in the states and what we were going to do on our first one when we got home again. One can't talk very long about Thanksgiving days without talking about football games, and it wasn't long before everyone was rooting for his hometown team. Teams never before heard of with such titles as „The East Jersey City Tigers", „The Malden Wildcats", and the „New Haven Huskies" began to put in their appearance... all with marvelous records. It is probably a good thing that Elmer Layden wasn't there to hear the terrors of these aggregations or he would have dissolved his professional football league on the spot.

At long last noon arrived. We placed the table in the center of the room, found some candles which we lighted and placed on the table. We all brought our messkits back and ate together in the candlelight. No one said very much partly because we were busy eating the turkey and dressing, and partly because there was a strong feeling of freindship there among us, and when there is a feeling like that, no one has to say anything. Soon we began to feel as stuffed as the turkey had been, that is all of us except our little Butch, but he never would have his appetite completely satisfied if Thanksgiving day were every day of the week. As we ate, various people offered an opinion as to how many more Thanksgiving we would be away from home. The opinions varied from one to five years. Only time will tell who was right. After the meal was finished, the air of contentment that usually follows a good meal seemed to enter the room. It was hard being away from home on a holiday, but if we had to be away, we were glad to be here with the rest of the crew.

In the late afternoon, the reconnaisance parties returned stating that we would move on the morrow. The Germans were retreating with great speed after the breakthrough at Raon L'Etape, and it wasn't contemplated that we would do much firing from our new positions.

Our next stop was one of our most interesting, the one at LeSaulcy. It was a newly-liberated town with some of the most friendly in habiants that we had yet seen. Our command post was located in a bar room, which used to serve as the town's meeting place. There were a couple of old women there who apparently took care of the place, and they also took care of us as far as furnishing beds were concerned. By this time, these were a luxury for us, one that we really enjoyed. It soon became the rumor that this was the birthplace of St. Bernadette Soubereau. However, upon further investigation, the fact was that Bernadette was the patron Saint of the town and the people had erected a grotto in her honor on the outskirts of the town. The church on the hill also was dedicated to her.

There was also a daughter in the family with which we stayed, who it goes without saying was very popular with the crowd. Sgt. Leicht, who of course could speak German very fluently, practiced up on his French, which he was learning mostly from the little book the Army issued us. It was amazing... his command of the languages and the ease with which he learned to speak them.

The Division stockade was in the barn just across the street from our C. P. Prisoners, young and old, dressed in the familiar green, poured into the PW cage to be processed. It was our first opportunity to see German soldiers at close range. They were, for the most part, tall and blonde. Their hair was long and unkept. They seemed to be glad that they were prisoners and stared at us with as much curiosity as we had when we stared at them. A tragically humorous incident occured while we were in LeSaulcy. Sgt. Price procured a few of the prisoners to dig a latrine. He lined them up, and not being able to speak German, went thru the familiar sign language to put across the idea that he wanted a hole dug of specific dimensions. The Germans thought that they were being required to dig their own graves, and fell down on their knees to beg mercy. They soon learned tho, that the

American army operated along different lines from the Germans, and that that wasn't the idea at all.

Our stay at LeSaulcy was all too short as far as we were concerned but the Division's advance necessitated another move on the part of our battalion. This time it was to Diesbach, on the way to Strassburg. Our command post was located in a house next to a railroad track and was on a high bank. From the front of the house we could look down on the street below and see endless traffic of all sorts moving in the direction of Strassburg. We never registered that day. The doughboys were moving so fast that they were out of range of our guns by the time we were ready to fire. Sgt. Ray got the generator working as usual and strung the light line. Across the street was a garage full of electric wire, which he appropriated for his use.

Next morning, bright and early, the Colonel went out again with his reconnaisance parties looking for a new position. While he was gone, Division Artillery called up and told us that we were to go into XV Corp reserve and would travel back to a bivouac area to await further orders. A radio message was sent to the Colonel and preparations made to go back to our assembly area which was to be in Le Petite Raon.

Seldom did we have a welcome like we had in La Petite Raon. The Germans had been there only a few days before, and we were the first troops to really settle down in the town. The battery lived on both sides of one street in town. The town actually had two. Most of the battery lived in houses with French families and had a good oportunity to practice our French, learned mostly from the little blue book issued on board ship. Our vocabulary was limited mostly to „merci beaucoup" which can plainly be seen won't last very long in any conversation as most people get tired of being thanked for everything especially when they inquire as to the state of your health. There is only one solution and that is to resort to the sign language. But with our limited knowledge of the language we gradually heard the story that the Germans had, three days before, locked all the population in the church and had gone thru the village taking every thing to eat, most of the valuables, and then taken most of the men and boys off to Germany.

The next morming, word came that we were going to move up past Sarreburg. We didn't actually start until the afternoon when the whole

battalion began to move. Refugees lined the road along the whole route making travel very difficult in most places. People blocked the road as they made their way back to their bombed-out homes with their cattle and carts full of household belongings. It was a strange sight to see these refugees straggling along the road and our hearts went out to them, for we were in a sense refugees ourselves and away from our homes. But this was to be a common sight from now on, and we became hardened to the fact as one does in combat.

It was dark before we arrived at Hesse. We stayed in a very large house on the upstairs floor in the front room overlooking the church. A family and their cows stayed downstairs, but they didn't bother us as much as one might imagine. The kitchen was located in their truck beside the church. The radio section and some others stayed in the schoolhouse by the church where books full of the Nazi philosophy could be found. Here people spoke German and were German in their thoughts apparently.

The church was one of the oldest in that section of the country being built in about the year 900. Rumor had it that one of the Popes had visited the church some centuries ago. A cemetery surrounded the church as was customary in Europe. One morning the pastor had a service for the men of our battalion. A crowd turned out for the occasion. Everyone was there no matter what his religion. The music of the choir was beautiful. The altar boys in their red cassocks and the priest in his white vestments created quite an effect. And at the end we all prayed with him for an early and a just peace.

We stayed in Hesse for five days and spent most of them cleaning our equipment which had taken a bit of a beating our first month in combat. It was good to have a little rest. The first few weeks had been hectic; our baptism of fire had been rather severe, and everyone welcomed the change.

So the month of November ended with the entire battalion still in XV Corp reserve. However, this was not to last long, for on the 2nd of December we were attached to „Hawk", the telephone code name for the 208th Group. The 208th was commanded by Col. Erickson a tall, efficient-looking officer who dropped in to our C.P. occasionally. During the time we were attached to the Hawk Group, we spent probably our busiest days in combat. We fired heavily at any hour of the day or night. It was not unusual for them to

call up at two or three in the morning with an order to drop a few rounds on some enemy battery that had been located earlier in the day.

On the 2nd of December we moved out of Hesse and into Schoenberg. At first the 398th Infantry was also in the same town, and the only place left in town for us was the top story of a house where grain and a collection of mice had previ ously been. However, near the end of the day, the Infantry moved up to the front and we moved down in a spacious schoolhouse. It was on this first night in Schoenberg that fifteen rounds came into B and C batteries. The batteries were well dug in and no one was injured.

The next day near the end of the day, with only a couple of hours of daylight left, we were ordered to move to previously reconnoitered positions. The Colonel was gone and Major Hill prepared to move the battalion at night. However, the order was later rescinded and we were notified that we would stay in Schoenberg for the night.

Most of us stayed in a house up the street and rapidly made the domicile into a palace. The switchboard knew the rooms as Suite 1 and Suite 2. On the last night in Schoenberg, we celebrated with the greatest glee, for no particular occasion exept that we were once again in combat. The packages had begun to arrive and came in conveniently on this particular occasion. The owners of the house, altho, they all spoke German, seemed sympathetic toward us, and as this was the days before the non-fraternization policy was put into effect, we made the most of it.

On the 4th of the month we did move and to La Petite Pierre. We moved into a large summer home that had formerly belonged to a wealthy man, who had spent most of his time in Paris. Our workroom was located in the large front room. It was a new experience for us to operate in a room this large. It was a beautiful room with a large stove on one side of the room, where we used to reheat all our meals during the rainy days that we spent here. There were many rooms upstairs, enough so that each one us had a bedroom to ourselves. The advance detail arrived early while there was still some infantrymen from the service company there; we talked to them for a long time about some of the experiences of the doughboys. It was very interesting listening to these infantrymen and the matter-or-fact way that they talked about their comrades being killed at the front. Only after talking

to these people did we realize that our part in this war was not nearly as dangerous as that played by some others, namely the Infantry.

The Division was moving rather rapidly now, and it soon became evident that the Germans were retreating to the protection of the Maginot line defenses.. We didn't stay in La Petite Pierre long before we moved again, this time to Althorn, the little town which lay between two large hills. It was nearly dark before we arrived. We moved the radio truck right up to the C.P. and registered the roving gun from there as the radio at the gun position, which had gone forward with the registering party, couldn't contact the plane. The registration was obtained before dark, and we turned our attention to cleaning up the schoolroom that we were to use. There was the usual collection of maps which showed the new Germany spread all over Europe and half of Asia. But we were well on our way whittling down the Vaterland to something of its original size. The schoolroom was immense. Our sleeping quarters and our operational section were all located in the same room. A stove in one end of the building kept the whole room comfortably warm.

Our stay in Althorn comprised a week, and a pleasant week it was. Althorn was a friendly little town, which had never favored the Nazis to any great extent. There was only one street in town, and the battery was located along its entire length. The battery C.P., S-2 section, and the medics were all located at the top of the hill, across from the church. The church was a picturesque little place where some of us went to church the Sunday we spent in Althorn.

Registration was difficult from the plane because of the weather and so we registered with a high burst from our short base with good results. It was the first time that we had used the short base in combat. Sgt. Kelley, the survey sgt., and Lemlin worked the ends of the short base. It was cold up on the short base. Jessie Dickerson, Lt. Knauff's boy, from Greenville, South Carolina, didn't think too much of the „Yankee weather" as he operated the telephone. The conversation went something in this manner, „Boy, it's cold." „There it is up there, Lem". „It was never like this in South Carolina." „Did you get that one, Lem", „They should give this country back to Hitler". The registration was soon over, and Dick didn't move away from the stove for three days.

A few shells landed in the creek one night while we were in Althorn. Examination in the morning revealed that one of them had been a 170 mm. None of them landed close enough to do any damage either to Headquarters Battery or the tank battery that was bivouaced down the road a bit.

Our kitchen was located down the road in an old restaurant which was small but was sufficiently large to accomodate all the beer drinkers in Althorn.

One morning in the middle of December, we displaced to a rather small house on the outskirts of Lemberg. We were in a very small room, much too small for all the activity that was to take place there. We slept in the next room, also a small affair, whose one claim to fame was the mirror which hung on the wall. Soon, however, enough pin up girls made their appearance to offset the lonely look of the mirror. The rest of Headquarters Battery was located some distance from us and brought our meals up in the mess truck.

The Germans had put up a determined stand in the forts of the Maginot Line. All the artillery available was brought up in an effort to pound the forts into submission. The enemy had retreated all through southern France, had held for awhile in the Vosges, and then had retreated again. Now they were making a determined effort in the defense line built by the French which they had turned around to their own advantage. Key to the whole line was the bastion of Bitche, a town that had never been successfully stormed in all history. Two main forts in the Maginot Line which lay outside the city of Bitche were Ft. Schiesseck, which was attacked by the 398th Infantry and Ft. Otterbiel, stormed by the 397th.

D day came on the morning of the 16th. We were in general support, reinforcing the fires of the 398th. On this day we fired the most rounds that we had fired up until this time. Before the next twenty-four hours were over, we had fired one thousand one hundred and twenty three shells at Bitche, Otterbiel, and Schiesseck. The 2nd battalion of the 398th attack hill 309 in front of Ft. Otterbiel with no success. Most of our firing was done in that direction. All the fires of our preparation. were placed on hill 309. We threw enough steel at that place in one day to keep twenty French iron miners busy for five years. The Jerrys were well dug in though, and our fires did little good . . . most of the shells literally bounced off the concrete emplacements.

The day passed with many shells being expended but with little ground being gained.

Preparation after preparation fire was planned, but the result was always the same. Finally four M12s, a 155mm howitzer selfpropelled, were brought up and put into position under the direction of Colonel DeLange. They fired on some of the forts with much better success than had hitherto been achieved. At this time we also started using the T105, or concrete piercing fuze, against the concrete emplacements. These fuzes also had more effect than the regular ones.

For five days in a row, each day was the same. It would start with a preparation being fired, continued by observed fires from the airplane and ground observers throughout the day. But the result of each day was the same. The Infantry would gain a few yards only to withdraw when darkness came and to send out some patrols to try and discover how well manned the forts were. Time after time, our battalion laid down a smoke screen to aid the Infantry to advance.

Finally the German defenses began to weaken. The doughboys occupied two of the forts under the cover of darkness. The next task would be to attack the two Otterbiels and Fort Scheisseck. Elaborate plans were drawn up to attack the defenses when the order, a very disheartening order, came. Our Division was to take over the 44th Division sector and retire to a winter defensive position. It took all the wind out of our sails, for we felt in our hearts that we were about to succeed in breaching the Maginot defenses. It was heartbreaking to stop now. Many doughboy lives had been sacrificed at the foot of those forts out there. Carload upon carload of artillery ammunition had been buried in those forts. Indeed it was hard to stop, but we were to take part in the larger plan, a plan which included all the divisions on the Western front. The 100th now had a tremendous front to cover. Consequently we went back far behind the lines in order to accomplish our mission better.

And going far back meant going to Guisberg two days before Christmas. We had the whole town, all twelve houses, to ourselves. The switchboard, message center, and ourselves with the S-2 section were in the house on the outside of town. We had an immense room for the fire direction. Cabinets

were drawn over to the middle to separate the room into a working room and a „schlafen zimmer". The radio car was located in the garage which adjoined the house. Speaking of the radio truck, let us insert a word for the magnificent job turned in by the radio crew which worked the 608 from the command car, HQ 30. There were three of them... Gene Leach, the little lad with the winsome smile. One just couldn't help liking Gene. He was so sincere in everything he did, the kind of a fellow one likes to have on their side. We could all see Anita's point of view... quite definitely. Then there was „Lampy"... rescued from the M.P.s just in the nick of time. Inexperienced with the radio at the start, he became our mainstay and best rooter at the finish. We liked Lampy for he always did his best, and his best was plenty good enough. He had a brand of humor all his own and never seemed to linger on the dark side of the situation too long. To complete the threesome, there was Joe Scauri. No matter how bad the situation, Joe could smooth it out in two sentences. There could be forty tanks to be fired on and four tubes blown on the radio, but according to Joe, there was nothing to worry about. Everything was on the rosy side. That was the three of them, three radio operators who developed into a smooth-working team, a hard working crew, that helped us no end. Our hats are off to them and to their boss, Sgt. „Eddie" Edwards, for a swell job.

We weren't in Guisberg a day before the rumors began to mount that we might move. Everyone hoped against hope that we might stay here for Christmas and that we wouldn't be moving on that day. Christmas morning came with a light snow on the ground. Surely enough, the Colonel left on reconnaisance for a new position. The 375th was to move into our positions and take over our command post. They wandered in and out all day while we wondered when we were going to move. Dinnertime came and we ate our turkey a gain. This time there were no tables and candles in the middle of the room. We ate around the stove, each one holding his mess kit on his lap. The reconaissance elements were still out after the meal was finished. Back home we would have made a path for the sofa after our Christmas repast, but now we merely „sweated out" the movement. Finally, the decision came that we would not move that day or at all. So the 375th folded their tents like the Arabs, but not-so-silently stole away.

As soon as we knew definitely that we wouldn't move, everyone heaved a deep sigh of relief. Christmas night we really settled down and celebrated. Christmas time is a friendly time. And to make it more friendly, we had a little liquid refreshment saved for the occasion. It was on Christmas night that all our cooks came to the fore. Sgt. Johnson, an expert along the baked-apple line, took charge of the small stove for awhile, and soon everyone was sinking their teeth in baked apples as only Sgt. Johnson could bake them. Then Artie started baking the pancakes. The mere thought of it will make the next few lines very painful to the writer. Artie was doing all right until he started to flip them with the frying pan. Pancakes are the darndest things to get down off the ceiling. Everyone ate pancakes that night until we lost the count. However, in the middle of the night, some strange, low, moaning sounds issued forth from one bedroll, and in the morning, one of our members failed to answer the call. When he finally did show up, about two in the afternoon, he was a pale shade of green ... about the color of a newleywed's kitchenette. He was definitely out of the lineup for at least two days. But as he wasn't what might be called essential, and served merely to keep the morale up anyway, it didn't make much difference. Our morale was good and needed no boosting.

The days came and went in Guisberg. The weather became bitter cold and the snow came down in big, heavy flakes. It reminded us of home, for most of us came from the North. One holiday passed to another and before we knew it, the New Year was upon us.

New Years Eve! New Years Eve in Guisberg. It was a far cry from the holidays that some of us had spent in New York, but nevertheless, we had a good time. Certainly it was a New Years Eve that we will never forget; it was just a little different type of exitement from what we had been used to on such evenings in other years. A bottle of Old Schenleys had been saved for the occasion and was soon gone with our usual supply of pancakes and other delicacies that we were wont to cook on our little stove near the door. „Route Order" turned from his position at the stove, got some pancake batter and started to work with the frying pan. The „coach" saw Gonzales turn from the stove and get the batter; he also backed away from the stove, put on his coat, and made his way down to the radio section.

The festivities of this night weren't quite as festive as they had been on Christmas. Everyone had his own private thoughts in which he was absorbed. This was the beginning of a new year, a new year of war. Would this year bring victory in Europe? And if it did, then what? We thought of home; we thought of singing Auld Lang Syne at parties on other years; we thought of wives and sweathearts. We also thought of the doughboys out front sleeping in the frost-encased foxholes, cold, wet, discomfortable. We thought of them and what they must be thinking on this night, and somehow then, we didn't feel quite as sorry for ourselves.

Hitler spoke at midnight that night. He hadn't spoken for nearly six months, and rumor had it that he might be dead. At twelve, Sgt. Leicht and Capt. Yehl went down to the radio house to listen to der Fuhrer. He spoke in a calm voice, not like his former robust, frenzied, frantic outbursts. He spoke slowly in his deep gutteral tones. He spoke of the damage done to the German cities and how he would repair them, of the hardships of the people and how they would one day be lifted. And he ended his short talk, „And I swear before Almighty God that I will never rest until Germany has found her place in the world". Little did he know that his German state which was supposed to last for a thousand years would fall in this year, which had just been ushered in.

Even while Adolf Hitler had been addressing the German nation, the Germans opposing us had started to attack. They attacked in force, desperately, fanatically. Our fire direction was called upon instantly to fire our normal and emergency barrages, that is concentrations on danger areas to which we had the data computed beforehand. Our name was made that night. Day after day, we had computed our barrages, but never had been called upon to fire them before. Our fire fell accurately and swiftly with devastating force on the Germans. Soon the whole fire direction was out of bed working feverishly for the counterattack was mounting in fury. The night was clear as crystal with the stars hung out in a blanket of blue. The forward observers from the light battalions could see the Jerries as if it had been daytime. They reported that the enemy was attacking as though they were crazy. At first they thought they were drunk, but their finnesse in their movements soon dispelled that idea. They would attack in the face of

NACH STUTTGART

WILLIE AND JOE

withering artillery barrages. Numbers upon numbers came out of the foxholes to be cut to ribbons by the redhot, fiery steel. It was the artillery that saved us that night, the artillery of the Division in general and of the 373rd in particular, for our fire fell before that of the light battalions and fell more accuraetly.

On New Year's morning, the enemy increased his attack in tempo. In fact, the small arms fire became so heavy that Sgt. Behlen was ordered to leave his observation post and return to the battalion. Everyone was on edge, for soon it became known that the Germans were attacking all along the Western front. Up north in the First and Ninth Armies sectors, the situation was much more serious than it was in ours. It was a comparitively clear day and the airplanes picked up quite a few targets which we fired upon. The 925th forward observers gave us the remainder of our business on that day when they picked up enemy troop concentrations and also enemy artillery and caissons moving up to the front.

That was the day that Capt. Yehl went to church in the afternoon at Enchenberg. On the way back, some German pilot, who evidently didn't like the way he combed his hair, dove low and gave a few welcoming bursts from the machine gun at the jeep in which he and Lt. McQuilton were riding. The plane had previously strafed Baker and Charlie battery on the same run. The two above mentioned gentlemen dove out of the jeep and into the ditches so fast that they made Gunder Haegg look like Father Time. The „coach" must have been a bit upset at the incident as he didn't heckle Butch for a whole day afterward which was something of a record.

Lieb and Sgt. Johnson took a walk in the afternoon down by the creek which ran in back of the command post. Of course there could be heard the sounds of small arms fire all over the place anyway, but there must have been a couple of shots fired that afternoon which weren't fired according to the tactical plan of things. For all afternoon, frightened hawks and rabbits seemed to run past the command post after having been routed from their hiding places in the woods. However, the results must not have been too good, for we had to resort to our usual snacks at night, which again on this night didn't consist of meat.

Late in the afternoon, Colonel Keithly was called to Division Artillery headquarters and informed that the situation was serious. The Division had

held the enemy on its own front very well, and had in some places suceeded in driving him back. But on the right flank the Germans had penetrated deeply and menaced the entire Division. The Colonel was told to plan for a withdrawal on a moments notice to previously prepared positions.

The next morning, it was evident that „Task Force Huddleton" which had been on our right flank, had been severely mauled and had been nearly disintegrated. We could no longer hold our present positions. At eleven in the morning, the batteries started to move one at a time. Sgt. Leicht, Sgt. Ray, Teddy Beck, Anzio and Artie left for the new command post in Montbronn. The rest of us stayed until the last battery had gone. We fired many missions during the displacement, as the airplanes picked up many targets of opportunity. About two in the afternoon, with only A battery left in the old position, we got the report that the Germans were only three thousand yards away, and that they had entered Meisenthal far to our left rear. The Division that day came near to being cut off and surrounded. We continued to fire upon juicy targets of opportunity, vehicles and troop concentrations, making the enemy pay a heavy price for his advance. Finally the situation became so desperate, that Col. Keithtly gave A battery the order to move. Sgt. Ray, Leib, Butch, and the Capt. Yehl packed the equipment into Johnny Renn's command car, and departed for the new area. After we turned the corner to go down to Montbronn via the back way, we all began breathing regularly again. The enemy had penetrated just a little too close for comfort, and we hadn't done enough zeroing in on the tin cans in the area to feel that confident with our carbines. As we traveled down the back way to keep out of sight of enemy observation, we passed many mined bridges guarded by the engineers, who stood ready to set off the charges underneath the bridges if the Germans advanced down the road.

It was nearly dark when we arrived at the new command post, the room on the top story of a high, red-roofed building, complete with holes . . . mostly in the roof. There was much work to be done that night, for the Division had taken a toe hold in its new position; it would be hard to dislodge us now. There were a few makeshift beds in the adjoining rooms amidst the trucks, chicken wire, garden tools, and what have you. These we soon whipped into shape and rolled out our bed rolls. It was dark when we went to supper . . .

down across the road, past some 170 mm holes that had been plowed into the ground by the Germans at some earlier time. The air was cold, that sort of soft coldness, and the flakes were coming down, big and fluffy. It was good to get back a little further behind the lines; it brought a feeling of safeness. The day had been hectic, and sleep came quickly that night.

The next morning, there was little to be learned about the situation. „Task Force Huddleton", the unit of the VI corp boundary had not been heard from. No one knew to what extent our right flank was exposed. Capt. Cornelius and Lt. Knauff were hurried out in the morning to reconnoiter positions farther in the rear just in case. We knew that a combat team of the 36th Division was coming to help out, and later in the day we learned that the 45th Division was on the way to take up a line through Wimmenau and Wingen. It was a day of many fire missions. The 117th Reconnaisance Troop was holding out way up front and was calling on us for fires even thought the communications were long and conversation over the wire was difficult. We fired on an enemy tank column, hitting the lead tank and throwing the rest of the column into confusion. Later it was reported that there were no troops in that area to hold back the oncoming tanks. If they had penetrated at this stage of the game, well we didn't think about that. During the afternoon, our fires broke up two more counterattacks there. As darkness fell, we learned that German attacks on the 44th Division on our left had also pentated fairly deeply. Our Division had held firm after giving ground the day before. The worst was now over.

Our stay in the house by the well in Montbronn was to continue for two more days. We couldn't have stayed there much more than that without cutting a few holes in the ceiling. The low beams in the fire direction room were the cause of much cursing, both of the mild and the blue variety, from some of the taller members of the section. Butch and Max were quite content, however, but then, they could probably walk through the front door of a dog house without bending over. The gasoline stove in the corner kept us warm and served to heat the goodies from the packages from home at night.

On the 5th of January, the battalion moved back to Guisberg, inasmuch as the enemy threat had been stopped. There was one little difficulty about moving back into the small town, and that was the fact the the regimental

command post of the 399th Infantry was also there. Solution . . . we shared it with them. So it was back to our sunporch room with the small stove where we had spent the holidays. The weather, which had been quite clear became overcast; the days were dark and sullen. Neither the airplanes or our own observation posts picked up many targets during the last days in Guisberg. After we had been back the second day, Baker battery was the recipient of about sixty rounds of enemy artillery fire in which no one was hurt, probably because of the fact that every one was well dug in.

It became quite evident that the Germans had moved sound ranging units up on this front and were using them quite effectively. In order for them not to be able to plot our location when one battery fired, the system of firing at least two batteries simultaneously whenever possible was adopted. This would confuse the sound tracts and give an untrue plot to our friends across the line. Neverthe less, the next night, about thirty rounds fell near C battery which ranged in caliber from 88mm to 170 mm. The next morning we were able to see a 170 mm crater on the road four hundred yards from the command post which even in the cement-like, frozen ground measured twelve feet across and five feet deep . . . enough to put even the hardiest person on sick call. That was the night that someone tried to wake Butch to inform him that a little stray hardware was floating around. As we all know there are two methods of waking Butch, the rapid way which requires two charges of dynamite, and the slower way which requires at least one hour of shaking and hollering. On this particular night, no dynamite was available, and no one had an hour to spend before heading cellarward. The next morning, and to this day, he wonders why he woke with a helmet on his head. Some kind friend had done the next best thing.

The 11th of January and about ten o'clock in the evening, our Teutonic friends sent over some more shells which were this time aimed at our command post. Luckily the center of impact was off about two hundred yards. That was the night that the machine gun tent on the top of the hill was riddled by flaying shell fragments. Frank Folliard and Caton were on duty at the machine gun when the shells started coming in. As the first one hit, the two headed for the fox hole. Soon they started coming too close for a fox hole. At the first lull, the pair took off down the hill for the protection

LOADING UP
LET'S GET THAT GUY

THE SARGE & THE COACH
THREE MUSKETEERS

of the buildings. Four walls and a roof gives one so much more confidence at a time like that, especially at night. The next morning, it was the concensus of opinion that the trip from the tent on top of the hill to the orderly room had been rather rapid inasmuch as there were only three footprints on the side of the hill which was about two hundred yards long.

Life in Guisberg continued much the same, the walks in the morning or afternoon, depending upon how the shifts were running, the trek down the road in the early morning to breakfast seeing Matilda, the muscular, wheeling the wheelbarrow out of the barn, and then the letter writing in the evening. One day, the digging of the defensive fox holes began. Each man was to have an individual foxhole. The ground was like concrete, so dynamite was employed, that is after we had dug cours. There was much squabbling in the section as to just who was T/0 bazooka team, but as no one got to use the thing anyway, it didn't make duch difference.

Things remained quiet for a day, a day which we spent for a „dry run" on the occupation of our fox holes which we had dug, or chiseled, two days previously. Then sixty rounds of what was apparently 105 mm shells descended on Baker Battery. No one was killed or injured, but the communication lines from the executives post to two howitzers were cut. About twenty minutes later, some more of the same descended upon A battery. This time the shells landed a bit farther away, but still close enough to cause a few white hairs.

The next day, on the 19th of January, we moved from Guisberg to take up our historic stand in the supply dump at Montbronn, France. The same crew, Artie, Sgt. Leicht, Sgt. Ray, Lieb, the Deacon, and Anzio, went forward again, to leave the mopping up crew behind. Soon however, we were all in our new home, our home for the next two months. It used to be a huge German supply dump, which consisted of a number of buildings inside a wire fence. The house in which the S-2 and S-3 sections were housed was an immense place. And bowls, the bowls were stacked all over, inside the building and out, bowls yellow in clor and made from a sort of porcelain material. The thought that immediately came to mind was that Ed DeMarco, Gene Stiffler and all the rest of our barbers would have at their disposal all the practicing material that they needed. For before we had come overseas,

there were no barbers in Headquarters Battery but now every other man in the battery was cutting someones' hair.

Soon the bowls were stacked in one corner down by the door, the pile behind which Sgt. Price used to take refuge . Bunks were quickly made up in the other corner of the building near the HCO and VCO tables, and things were more or less under control. The building had rather a low ceiling for one of its size; the windows were small giving insufficient light. Visitors used to come in from the bright sunlight and have to be guided around by instructions, such as, „Take a sharp right. Watch the bowls on your left." But the walls were thick and made of concrete, which right then, was the important thing.

The item of equipment in our new home that caused the most difficulty was the stoves. There were no stoves in the place, but what used to be two large water heaters were soon converted. They undoubtedly were much better as water containers, for no matter how closely one stoked and watched the fire, the place would soon be full of smoke. The fire never really did much good because the human body can only stand so much smoke, and then the doors would have to be opened so that the place could be aired and in the meantime, thoroughly chilled. If any of us still possess that choking cough in the throat, it isn't because of the cheap brand of cigarettes that we are smoking, but because of a two months stay in Montbronn way back when.

The front had become relatively quiet again; we now knew that we had taken up our winter defensive line and were here for a long stay. The 36th Division had pulled out of the line to go down south and relieve the hard-pressed garrison around Hagenau.

The second day in our new spot, a huge B-17 circled over the command post. It was evident that the big ship was in trouble. It circled overhead two or three times and then plunged into the trees to our rear over in the vicinity of B battery. Search parties were sent out from the batteries. Sgt. Johnson and practically all the rest of the fire direction took off at a gallop to see the plane. If a fire mission had come into that personnel-ridden fire direction at that particular time, Sgt. Leicht could have well used his theory on the one man fire direction center that had been his brain child for so long. But things like that were farthest from our minds as we dashed through the undergrowth

and across the fields in the direction of the plane. The plane was almost a total wreck. The pilot was found dangling in his parachute from the branch of a nearby tree. He and his crew had been on a bombing mission over Germany and had wandered off the course on the return trip. He had ordered the crew to jump after he was certain that he was over the front lines. A jeep arrived and whisked the pilot off to report the accident to his commander. After the excitement had died down a bit, we all joined in a hunt for souveniers, mostly pieces of metal from which we later fashioned rings. If you will look at our ring fingers today, you will undoubtedly see a plain looking ring there which seems very ordinary in design, but which means a great deal to us and brings back fond memories.

We didn't receive much shelling in Montbronn. There were occasions though, that we were harrassed. One morning at breakfast some 88's came whistling over which made us head for the muddy ditches face down. All enroute to or from the kitchen that morning got very close to good old mother earth. Those of us, and they were few indeed, who had the habit of washing before breakfast, had our work doubled that morning. On the 21st of January, about twenty single rounds of all calibers landed in C battery area. One of a larger caliber hit the parapet in front of the number two piece. A piece of dirt, frozen to the consistency of concrete, flew off and hit Cpl Huntington in the hip wounding him seriously enough that he had to be evacuated.

Those were the days of the movies sponsored by Division Artillery in the theatre in the town of Montbronn. There, using the law of averages, could be seen two good pictures a week. The rest, it would be best not to mention. It took a person of perseverance and fortitude to endure one of those sessions. First it was the sound tract that wouldn't sound; then it was the film that would break, and then it was the cigar smoke that began to close in like a London fog. Among the better efforts in the Montbron Movie Mansion were. „The Keys of the Kingdom", „Wuthering Heights", and „Saratoga Trunk".

Those were the days also of the parties that were held in the C.P. Willy Sears, Dickerson, and Middleton used to be the mainstay in the music department. Dupont was featured on the harmonica on a couple of occasions, and

Sid Glass on the chaplains organ. The selections on the organ were a bit confined because of the limited keyboard. We soon found out that it takes more notes to beat out „One O'clock Jump" than it does to play „Rock of Ages". Packages put in an appearance from all corners and the liquor ration was soon depleted. On one particular night, the beverage supply, mostly champagne, was what might be termed „beaucoup". About midway through the evening Bill Splaine went out to recover a bottle of cooling champagne and fell down the steps. He was shut off immediately, but went to the hospital the next day, nevertheless. Carl DeMacy sang that night, sang such songs as „I Walk Alone". The command post had never had silence reign like it did then, for when Carl sang all thought of home, of New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. As someone, and you know who, put it, „Boysh, it makes me all goose pimply". Finally the party came to a close. Walter Starnes, the silent man oft the radio section, surprised everyone by getting up and saying seven words in a row, „Good night. Thanks for a lovely evening". He then walked out with guitar in arm, failed to make a right turn, and walked directly off the front of the porch. Of course, when the word got around, Sgts. Campbell and Delaney were furnished with all sorts of ammunition, such as „I hear that after last night, a thousand men transfereed from the 399th to the 397th because they heard you can't fire up in their sector" and „They tell me you are issuing parachutes to everyone of your departing guests.".

The Red Cross girls made a couple of visits with doughnuts and coffee. They weren't quite in the pin up class but everyone admired them for making the „Trip up to the front."

There was a beautiful church in Montbronn where some of us used to go on Sunday, some of us to worship and some of us to see the guardian, Benny. Benny was a stern looking character, dressed much in the manner of the late George Washington, with blue trousers and a red coat decked in gold braid. He wore a two-pointed hat like the one Napolean used to wear, and carried a long staff, which came in handy to rap the kids in the front row everytime they started discussing the world series, or whatever kids discuss in Europe. Benny had a withering stare that made the boldest among us cringe in the corner of his seat. He looked much like Captain Bly and might be expected

to shout at any minute, „Mr. Christian, tie that man to the main mast and give him forty lashes".

Late in January, General Murphy came over to the battery to decorate Colonel Keithly with the Bronze star in recognition of the fine job he had done with the battalion since we had been in combat.

During our stay here, the firing was rather light on most days, we registered, registered every day until it became a bit monotonous. The „Citadel", „Bitche", „Camp de Bitche", and „the College" were fired on nightly. Later we were to see what devastating effect our shells were having on the bastion of Bitche. It was during this time that we began to experiment on each others jobs. Max and Aaron took turns working the radio on occasion. Artie and Butch used to plot nearly all the night fires. And we all worked metro messages and pulled shifts at night. Classes were held for the newer members of the fire direction. Few if any of us recruits knew what the coach was talking about and didn't know enough about the subject at the time to know if he did or not.

Life moved along rather slowly, rather quietly, rather monotonously in Montbronn. Our biggest fight was not with the Germans but with the stove, the two long, converted water tank affairs which heated (a fact very much open to discussion) the S-2 and S-3 sections. Frequent trips were made for wood to feed the stoves using the two and a half ton truck. Then the chopping would take place. No matter who started to chop the long pieces into smaller ones in front of the warehouse, Lt. Knauff would sooner or later appear to give a short course on the proper method of splitting rails. After it had been split, the wood was piled into the stoves. In about five minutes one could see just what the first efforts of Robert Fulton on the Erie Canal must have looked like. Every other day we would revert to the gasoline stove, which had about the same heating effect in that big warehouse as lighting a candle in the corner. There were two schools of thought, the one which advocated a little heat with a lot of smoke and the other to have no heat at all and consequently no smoke. Somehow or other, the one with the smoke always seemed to win out. Every now and then Sgt. Johnson and Artie would climb the ladder up to the attic and clean the stovepipe of soot. They always

returned to the ground floor looking like they had been playing Santa Claus up and down the chimney.

The nights that weren't spent writing, going to the movies, or throwing parties were spent playing bridge. Sgt. Leicht and Butch were newcomers to the game. The Deacon, Max, and the Coach apparently had played somewhere before, just where even they couldn't remember. Culbertson would have probably gone into spasms if he had been an onlooker at the proceedings, but we had a lot of fun. Sgt. Leicht used to plan a strategic campaign each time he got the bid, but somewhere along the line, the attack always used to bog down. Butch and the Coach used to insist on being partners, just why no one could decide, for every team ought to have at least one good player. But they used to go around with a chip on their shoulder challenging people which made all the rest of us wish they would play for money, for two weeks of bridge playing had passed and no one could remember them winning a game. What a combination ... Capt. Yehl would start the bidding at one heart; Sgt. Leicht would bid one spade; and Butch would bid one club. „No, no, Butch, they run like this ... clubs, diamonds; hearts, and spades. You will have to bid two clubs." And the reply, „O.K., O.K., but at least you know I have some clubs, anyway." Max played his usual scientific game, and used to get a big jolt taking advantage of the overconfidence and blunders of the rest of the crew. If any wives have the unfortunate occasion to read this, Angelina is the only one who is getting any break as far as bridge players are concerned. The rest had better take their husbands to the movies at night.

All in all, there isn't too much that can be said of the activities at Montbronn, even though we stayed there for nearly three months. Some things though stick in our memories, for instance, Bob Boyle writing letter after letter and receiving package after package. Bob joined us late in February; soon we all began to put on weight. Then there was Ernie Johnson, who used to sit on the end of the bench near the stove and file away making rings from the airplane that crashed. After he had made a ring for each of Janet's ten fingers, he started making them for the others who were less ambitious or less skillful, probably the first case in most instances. We will always remember the times that Artie and Butch fell asleep on the bench

near the fire, rolled over on one side, fell off the bench and onto the fire. Butch went around for nearly two weeks with his hand bandaged as a result of this little incident. However, we have said enough of his sleeping qualities before in this manuscript, and we wish to have him continue reading this little epistle. If he doesn't continue as a reader, that will cut the total down to an even four, and bad as this thing is, it isn't worth the effort for four readers, but five, well, that's something different.

Near the end of January Capt. Yehl left for a trip to Paris. He came back singing the praises of the Opera, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Napoleon's Tomb, the Arc de Triumph, and Champs de Elysses. But the main thing was that he came back, was able to get back, get back and sleep solidly for a week to recover.

During this time Max worked hard on his course in solid geometry. We all admired Max for his efforts. Most of the rest of us spent our time fooling around when we weren't working, but not Max. He worked until he had completed his course, took the test and passed it, then sent for another course. Max would go far after the war was over, for a man like that can't be held down very long.

Other things that we can remember from Montbrohn were the discussions generally about politics that took place around the stove at night. Here, Aaron Ray had no peer. He of course leaned a bit to the democratic side, but everyone was convinced that he knew what he was talking about. We used to like to listen to a fellow like that, for though the was unassuming, when he spoke he had something to say. Aaron had always been like that. Sgt. Henderson, from the message center used to stop by to put in a plug for the Republicans, but Aaron, Max, and Butch soon made the score about 50--0. on that count.

Sgt. Delaney and Sgt. Campbell used to stop around every afternoon to lend a little humor to the situation and to raise everyone's morale in general. That was the combination that kept morale at a higher level in those days. They used to visit each section each day just a as regular as clock-work. They made the excuse that they were checking up on the package from home situation, the eating mail, but we knew differently. Of course if we offered them some of the goodies from home, their spirits weren't hurt in the least.

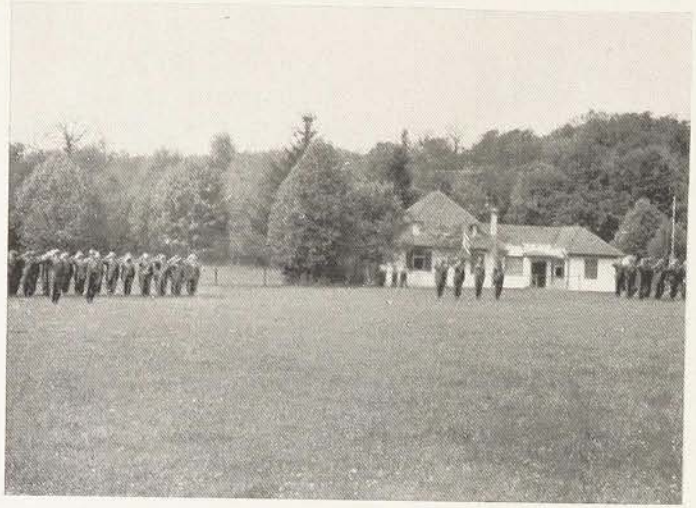
Nick Guralnik also used to put in an appearance quite frequently. We liked to see him come around. He was one of these down to earth fellows who spoke his mind and who everyone liked . . . a man's man.

Lieb began writing a paper each day to go to the batteries telling the cannoneers just what they had been shooting at the day before. The canonne ers were, often times, unaware of just what they were pulling the lanyard at. Lieb wrote swell articles each day, and the cannoneers used to eat it up. He did a great job keeping the canonneers informed, thereby making them better.

Sgt. Leicht spent his time devising new gadgets for the section to better compute metro messages and speed up the operations a bit. His spare time was used mostly at this time in looting and mailing home glassware from St. Louis de Bitche, probably the best known glass in France.

January passed into February, and we still remained in Montbronn. The weather began to get miserable; the observation was so poor that on most days neither the airplanes nor the ground observers could see anything of importance. In addition to this, spring came early in France in '45. It rained frequently. Finally C Battery was forced to move from their position because of the water which was slowly enveloping the guns. All battery positions became a sea of mud, which made it bad with one exception; the inspecting officers didn't want to inspect quite badly enough to wade knee-deep through the mud. The action remained rather quiet. Division Artillery gave us permission to move one battery at a time back of the lines for a rest and a general cleaning up period. A battery was the first to go; they went back to Harschkirchen where Service battery was located. Baker and then Charlie followed soon after. Each one of them had a party back in the rear with plenty of liquid refreshments and Alsace gals plus a small native band, which couldn't be seen anywhere in the States, even in the remotest alley cafe. It was about this time that Butch left for Paris looking quite dapper in the white field coat. Aaron Ray went to the Division rest camp. Surely there was no one who needed it more than he. All admired the way that he had been handling his job as chief computor, always exact, diligent, and concientious. We always liked to work metros with Aaron; he had a way about him that made all the work seem easy.

HANDSOME THREESOME



V. E. DAY

AT EASE

There wasn't much firing to do in Montbronn except registrations. Occasionally the airplane would pick up a target which we would hop on with the greatest of glee. During the end of the month, we used to destroy on the average of a house a day that the Germans were using as command posts and observation posts. Colonel Renola, the commander of the 375th battalion, shot our battalion on a dugout one day and soon after Colonel Feigin, the Division Artillery S-3, went up to the O P and adjusted us on a house. One day we adjusted on a house near a road which was suspected to be used by the enemy. While we were adjusting, a German came out of the house, got on a bicycle which was leaning against the wall, and took off up the road. About that time, one of our rounds landed directly in the path of the bicycle. When the smoke cleared, neither man nor bicycle could be seen.

A thing that was developed during our stay at Montbronn was the Smith sudden-death treatment. Capt. Smith who was acting as the Asst. S-3 at Div Arty was the instigator of this one. It was a method used against personnel in houses, and consisted of firing pozit or automatic time fuze first to get all the personnel in the open to go into the house. Fuze delay was fired next to penetrate the house and destroy it. White phosphorous shell followed to burn down the house and to get the personnel in the house to come back out in the open where pozit shell was fired again. As Capt. Smith said, „Any Germans living through that deserve to get back to Germany."

Toward the end of the month, General Murphy came over and gave bronze stars to some of the members of headquarters battery. Capt. Prince and most of his medics received them for the heroic and brave work they did during the time that we had been shelled. Most of the wire section recieved them too.

Artie and Butch made up a song while we were in the warehouse which ran to the tune, „Don't Throw Bouquets at Me". It went omething like this:

„Dont throw grenades at me
I'm allergic to T.N.T.
Don't throw 88's at me
People will say we're kaput."

This little number was sung sooner or later at every party and gathering that we had. It was humorous in a grim sort of way, but G. I. Joe has a way of laughing at things, everything, even death. It helps him not to get depressed or downhearted. Everything is just a joke to him from appearances on the surface as this song indicates, but underneath the merry, rippling surface the water runs swiftly, runs deeply, goes straightly along the course, way down inside of Joe.

Activity continued to be slow during the month. The battalion kept firing on houses used by the Krauts for command posts and assembly areas. At different times we saw prisoners come from the houses and surrender to our front line infantry. Some of the firing during this time was of a rather weird nature. For instance we often marked a target with a couple of rounds of white phosphorous smoke so that the Air Corp could come over, pick up the target and bomb it. One day we marked a target on some enemy anti-aircraft batteries. The Jerries thought that the Air Corp would be coming over shortly, and went out to man the ainti aircraft guns. However, we then plastered the area with pozit fuze. The Air Corp never did come over, but then, they probably didn't have to.

On the 17th of February we were awakened the the loud, dull, rolling sound of artillery nearby. It was music to our ears. Never since Lemberg had we heard that many shells going out toward the front lines. The terrific din kept up, and all wondered what was happening, for we weren't firing a shot. It was the 44th Division on our left straigtening out their lines. The artillery was laying down a barrage, and their Infantry was due to jump off in a moment. We continued to be intensely interested in their activities. Toward afternoon, we heard that they had met light opposition and that their lines had been straightened out comparitively easily. All knew then that this was only a peliminary move before the whole front would one day soon move out and would keep on moving. The time for the big spring push was near at hand.

Toward the end of February, the Division commander of the 71st Division with his Division Artillery S-3 came to visit us. He seemed intensely interested in the way we operated our fire direction center and took many notes. The 71st was to move in on our right soon. The spring would surely

bring a power push. This was one of the most concentrated, power-packed fronts on the whole West Wall. About this time we were also visited by the 101st Airborne. They were bivouaced just south of us. Several of the officers who had previously been with us and were now with the 101st, came over to visit us. We had all kinds of respect for them. They were the ones who had held out at Bastogne in the Ardennes bulge when Gurt Von Runstedt, the German commander, had nearly reached the supply lines between the lst and the 9th armies up near Belgium.

And so February passed into March. The firing continued to be light. We had fired only 5508 rounds in January and 4403 rounds in February. Now our ammunition allotment had been cut from 15 rounds per gun per day to 7 rounds per day. That was hardly enough to register with . . All the boys began to write home requesting that the home guard buy a few more war bonds. However, it wasn't actually an ammunition shortage that was holding things up. Much ammunition was needed up North after vast stores of American ammunition had been captured by the Germans at the Ardennes bulge. Then too, we were building up stores for ourselves, saving bullets for the day that we would take the offensive. It was monotonous not being able to fire many rounds; we longed for the days back in December when we fired 1123 rounds in one day. Now we couldn't fire that much in a month.

It was in the early part of March that the Corp commander was to inspect our A battery. This battery was chosen from all the Division Artillery as the best battery to inspect. They had a story-book position down at A battery. The guns were located down in the valley, two of them in front, of or under small sheds. An imitation grape vine was placed over the number four piece instead of the conventional camouflage net. The executives post was placed in an old mill to the rear of the gun positions, and there was a road running directly behind the pieces which greatly facillitated getting ammunition to the guns. On the 9th of March, the Corp commander, General Haislip, General Burress, and General Murphy . . . a five star review . . . visited the battery. All were high in their praise and compliments.

Rumors began to mount. Division Artillery ordered that we establish a two thousand round ammunition dump forward of our battery positions, so

that when we began the attack, we wouldn't have to go so far back for ammunition. Service battery worked for two days before the ammunition was brought up.

On the 12th of March, Colonel Kiethley was called to Division Artillery and told to go on reconnaisance for battery positions up near Enchenberg. D day was now close at hand. We were to move our batteries close to the front lines so that we could reach out farther once the attack started and wouldn't have to displace so quickly.

The next day, the fire direction of the 71st Division descended on us, en masse. Their batteries were moving up that night. We would have to register them in the morning. All the Fdc personnel of the 71st was there plus our own. The place was crowded. Everyone was continually stepping on everyone elses' toes. It looked somewhat like Macy's bargain counter on Saturaday afternoon. The 71st was new to the European theatre. They were to come in on our right flank.

Early the next morning C battery displaced to its position at Enchenberg. Due to the traffic with the airplanes, we could not register the 564th battalion of the 71st until early afternoon. It was nearly four o'clock before Able and Baker battery displaced. The forward elements of the fire direction were nearly strafed as a German plane flew over Enchenberg sputtering 50 caliber machine gun bullets. Those of the Fdc who came up last went thru Montbronn and had the command car stopped on the main street while the same German plane was whizzing overhead. It's best to get out of sight with one of those things anywhere aroun.

Finally we were all settled in our new spot ... if one could get settled in a railroad station with about ten thousand rounds of ammunition piled out on the tracks alongside in plain view .. However, we went on a little scouting expedition and found an old combination restaurant-home up the street and promptly moved into the front room. The operational part of the section was placed in the room near the street, and everyone slept upstairs .. The place was owned by two old women, two of the type that appeared in „Arsenic and Old Lace", but of course, without the arsenic. Both had lost their families in the war, and were very friendly toward us Americans. Each night, they used to bring out coffee and apples for us. In turn, we gave them coffee and

— TOUGH KRIEG —
INSIDE GERMANY

ED AND ARTIE

PARTY MEMBERS

some juicy tidbits from some spare K rations, things we wouldn't give our worst enemies back home but which went over big here.

It was on this first day in Enchenberg that C battery fired on a tank, firing six rounds in fire for effect in 58 seconds, scoring two target hits... At nine in the evening, the news that we had all awaited arrived. D day and H hour were to be at 0500 the next day. This would, no doubt, be the beginning of the end. No one knew just how strong the Maginot line was around Bitche and Camp de Bitche nor how well fortified they were. We had fired at them all during the winter but had no chance to observe the results.

Morale went up one hundred per cent, went up like a metro message baloon in a high wind. At last we were to take off on what we hoped would be the last round in the battle of Europe. Sgt. Leicht left for England that night. He had known that he was going when we were still in Montbronn. His mother was near London, and he hadn't seen her for six years. It was one of the red letter days in his life to be able to go to the United Kingdom and see her again. Of course, that left us short an HCO, but Artie Gonzales filled the bill in an admirable manner. He had been practicing on the board for some time in Montbronn, had become very interested in maps, and filled in nobly in one of the busiest times that we had ever experienced.

Things began to happen at one o'clock in the morning on the day of the attack. At that time we helped out on the Corp counterbattery program. There wasn't any scheduled artillery preparation, just targets far behind the lines to disrupt the German communication system. Our Infantry jumped off at five in the morning. Commencing at daylight we fired every conceivable kind of mission. In the first place we were to take part in the Corp firing and give priority to any observed targets that the airplanes might pick up. Starting at daylight, we bacame as busy as the proverbial cat on the marble floor. We continually fired three different missions at one time, giving one to each battery. We fired on everything, tanks, vehicles, troops, mortar and rocket postions, and machine guns. The speaker on the radio got so hot that one could have easily fried eggs on it. Artie mentioned something about cooking pancakes on it, but the coach, remembering one sad day in Guisberg, quickly squelched that one. Sgt. Campbell walked in that morning,

and as much as we liked Sgt. Campbell, no one had time to say hello. He just sat in the corner and ate it up; at last we were doing something besides „just registering".

All through the morning, the fire direction room resembled a three ring circus. Various people came in with some business, but immediately walked out again. Everyone was so busy that they weren't even noticed. Lt. Owens stayed in the room almost continually. He had established a huge dump just outside town, but at the rate we were using it up, it would last about as long as a dozen pairs of nylons once the fairer sex heard that they were being put on sale. Very few of us left the room for meals that day; those that did brought the meals back to the others. By late in the afternoon, the firing began to slack off a bit to the extent that we weren't firing more than two missions at one time. What a day. Seven hundred and eighty rounds had been fired that day, mostly on observed targets. About mid afternoon the word came in that our Infantry had been doing real well. The 399th was well on the way in the capture of Bitche and would probably proceed to Camp de Bitche the following day. Ft. Scheisseck and the Otterbiels had been taken in a day of fierce fighting.

On the 16th, the Infantry went back into Bitche and secured it. The bastion that had never been stormed successfully during all of Europe's wars, fell for the first time in history to the 100th Division. The enemy pulled out on the only escape route left, the road from Bitche to Camp de Bitche. Our battalion adjusted on these retreating columns with devastating effect. The planes, in perfect flying weather, picked up one target after another. The firing was not quite as heavy as the preceeding day because of the fact that the Germans were now getting out of range of our guns. A registration party left late in the afternoon. New positions were selected in the heavily mined area of the old German line of resistance. Progress was slow because of the mines, but a registration was obtained. before nigthfall. The battalion was to move the next day. The positions were located on the verge of the completely ruined village of Schorbach. The command post was located in the just-as-completely destroyed town of Hottviller.

Early the next morning B battery displaced to the new positions. A registration was difficult to obtain because of commnication difficulties. Radios

wouldn't work in the high mountains; the area was extremely well mined and our wire lines were continually cut by tanks. It was after dinner before the rest of us displaced. The kitchen was closed down and wouldn't „feed out" until we got to the new position. This was just a little more than Max and Butch could stand. It wasn't long before a few K rations from under the seat of Joe Festa's truck put in an appearance. We borrowed back a little of our Indian-given coffee from our two gal friends who owned the house, started the fire in the stove, and soon were on our way to a meal. When we were half way through our delicious repast of beans and hash, the order came to move. However, we didn't move until we had finished the lunch. To walk away from a hot meal is like walking away from a target hit. Our two aged hostesses were indeed sorry to see us go. Tears actually started to flow. Just why these two wouldn't be the happiest couple in the world to see a bunch of ruffians clearing out of their home was beyond us. So we waved good bye promising that we would be back after the war. Of course we wouldn't, but then we might someday. The world is a small place we had learned.

As we passed up toward the front from Enchenberg, we could see the devasation that we had caused with our firing during the winter. Schorbach had been one of our favorite targets; the town was completely leveled. There wasn't a house in the whole town that had a roof. It was simply a ghost town; absolutely no one could be seen anywhere. Then we came to Hottviller, the town in which our CP was located. It was nearly as bad as Schorbach. As we passed up the streets, everyone felt certain that here at last, we would erect the CP tent. There were few houses indeed that could boast a roof and four walls. Our house had four walls and a roof... mostly full of holes, but one couldn't be choosey in this town. There wasn't much firing that night as the enemy was really on the run now. Certainly the battalion would move on the next day. There was one notable event though that night. Baker battery's number two piece fired the first round into Germany... on a registration on a crossroads near the town of Staustirerhof, Germany. Able battery was left behind and attached to the 375th Battalion to strengthen their fires. Lieb went over to their CP that night and took all the data from the registration with him.

The next day, our two remaining batteries moved up in the vicinity of Bouseviller, about a mile south of the German border. We had a house that was just a little better than the last one. However, there wasn't much to choose between the two, and most of us slept out doors. The first day in Bouseviller, we fired a bit on some enemy vehicles in the Seigfried line. In fire for effect, we blew up one or more vehicles and damaged many more.. We had a couple of parties in the fire direction room in Bouseviller. One bottle of champagne was saved from our store of beverages to celebrate our crossing the border into Germany. However, plenty drinks of other kinds were consumed in Bouseviller. One night the Coach made the unhappy remark to Artie and Butch that „neither one of you birds would last five minutes in the Olean House". In about five minutes he was flaked out on the bunk. The two radio operators, their anger aroused, proceeded to prove to themselves that they could last five hours anywhere. What Artie's activities were after that, is not quite clear, but there were plenty of stories floating around the next morning as to Butch's whereabouts. Most of them had to do with being fished out of the latrine.

Able battery returned to the battalion the next day, but was put into a rendezvous area instead of a firing position. The situation had become a bit obscure, and a rapid move by the Division was contemplated. About noon our old friends, the 71st Division pulled into Bousviller. We were to reinforce their fires, and be prepared to pull out and mop up after the 6th Armored Division, which was about to go thru the hole in the Siegfried line, now being created by the 3rd Division. The next day, we pulled our guns out of action. Our infantry was relieved by that of the 71st. There wasn't much to do now. We all visited the fire direction of the 71st, and came back feeling highly elated over how good we were in comparison. Every afternoon, we used to lay out side the building in the sun and read things which varied from a USAFI course on psychology to Sgt. Rays latest edition of the PM. When this supply was exhausted, we resorted to the labels on some of the cans filched from Corbett's Hash House.

The town of Bousviller was full of Infantry, our own and that of the 71st. One night we could see long lines of Infantry from the 71st Division marching

up the road across the creek. Hour after hour they marched by, and the longer they marched, the better we felt because we were in the Artillery.

After our guns were out of action, there wasn't much to be done. The crew spent its time in various ways. Sgt. Johnson took up a fistful of hand grenades and went fishing. Artie and Lieb, brave souls, went gown to the creek to take a bath. They used the creek to bathe, the rest of us used it to chill our champagne. Some of the hardier went roaming around the hills which surrounded the town. The scenery was breathtaking. Truly this was a beautiful country. Touch football used to occupy the time of a large number in the battery. Each night there was a game in the field across the creek. During our stay in Bousviller, we went down to see Bitche. We were all very much impressed by the effect of our shelling during the winter. The Bismarck barracks were demolished. as well as most of the houses in the town. We went up to the Citadel, the fortress on top of the hill in the center of Bitche. It was a large place, an old place, with many subterranian passages. It hadn't been damaged too much, but then it was hard to damage a place like this. One could plainly see why Bitche had never been taken before. It was ideal for defense. On our way back, could be seen Ft. Scheisseck and the Otterbiels. They were pillboxes dug into the sides of hills. Of course they were part of the Maginot line and had been turned around and were now defended from the rear. There was no activity around them when we went past them, but we remembered how much of our own doughboy's blood had been spilled out there on the ground trying to a storm those forts.

Finally our orders came again to move. We were to follow the 6th Armored Division thru the gap in the Siegfried Line, turn east and drive toward the Rhine mopping up anything in our path, for opposition was expected to be light. The Germans were in headlong flight and only hoped to get as much of their army back across the Rhine as possible. On the 23rd, we left in tactical march formation headed for a small place near Bergzabern.

After riding about an hour, we crossed from France into Germany. At last we had invaded Germany. Hitler had boasted that Germany would never be conquered, yet here we were rolling along into his „Festung Europa". At first, there wasn't much difference that could be seen between the two countries. The first German town we saw was leveled. The Air Corp had been over and

had left its distinguishing mark of destruction. It did our hearts good to see these sights, because we had see so many French towns and homes that had been destroyed by the Nazi war machine. Another column crossed our path halting our convoy. We all got out in front of Joe's truck and had our picture taken . . . our first picture in Germany. The column started moving again, and we resumed our trip thru Germany.

Just short of our rendezvous area, the column was broken. Headquarters and Service Battery were on the rear of our battalion column. Major Hill was leading the column and was doing his usual fine job. Tanks, half tracks, and every other kind of armored vehicle the United States Army makes, was on the road cutting our column to pieces. The route markers were out, so no one worried too much. It seemed that everyone was having their own personal manhunt for Hitler that morning. We arrived at what should have been our bivouac area, but there was no one to meet us. Lt. Wilds and Capt. Yehl, who were in charge of the column from Hq. Btry, stopped the column and went on a little reconnaisance to see if they could find someone that looked familiar. They found Service Battery a little way down the road and told them what had happened. But no one could be found that knew where we were to go. There was no route marker that knew anything about the situation. Evidently we were to continue on the road; the situation had been moving so fast lately that this was a logical assumption.

They returned and decided to take the command car and go forward a little way up the road to see if anyone knew anything about the situation. Sgt. Campbell was left in charge. Butch and Artie made up a set of signals to use so that the command car could radio back for the rest of the column. All the military police along the road said that the 373rd had gone past about a half hour before so the column proceeded up the road. In the interim Sgt. Johnson, his Navy blood coming to the fore, decided to try out the capabilities of a small boat in the lake along the road where the column had stopped. He was doing very well with one exception, that being that he maneuvered the scow a bit too far out in the lake before it sank. It was a bit chilley to day the least, but then, one couldn't be choosey where one got a bath these days.

The road led up thru the woods and the hills. We hadn't proceeded very far along the road before we began to see evidences of the destruction of the

German war machine and their headlong flight toward the Rhine. Trucks, vehicles, and tanks had been shot up by our planes and bazooka men. A few were still in the road but most of them had been shoved over into the ditches so that our columns, ever moving up, could pass. We saw German red telephone wire for the first time. The Germans were past masters at retrograde movements, effecting them so skillfully that not even telephone wire had been left behind. Then there were the dead horses that lined the sides of the roads. Most of them had probably been used in the German horse-drawn artillery. One could notice that pieces of meat had been cut from the hind quarters of nearly ever animal. This had been done either by the hungry German troops or by the refugees that were streaming along the sides of the roads.

As we drove along the road, we could see the effects of the war first-hand. It seemed that all Europe passed us that day. There were Frenchmen, who had been forced to come to Germany to work or join the Army, that were now wending their way home with packs on their backs. The misery of four or five years showed on their faces, but they were smiling now. They waved at us, and we waved back. It gave us a good feeling way deep down inside to know that these people who had groveled under the heel of Hitler for so long, were at last going home to their own land again. There were the Russisns, some of them Mongolians, all drafted into the German army. They trudged along in pairs with knapsack on their backs, smiling, glad to be liberated. We passed many burning vehicles as we moved thru the Hart mountains. Most places were barely mopped up. Everyone was alert and had his hand near his weapon. We passed thru one small town after another with absolutely no American soldiers in them. Groups of newly-captured German soldiers, with no guards, stood around on the crossroads. The Infantry was taking too many prisoners to be bothered sending guards back with them. It was only when we saw these unguarded prisoners that we began to realize that the Americans were sweeping clear to the Rhine. We had already traveled sixty miles and were still going. There were many motorcycles that lined the sides of the roads. Most of them looked usable. Every soldier in the Army was picking up a motorcycle to cruise around the

countryside later on. Seventh Army quickly changed everyone's ideas about that, but the dreaming was well worth while.

No one knew where or how far we were going. The column kept following the directions of the M.P.s, who assured us that a 155mm battalion had gone up this road. Lt. Wilds ventured that he was in favor of stopping short of the Rhine come what may. But we rolled on thru the devastation and wreckage of the German military machine west of the Rhine. We had never seen, nor were we ever to see again, such a maze of wrecked equipment. The prisoners of war, the freed slave laborers, that had been forced to work for the German war machine for six years, the refugees, and the civilian population, that had been forced from their homes, crowded the sides of the road more, the further we went.

About dinner time we finally saw Capt. Humphry standing along side the road. He was there to stop Service Battery and guide them into their area. Standing beside him was Col. Blake, who had formerly been the executive of our battalion, but who was now in command of the 562nd Battalion which was in position not far from there. It was good to see him again. He had been working with General Patton's Third Army most of the time. With him was a very large Lieutenant, who reminded us of Major Blakes other old buddy, Lt. Calhoun. As Col Blake talked, he repeatedly said, „Isn't that right, Junior?" We looked around for his son, but saw instead this mamouth lieutenant with the affable grin. The Colonel kept telling us his familiar stories, typical of which was: „And we were going out on reconnaisance one time when a couple of 88 shells landed near us. Junior remarked that it must be a German patrol. But I said to him 'Patrol, hell. Those Germans don't take 88s with them on patrol, Junior'".

The meeting with our old executive had to be short, for we had to get into position. Besides that, we had the kitchen truck with us and they wouldn't cook dinner until we landed in the new position. A short way down the road, we saw Major Hill, who would lead us into the new position. Our command post was in the town of Schauernheim. It was a picturesque little town. We had been constantly aware of the fact that the Germans were a much cleaner sort of people than the Alsacians. The towns were much neater and better kept. Of course, these people had the advantage of having

slave labor to work for them for four or five years. However, they seemed to take much more pride in cleanliness of homes and towns that did the French that we had seen. Of course, we had been exposed to a part of France that wasn't typical of the whole country ... Alsace-Lorraine.

At any rate, our fire direction was soon set up in a schoolroom. It was a large room, which furnished a place in one end to sleep. There was a stove in the place which bid well for our heating our little midnight snacks. Schauernheim was just short of the Rhine. We registered on a point between Mannheim and Ludwigshaven across the Rhine. B battery was the registering battery and therefore was the first battery in our battalion to fire across the Rhine. It was this battery that now had the twin distinction of firing the first round into Germany and now the first round across the Rhine. Sgt. Ray didn't celebrate much over the event, though, as he was what might be called a bit under the weather. It apparently had been the long ride in the sun, for investigation had proved that he hadn't partaken of any of the pancakes that Artie and Bob Boyle were making up stairs.

Local security in the area was stressed that night for A battery had captured four Krauts that day, and Service battery, of all things, had captured nine. No longer could we joke with Lt. Owens, and Sgt. Red Graham, when they came up to see about the ammunition situation about their trip from service battery „up to the front lines".

The XV Corp was preparing to cross the Rhine as soon as a bridge could be built, and we passed under the control of the VI. Corp. Not much firing was done the next day, as the mist hampered the planes observation. The terrain was as flat as the top of a ping pong table, which made Artie and Sgt. Johnson happy as site was always zero. However, this flat terrain afforded the firing batteries little defilade if the Jerries had any ammunition left, which apparently they didn't. The haze soon rose and we fired several missions over the Rhine into Mannheim, blowing up many ammunition dumps and warehouses. Most of our missions came from the 925th forward observers who were located on the banks of the Rhine. Service battery continued to round up the prisoners taking forty in two days.

We watched the German families moving from their home in the whole block in which we were situated. They went by all day carrying bundles on

their backs and pushing carts loaded down with blankets, sheets, and other household equipment. We had dual feelings. At first, being of a kind-hearted nature as all GIs are, we felt sorry for these people who were being forced from their homes. Then we thought how these same people had forced half the world from their homes. It was people of this same nation, people like these, that had let Hitler carry out his fanatical dreams of world-conquest. Then we didn't feel so badly about it. One thing that amused us greatly was the man who used to lead his pig down the street. The animal was one of the most stubborn creatures imaginable. The farmer and the creature didn't seem to see eye to eye at all. In the end, however, the pig, after much kicking, beating, and pulling on the part of the owner, ended up somewhere down the end of the street. After he got as far as the kitchen, the kitchen crew took it up themselves to help the farmer put the pig in a cart, and things proceeded much more smoothly from then on.

The country was infested with snipers and German soldiers that were trying to get back to their own lines. Everyone carried his carbine wherever he went. One night three figures approached a guard at B battery's motor park. The guard called for the three men to halt. They did not, and he emptied his carbine at them. One doubled up and fell; the other two started to run and melted into the darkness. The next morning, it was discovered that a German lieutenant, armed to the teeth, had been killed by the guard at B battery. German soldiers, unable to obtain enough food, constantly gave themselves up and were brought to our command post. Lt. Church had his hands full taking them down to the Division prisoner of war cage.

There were many signs of battle around the outskirts of the town in the form of destroyed enemy equipment. Just behind the command post on a small road could be seen a German tank that had been destroyed by an anti-tank gun emplaced at the corner of a barn. Shell holes had penetrated the corner of the barn. Two or three direct hits had been scored on the Jerry tank. One could imagine how the tank had rounded the corner of the road into the withering fire of the concealed anti-tank gun. Shells from both the gun and the tank littered the ground around the scene of the battle.

Baker battery hat its headquarters in an absolutely luxurious house across the street from us. It had formerly belonged to a dealer in grains. The house

was well furnished. Perhaps it was because we had been living in the combination barn-houses in France, but it looked like an emporer's palace to us. On top of the roof, a stork's nest was located, which intriqued Sgt. Johnson very much... enough at least for him to go over and take a couple of pictures of it.

It was at this position that the beverages began to put in their appearance. Frank Morgan or W.C. Fields would have joined up immediately if there had been a recruiting office in Shauernheim. Beer was obtained in order to have a couple of informal parties in the mess hall, which had formerly been an old restaurant. However, the private parties held in the various sections, were defintiel y the thing to go to. Of course, the fire direction center wended its way across the street each night to join forces with the radio section. Soon the smoke from the cooking french fried potatoes filled the room, but after a couple of glasses of that German varnish remover... some people call it Schnapps... one never knew the the difference. It was an ocassion to celebrate, this crossing into Germany, and everyone made the most of it. As it turned out, this was a bigger celebration than the observance of the war's ending.

The 3rd and the 45th Divisions had now crossed the Rhine. Our Division was to go into Corp reserve and be relieved by the 71st. We had been in the line constantly since the 3rd of November; this was our first rest. We had been in action constantly for one hundred and forty three days, and it was good to get away from the boards, the graphical firing tables, and the metro messages for awhile and just relax. There had been other occasions, when our battalion had pulled its guns out of action, but our Infantry had still been out in front. Now for the first time, since entering combat, the whole Division was to be relieved. On the 27th of March, all the firing batteries pulled up their aiming stakes, closed their trails, backed up the tractors, and moved into town with us.

How soon we would move, no one knew, but it wouldn't be long. There was no news on our operations after we had crossed the Rhine, but the logical assumption as that we would drive for Munich. The reports on the war were good. Reconnaisance planes reported that they had seen the forward elements of Patton's tanks in Nuremberg, which if ture, would mean that the

German Army was being cut in two by the Third Army's powerful armored drive.

In the meantime, we spent all our spare hours in cleaning up our equipment and washing our clothes. Any wives that happen to be listening will probably appreciate a few sentences on the clothes washing. In fact, you probably little realize the hidden talents of your husbands in the laundry line. Carl Demacy, Lieb, Max, and Aaron took the less spectacular method and merely washed them with some hot water heated over the fire in the garden out back and then dried them on the line. Artie and Butch, though, found an old boiler in the next building, built a roaring fire until the water was boiling merrily and threw the clothes in. In about five minutes, the contents of the boiler looked like something the kitchen would turn out on Wednesday nites. Of course we were getting near Bavaria and if the OD trousers shrunk up to knee size, one would be right in style any way. No one really ever knew just how the clothes came out, but shortly thereafter, Butch was put in charge of salvage for the section... to get a new complete wardrobe for himself, no doubt.

Marlene Deitrich appeared at a USO show in a town about twenty miles from us.. Nearly all of the section attended. Butch and Artie came back singing the praises of Marlene. It kept up hour after hour. „Oh, what a bee--you--fi--tall girl. Oh, boysh, Oh, boysh." Finally, the Coach, after remembering that someone said she had appeared in silent pictures remarked that he liked Edma May Oliver himself. This brought down the house, and caused no end of discussions and debates. It the truth were known, he probably would have liked to have gone too, but controversies keep the morale high.

It was while we were at Schauernheim that Teddy Beck received the heart-breaking news that his brother, Paul, had been killed in action up on the Ninth Army front. It was a great shock to him, for he had dearly loved his younger brother and had planned so many things that they would do together after the war. Ted went for a long walk that day and came back looking much better. All of us had thought a lot of the Deacon before, always jovial, always congenial, but we thought much more of him now. He had taken the hardest blow that he would probably ever have to take and had

taken it well. To be able to have news like that come to him and to be able to react like he did takes a lot of courage. One has to be able to draw on something deep down within himself, something that has been stored there for years; one has to live a good life, be able to live with himself, to be able to undergo what Ted did that day. He had been everyone's friend before; now he was everyone's idol.

Finally the news came that we were to cross the Rhine up near Ludwigshaven and Mannheim. The Engineers had built a pontoon bridge there. The whole Division was to cross in one day. Reconnaisance parties were sent out early in the morning. The rest of the battalion got ready to leave at about elevn in the morning. While we were waiting to move, we took pictures in front of the demolished church in back of our C.P.

Once again we were in tactical march formation. Sgt. Johnson, Max, Butch, and Capt. Yehl rode in the command car with John Renn. The rest of the section, rode with the S-2' section in the 2½ ton truck with Joe Festa. We didn't have to ride very far before we went over a small rise in the ground, and there before us was the Rhine River. There it was, the Rhine, not too wide and a deep green in color. The engineers had constructed a pontoon bridge across the river which of course was only large enough to allow traffic to pass one way, and all the traffic was going one way that day, and that was into Germany. There had been many standing jokes about the Rhine crossing. Whenever anyone had felt as though they had been reprimanded unduly by someone, the comment was, „It will be different when we cross the Rhine." Another was, „I can't wait until the day that we will spit in the Rhine". The queer thing was that no one spat in the Rhine that day, not that we couldn't have, but it was a case that anticipation is better than realization. We were too thrilled that at last we were to get across this river and romp in Hitler's playground. We passed through Ludwigshaven and on toward our new area. We stopped several times after crossing the river and noticed small groups of German prisoners that were being rounded up.

Our new command post was located in a town named Grenzhof. Our section was located at the end of a park. Our operational room was located

in the former parlor. Our sleeping quarters were upstairs. A few of us slept among the family furniture and heirlooms in the room adjoining the FDC room. Our kitchen was located down at the other end of the park. There was a bathtub located in the house in which the survey section was staying; some of us had the opportunity of taking a bath there. A bath . . . it was such an improvement over the old helmet style opperation, which was very economical as far as the water was concerned but left much to be desired as far as leaning back and soaking. We had moved into the town on Saturday. Tomorrow was Easter. Chaplain Nyberg, the chaplain attached to our battalion, and one who everyone liked, no matter what their creed, planned to have sunrise services in the park across the street at five o'clock on Easter morning.

Most of us were able to attend the services, that is, those of us with enough determination to get up no matter what. It probably wouldn't have been accomplished in civilian life, this terrific chore of getting up at the ungodly hour of five in the morning, but religious services took on a new meaning in combat. It could well be that this would be the last Easter service we were ever priviledged to attend. Some went to church down in the town of Grenzhof, no doubt because it was at a more reasonable hour. It is nice to see the sunrise on Sunday but only after a long tour of all the parties in town on Saturday nite.

The battalion moved about noon on Easter Sunday. This time it was to Oftersheim. The Division was really on the move now. It was very seldom that we stayed more than one day at one place. We were apparently driving down the east bank of the Rhine to join forces with the French, who had made a crossing at Speyer farther down the River.

Our new home was located in Oftersheim, due south of Grenzhof, in an abandoned schoolhouse that had also been used by the German Wehrmacht for barracks. We finally selected a room with the least amount of abandoned equipment and the most amount of straw. It wasn't long, however, before we had all the old straw matresses piled in one corner, the beds lined up against one wall, and the operational equipment in another corner. There wasn't much firing from this position as we were driving quickly down the banks of the Rhine to meet the French near Speyer. The location of our front

elements was a bit obscure, and no one dared to fire unless the target had been carefully checked.

No sooner were the tables and desks set up, than everyone started on a souvenier hunt. Some had a field day among the old German uniforms, located in the room downstairs . . The town hadn't been damaged very much as the war had moved swiftly through the place. Pete, the smallish recorder from C battery, came over to visit us the second day that we were there. Sgt. Johnson had a Nazi flag, behind which we all had our picture taken. Max and Pete knelt in front and crossed captured German swords across the front of the flag. Capt. Yehl stood in back waving his cat-o-nine-tails that he had picked up in the schoolhouse. All in all we were a ferocious looking lot. If we had sent a copy of that one to the German High Command, the war, no doubt, would have been over much sooner.

This was the place where the biggest party that Headquarters Battery ever had was given. It had been announced in the afternoon that the battery would have a beer party in the mess hall in the evening. Everyone thought it was just one of those things, and didn't pay much attention. About six o'clock in the evening, Lt. „Clambert" Foppiano rolled up in front of the mess hall with a truck of „liberated" eatables. He had three boxes containing twenty-seven thousand cigars, numberless boxes of five pound cheeses, more beer and wine than we could ever drink, and, of all things, an ice cream freezer.

It wasn't long before the party got underway in good style, such good style in fact, that Mike O'Gorman was churning on the ice cream freezer frantically for about fifteen minutes. Lt. Foppiano stood beside him, smacking his lips, and repeated time and time again, „How's it coming? Is it getting any thicker?" to which the answer always was „No". After about three quarters of an hour of this fruitless churning, the two became suspicious, and investigation revealed that Mike had forgotten one little item, namely, to put the churning apparatus on the end of the handle.

The highlight of the party was seeing Max's eyes pop out when he saw that pile of cigars. He had been sweating out cigars from day to day for months and had bribed the rest of the section for their share of the PX ration. Here, he said, was enough to last him for the duration. All agreed . . .

both for this war and the next. Soon he could be seen transporting them from the huge boxes up to his room in bushel baskets.

The trio of Dickerson, Emanuel, and Sears furnished the musical portion on the program. Soon everyone got into the singing mood and the old mess hall was rocking merrily. It was at this point that Sgt. Williams came in with a cute looking little gal. We had all been overseas for seven months and was quite envious of Bill (even if it were to cost him sixty-five dollars) until closer investigation revealed the girl friend to be Frank Folliard, dressed like a girl, wearing plenty of rouge, lipstick, and all the rest. He presented his act, which no doubt, had earned him a living at the Howard in Boston before he came into the Army. And so the party faded into the night with most of the stragglers being carried out in the late hours, as is usually the case at those affairs.

The next morning was moving time again. This time we moved to Duhren. It was a small town. We were quartered in a what-looked-like a magnificient house to us at the time. Our office was located in the parlor. The house was well furnished with piano, bath tub on the first floor, and wonderful soft, beds. A short reconnaisance of the cellar revealed that the occupants had enjoyed a short snort every now and then, and had obligingly left a little for us. It was a night of celbration for no particular reason at all. Lieb was in the middle of things that night leading the group in song, while the eggs fried very merrily. Germany was indeed different from France. The houses were much better furnished, and the food and drink was much more plentiful. The whole country appeared to be better kept than did Alsace. It was with heavy hearts that we left Duhren the next morning. Little did we know what we were going to next; little did we know that the Germans were going to make a stand at Heilbronn in one of the stiffest fights of the whole war, that doughboys were going to sacrifice their lives by the hundreds at the banks of the Neckar River.

From Duhren we moved to Kirchhausen to support the Division's attack on Heilbronn. This was the 4th of April. Almost immediately we began to fire missions and very seldom stopped until we left. Our command post was quite good. We were again located in a parlor, with a grandfather's clock, china closets, and a walnut desk. There was a bedroom adjacent to the

VIEL ARBEITEN
TIME OUT

CHOW HOUNDS
O. L. REPORTS

operational room where some of us slept. The rest slept upstairs. A kitchen was also located in the rear of the building which was to take care of many a french fried potatoe and fried egg. The kitchen was located in the trailer across the street. This was the place where German prisoners and tanks streamed by the corner constantly from morning until night.

The Germans dug in and resisted fanatically in a natural barrier. Heilbronn was located on the other side of the river against a row of hills which afforded natural protection to the defenders. Each time the Engenieers attempted to put a pontoon bridge across the river, the Germans shelled it to pieces with their artillery. The Infantry tried to ferry troops across the river with no success. Each time the Jerries discovered the fact and annihilated the small force. We were in for a tough fight at Heilbronn. It was something new to us after we had been doing little more than having one big road march after leaving Bitche.

The Germans had dug in on the fourth of April, and from all appearances were going to resist until the last. Our battalion did some of its heaviest firing trying to dislodge them. On the fifth we fired 454 rounds, on the sixth, 848, on the seventh, 772, on the eighth, 885, and on the ninth only 392, for on the ninth the enemy's defense of Heilbronn was broken. Targets were of all types, mostly troop concentrations and gun flashes in the hills beyond Heilbronn that the air OP was able to pick up. Our battalion had two observation posts at Heilbronn. Lt. Foppiano and Lt., formerly Sgt., Zimmniewicz did most of the shooting. Both did fine jobs, shooting on many troop concentrations that they were able to pick up. The activity in our section was not as concentrated as it had been on some occasions, but it was a period of good steady shooting, the kind that makes the work a lot of fun.

The weather was beginning to get warm; the apple blossoms were beginning to put in their appearance; everyone was inclined to lay in the sun. In short, spring was here. It was hard to imagine what was going on up front while sitting in the sunshine-filled living room of our house. However, we had a chance to see at close range what was happening up by the river. Our house was located right on the main intersection of the town. From our vantage point, we saw the Engineers move up with mamouth trucks carrying pontoons to try and get a bridge across the river. So far the Infantry

had a bridgeless bridgehead. Then we saw the Infantry roll up to the front in trucks, smiling yougsters and hardened veterans, and we saw them come back in ambulances that raced down the streets with sirens whining and red lights glaring. There was much bloodshed for the cause up at the river. Day after day, hour after hour, the trucks bringing back the injured and dying doughboys went past. It was here that we really realized what a perilous part the Infantry played in war. It somehow made us feel that we actually played a small, infitesimal part in the war. On the day that the praises and congratulations were to be passed out, the Infantry should receive them all, at least to our way of thinking. Other trucks came by filled with German prisoners, most of them young, very young. The tanks rolled up to the front in droves. Apparently the armor was to be prepared to roll across the Neckar once a bridge could be built that would stay in. It was here that some of the aid men that had been training with our medics left for the Infantry. It was now an established fact that the Germans were sniping at our aid men. Several had been shot through the red cross on their helmet.

The firing of our battalion continued. The planes went up to spot houses that housed the enemy. Immediately we and an eight inch outfit to our rear would fire on them until the houses were destroyed. The firing continued to be heavy. At last a bridgehead had been secured across the river, and fierce house-to-house fighting in Heilbronn was under way. Truly our Division was having one of its toughest scraps.

It was while at Kirchhausen that we received the news of President Roosevelt's death. We were as shocked as anyone could be. The news sounded incredible, but was true. The President had died of a cerebral hemmorage at his Warm Springs home, and Vice-president Truman was now to take office. Regardless of one's personal political views, everyone in the armed forces grieved the loss of their commander in chief. As far as the Army was concerned, it was indeed an unlucky Friday the thirteenth.

The enemy had been driven from the high ridges behind Heilbronn, and our Infantry was moving at a rapid rate. Apparently the Germans were retreating wholesale as they had done before they made their stand at Heilbronn. Late in the afternoon of the thirteenth, we moved across the Neckar River and thru Heilbronn. Our artillery had practically leveled the town.

Most of us had seen the town from the observation post before. There the town had been a smoking ruins, but the enemy was still entrenched in the hills beyond as most of us could testify for we were shot at by 88s somewhere in the vicinity of those hills. Now as we moved thru the town in convoy, we could see where the rail. road bridge had been completely destroyed by the Air Corp. Factories and residential sections lie in ruins because of the terrific artillery pounding the town had taken. There weren't many civilians around, and it didn't take much imagination to see why.

On we went to Weinsberg. Here was a place rich in experiences for us which will be hard to forget. Our command post was located in a beautiful home that had formerly belonged to a woman doctor, who was evidently a good party member, for all the beverages, food, and furniture had been looted from Paris. Bob Boyle found a complete German officer's uniform, and after wearing it on a couple of occasions, sent it home. The operational part of the section was set up in the parlor downstairs. The parlor contained a piano on which we persuaded Sid Glass to play on a couple of occasions, a china closet containing glasses that were used conveniently for the beverages downstairs, and lastly some beautiful tables used for the map boards and computors. A bedroom adjoined the parlor where some of us slept; the rest of us slept upstairs near the S-2 section. But the main room in the house, as far as we were concerned, was the kitchen across the hall. This room was undoubtedly, the busiest room in the house, used from morning until night for washing and cooking, by far the greater percentage of the time for cooking.

Weinsberg was one of the most interesting towns that we had seen. On the hill behind us was the ruins of an old castle built in the tenth or eleventh century. In it could be seen the painting of an old legend. The legend ran something like this. Centuries before one knight declared war on the other defending this castle. The garrison held out for weeks, but eventually because of food and water shortage, was forced to surrender. The knight who was attacking the castle, proud of the defense of the garrison, conceded that the women in the fortress would be freed and allowed to take whatever possessions with them that they could carry. The women then carried all the men from the castle on their backs, thereby saving them all. The picture that

still hangs in one of the buildings portrays the women carrying the men out of the castle and down the steep hill. From the vantage point of the castle could be seen the town of Weinsberg beneath and the whole surrounding countryside.

Six bombers had visited the town the week before we arrived and had leveled the bottom section of the town. It was unbelievable the damage that could be done by half a dozen bombers on one bombing mission. Our opinion of the Air Corp, which had always been high, was increased after viewing this scene in Weinsberg.

Any of the collection of the swords, knives, pistols and so for forth that are now collecting dust around the house were obtained at this position. This was one of the few places where we had arrived before all the other troops, and consequently we had a free reign at the office of the burgermeister. From now on our trailer was to look like a portable arsenal with all the swords protruding from beneath the canvas.

On the outside of town was a hospital, a beautiful place on the side of the hill with all sorts of trees, flowers and gardens surrounding it. Many of the victims that were taken from the bombed, still-burning houses were receiving treatment here. Many of the German soldiers, wounded in the conflict were also here. It was a quiet, peaceful place; one could hardly believe that there was a war going on not far from here as he walked through the beautiful surroundings.

Each night in Weinsberg was banquet night. There was plenty to eat; the stores in the cellar provided the raw materials; and there was also plenty to drink from the same source. Sgt. Johnson had led the beverage searching detail in the cellar aided by the Chaplain who held the flashlight. As Chaplain Nyberg held the light he remarked, „I'm not looting any of this stuff. I'm merely holding the light so that I won't lose my way." Perhaps he was trying to appease his conscience. No one cared, for he was a good skate. At our banquets, french fried potatoes were prepared by the bushelful. It came to be a small feat for each of us to eat a dozen eggs a night. Sardines and other sorts of fish from Aaron's and Max's packages were a welcome addition to the meal. Lieb's culinary abilities came to the fore about this time. No longer did we have to sweat out the cooking . . . some people called it that . . .

of Artie and the rest of his cohorts. Now we could sit down and eat in peace with no thought of the horrors that tomorrow morning would bring. Champagne flowed like water and was the beverage for each meal. No doubt it would have cost us a hundred dollars a week each in civilian life to live as we lived at Weinsberg. We were just civilians on temporary duty with the Army, but there were few of us who wouldn't have become thirty year men after one of those meals had someone brought forth the reinlistment papers.

The Division front was tremendous... about forty thousand yards. Consequently the advance of the Infantry was slowed down considerably. Soon the 44th Division was to come in on our left and the 103rd on our right. As soon as we received the help of these two divisions, our advance once again became of the ratrace type. The battalion had one observation post way out front while we were at Weinsberg. Lt. Foppiano was the observer. Both he and Sgt. Finch shot a lot of problems from this O P. They were shelled heavily on numerous occasions, for the Germans were reluctant to move their artillery back in the face of our slow advance. Finally the shelling became so heavy that the O P was abandoned.

Finally in the 19th of April, our too- wide Division sector was reduced by the appearance of the 103rd on our right and the 44th on our left. The three of us with the 10th Armored were just too much for the Germans. Near evening, we had a field day blasting their retreating enemy columns along the road. The observation planes stayed up until forced down by darkness, for this was like shooting fish in a rainbarrel.

We displaced the next day. Headquarters Battery used the infiltration method. Our new area was in Billensbach. However, the bridges over the entrances had been blown and we waited at a cross roads for a considerable time before a route in could be found. Our command post this time was in a Gasthaus, with our operational room in the what-would-compare to our bar rooms back home. Sleeping quarters were all over the place. Two or three slept in a room, more or less hotel style.

When we arrived the townspeople were preparing to hold services at six in the evening for four German soldiers who had been killed the day before.

None of us were able to go, for we were all busy getting set up. No doubt, the ceremony would have proved very interesting.

There was a water trough in front of the Gasthaus and a pond beside the building. The thing that intrigued us most though was the piano in the corner. Cpl. Bob Beitman came down that night and played. He was an extremely accomplished piano player and played mostly classical numbers. We listened from nine until one in the morning. No one seemed to notice the time pass; we were all so engrossed with the music. Finally we went to bed, for we were to move again the next day.

The next morning, we just waited around until the Colonel had time to make the reconnaisance for the new position. Everyone spent their time heating K rations on the stove in the corner and frying eggs in the kitchen. Artie spent his time pecking at the piano with two fingers. He might have been an excellent drummer, but his piano playing abilities were strictly limited. Finally Sid Glass came in to take over on the piano and relieve us of our miseries. He played all requests and played them real well.

The next move was accomplished with out incident. It was the move to Hosen into a large, rather smelly, farm house. Not much occurred here. We weren't able to fire much, and it rained constantly all day. It was from here that Bob Boyle left for the United Kingdom.

The next day, on the 22nd, we moved to Endersbach. The road down was treacherous. Butch drove the command car, so probably a drive down the Autobonn could have been placed in the same catagory. We moved into a perfectly luxurious home in Endersbach. Three families had previously lived there. The furniture was gorgeous as were the furnishings. The S-3 section occupied the third floor. One room, the parlor, was used for the work room. We hated to put all the telephone wires and boards in the rooms; it would mar the furniture. Bedrooms were all over the place.

Upon arriving at Endersbach, there was no firing to be done, for our own or the French troops could not be definitely located. The Infantry was running wild, and by this time the French and the American forces had joined on this side of the river and had pinched out Stuttgart on the other side of the river. The first day in Endersbach, the Colonel went on reconnaisance for positions near Bunzwangen. The Colonel, Sgt. Price, Gene Stiffler, and Waltman

captured nearly a hundred prisoners that day. There were one hundred and fourteen prisoners taken in the whole battalion that day, more than some of the Infantry battalions accounted for.

Next door to the house in which we stayed was a wine plant. Most of the casks were empty, but the senses of some of the crew, which by this time were specially adapted for such things, scented some Vermouth in the back room. From then on there was „vielen" wine to drink. Potatoes were in abundance which meant that no one would want for french fried potatoes. The packages were arriving in good style in those days. All in all, it was a time of feasting. This particular period was probably one of the best that we had in combat. Because of the obscure situation, the work was rather easy; the living conditions were marvelous, and the eating situation left little to be desired. It was while at Endersbach that Max had a birthday. Packages were saved for a couple of days to prepare for the occasion. Max got little help on the preparation of the food for the party, in fact, Pete Peterson had to be recruited for the chore. However, when it came time to eat, everyone was ready, willing, and able. It was a fine party, plenty to eat, plenty to drink, and lots of good people for company. There is little else to be desired in any party.

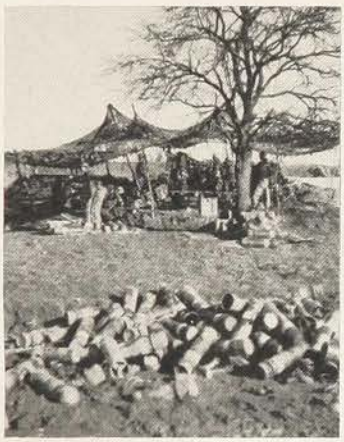
On the 23rd, we started to move to an assembly area near Bunzwangen. On the way we started to pick up the 2nd battalion of the 397th Infantry and carry them to our destination. They piled on tractors, trucks, guns . . . anywhere they could get a ride. We were just ready to pull out when Major Hill received a message from Division Artillery to return to our old area, which was Endersbach. He radioed the Colonel, who was out in front, turned the column, which was no small task, and started back from whence we had come. No one in our section was sorry to go back, for this was the best arrangement we had experienced in combat thus far. We soon learned that the 100th Division had been pinched out by the 44th and the 103rd Divisions, and we were now in 7th Army reserve. We soon also learned that we would occupy Stuttgart as soon as the French, who were there now, would move out. In the meantime, there was nothing to do but wait, and we certainly enjoyed the waiting in this place.

Always to be remembered will be the memory of the Deacon leaning back on the sofa, with a glass in his hand, remarking, „Boy, what a nice army" and „It sure is a long time between drinks". Then there was the time in Endersbach that „Scoop" Meyers had a birthday party. There could'nt have been a better place for all these birthdays to occur. That was the night that Sgt. Campbell was introduced to the „88", a drink of vermouth and schnapps, by far the larger preponderance of the solution being schnapps. But the less said about Sgt. Campbell and the „88s" that night the better. Butch also went on an escapade that night. When everyone left Tex's party, Butch was in good shape, but a couple of hours later he returned to the bedroom, looked out at the landscape and muttered something about, „I wish I were a poet, I would write a poem about this bee-you-fi-tal scenery. But I'm no poet, so I'll have to sing about it." He was no singer either, and those that he had awakened quickly told him about it. At two o'clock in the morning, even the Bing doesn't sound good in a bedroom. With a little persuasion and a lot of strong arming, he was finally convinced that it was about time to retire.

A training schedule was started in Endersbach; it was hard to get back to the old grind after being in the line so long. The mornings were devoted to hikes and maintenance, the afternoons to athletic and recreation. Speaking of athletics, it was here that Headquarters Battery suffered the sad fate of engaging in a football contest with the Medics, who were staying nearby.

On the 26th of April, we moved to Ludwigsburg. Ludwigsburg was a town just north of Stuttgart. The French had not yet moved out as was originally planned, which later caused a lot of trouble. Our mission there was to occupy and guard the town. From now on it might be said that our combat days were over. The war still went on, but our battalion wasn't ever again in the fight. The whole battalion was quartered in a German barracks. The operations section had one room. Bunks were soon put into shape, and we settled down to „garrison standards". Motorized patrols were set up with radios which were in communication with our base set back in the battalion command post.

Movies were shown every night in the mess hall; this was about the only form of recreation in our short stay in Ludwigsburg. Some of us went down to Stuttgart to view the ruins that were left after numerous visits of our Air



Corp. Parts of the town were utterly destroyed, and the rest of the town was badly banged up.

One night the Colonel had some distinguished guests for dinner. They were a British Lieutenant Colonel, the Commandant of the French Military Government, a Russian Colonel and Captain, and the French military government staff. The highlight of the party was the toast that was drunk celebrating the junction of the Russian and American forces up in the vicinity of Wittenburg and Torgan, Germany that day, the 27th. No one knew what anyone else was talking about because of the number of different lanquages used, but everyone smiled broadly ... no one knew what for, probably to keep international relations on an even keel.

On the 30th of April, we moved to Göppingen. We had for a home this time a small house, complete with bath and kitchen. There was a small yard surrounding where the flowers were coming out to greet the spring. It was a nice little place, but it can truly be said that we weren't very happy there, The war was over as far as we were concerned, and strange as it may seem, it was hard for us to get out of the war. Here we learned a lesson from one of the pages of the book of life. A year ago, we had been hesitant to enter combat, but now, after the adventurous life that we had led in Europe, it was extremely hard to settle down to the monotony of this garison life. It was dull, it was uninteresting. Hitherto we had felt that we were playing an active part in winning the war. Every shell that we fired gave us the feeling that we had delivered it personally to Adolph Hitler and his cohorts. Now however, the feeling came over us that we were no longer essential to the winning of the war, and that we were a fifth wheel on the Seventh Army wagon. But then, this feeling would no doubt soon pass, and we would become acclimated to our new mode of living.

It was hard to live in Europe. The average GI is an affable, friendly, smiling, carefree gent always willing to say „good morning" and pass the time of day with anyone. By force of necessity, the non-fraternization policy was put into effect. We were not allowed to talk to any Germans. True, we had not seen the German soldier at close range, but we had seen his shells land in our areas and kill some of our friends. Even considering this, it was

hard not to say hello to some of the cute two and three year old kids, However, this was another thing that we soon became accustomed to.

We waited constantly for the news that the Germans had surrendered unconditionally. The German armies in Italy surrendered en masse. Then the Northern army surrendered to General Montgomery and the British. It was only a matter of time until the remainder of the German forces that were holding out in Bavaria would surrender. The Seventh Army had already made a dash to Czechoslovakia. Hitler according to German reports, had died in the last struggle in Berlin, and Admiral Doenitz, the former U boat commander, was now in control of the Reich. At last it came. The German army, Navy, and Air Force surrendered to the United nations.

And so VE Day came for us, not at any specific day and hour, but at the time that we as individuals had the realization come upon us that the war in Europe was over. Victory in Europe day came for us whenever we happened to wander off from the rest of the crowd and ponder upon the events of the last few days. Only then did we come to the realization that what we came over here to do had actually been accomplished. It was disheartening to have been in combat since November, or to start the second half and then be benched when the team was within the ten yard line driving goalward.

One would think that celebrations would be in order, but they weren't... partly because everyone had known for days that the end was near, and partly because we all realized that the battle was but half over. Not until complete victory was won in the Pacifik would there be cause for all-out celebration.

Then on the 8th of May we marched down to the soccer field located near what used to be a sports club. The whole battalion was there in formation to commemorate the victory. At first we were very much unenthused. No one liked the idea of marching after we had led such a carefree life as far as discipline was concerned in combat. The ceremony was short. The band played „God Bless America"; it was good to hear a band play again. Major Hill read the message from General Burress to all the men in the 100th Division. After this the band played the National Anthem as we presented arms. Then Chaplain Buckley closed the ceremony with a prayer. Father Buckley was one of those plain, down-to-earth men, and as he prayed, we all prayed

with him ... „And we thank Thee that we are able to be here today to celebrate this great victory. We ask Thee to remember those who have fallen beside us in the conflict and are no longer with us, those who have paid the supreme sacrifice in this great struggle. And we pray for a peace founded on the eternal principles of justice and charity, for only such a peace can long endure."

As we marched back to our area after the ceremony, we were different men. Why had we come here: what had we accomplished; and whither were we going? These were the thoughts that passed through our minds. We pondered on our coming to Europe, the good fight that we had fought, and the peace that we had won. It had been a long, a hard fight, and we had done a good job. We were proud of our accomplishments in the battle of Germany. Now peace had come in Europe, a peace we hoped that would endure so never again would any American soldiers have to leave their homes to come over here to give their lives. Now there was peace.

The count of cadence rang out as we marched on, „Hut, two, three, four," but we scarcely heard. Our thoughts were elsewhere. We marched mechanically as we reflected our thoughts on the end of hostilities and meditated on the old story so dear to us all and so appropriate on this day. When centuries ago, out over the white chalk hills of Bethlehem, there rang a song of angel voices from a multitude of the Heavenly Host: „Peace on earth to men of good will!"

ROSTER OF HEADQUARTERS BATTERY AT BEGINNING OF COMBAT

M/Sgt. Charles Price — Sergeant Major
lst/Sgt. Raymond Campbell — First Sergeant

Radio Section

T/Sgt. Hannibal Cole — Communications Chief
S/Sgt. Martin Betts — Radio Sergeant (MIA in Bitche)
S/Sgt. Ninian Edwards — Radio Sergeant
T/4 Irving Guralnick — Radio Operator
T/4 William Sears — Radio Operator
T/4 Walter Starnes — Radio Repairman
T/4 Walter Riley — Radio Operator
T/5 Primo Scauri — Radio Operator, FDC
T/5 Salvatore Silvestro — Radio Operator, Fwd Obsvr.
T/5 George Straub — Radio Operator, FDC
T/5 Robert Waltman, Radio Operator, Bn. Comdr.
T/5 Patrick O'Neill — Radio Operator
Pfc. Eugene Leach, Radio Operator, FDC.

Wire Section

S/Sgt. Elwin Hebert — Wire Sergeant
Sgt. William Henderson — Message Center Sergeant
Cpl. Sidney Glass — Wireman
Cpl. Harvey LaPorte — Wireman
Cpl. James Moran — Bn. Mail Clerk
Cpl. Clyde Nash — Wireman
Cpl. Anthony Silkonis — Wireman
T/5 Robert Beitman — Message Center
T/5 Jee Eng — Switchboard Operator
T/5 John Hartley — Switchboard Operator

T/5 William Mahoney — Wireman
Pfc. Ernest DuPont, — Switchboard Operator
Pfc. Eric Hoffman — Wireman
Pfc. Ben Jacobs — Wireman
Pfc. Claude Reese — Wireman
Pfc. Domenick Scafidi, Wireman
Pvt. Carl Almquist — Switchboard Operator
Pvt. James Hopper — Wireman
Pvt. Alva Ingersol — Wireman
Pvt. Raymond Meade — Wireman
Pvt. John Shaw — Wireman
Pvt. Leon Wilkinson — Wireman

Kitchen

S/Sgt. Elva Daisey (Transferred in February)
S/Sgt. John Corbett — Mess Sergeant
T/4 Francisco Domingo — Cook
T/4 Edward Podlaski — Cook
T/5 Louis Normandeau — Cook
T/5 Michael O'Gorman — Cook
Pfc. Edward DeMarco — Cook
Pvt. William Cooperman — Cook

Motors

S/Sgt. Dermott Heslop — Motor Sergeant
T/3 Harold DeAth — Airplane Mechanic
T/4 Bernard Hazen — Mechanic
Cpl. Jessie Dickerson — Driver, Survey Jeep
Cpl. William McCormick — Bn. Agent
T/5 Joseph Festa — Driver, CP Truck
T/5 Orville Harris — Driver, Bn. Exec. Truck
T/5 Hugh Middleton — Driver, Wire Truck
T/5 John Renn — Driver, FDC Command Car

T/5 Eugene Stiffler — Driver, Bn. Comdr.
T/5 David Wyant — Mechanic
T/5 Bert Watson — Driver, Air Section
Pfc. Stanley Bobrowsky — Driver, Ln. O.
Pfc. Howard Caton — Driver, Wire Truck
Pfc. Richard Gennaro — Driver, Wire Truck
Pfc. Howard Piatt — Driver, Radio Truck
Pfc. George Silva — Driver, Wire Truck
Pfc. Edward Rivers — Driver, Kitchen Truck
Pfc. Perry Tomlinson — Driver, S-2 Jeep
Pfc. Charles Winegar — Driver, Wire Truck
Pvt. John Kissman — Driver, Air Section
Pvt. Eugene Turner — Driver, Fwd. Obsvr.

Machine Gun

Sgt. Underwood Williams — Machine Gun Sergeant
Cpl. Ben Shaffer — Machine Gun Cpl.
Pvt. Otis Crenshaw — Machine Gunner
Pvt. John DeFeo, Machine Gunner, Air Section
Pvt. Frank Folliard — Machine Gunner
Pvt. Joseph Mendoza — Machine Gunner
Pvt. Gerhardt Potz — Machine Gunner
Pvt. Julius Riso — Machine Gunner

Operations Section

T/Sgt. William Hoagland — Operations Sergeant (Commissione
T/Sgt. Walter Leicht — Operations Sergeant
S/Sgt. Harold Sampson — S-2 Sergeant
S/Sgt. David Kelly — Survey Sergeant
Sgt. John Finch — Liaison Sergeant
T/4 Thomas Lemlin — Survey
T/5 Roland Benson — Survey
T/5 Carl DeMasi — S-2 Radio Operator

Pfc. Cornelius Ahearn — Survey
Pvt. Eugene Emanuel — Survey
Pvt. William Splaine — Survey
T/4 Ernest Johnson — V C O
T/4 Aaron Ray — Chief Computer
T/4 Max Barth — Computer
T/4 Seymour Lieberman — Computer
T/5 Arthur Gonzales — Radio Operator, FDC
T/5 Charles Rose — H C O

Personnel Section

T/Sgt. Charles Grattan, Personnel Sgt.-Major
T/4 Albert Rothblatt — Personnel Clerk
Cpl. Joseph Silver — Hq. Btry. Clerk
T/5 Raymond Sweeney — Personnel Clerk
Pfc. Edward Schreiber — Clerk-Typist
Pvt. Arthur Klein — Glerk-Typist