The STORY OF THE CENTURY

There is nothing soul-stirring about Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. No snow-capped mountains hover majestically in the background. There are no poetic, willow-bordered, trout-filled books, nor lambs gamboling in lush pastures. There isn't even a picturesque row of East Side pushcarts to break the monotony of sand, scrub-oak, slash pine and tar-papered troop hutments. Ft. Jackson's chief claims to fame are chiggers in the summertime and the history-making fact that the 100th Infantry Division was born there on 15 November 1942.

In reality, the story of the Century was begun three months earlier, on 15 August. First signs of life in the embryo division were the War Department appointments of Maj. Gen. Withers A. Burress as division commander; Col. Maurice L. Miller as assistant division commander, and Col. Theodore E. Buechler as Divarty commander. Both Col Miller and Col. Buechler were later elevated to the rank of brigadier general.

By the end of August, all 100th Division cadre officers, including company and battery commanders, had been designated. Colonels William E. Ellis, Robinson E. Duff, and Andrew C. Tychsen were appointed commanders of the 397th, 398th, and 399th Infantry Regiments, respectively. Cadre officers were then dispatched to Army schools for special and refresher training courses designed to equip them for the intricate work which lay ahead.

With schooling completed, cadre officers reported to their stations at Ft. Jackson early in October. They were followed by more than 400 "filler" officer personnel drawn principally from Officer Candidate Schools.

The potential Century privates, who were then sweating out pre-induction examinations, would have enjoyed the next six weeks between 15 October and 30 November. In mid-October, the NCO cadre, consisting primarily of men from the 76th Infantry Division with trickles from replacement training centers, schools and other units, 1,500 men in all, added brain, bone, and sinew to the fighting machine struggling to crack its shell. The privates who joined the 100th later would have stared unbelievingly at the astounding sight of sergeants drawing KP, pulling guard, cleaning latrines while they nurtured the as yet unborn division.

And then, on 15 November 1942, the day of parturition arrived. Maj. Gen. William H. Simpson, XII Corps commander, delivered an address in which he stressed the severe trials which lay in the path of the Century Division, and clairvoyantly predicted the im-

portant role it would play in helping to win the war. The 100th Division colors passed from the hands of Maj. Gen. Emil F. Reinhardt, commander of the 76th Infantry Division, to Gen. Burress. The band played martial tunes. Officers smiled and shook hands. The assembled NCOs sighed and went back to latrine duty and nursing the new-born infant.

But something more than speeches or bands or latrine duty had happened. The Century Division was no longer an embryo. It was no longer anything as impersonal as an "It" or a "They." The 100th had been born. A living, breathing, pulsating entity had been created out of the heart and will of a united nation. From now on, "It" or "They" would not suffice. From 15 November 1942, it was "We." *We* fighting men of the Century.

Officers and an enlisted cadre had successfully completed the organizational groundwork when the recruits who were to form the fighting men of the Century began to arrive in December. If the Axis leaders could have seen us in quartermaster-creased overcoats as we filed from the troop train and struggled to form some semblance of four ranks, it probably would have taken an atom bomb to convince them that they could conceivably lose World War II. The little green shop-tags were still on our clothing. Unbraided caps were perched at any angle which pleased the ego of the wearer. We didn't even come to attention when the "brass" passed for inspection.

The German High Command would have laughed uproariously at that. Why, even a child in Germany knows that you click your heels when a General pauses to ask you a question. We merely fidgeted and cussed our draft boards. Fighting men! All we knew about the Army was that we had to salute everyone, especially Pfcs, ate a seven-course meal out of one plate, received innoculations for every disease known to God and man, and waited for hours in lines reminiscent of Saturday nights at the neighborhood movie. We didn't even know we were to be part of the newly activated 100th Infantry Division.

Soldiers! We weren't soldiers. We were salesmen from New York; farmers from the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama; mechanics from New Jersey; clerks from the New England States; mill workers from Pennsylvania and Delaware. We were plumbers, architects, writers, stenographers, stevedores, artists, printers, musicians, craps-shooters, lawyers—you name them and we have them. Except soldiers.

Herr Goebbels had scornfully summed us up by calling us "ice-cream eaters." He was correct. He could have also called us T-bone steak eaters, milk drinkers, easy-chair sitters, radio listeners, automobile riders, six-zoot-suits-in-the-wardrobe wearers. We had toiled and dodged the Finance Company for those things and wanted to enjoy them. There's no percentage in trading the warmth of a woman's caress for the scowl of a 1st sergeant or a steam heated room for a foxhole.

That was what Hitler and Tojo had relied upon when they started the war. But the Axis psychologists had slipped up on one very important point. We loved the life we had and weren't going to sit idly by while some predatory gang snatched that life from us. When gunmen start shooting-up the neighboring county, it's time to call out the posse lest your own home meet the same fate. Perhaps we didn't know much about standing at attention. Americans are taught to pay that respect to God and their country. We hate lines and regimentation and caste systems. It gripes us to be ordered around. But illiterate or college graduate, our free way of life had taught us to think, and

we knew why we were standing along that railroad track in Fort Jackson; although anyone of us would unhesitatingly have told you that he didn't like it. So we waited in line while the "brass" inspected and asked pointed questions, listened unenthusiastically to the blaring "welcome" band, cussed the Axis through the medium of our draft boards, and when the order was given, marched to the long column of trucks which waited to carry us to temporary hutments pending assignment to regular units.

The excellent planning which preceded our arrival as recruits began paying dividends the next morning. Within 24 hours, we had learned how to make up an army cot, hospital style, had been taught to salute officers and not to "Sir" non-coms, heard our first batch of rumors in the latrine, found out that we were to be soldiers in the 100th Infantry Division, had been informed that Major General Withers A. Burress was our division commander and had received our initial dose of close order drill.

By mid-afternoon, men began trickling off to their various assigned units. The departure was moist as we took leave of friends we had made on the trip to Fort Jackson from the induction centers. But in the excitement and expectancy as to what lay ahead we lost much of the nostalgia which had been hanging over us. It probably would be stretching the point to say that we had found a home, but we certainly were no longer "Orphans of the Storm." Co. "G" was going to be a wonderful outfit. Chests expanded despite ourselves when cadremen told us Co. "M" was armed with heavy weapons. Big guns, Garands, 50 calibre MGs wire, radio, mechanics, drivers of the famous jeep and 10 wheelers, stuff we had read about in novels and newspapers and seen in newsreels. Now we were part of it, sharing in the big picture. Flags were not waving, bands were not playing, orators were not telling us why we must fight. Yet it was there, the first spark of an *esprit de corps* which in the months and years to come was to grow into a conflagration which left the Nazis wondering what it was that the Century Division had which they didn't.

While the division increased to full strength we laid around getting our feet wet—soaked, would be a better word for it. Every training class was conducted in the open, and it soon became evident why the plaintive tune, "Carolina Moon Keep Shining," was written. During the entire two weeks we never saw the moon or the sun, either. All we saw was rain. Between rain-drops, however, we absorbed such interesting things as the organization of an Infantry Division, fundamentals of close-order drill, military courtesy and discipline, and the hazards of backtalking to your first sergeant.

Christmas Eve the 399th Infantry Regiment gathered on the huge, sandy drill-field, later dubbed the Dust Bowl, to sing Christmas carols and listen to Sgt. Kenny Gardner croon "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas." Company commanders had ordered a 100% turnout and, surprising enough, they got it. Even those of us who hated Gardner's singing obliged by marching to the drill-field while the first sergeants remained behind to search the barracks for stragglers. The program was supposed to act as a morale builder, but it made everyone feel depressed. It was our first Christmas away from home. The greatest soldier show ever assembled couldn't have helped our morale. If only we could have faced Hitler's best division that night, the brawl at Heilbronn would have looked like a ping-pong match in comparison. On that night of peace on earth, good will toward men, the first spark of the instinct to kill our enemies was kindled in our breasts.

Then, on 28 December, we plunged into what the War Department designated as the first phase of its Mobilization Training Program, or basic training. For thirteen weeks we ran obstacle courses, tumbled in sawdust pits, hiked long, weary miles, learned how

to fire our principle weapons, were taught to care for our equipment. Palms and soles blistered and calloused. Waistlines streamlined. "My aching back" became an army catchism with meaning.

We also learned to sing. Some amateur psychologist in Second Army Headquarters, undoubtedly prodded by a bucking Public Relations Officer, conceived the idea that we would train better if we sang. In all probability this inspiration was plagarism from Walt Disney's seven dwarfs who whistled while they worked. But whistling wasn't good enough for us. We had to sing. No one felt like singing after marching fifteen miles. In those basic training days we were lucky to have the strength to walk after that distance. But being the 100th Division, we sang louder, longer and with more gusto than any other outfit in the United States Army. We sang old-time favorites, popular ballads and ribald parodies composed by company wits. We were hailed in the press of the nation as the "Singing Division." We didn't know then that we were destined to make even the Jerries change their tune.

Basic training serves two purposes. It hardens the body of the recruit so that he can withstand every possible rigor of combat, and it schools the newly inducted soldier in the particular task assigned him. The global conflict, in which we were to play such an important role, posed problems never faced by any army in history. The mechanized fighting force our country was building had changed tactical conceptions and tenets. Where World War I divisions had moved fifty yards, we had to be prepared to move fifty miles. Climate ranged from tropical to arctic, jungle to desert. Rapid movement increased the danger of encirclement and magnified logistic enigmas. To maintain contact and the fighting efficiency of widely scattered forces, technicians skilled in radio, telegraph and telephone operation were needed. Overworked supply and transport vehicles required expert mechanics, welders, drivers. Engineering difficulties were swelled to include building of bridges and roads capable of supporting tanks and heavy guns, to use bull-dozers and angle-dozers. Medical battalion men had to be trained to perform first-aid on the field of battle. Blood plâsma. Posit fuses. Radar. Rocket guns. It was a technical war. We began to specialize.

Through it all, like an unbroken thread in a multicolored tapestry, ran the basic design of soldiering. Despite guns and planes and tanks, the rifle was still the primary weapon of offense and defense. Three weeks after the start of basic training, we had our first test of range firing. The 397th Infantry Regiment led the division to Leesburg Range. Leesburg, sixteen miles from Fort Jackson, is a sandy stretch of wasteland on which no self-respecting palm tree would be found dead. Compared to Leesburg, the Sahara is a blooming Paradise. The men soon dubbed the windswept mountain top "Siberia." It was a misnomer. Siberia never gets that cold.

Days were spent to the full. Revielle was at 0530. By 0700, we had eaten breakfast, made certain our six-man pyramidal tents would pass inspection, and marched out to the firing range where we waited for the tardy winter dawn to permit firing. With the exception of one hour for lunch, we remained on the range until dusk made it impossible to see the "five" on the targets. When we weren't shooting, we were in the huge pits calling shots, pulling targets, marking scores. The flag is up. The flag is waving. The flag is down. Maggies drawers. Dry runs. A "four" at five o'clock. Many of us who had never held a rifle in our lives stared in wonder as the white "five" disk

peeped over the concrete abutments. We began to talk like soldiers. By the time our week was up, we began to feel like soldiers.

A computation of unit small arms scores revealed that 87.2% of the division's personnel had qualified in firing the M-1. Highest unit score was made by the 325th Engineers, with 96.4% of the battalion's men qualifying.

Range firing had just been completed when XII Corps called for a command inspection. Before dawn, we were pitching puptents and laying out our equipment as the manual directed. Naturally, it rained. It always rained when we had command inspections.

Just seven weeks after the start of basic training, on 13 February, the first division review was held on Ancrum Ferry Field. An involuntary thrill of pride swept over us as we saw the massed might of the Century stretched out in formation over nearly a half-mile of parade ground. The review, held in honor of South Carolina's governor, Olin D. Johnston, proved how far we had come in our efforts to become an irresistible fighting force. Seven weeks ago we didn't know how to form four ranks. Now we marched and pivoted on a twenty-man parade front.

Special Service activities gained momentum. A division tabloid newspaper, the *Century Sentinel*, made its appearance. The lead story was devoted to the ranger training planned in the division. Intra-unit athletic competition was stressed. Following an informal booking elimination, sixteen men were chosen by the Division Special Service staff to represent the Century at Charlotte, N. C., in the annual Golden Gloves Tournament. The 100th finished third in the standings with two 397th Infantrymen, Pvt. Joseph A. DeMatteo, bantamweight, and Pvt. Carlo M. Litz, welterweight, reaching the finals.

We won our first championship on 27 February when the 399th's 3rd Battalion defeated the 52nd Medical Battalion, 39-25, for the Post basketball crown.

Two Soldier's Medals, the first in the long list of awards for heroism to be garnered by Centurymen in the years which followed, were presented. Capt. Marvin H. McCracken of the 325th Medical Battalion was cited for rescue work at the scene of a bus accident, and S. Sgt. Walter L. Bull of Co. A 399th Infantry, for heroic action during a train wreck.

On 27 March 1943, basic training ended and we looked forward to our first furlough and the second phase of training which was to begin the following week. Furlough time is always a cause for excitement in the Army. But the tenseness and pounding heart which accompanies the citizen soldier on his initial extended pass, like a schoolboy's first date, is a sensation which can never be regained on subsequent leaves. Pride in uniform had never meant so much. The 100th Division patch took on a new significance. We sweated-out furlough rosters like a father awaiting news of his first-born. The Post tailor did a rushing business formfitting shirts to streamlined waists. VD lectures. Train tickets. Reservations. Home. I'm to be a gunner. I'm in the engineers. The quartermaster feeds and clothes the troops, Mom. Better, the best, "prima." In those three months pride in outfit had mysteriously crept into our hearts and marrow. Among ourselves we griped about "chicken." But to outsiders and especially men from other divisions, the Century Division was above reproach. We had learned to train together. Over the horizon waited the day when we could show how well we could fight together.

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Second Phase of Training

"What are the bugles blowin' for?" said Files-on-Parade.
"To turn you out, to turn you out," the Colour Sergeant said.
—KIPLING—*Danny Deever.*

The second phase of our training, designed to weld individual soldiers into fighting teams of platoons, companies, batteries and battalions, got off to a flying start. Tired and caked with Carolina dust, we had returned from our first week of field exercises on 10 April. We rushed into our hutments, dropped our packs, and dashed for the showers. It was Saturday and the capital city of Columbia, three miles from Ft. Jackson, beckoned. The day was fair, and the beer would be cold. On Main Street, blondes, brunettes, and red-heads would be displaying their spring crop of nylons. There's something about a woman in the spring. The war seemed very far away at that moment. Some of us had wives waiting anxiously after a week of separation. Fiancees were taking extraordinary pains with lip rouge and coiffure. There were dances and movies at the USO clubs. To hell with chow. The idea was to take off before the 1st Sergeant got any ideas about details. This was one week-end we were going to make the most of.

And then it happened. As if to remind us that soldiering is a very serious business, came the notice that all passes were cancelled for the week-end. No one knew the reason for the order, but everyone ran to the latrine to find out. Rumors flew thick and fast. We were to be alerted for immediate shipment overseas. We were to act as a special attack force. That Ranger training had been for a purpose! As usual, the bloodied heads of the brass were battered by cries of "chicken."

We didn't know that the general, himself, had learned only a few hours earlier that we were to act as security for President Roosevelt while he inspected military installations in South Carolina en route to his conference with President Comacho in Mexico. The importance of secrecy covering President Roosevelt's itinerary was stressed by the general at a hasty meeting of unit commanders and special and general staff officers. By Sunday evening, plans had been completed.

Our mission was to guard all the Atlantic Coast Line tracks running through South Carolina, from the extreme northern border of the State at Dillon, to the southern boundary at the Savannah River town of Chatham. In all, 252 miles of track were to be patrolled, including the 24-mile spur from Yemassee to the Marine base on Parris Island. Special attention was to be paid to tunnels, culverts, bridges and defiles, as well as straightaways during the three day period on which we were to stand guard.

The division quartermaster arranged for the collection of food and fuel from military bases near the defense sector. Reconnaissance parties of officers traveled to the areas to which they were assigned and inspected them for bivouac positions and vital defense points. Artillery units, without field pieces, were assigned to co-operate with the infantry regiments.

Early Monday morning, carried by trucks, we began moving from Ft. Jackson toward previously designated positions along the ACL railroad. By Tuesday evening, all was in readiness through the division's defense zone.

At 1000 hours on Wednesday morning, a ten-car train rolled into the junction of Yemassee. Shades were drawn over all windows in the last car. While the train was being shifted from the main line to the Parris Island spur, a small, black Scotch Terrier bounded from the carefully curtained Pullman. That was the tip a couple of our division MP's, standing nearby, needed. They immediately recognized the dog as the President's Scottie, Falla.

But to most of us, the purpose of our mission was still a mystery. Switching completed, the train continued to Port Royal and Parris Island where the President inspected the Marine base. Then, the President's train returned over the Yemassee spur and, our all-important task successfully concluded, we returned to Ft. Jackson.

Training shifted into high gear. During basic we had sweated perspiration. Now we sweated blood. The effort of college football teams to get in shape seems

The mock "Nazi Village" where we were introduced to the difficult technique of street fighting. Pictured are "Fuhrungsstelle Village Hall" and "Musso's Dance Palace". A rifleman draws a bead from around a corner of "Goebbell's Post Office" during training for this important phase of combat.

pathetic compared to the regimen laid down for us as we raised our sights on the XII Corps physical fitness tests scheduled for June. We still were not ready for an Axis inspection, but the laughter of the Fascist bigwigs wouldn't have been nearly as scornful as on that December night when we lined up along the railroad tracks.

We did push-ups and burpees until we fell flat on our faces. Some of us vomited as we ran 300 yards in 45 seconds; stepped through the burpee; carried a soldier pig-a-back for a 75-yard run; alternately crept, ran and crawled over a zig-zag course for another 75 yards and paced off a four-mile fast march in 50 minutes with full field pack. We persisted until we didn't vomit. You can't spill your guts when they've turned to iron.

On the day of the Corps tests, twenty companies were chosen at random to represent the division. The Corps brass was elated with the results. We felt pretty good about it, also. General Burress commended us on our "excellent showing," unit commanders complimented company commanders, company commanders passed on the compliment to us, and we complimented each other on the welcome news that the ordeal was over.

The training tempo continued to increase. By the end of June, most of us were capable of marching 25 miles with full field pack in eight hours.

Innovations, such as the much publicized Infiltration Course, were added. Designed to impress us with the importance of hugging the ground when crawling toward an enemy position, the Infiltration Course afforded us our first experience in advancing under "live" machine gun fire. We weren't very confident of our chances for survival as we jumped from a trench and inched across 75 yards of shell-pocked ground laced with barbed apron wire while machine gun bullets whizzed only 36 inches over our heads. A couple of enterprising Philadelphia lawyers probably could have increased their income considerably if they were on hand to make up last wills and testaments.

Our introduction to the difficult art of street fighting was made when we stormed a simulated "Nazi Village." A dozen frame buildings, all bearing the names of infamous German establishments and laid out to pattern a street in a Kraut town, had been constructed by our 325th Engineers. The object of this training was to demonstrate and practice the advance down a street lined with houses and reach the last building while taking advantage of maximum cover. In squad strength, we stormed the town, scouted the Jerry structures for snipers, blasted dummy figures with rifle fire and continued our advance until we had captured our objective, the Fuhrungsstelle Village Hall.

We now were spending one week in every month in the field. We learned to dig slit trenches and fill them in when we left the area. Camouflage discipline was stressed. Sanitation, eating in the dark, cleaning of mess kits, covering of garbage pits, how to wash underwear and socks in a helmet were sweated and cussed over. We learned many other expedients considered necessary to living outdoors in combat, most of which were promptly discarded when the bullets really began to fly. But it was nice knowing them, anyway.

While the Infantry regiments studied defensive and offensive deployment and disposition of platoons, companies and battalions, those of us in the Field Artillery busied ourselves with the tactical use of the big guns. We learned how and where to set them up for

rapid and effective employment. Weary hours were spent on camouflaging our vital support weapons against enemy air and ground observation. We became adept in the use of fire control instruments.

As members of the hard-hitting Combat Engineers, we became skilled in the important function of providing drinking water for the entire division by filtering water from lakes and ponds. We spent three weeks on the Wateree River building bridges and engaging in many other activities.

At this point in our training, important shifts in our personnel occurred. Previously unforeseen requirements and revisions in the draft structure, which became necessary as our country grasped the cudgel of war more firmly, were responsible for the changes.

From a peak of 16,000 men at the beginning of the year, our enlisted strength had dropped to 12,300 by

the close of the second period of training. Largest number of men to leave the division, either by transfer or discharge, came from the ranks of over-age soldiers. Of those who left, 793 were discharged outright and 242 were placed in the Enlisted Reserve Corps. Transfers to the Air Corps, Airborne Paratroopers, and combat units already advanced in training, accounted for an additional 978 men. Development of the Army Specialized Training Program drained 505 men from our ranks. All other causes such as dependency, military ineptitude, physical disability and death took a toll of 1092 of our original number.

While these changes were taking place in our ranks, officers also were being shifted. Among General Staff Officers, Maj. Paul S. Reinecke, Jr., became G-2; Maj. Kenneth E. Eckland moved up a notch to the G-3 post; and Lt. Col. Robert M. Stegmaier, formerly division quartermaster, was shifted to G-4.

Fanned by the strong wind of fellowship, the growink flame of *esprit de corps* was reflected in our athletic endeavors. Center of attention was our baseball club. Boxing also held the spotlight. Softball aroused keen interdivisional interest.

In the field of the drama, the Century made a lasting impression upon us as well as civilians with the presentation of Maxwell Anderson's war play, *Eve of St. Mark.*

With the end of June and the close of the second phase of our training, we readied ourselves for the large field operations of the third period. This was to be a test of our individual ability as a soldier and our effectiveness in major tactical operations.

3rd and Pre-maneuver Phase

Independence Day, 1943, will be long remembered by those of us who were in the Division Military Police. In effect, it was a 32-man platoon from our Century stalwarts which carried out our first foreign mission. Assigned the duty of guarding Italian prisoners en route to camps in the U. S. from Africa, our beloved MPs, blue arm-bands and all, left Ft. Jackson on 4 July and embarked for Casa Blanca on 13 July aboard the *S.S. Mariposa* out of Newport News, Va. Landing in Casa Blanca, our Century MPs, under command of Lt. Charles T. Housam, boarded a Liberty Ship on 22 July and with seven additional MP detachments efficiently transported some 3,500 Italian war prisoners to Boston harbor. The platoon made a second trip to Africa on 4 September. This time they disembarked at Oran where they put in two weeks of guard duty in the town of Mostagamen, 100 miles east of the seaport, before setting sail for the States on 16 October with 400 Jerries whom they delivered at Newport News after an uneventful crossing.

But while our MPs were winning Theatre Ribbons, we weren't sitting idly by waiting for news reports. With the sweltering heat of mid-July came our first unbroken two-week period in the field and our initial experience in operating as regimental combat teams. It also marked our introduction to the Carolina chigger. No one relished either the problems or the chiggers. But by the time the RCT exercises were over, we had taken one more giant stride toward becoming a unified fighting machine.

From 19 to 30 July we sweated on long marches, deployed through thick woods, and learned to make one canteen of water last for a day's drinking and washing. With the temperature in the 90's, however, we didn't do much washing.

In contrast to previous small unit problems, all of us—engineers, artillery, medics, quartermaster, ordnance, and infantry—joined hands in the common effort. Slowly, the realization dawned that a rifle com-

Some of the citizens of Chester and Winnsboro cheered on friend and foe, and even took sides.

pany, no matter how expertly trained, required the support of the artillery; that the artillery was useless without infantry; that neither could operate effectively without the engineers, and that all elements were dependent upon the quartermaster, ordnance, and medical detachment.

By 23 August, after six RCT problems, we were ready to begin training as a division. Some seven months had passed since we had officially launched our military careers with basic training. We had worked hard and adapted ourselves with the ingenuity and initiative inherent to Americans. Yet—seven precious months had elapsed before we could even begin to maneuver as a unified division. What a perfect answer to those who contend that an army can be built overnight while they sit smugly in a fool's paradise of industrial strength.

The mock "Battle of South Carolina," as these Division or "D" exercises were termed, was divided into six phases and was "fought" from 23 August to 1 September, and from 22 to 30 September. Even the brass began roughing it. Division Hq left their elaborate CPs and began working in trucks and march-command setups. When that happens, training is getting serious. As if to add emphasis to the importance of these exercises, Lt. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall, Second Army CG, paid us a visit during one day of the exercises and Maj. Gen. William H. Simpson, XII Corps commander, remained in the field for most of the period.

By the time the six "D" problems had been completed, we had ranged over the entire northern half of South Carolina with the main "battleground" centered between the towns of Winnsboro and Chester. As usual in exercises of this type, the "enemy" forces lost every engagement. In the first three "battles," we moved 60 miles by motor to soundly trounce the numerically inferior Sixth Cavalry. In the three concluding exercises, we designated successive regiments from the division as a hostile force. We attacked and defended. We walked seemingly endless miles cross-country. We thrilled the gaping citizens who lined the streets of Chester and Winnsboro to cheer on friend and foe as we shot-up the town with blanks. Some of the civilians even took sides and hid the defenders in their homes. To them it was good, clean fun. To us it was hard work with time out to cast appreciative glances at the southern belles between "shots."

The real stuff wasn't falling on Winnsboro and Chester. Soldiering is fun when casualties are hypo-

thetical, when the scream of the wounded is only the wolf-cry of a GI, when direct hits are decided by an umpire, and dead men walk back to chow. It was that way in Italy, Germany, and Japan when the Axis was maneuvering its legions and defying the world. Perhaps some day, predatory nations will forget parades and remember the stench of death. Perhaps.

But we had one more notch in our training rifles by the time the "D" exercises were completed. We had corrected many natural errors in the complicated business of working as a unified division. The quartermaster had overcome the stupendous task of distributing 150,000 gallons of gasoline and 1,500,000 pounds of foodstuffs while the division was on the march. We had learned the meaning of envelopment and tested the salt of opposition. We had cut our molars.

Between problems we attended an aerial show at Ancrum Ferry Field in which we were taught recognition of bombers and fighters through sight and hearing. The 325th Medical Battalion and unit aid-men treated simulated casualties in a week-long demonstration witnessed by the entire division. A spectacular training feature was an attack upon Hill 20, a fortified height on the Ft. Jackson reservation, by our infantry battalions with the support of our artillery and a devastating B-25 bombing attack. Live ammunition was used by all elements.

The War Department now added iron spikes to our heavily mailed fists with the addition of three Cannon Cos. to our T/O. Armed with 105 mm infantry howitzers, the Cannoneers were to prove a welcome asset when we entered combat.

We knew we were getting good when the brass began bringing visitors to Ft. Jackson. During the "D" exercises, a Brazilian military mission of 56 officers had tagged along to study American methods of training. They were followed by the Brazilian minister of war, Maj. Gen. Dutra, who was formally welcomed with a 19-gun salute fired by Battery C, 374th F A Battalion. Flanked by numerous American and Brazilian generals and escorted by the 100th Rcn. Troop, the visitors toured the post while the 397th Infantry acted as guard of honor.

The ebb and flow of enlisted personnel in and out of the division continued. During the three months between July and September, approximately 1000 men left the Century, primarily as fillers for divisions more advanced in training or alerted for shipment overseas. This number brought total discharges and transfers to 4, 736 in the 10½ months since activation.

Seeking to profit by the adage concerning "all work and no play," we won the Post baseball and softball championships when the 397th Infantry beat the Reception Center nine and the 325th Engineers trounced the 74th General Hospital delegation. Both these teams were chosen to bear the Century banner after an inter-division tournament.

Since no division is complete without a sweetheart, we selected Miss Catherine Ryan (of Brooklyn, naturally) as the "Girl of the Century." Miss Ryan, best-girl of Pfc Dan Linehan, 397th Infantryman, was chosen from among hundreds of contenders in a *Century Sentinel*-sponsored contest.

But not even a beauty contest could detract from the fever of expectancy with which we greeted the news, late in October, that we were to engage in large scale maneuvers in Tennessee.

In the midst of preparations, our first major change in command occurred when Gen. Buechler, Divarty Commander, was transferred to a Corps post on the West Coast. His place was filled by Brig. Gen. John B. Murphy, who had been combat commander of the 7th Armored Division. A West Point graduate, Gen. Murphy brought to the Century Division the experience of 25 years with all types of field artillery.

On 8 November, we began to move by truck from Ft. Jackson to the Tennessee maneuver area. The 399th Infantry combat team led the division from the camp which had been our home for an entire year. CT-7 followed and on 15 November, exactly one year after activation, the 398th Infantry, last element of the division, passed through the Post's main gate with its indelible memories and rolled into the unpredictable future.

Two night stops were made en route, the first at Athens, Georgia, and the second at historic Ft. Oglethorpe. Ft. Oglethorpe, site of one of the great engagements of the war between the States, had been

converted into a WAC training camp, and the lady soldiers played hostess at a dance staged in our honor.

Some five hundred back-breaking miles from Ft. Jackson we arrived in the Tennessee maneuver area and had our first experience with hogs, mud, and cold which belied the warm hearts of the mountaineers.

Tennessee Maneuvers

How it pours, pours, pours,
In a never-ending sheet!
How it drives beneath the doors!
How it soaks the passer's feet.
—ROSSITER JOHNSON—*Rhyme of the Rain.*

In many respects our winter maneuvers in Tennessee were more than another period of training. They were a turning point in our innate psychology and opened upon startling conceptions as to what was important in the appreciation of living. True, we had exercises—eight of them. We practiced at holding operations, defended bridgeheads, forded hissing, rain-swollen streams and rivers, hiked more than 60 miles through cross-country mud in three days, demolished and constructed ponton bridges, ferried support weapons across the Cumberland River, advanced over rugged mountains and retreated back again.

As officers, we supposedly learned a great deal about tactical maneuver. The Benning School of thought was the Bible and it was a rash junior officer who had the temerity to question the tenets of the "Good Book." Errors were made, of course, but if the answer was the Benning solution, everything was fine. It wasn't until we faced the Jerries in the man-trap of the Vosges that we left Benning in Georgia and began to fit the cart to the wheel.

As soldiers, we knew only that from 17 November 1943, when we arrived in the maneuver area, until 11 January 1944, the end of the winter exercises, we were constantly cold, wet, and utterly miserable. In retrospect, it seems unbelievable that the human body could endure such hardships. That we did, with only a relatively small percentage falling ill from exposure, is a commentary on the training we had received during the past year. Even the hardy Tennessee mountaineers shook their heads in wonder and hospitably invited us in for coffee as we sloshed past their hillside homes.

Making a million dollars, getting ahead in the world, suddenly lost its importance. An easy chair by the fire; a sturdy roof which fought off wind and rain; a warm, soft bed; a home-cooked meal; dry clothes; a good book; a woman's caress—these became the important things in life. You can't eat a million dollars, and they don't compare to a cedar log when it comes to building a fire.

We matured mentally as we hardened physically. In man's timeless battle with the elements, we discovered the necessity for teamwork and companionship. Two men huddled in a pup-tent found warmth from each other's bodies. Four shoulders to a wheel loosed a mired jeep. When covered fires were finally permitted late in December, one man to chop wood, another to carry kindling and feed the blaze, meant life-giving warmth and at least partially dried clothes. Rugged individualism, born in steamheated homes and nurtured on Dagwood sandwiches, expired on the rocky, wind-swept hills of Tennessee.

Confidence in ourselves as individuals, pride in our own platoon or section, remained as steadfast as ever. But we broadened our views. A platoon didn't mean very much by itself in the 15,000 square mile maneuver area. We understood that, when we were halted at some unfordable stream and were forced to wait there until our engineers anchored a ponton bridge to the far bank. Time and again, we lost contact with

Headquarters until our Signal Co. re-established communications.

We gained new respect for the medical aid-man who dogged our steps and patched sprains and blisters when most of us were too tired to move. The QM Co. meant food and gasoline; if they failed, we failed. Tanks were still "Oil Cans." We gibed, "The Infantry makes the holes for the tanks to break through." But they had guns and mobility, and a couple of 75s give a soldier a comfortable feeling even if they aren't leading the attack. We continued to scoff at the Air

Christmas dinner, like Thanksgiving, was eaten in the rain.

Corps. To us, sinking in mud, drenched by rain, they were the "Chosen Ones," the fair-haired boys of the army, sleeping in warm barracks, eating out of plates. Sure, it took the Infantry to hold territory, but the drone of the bombers' engines and the growl of the fighters as they dived to strafe an enemy column, blended into a sweet symphony of confidence.

At 2100 hours of 21 November 1943, with the Century designated as part of the Blue forces, the "Battle of Tennessee" officially began although contact was not established until the following morning when our 100th Rcn. Tp. skirmished with Red reconnaissance elements in the village of Hurricane. Gen. Miller acted as our commander in the absence of Gen. Burress who had assumed the post of XI Corps CG.

Teamed with the 14th Armored Div., we pushed toward Doaks Crossroads, south of Lebanon, while the 14th Armored attempted to encircle the "enemy" from the rear. The Red forces, consisting mainly of the 35th Infantry Div. and the 3rd Cavalry Group, fought well. But after four days of battling over the rough terrain, the Blues were well on the road to victory when the problem was called to a halt.

The rains hadn't come as yet, and if you didn't mind the sound of your teeth chattering in the icy mornings, conditions were not too difficult. The magnificent cedar groves which covered the area north of Lebanon lent a picnic touch. There was the thrill of pageantry in the green flags of the umpires and the flapping red and white banners of the opposing forces. Everyone played Boy Scout and went patrolling for prisoners. Brilliant and hair-brained maneuvers were executed by the smaller units. The Benning theories were expounded. Fort Levenworth classrooms were magic-carpeted to the banks of the Cumberland. Whole companies were surrounded. Tank platoons were wiped out. The hills echoed to cries of victors and vanquished. "You're captured!" "I'm not!" "You're dead!" "We're not!" "One man can't storm a machine gun position!" "Why not?"

Why not? We were told why not. When we got into combat, we knew why not. The Book warned against it. The Germans couldn't understand it. It is doubtful whether anyone could explain it. But we did it anyway. Wars are won that way.

Problem O-2 put us in pursuit of an out-numbered enemy. Contact was made in the vicinity of the town of Halloway, and a flanking movement to the right resulted in a breakthrough of the Red's lines. The problem ended with the Blues, spear-headed by Centurymen, closing in on the Red's final defense positions at Leeville.

The Century was encamped just west of Lebanon on Sunday, 5 December, when word was received from Corps Hq. that Problem O-3 was to begin at 0800 hours the following morning. Although we once again carried the Blue banner, our strength was reduced when CT-399 was attached to the Red forces, led by the 35th Div. This gave the enemy a numerical advantage of four combat teams to our two at the jump-off. But as our drive against the rail center of Carthage, 15 miles to the east, ran into stiff opposition we were reinforced by the 87th Infantry and the 14th Armored Divs.

Four types of strategic maneuver were engaged in during this four-day problem: a withdrawal under cover of darkness, when the enemy counter-attacked to gain high ground; a night attack to recapture these important terrain features; a meeting with the 87th Div., sent up from the south to strengthen our lines; and an attack against well emplaced enemy defenses

The Medics learned their vital duties by doctoring simulated casualties.

Message Center jeeps delivered operations instructions over almost impassable roads.

near Cedar Grove, where the problem was halted by Director Headquarters.

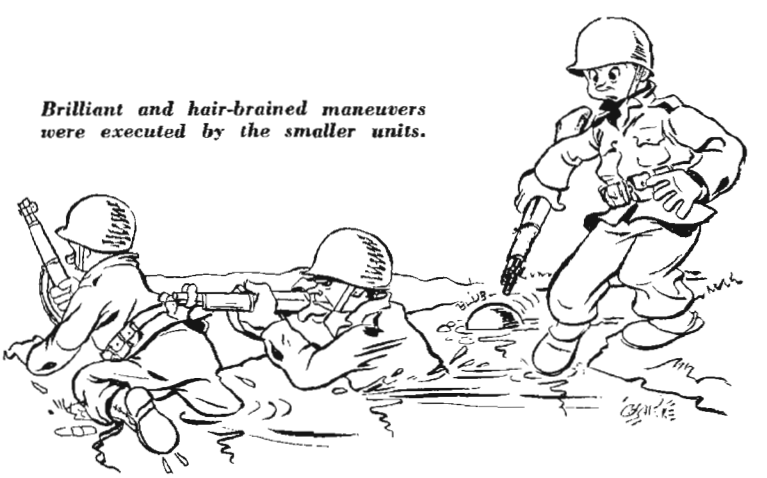
What a boon it would have been if Director Headquarters could have halted the rain as easily. The seemingly endless downpour became a nightmare of a sadistic Aquarius. It was as if every drop of water from the seven seas had been pumped into a huge garden hose and showered over us in changing sprays. Tiny rivulets swelled to raging torrents, brown with eroded topsoil. The Great Smokies, lashed by storms, cowered behind impenetrable fog banks. Giant firs and cedars ducked the wild blows of the wind and crashed in defeat. Even the earth, pummeled to chocolate pudding, clung quivering to the wheels of our vehicles as if seeking protection beneath the sheltering frames.

Day after day, the rain continued. Steel rusted. Clothes mildewed on our bodies. Plodding, jaded legs sank shin-deep in mud. Mud. We wallowed in it by day and slept in it at night. Raincoats were as wet inside as out. Waterproof tents absorbed moisture until they buckled and collapsed, dragging tent-pegs with them. Walking 50 yards to chow became a major operation, yet we struggled fifty miles across trailless hillsides to complete a maneuver.

As autumn turned to winter, temperatures dropped to below zero adding hail and snow to our difficulties. But the rain never stopped for any length of time. Now, however, it froze, stiffening wet clothes, forming ice-blocks around our feet, searing faces raw. Still, we continued with our assignments while hardened Tennesseans watched in awe and wondered what could beat such courage. We wondered also. Wondered when the rains would end. Wondered what beds and fire-sides felt like. Wondered if combat would be anything like this. The Germans wondered even more when they met us in the rain-swept Vosges. They didn't know we had wintered in Tennessee.

For the first time in months of training, the fourth problem placed us in a position requiring the defense of a bridgehead. Carrying the Red banner under command of Gen. Burress, we deployed along the south bank of the rain-swollen Cumberland River on a general line between Hunters Point-Bellwood-Rome. Our mission was to delay the advance of the numerically superior Blues while covering the extrication of threatened supplies by a Red Corps utilizing the railroad at Hartsville on the north side of the Cumberland River. Conducting a difficult withdrawing action in sub-freezing weather, we succeeded in holding the enemy at bay while our supplies were moved to safety. Then, falling back slowly across the unfordable Cumberland, we "blew" every bridge and established a strong defense line along the north bank. We were

Brilliant and hair-brained maneuvers were executed by the smaller units.



preparing to fight off an expected enemy ferry crossing, when the problem was terminated at 1100 hours of 15 December.

Problem O-5, also fought along the banks of the Cumberland River, saddled us with the mission of defending a portion of that swift-flowing waterway against an enemy who outnumbered us four to one. For the second time, we were the main body of a Red force with Gen. Burress at the helm. Although the problem was a difficult one for all elements, the work of our 325th Combat Engineers and attached engineer units held the spotlight.

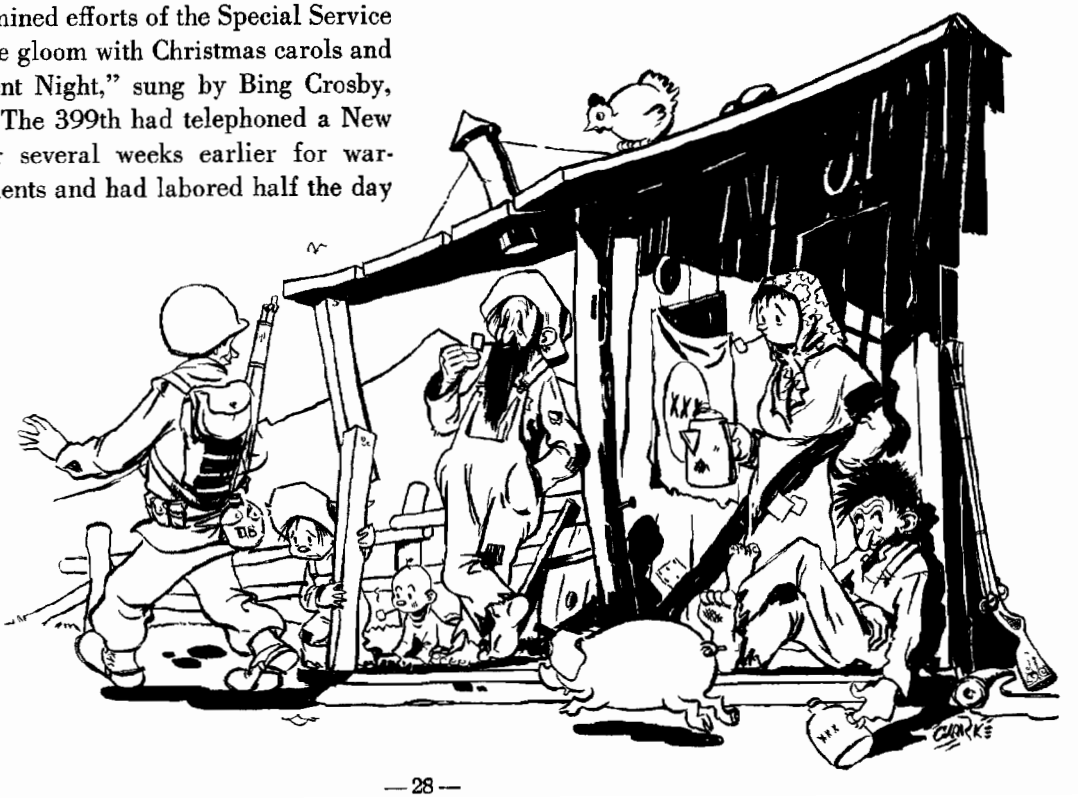
The exercise had barely got under way when the Blues, under cover of our own smoke screen, succeeded in capturing intact the vital Hunters Point bridge which our engineers had prepared for demolition. The span was later destroyed by aerial bombardment, but before this could be accomplished, the Blues had pushed strong elements across the Cumberland. This exploitation resulted in heavy engagements as the enemy sought to expand their bridgehead and we battled to contain and isolate them from further reinforcement. Here again, the engineers displayed excellent ability in constructing and demolishing light ponton bridges and erecting obstacles in the paths of the advancing Blues.

The engagement was concluded on Wednesday so that we could prepare for the Christmas week-end. For most of us it was our second Christmas away from home and the determined efforts of the Special Service sections to dispel the gloom with Christmas carols and recordings of "Silent Night," sung by Bing Crosby, fell miserably flat. The 399th had telephoned a New York manufacturer several weeks earlier for war-rationed tree ornaments and had labored half the day in the freezing rain to decorate a young fir. Next morning the gayly bedecked tree was lying in the mud, the broken tinsel and glass balls scattered pathetically around it.

Christmas dinner, like Thanksgiving, was eaten in the rain. We were a bedraggled and disconsolate lot as we sought a flat rock on which to rest our mess kits. We had turkey and all the trimmings, just as the newspapers said we would. But even turkey gravy doesn't taste very good when thinned with rain water. We did have some fun spearing tidbits lying on the bottom of the water-covered mess. It was like looking for prizes in a Cracker Jack box.

Returning to cross-country fighting in problem O-6, we teamed with another Blue division in pushing a Red force from Lebanon to the outskirts of Carthage, some 30 miles east. Pouncing upon the outnumbered Reds, we advanced in two columns and succeeded in smashing a hole through the center of the enemy line. This breakthrough enabled our attached armor to advance to the objective of Carthage and complete the annihilation of the enemy.

As if to prove the adage that there is never a dull moment in the Army, some higher headquarters eager-beaver with a malaria psychosis, stimulated, no doubt, by an overheated radiator, decided Problem O-6 was the ideal moment for training us in defense against Mme. Anopheles. No self-respecting mosquito would have been found dead in the frigid temperature which



Even the hardy Tennessee Mountaineers shook their heads in wonder and hospitably invited us in for coffee.

prevailed in Tennessee during December. But the inhabitants were treated to the rare privilege of watching us slog through the snow with mosquito nets over our heads. We also slept with mosquito bars draped over our tents. The practice, however, did serve a purpose. We learned how to tie a mosquito net around our heads. That, incidentally, was the last time we ever used mosquito nets or bars. Mme. Anopheles probably realized the futility of attacking a body of men so well prepared.

In official language, the seventh problem of Tennessee maneuvers was Operation O-7, Phase 4. To us, it was the third time we had been ordered to cross the rampaging Cumberland River under almost impossible conditions of rain, mud, and flood. Again part of a Blue force with Gen. Burress in command, we teamed with the 35th Infantry and 14th Armored Divs. and made assault-boat crossings of the Cumberland near Woods Ferry after pushing south from our assembly area near Westmoreland. Armored elements poured over the river via a heavy ponton bridge. We were in position to capture the Corps objective of Bairds Mill and Holloway, against only light resistance from the numerically inferior Reds, when the problem was ended by Director Headquarters.

Announcement that Problem O-8 would be the last of the Tennessee maneuvers resulted in an explosive GI sigh of relief which shook the Great Smokies to their foundations. The exercise, involving an exhausting cross-country advance southward from the vicinity of Carthage to the outskirts of Murfreesboro, was completed in a spirit of insouciance which only the smell of home and shelter could induce after a campaign in the wilderness.

Furloughs began before we moved from the maneuver area. Those of us who left from the field didn't mind the fact that there probably wasn't a clean set of ODs in the entire Division. We shaved and showered, threw some extra clothing into a duffle-bag and took off like a BAB for the railroad station in Nashville.

The rest of us remained in the woods for four additional days while the Division knotted the loose ends which are prerequisite to a major movement. Then, on 15 January 1944, advance Division elements entrucked for our new home at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. One overnight stop was made on the border of Tennessee and a second halt was called at Shelby, North Carolina. The reception afforded us during our one-night stay in Shelby will long be remembered by Centurymen as one of the most spontaneous display of patriotism and appreciation ever experienced by the

Mme. Anopheles probably realized the futility of attacking a body of men so well prepared.

soldiers of the 100th. Every resident opened his doors and heart wide to us. A dance was given in our honor. Bathing facilities were offered and home-cooked meals were dispensed with a bountiful hand. Even the "damn Yankees" were invited, and in Dixieland, brother, that's patriotism.

Post Maneuver Period

Let us praise, if we can, the vertical man,
Though we honor none but the horizontal one.
—W. H. AUDEN.

There is much to be said for pursuing the luxuries of life. It is, after all, the basis of human endeavor and is encouraged as much in socialist as in capitalist society. The direction and aggressiveness of such pursuit varies, of course, with the individual. In one, it may take the form of empire; in another, a castle on a hill; in a third, a modest home with a refrigerator on which all installments have been paid. With us, coming from the wilds of Tennessee to the sand dunes of Fort Bragg, it was an Army cot which became one of the most desirable and important things in life—a simple Army cot with a lumpy mattress and probably a few tension springs missing. Caked with the dust of our 500-mile journey, the mud of Tennessee still clinging to boots and clothing, we rushed into the snug, double-decker barracks, dropped our packs and sprawled across the folding beds with the joyous abandon of ducks on a pond. Tired eyes closed in ecstacy. Mucles which had bruised against rocks for almost three months, relaxed like kneeded dough. A lean buttock stuck into the air in a characteristic posture. Knees touched stomachs. Bodies curled into balls or lay flat like corpses in a mortuary. Faces pressed into grey-striped pillows. Displaying the usual irrespressable American curiosity, a GI shouted happily as he discovered the barracks' central heating system. From the latrine came the sound of running water and the off-key singing of some few mundane souls who placed cleanliness before godliness. But most of us remained immobile on our cots and said nothing. There is neither time nor inclination to converse in Paradise. Ecstacy defies words.

Despite the elusiveness of the comforts of life, however, man easily becomes accustomed to them. Within a few weeks the novelty of sleeping in a dry, warm barracks complete with latrines and showers had worn off, and we were griping.

The soft-drinks weren't cold. The beer was flat. Fayetteville was too far from the Post. The bus service was lousy. We couldn't find suitable quarters for

our wives in town. We didn't care a hoot that Fort Bragg was settled by Scots in 1729 and that it had a long and hallowed military history. We decided that anyone who would settle in such a wasteland with only sand hills and scrub-oak to break 28 miles of monotony, was beyond sympathy. Besides, we didn't like our mess sergeant.

You just can't stop Americans from griping. It is as much an institution with us as apple pie à la mode and is probably the reason why we have the best

As soldiers, all we knew was that we were constantly cold, wet, and utterly miserable.

plumbing system in the world. There must be GIs in Heaven today who are griping because the golden gates squeak every time St. Peter opens them for a new arrival. We were in the swing of garrison life again.

Precious little time was wasted in instituting a new training schedule. With the Division no longer a member of Second Army and now operating under XIII Corps, directly under the War Department, we began a training period designed to review the lessons of Ft. Jackson. The first five weeks were spent in completion of qualification, familiarization, and transition firing on Bragg ranges. A prominent spot in the program, attended by all members of the Division, was devoted to an extensive course in the laying, detection, and removal of mines.

Unquestionably our most spectacular training demonstration at Fort Bragg, was the massed infantry-artillery attack exercises with live ammunition which were witnessed by War Department officials and representatives of the nation's Press. These exhibitions accomplished the dual purpose of giving us the "feel" of maneuvering under close artillery support while affording the public, through the medium of the press, an insight as to how ground operations were conducted.

The demonstrations, staged on three occasions in the Gaddys Mountain area, utilized the 399th and 397th Regiments as infantry with artillery fire being laid down by the combined Division Artillery and XIII Corps big guns. Undersecretary of War Robert P. Paterson and a party of 28 publishers and editors of leading newspapers and magazines were present at the first demonstration on 3 March. Less than two weeks later, on 14 March, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and a party of War Department brass witnessed the same exhibition. The demonstration was repeated a third time on 15 April for the benefit of 40 more representatives of the press, radio, magazines, and newsreels.

We were all pretty tired of Gaddy's Mountain after three sweaty assaults, but the War Department Bureau of Public Relations was very happy about the publicity, the press was overawed, and the brass was impressed by our training efficiency. The Associated Press writer, for example, declared the Division to be trained to a pinpoint of perfection and stated that physical training left even "spectators out of breath." He had no idea how little breath we had to spare by the time we had reached our objective.

Sandwiched between this triple-decker ground power display, was the award of the first Expert Infantryman's Badge in Army history to the 399th's T. Sgt. Walter L. Bull. The badge was pinned on Sgt. Bull by Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, Army Ground Forces commander, at a picturesque division review held 29 March. Sgt. Bull had won this singular honor following successful completion of difficult physical and combat-course tests in competition with a selected number of our outstanding Infantrymen. In the months which followed prior to our leaving Ft. Bragg, similar tests were conducted throughout the 100th's infantry regiments and numerous other Centurymen qualified for the award. The medal added just the right dash of color to our uniforms. Besides, it was worth five dollars extra in our pay envelopes.

Off-duty hours were spent in pursuit of the usual recreational facilities which are part and parcel of an Army Post. There were motion picture theaters, Post Exchanges, and the inevitable Service Club at which we could dance, read, play checkers, or relax with a cherry sundae and half a Southern-fried chicken in passive resistance to overbearing mess sergeants.

Sports, as usual, received our enthusiastic support.

In a strange finish to a touch-football tournament which had begun in Ft. Jackson, reached the semi-finals in Tennessee, and was completed at Ft. Bragg, an aggressive 375th FA team defeated the 397th Infantry, 12-0, to snare the championship.

A Division boxing championship tournament was held in the Post Field House; the finals, on 14 April, were witnessed by numerous civilian newspaper reporters. Lt. Col. Larry S. MacPhail, assistant in the office of the Undersecretary of War, and general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers in civilian life, presented awards to the Century champions.

Basketball was a sports feature throughout the winter months with a powerful 397th "five" winding up the season on 10 March by out-playing the title-holding 399th Infantry, 39-30.

The early Southland spring hastened competition in baseball, softball, and golf. Opening league baseball game was played on 30 April against the Post's 55th FA Bn. with all the fanfare of a major league classic. Gen. Burress, at bat for the opening pitch, with post commander Gen. Kennedy in the box, clouted a slashing single over second base. The 100th won 8-5 behind the fireball hurling of Sgt. Bill Grant.

Important as a morale factor were the newspapers of the Division. The *Century Sentinel,* which had published throughout maneuvers, resumed its faithful reporting of division activities. Two unit papers, the 100th Signal Company *Guidon* and the 399th Infantry's *Powder Horn* also made their appearance. The *Powder Horn,* like the *Sentinel,* had maintained publication in the maneuver area, printing in Nashville. The 398th's *On the Alert* was resurrected after an eight months lapse.

Because of the demand for replacements on the fighting fronts, large numbers of Centurymen who had been with the Division since activation were transferred to Army Ground Forces Replacement Depots for overseas duty. Six hundred of these men left the 100th on 4 March. This loss was more than balanced on 31 March, however, when 4,000 "fillers" from the disbanded ASTP became members of our division.

The preponderance of these "college boys" had had little more than basic training, and even this rudimentary knowledge had been negated by the fact that they had been engaged in specialized study for almost a year. Many of the "Quiz Kids" were frightened and a bit overawed at joining what they considered a "Veteran" division. Some few were somewhat resentful at the interruption of their studies. The most part, though, were bright, young men willing to learn and eager to make the grade.

Old-timers in the Century spent long and tedious hours teaching the recruits how to roll packs, pitch tents, and perform other fundamentals of soldiering. In order to bridge the gap between our advanced training stage and that of the former ASTP's special training battalions were formed within the regiments. Two thousand of the newcomers left the Division as overseas replacements two weeks after arrival, but those who remained proved themselves capable soldiers as well as students, and within a few months they were marching and training with the best of us.

Officer transfers and big-order shipments also hit the commissioned grades. Strength of officer personal dropped from 921 in January 1944 to 648 at the end of April. Largest shipment occurred on 24 April when 120 officers left the Century for an overseas replacement depot.

Most important of the staff changes during the period were the appointment of Lt. Col. Byron C. De La Mater as division Adjutant General and Lt. Col.

Walter E. Moses as acting division Chief of Staff. Col. Moses replaced Col. Larry Zimmerman who died suddenly on 30 January.

With the end of April, the first phase of our post maneuver training came to a close. Seventeen months had passed since we had joined the Century Division at Ft. Jackson, and fostered by the constant drain of division personnel for replacements, rumor grew that the 100th would never be sent overseas. "We'll never go over as a division," fretted the gossips. "This is a 4-F outfit." We didn't know that five months later we would be boarding a boat for Marseilles. Several crack German divisions would have been worrying overtime also if they could have forseen how those "4Fs" would fight.

Supplemental Training Period

The second phase of our post maneuver training, extending over a period from 1 May to 26 August, served little purpose for those of us who had been members of the 100th since activation. After seventeen months of close order drill, squad problems, "D" exercises and maneuvers, we were as well trained as we ever would be. What knowledge we lacked could not be picked from the bones of obsolete bayonet drill. It could only be found in the cries of the wounded, the concussion of 88's, and the tenseness which walks hand in hand with a night patrol behind enemy lines.

Insofar as newcomers to the Century were concerned, this review of training was quite necessary. Most of the replacements had had little more than basic training and in the cases of those of us who had recently joined the 100th from ASTP, even such elementary instruction was often found to be lacking.

But old Centurymen didn't like the Supplemental Training Period. To us, learning how to sight an M-1 at that late stage was like coaching a Cape Cod fisherman on how to row a boat across a pond. Hadn't we sweated through a Carolina summer and survived a Tennessee winter? Hadn't we stormed Gaddys Mountain under live ammunition, fired for record three times, lived in the wilderness, marched 25 miles in eight hours? What kind of chicken was this?

Then, there was this business of replacements. It isn't very conducive to good morale to see your outfit torn asunder platoon by platoon. Oh, the new "kids" were okay, but they had a long way to go. Somehow, they weren't the old gang—best bunch of fighting men who ever pulled on a service shoe. We swelled with pride as letters from former Centurymen began trickling back from the fighting fronts.

"Heard from Johnny Sloan today. He's in Italy."

"Joe Gluck's in England. He made Sergeant in the paratroops."

"You remember Tony Parella? Landed in Normandy on D-day. Was hit in the leg. He says—"

"Where d'yu think Bob Clark is? The poor bastard wound up on New Guinea. Doin' awright, though. Got the DSC."

Of course, he was doing all right. They all were doing all right. None of us expected anything else. They had come from the 100th, hadn't they? They had trained with us, sweated with us, double-dated with us, got drunk with us. It takes more than training to build a fighting division. It takes the kind of

Review in storming fortified positions paid dividends later.

The stubby 105 mm Infantry cannon proved a potent weapon.

friendship which will make a man risk his life so that his friend can live. It takes confidence and loyalty and devotion—and time.

In our own way, those of us who continued with the 100th at Bragg, were doing all right, too. We were doing the job the War Department had temporarily assigned us. Our efforts were holding wide the floodgates through which streamed the trained replacements necessary to maintain our fighting efficiency on the world's battlefronts. Between January 1943 and August 1944, for example, we sent 14,636 Century-trained enlisted men and 1,460 officers to replacement depots—the equivalent of a full division of enlisted men and sufficient officer personnel to staff two divisions.

At the same time, with the 100th kept more or less up to strength through the medium of "fillers" from ASTP, the Air Corps, Coast Artillery, AAA, and other arms of the Service which had suffered fewer casualties than anticipated, we continued to weld a division which would be prepared to take the field at a moment's notice. This was a period in which all emphasis was placed upon the Infantry. After considerable vacillation as to the effectiveness of the Infantryman in modern war, it was suddenly discovered that Air Corps bombings, while effective, could not smash resistance or hold territory. Armored units played an important part in the attack, but were impotent in defensive situations and vulnerable without support of the Infantry. Almost belatedly, came the call for the human, self-propelled secret weapon—the miniature fighting machine composed of 96 cents worth of chemicals—which could fire an M-1, throw a grenade, make a machine gun spit, climb a mountain, endure weather, ford streams, lay mines, hold ground and conquer steel with flesh. The mud-slogger was finally coming into his own.

Key Century officers were also affected by the speed up in our war strategy. Col. Mark McClure, chief of staff since activation, was transferred to the 95th Div. where he became Divarty commander. His post was filled by Col. Richard G. Prather who had been assistant commandant of the Armored School at Fort Knox.

Lt. Col. Jack Mallepell replaced Maj. John A. Allgair as commander of the 325th Engineer Bn.

Lt. Col. Clifton H. Forbush, G-1, left to join Fourth Army Hq. He was succeeded by Maj. William V. Rawlings, former assistant G-3.

Col. Edwin E. Keatly assumed command of the 398th Infantry after Col. Robinson E. Duff left the 100th to become assistant division commander of the 10th Light Div.

Lt. Col. Horace W. Whitly was appointed 325th Medical Bn. CO and Division Surgeon, replacing Lt. Col. Don S. Wenger.

Lt. Col. Paul S. Reinecke, Jr., G-2, who had left the 100th late in February for observer duty in the G-2 section of the Fifth Army in Italy, returned to the Century after an absence of three months. Col. Reinecke had seen action in southern Italy and on the Anzio beachhead.

Dotting the entire four-month Supplemental Training Period was a host of special missions and formations in which we all took part. First of these occurred on 18 May when 20 representatives of the Allied and neutral press witnessed a massed attack demonstration staged by the 398th RCT which poured 110 tons of ammunition into assumed enemy positions. Present at this and other combat previews were writers from

We were taught close co-ordination with supporting armor.

The engineers learned their intricate job the hard way.

Australia, Canada, England, China, Russia, French Africa, and Switzerland.

During the last week in May, a special command post exercise was held at A.P. Hill Military Reservation, 15 miles from Fredericksburg, Virginia. Participating in this rehearsal of field administration was the Century Division Headquarters and those of the 78th Div., 13th Airborne Div., and the entire XIII Corps Hq. Representatives of the 100th travelled by truck convoy with a stop en route at Camp Lee, Va. Regular combat procedure in communications, handling of messages, and other forms of battle operation were maintained. "Breaks" in the problem were permitted over the first week-end and on the following Thursday, enabling Century personnel to visit Washington, some 60 miles north of the reservation.

Less than a month later, we were accorded our greatest honor since activation when a composite battalion of Centurymen was chosen to represent the Army Ground Forces in a celebration marking the nation's first Infantry Day. Commanded by Lt. Col. John King of the 397th Infantry, the battalion traveled to New York City and was billeted at Camp Shanks. The event, planned to fall on the initiation of the Fifth War Loan Drive, was publicized with Bond rallies at Times Square and throughout New York's five boroughs. With the 100th Division band in the van, the 1,200 picked Centurymen marched up Fifth Avenue from 40th to 82nd Streets on Sunday, 11 June, followed by token forces from the Navy and Auxiliary units.

On 15 June, Infantry Day, the battalion paraded up lower Broadway to City Hall where they were greeted by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. Most of the Centurymen returned to Ft. Bragg toward the latter part of June, but a special platoon remained in New York an additional four weeks to act as an honor guard at daily retreat ceremonies held at Radio City.

Meantime, those of us who were not parading in New York were doing our bit for the 5th War Loan in the area around Ft. Bragg. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 399th Infantry, combined to push the sale of bonds in Fayetteville by marching down the main streets of the town and forming in front of the historic Market House where addresses were delivered by Army and Naval officers as well as civilian celebrities.

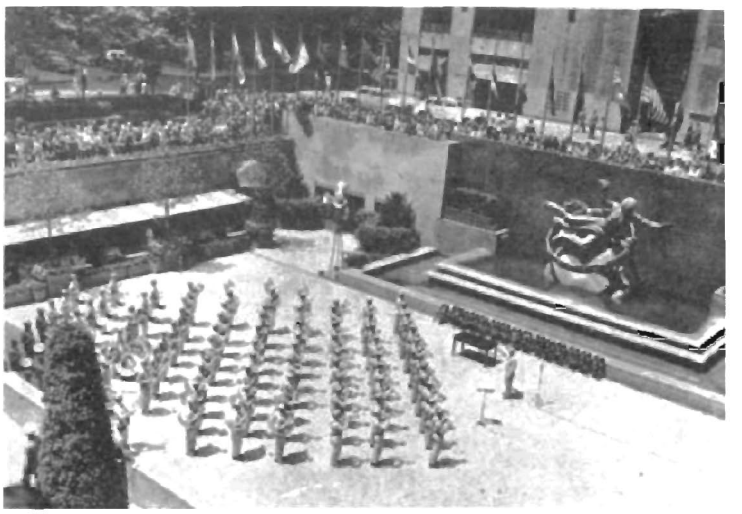
Troops of the 3rd Battalion 397th Infantry, journeyed to Wilson, N. C., while a fourth ceremony, involving a reinforced company from the 398th Infantry, was held in the town of Clinton.

On the morning of Infantry Day, the division formed on the 398th's drill field for appropriate observance. Five Soldier's Medals were presented. Four awards were won by enlisted men of the 398th Infantry for heroism in rescuing five men from a burning plane. The fifth award was pinned on Lt. Sam F. Dunlap of the 397th Infantry for his part in extricating two officers and ten soldiers from a dangerous swamp at Ft. Jackson.

Although primarily intended as a period of review, even veteran Centurymen profitably absorbed training innovations of this supplemental phase. A program of "water training" at Myrtle Beach, S. C., which was to teach us swimming and beach landing, was abandoned because of the pressure of other required instruction after the Artillery and 325th Engineer Battalion had completed the course.

During July and August, every Infantry combat platoon in the division underwent firing tests to determine its proficiency in various categories of combat

Century jeeps pass in review during Infantry Day parade in New York.



7th War Loan gets plug from 100th Division band at Radio City rink.

operation. This series of small unit problems tested the tactics, leadership, and fire efficiency of rifle, heavy machine gun, weapons, mortar, antitank, and cannon platoons. Stiff grading requirements were deliberately established so that borderline units would receive failing grades and be forced to repeat the tests. Highest score in rifle platoon efficiency was 89.0 percent, made by Co. G 397th Infantry; in weapons platoon, Co. B 399th Infantry, 92.6; in machine gun, Co. H 397th Infantry, 90.4; and in 57mm antitank fire, the 398th Infantry with 87.2.

One week in July was devoted to regimental combat team problems designed to iron out possible wrinkles in artillery-infantry liaison and coordination. Divided into four phases, the exercises entailed a daylight shuttle movement to an assembly area, a night blackout assembly, a night movement to relieve a front line unit, and a morning attack supported by all arms.

Dovetailing these varied training pursuits were detailed instruction and practical work on both Allied and enemy mines and booby traps; sniper fire with rifles equipped with telescopic sights; practice in firing the potent 57mm antitank gun; and coordinated infantry-artillery-tank exercises.

We continued to maintain our reputation as a "show" division when we played host to 60 executives of North Carolina textile concerns who "soldiered" with us for three days. The businessmen, 42-inch waistlines and all, arrived at Ft. Bragg on 11 July. Although no reason for this visit was announced in the Division or, so far as is known, to the cotton industrialists, a War Department official had advised several days earlier that cotton production had fallen off. The OPA, accordingly, had lifted the ceiling price on cotton textiles and the War Department feared that this increase might influence the flow of badly needed cotton goods from Army channels to civilian outlets. The cotton textile bigwigs were thereupon invited to visit with us and see for themselves the good use to which the product of their looms was being put.

The whole affair smacked of a salesmen's convention in Omaha, but we dressed the industrialists in fatigues, fed them Army chow, demonstrated hand-to-hand combat, bazooka firing, etc., permitted them to purchase in our PX, and showed them as good a time as our facilities would permit. They, in turn, gave us a preview of what the Volksturm would look like.

The Philadelphia transit strike caused the 100th to be assigned its fourth important mission outside of training. Faced by a walkout of some 5,000 workers in defiance of a government order to maintain transportation facilities because of the wartime emergency, Washington called upon the Century to aid in operating street cars, subways and busses so that war workers could get to their jobs. The order arrived during the afternoon of August 5th, and by midnight 113 Centurymen, mostly former auto mechanics, servicemen, brakemen and conductors, under command of Capt. W. H. Hanson, 399th Infantry, had entrained for Philadelphia. Upon arrival in the City of Brotherly Love, however, the 100th Div. transportation specialists found that the union had ordered all men back to work with operation guaranteed to resume at 0001 Monday, 7 August. Nevertheless, the special force of Centurymen set up in the Philadelphia Cargo Port of Embarkation, ready for any emergency.

The 100th transport specialists remained in Philadelphia for two weeks before the danger was past. On 18 August, the detachment returned to Ft. Bragg, having responded to our government's call on ten-hour notice, although fortunately, no action was necessary.

Lucy Munroe sings national anthem while Gen. Miller presents arms.

Soldiers of Century take time out to rubber at wonders of Gotham.

In the interim, a long-awaited call finally came to the Century Division. On 10 August 1944, we were alerted for shipment to the European Theater of Operations. Most of us did not know of the history-making event until several days later. But with the official announcement that we would soon be facing the enemy in quarterless combat, a feeling of tenseness and urgency swept over us. Last minute training assumed added importance. We found ourselves taking new interest in the members of our platoon, section and battery—appraising ourselves as fighting men, weighing potentialities and probable reactions in combat.

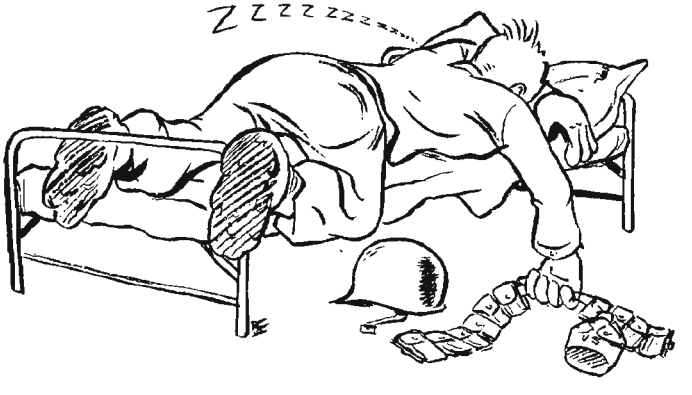
The stakes were high, but what we saw made the gamble worth while. With older Centurymen acting as a cadre, replacements who had filled the ranks of the 100th were ready. Four months had made a great difference in the capabilities of these men. Under the expert and devoted tutelage of experienced NCO's, the "kids" had hardened physically and mentally. They had brought youth and intelligence to our division; factors which when added to the confidence and knowledge of those of us who had been carefully trained for almost two years, made a combination which would be hard to beat.

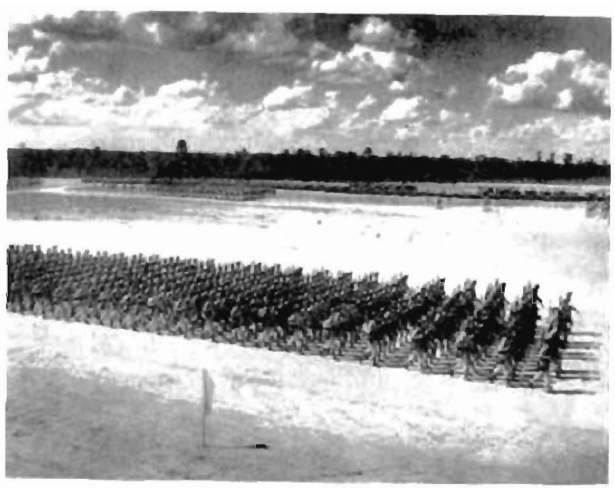
Our assurance grew with the issue of new clothing and equipment. Strangely, on the eve of our departure, we found ourselves calm and resolute—more annoyed with the interminable inspections than the fighting qualities of the enemy, more concerned with the restriction of personal items to five pounds than with our prospects for returning in one piece.

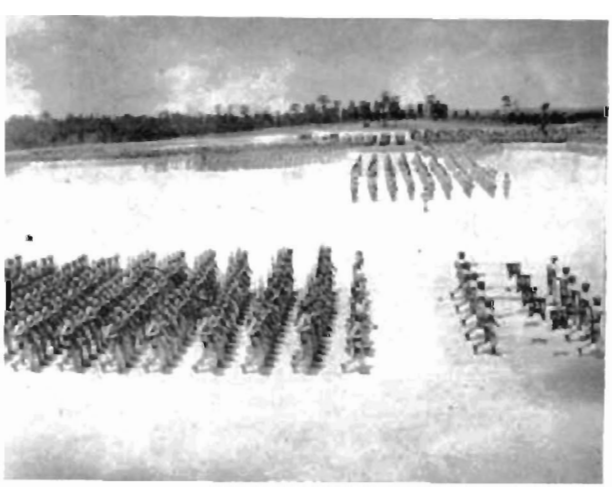
One day after our alert, Lt. Gen. Ben Lear, AGF commander, who had succeeded Lt. Gen. McNair, killed several weeks before in France, spent two days inspecting the Century. Characteristically, Gen. Lear was publicly non-committal as to his impressions. But whatever the good general thought did not bother the rank and file of Centurymen overmuch. We were ready and we knew it.

Last minute preparations rushed to conclusion. Unit dance bands, which had entertained us for the past four months and had staged a thrilling "Battle of Music" in which the 399th Infantry band won the judges acclaim as best in the division, packed their instruments. The *Century Sentinel* and unit newspapers closed shop. Lids were nailed on the seemingly endless rows of crates stamped TAT. There was the last minute exodus of wives bound for home, the clinging embrace of lovers, and we intrepidly awaited the order to move out.

Our Advance Detachment left Ft. Bragg for the New York Port of Embarkation on 20 September 1944. Four days later, to the accompaniment of martial strains from the 100th Division band, first elements of the Century, carrying full field packs and horseshoe rolls, boarded the long line of waiting Pullmans and flopped onto prearranged seats. For several moments the inspiring tunes which had paced our steps on uncounted reviews across the drill fields of Bragg and Jackson were drowned in the cacophony







Maintaining our reputation as a "show division," the 100th struts in last states-side review. Take a good look, West Point, here's marching we defy anyone to surpass.

of grunts and curses as we shifted duffle bags in an effort to make ourselves comfortable. Then, noses and foreheads pressed to windows, we watched Ft. Bragg hide behind a curve in the railroad. By 30 September, all units had closed into our Staging Area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

Kilmer, Marseilles, and Front

Our battle is more full of names than yours,
Our men more perfect in the use of arms,
Our armour all as strong, our cause the best;
Then reason will our hearts should be as good.
—Henry IV.

If the point system of discharge had functioned as efficiently and speedily as our final processing at Camp Kilmer, even a Congressman up for re-election would have had nothing to say. He barely would have had time to gasp before we were bound for the ETO.

There was an atmosphere of urgency about the huge Staging Area which quickened the beat of our hearts even as we stumbled from the Pullmans and, burdened by our equipment, lined up on the long, cement platform. A full-tilt drive against time could be sensed in the officious bustling of the Transportation Corps officers, seen in the camouflaged buildings, felt in the damp breeze which hurdled the Atlantic and seemed to whisper, "Hurry, your friends are dying. They need you in the fight."

The double-decker barracks were something of a surprise. Many of us had expected to live in tents. But we did not spend much time day-dreaming. Kilmer operated on a 24-hour basis and there was no overtime for night work. Reveille was before daylight and lectures, inspections, and last minute preparations generally continued until long after dark.

Rumors soon began flying thick and fast when it was learned that the sailing orders of the Advance Party, which had preceded us to the POE, had been changed at the zero hour. Although our original destination was not generally known in the Division, the plan had been for us to land in England.

Because of a revision in strategy, however, our division was suddenly ordered to Marseilles. At 2241 hours of 26 September, therefore, a small advance detachment consisting of nine officers (Gen. Miller, Col. De Lange, Lt. Col. Reinecke, Jr., Lt. Col. Eckland, Lt. Col. Stegmaier, Lt. Col. De La Mater, Lt. Col.

Training in use of the flame-thrower and all-important rifle grenade put final polish on combat preparations at Ft. Bragg. Top, a hit mushrooms like an atom bomb.

Kemble, Jr., Lt. Col. Walker and 1st Lt. Hudson) took off from the New York Port of Aerial Embarkation, La Guardia Field, for Marseilles, France. The air route followed on the 6191-mile flight was via Newfoundland, the Azores, Casablanca, Oran, Algiers, Naples, and Corsica to Marseilles. The trip consumed 33 hours and 58 minutes. An American transport carried the party as far as Naples where they boarded a British plane for the balance of the flight to Marignane Field, Marseilles. The remainder of the original advance party rejoined the Division at Camp Kilmer on September 27.

The interminable clothing inspections which were interrupted when we left Ft. Bragg were resumed at Kilmer the day after our arrival. Re-hash lectures were conducted on safeguarding military information and instructions were disseminated on our rights under the Geneva Convention in the event we were taken prisoner. No one mentioned that the Nazis weren't adhering to many phases of that humane agreement.

Abandon Ship Drill was a highlight in our final preparations. Realistic "props" had been set up to represent a transport, complete with a water-filled moat on which floated an actual life-boat. The idea was for us to clamber safely down a cargo net and into the boat without taking a bath. This exercise was followed by an engrossing lecture on how to survive a shipwreck by means of the ingenious and compact emergency equipment stored on a life-raft. The balance of the day was taken up with immunization "shots" and a long hike to a field where we were instructed on how to board the trains which were to carry us to the POE.

The telephone operators received little respite during our brief stay at Kilmer. We waited in patient queues while the co-operative employees made every effort to reach our loved ones for what they and we knew would be our last conversation with wives, mothers, and sweethearts for months to come.

All Centurymen will remember the day of the great "physical" examination at Kilmer. Separated into companies, we trooped into a long, one-story shack bare of furnishings with the exception of a partition which divided the structure into dressing and examination rooms. In the examination room, several medical officers sat waiting. A medic non-com stuck his head into the dressing room.

"You will strip down to your shoes," he ordered.

"As soon as you are ready, you will file past the medical officers and do as you are told. And make it snappy!"

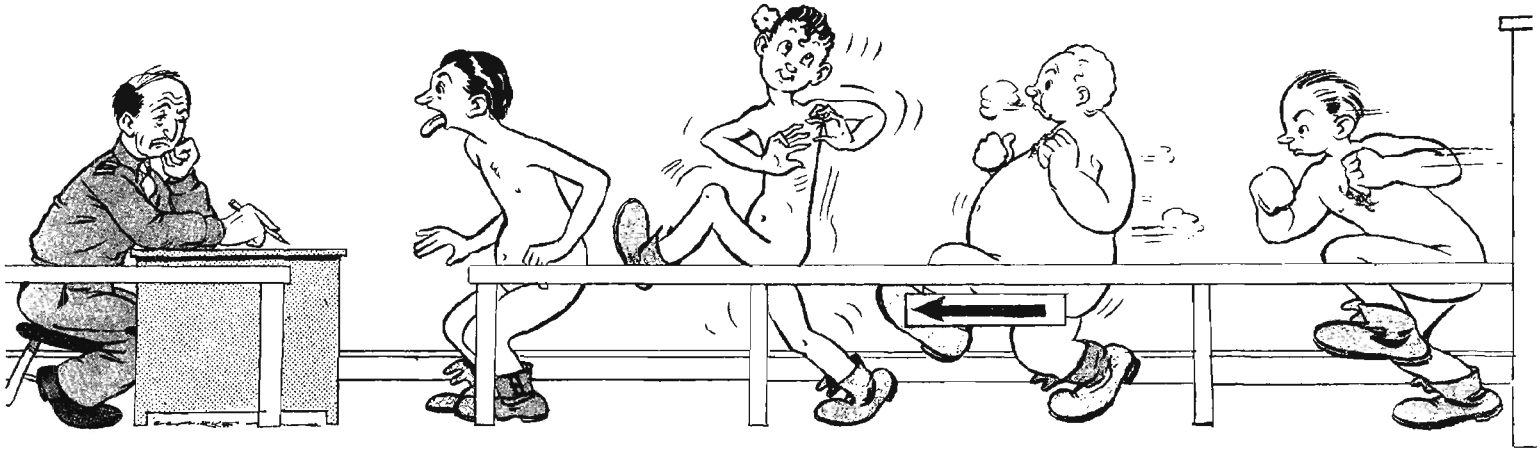
We removed our clothes as quickly as possible and began to pass before the board of review. By the time the first ten of us had entered the examination room, we were running. So help us God, we were running! The examination reminded one of the antics of a football player warming up. We stooped over, straightened up, stuck our tongues out, and began dressing again. Two men failed to pass. One had found the time to stick his tongue out all the way and was diagnosed as suffering from a case of hemorrhoids. The second, was inadvertently discovered to have a hole through his head.

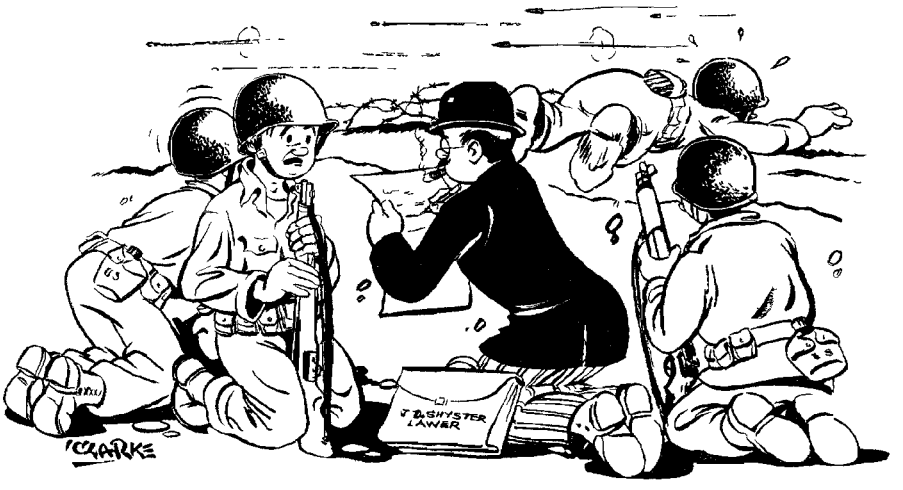
Issue and instruction in use of the light-weight gas mask and distribution to all personnel of two extra blankets, a mattress-cover shroud, four pairs of ski-socks, and one pair of shoe-packs, gave rise to our last rumor on home soil. We were certain we were destined to make a beach landing on Norway.

Twelve-hour passes to nearby New York City were permitted until 0600 of 3 October when the division was alerted, and all passes and telephone calls from camp were terminated. Every possible measure had been taken to insure our safety in combat and our eventual victory. Well trained, toughened physically and mentally for a kind of hell which would have made the devil wince, we were ready to take the best our enemies had to offer. The rest was in the hands of God and a nebulous phantom termed Luck.

Late in the afternoon of 5 October, the entire division, comprising 762 officers, 44 warrant officers, and 13,189 enlisted men, began the exodus from Camp Kilmer. The first part of our trip was comparatively easy. Our duffle bags had been transported by truck to waiting trains and all we had to carry was a 70-pound pack with horse-shoe roll, rifle, overcoat, cartridge belt, and steel helmet. It was upon arriving at the rail terminus in Jersey City, that our troubles began. We were now confronted with the problem of walking approximately one-quarter of a mile to the Communipaw Avenue ferry slip with a duffle bag weighing in excess of 100 pounds in addition to our initial load.

Knees buckling, sweat pouring down spines and faces in tiny rivulets, we staggered toward the ferry under loads which in many cases were heavier than their bearers. How unfortunate for the peace of the world that Germans had not been equipped by American standards and been forced to walk that last mile from train to ferry and from ferry to transport. The





Innovation of the Infiltration Course gave us our first taste of what it feels like to advance under fire. A couple of enterprising Philadelphia lawyers could have increased their income considerably making up last wills and testaments.

Nazi Superman myth would soon have dissolved into a caldron of perspiration. Before we had reached the ferry most of us deeply regretted that extra five pounds of personal equipment we had crammed into our duffle bags.

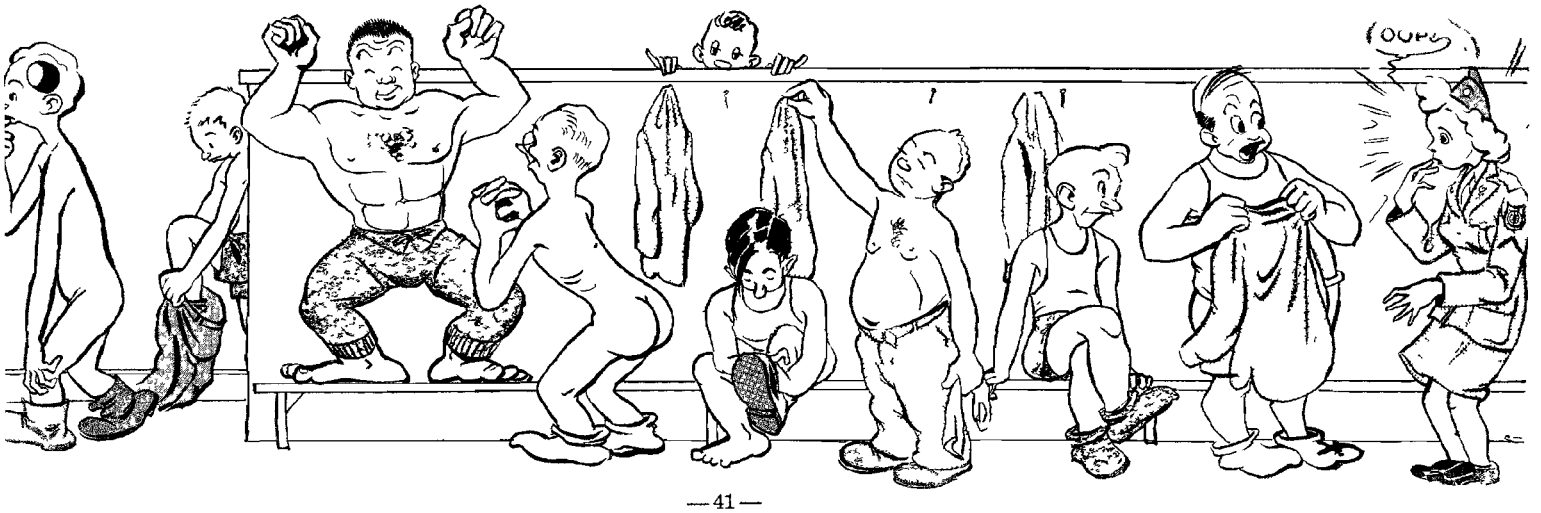
The ferry-ride across the Hudson to the New York bank was of about thirty minutes duration, and we worshipped every second of it. By the time we had tied up at the slip in mid-town Manhattan, we had regained sufficient strength to lift our equipment and totter forward. Ashore, we were greeted by a band and a long flight of stairs which led to the pier. The band was bad but the stairs were worse. Somehow, we managed to climb to the pier and reach the end of the dock where we lined up according to the numbers chalked on our helmets, dropped our duffle bags, and waited the signal to board ship.

The Red Cross workers were there, of course, dispensing the inevitable coffee and doughnuts. Trim and neat in their well-tailored uniforms, they rushed back and forth with fresh pots of coffee in that officious and business-like manner women will adopt at such moments. They thought they understood how we felt, but they didn't. Not even a woman can understand the complex emotions of men leaving a country they love without knowing whether or not they will return. Sooner or later the ladies in field-grey would expend their supply of doughnuts. Then, they would go home.

Slowly, we began filing up the gangplank, onto the steel main deck, and down into the holds which had been converted into sleeping quarters by the simple expedient of erecting tiers of iron frames over which strips of canvas had been roped. We have no doubt that the designer of those "beds" was a patriot to the core and that his object was to crowd as many troops as possible into available bottoms. But there must either have been a sadistic streak in his character, or an error in his figures relative to the necessary space between bunks. Sleeping on one's back for fifteen nights with a canvas-covered butt pressing into one's face is not very conducive to restful slumber, effortless breathing, or morale.

For the first night, at least, the hard, hammock-like bunks didn't bother us too much. We were so exhausted that we could have slept on rocks. We had expected to find ourselves on the high seas next morning, but we awoke to discover that we were still in port.

The fact that we were ordered to remain below, however, warned us that we soon would be leaving the great harbor. We spent the time gossiping, trying



vainly to stack our equipment so that we would have enough space to move through the aisles sideways, and straining our ears and senses for the first sign that our ship was moving.

At last, with a display of power which sent vibrations through every steel plate from bow to stern, the giant screws began turning. Like an enraged herd of bulls preparing to charge a foe, the great ships snorted, backed from the pier into mid-stream, and headed toward the mouth of the Hudson.

With the precision of well-trained soldiers, the 11 ships comprising our convoy, fell into pre-arranged positions. One destroyer and four destroyer escorts, joined us with the unexpectedness of legerdemain, and at 0930 hours of 6 October, we passed Miss Liberty and headed for the open sea and the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles.

Troops of the 100th Division occupied four transports, the *George Washington, George Gordon, McAndrews* and *Mooremac Moon.* Major units carried on the seven remaining ships were the 103rd Infantry Division and the Advance Party for the 14th Armored Division.

By the time permission was granted for us to come up on deck, some Centurymen were feeling the first nausea of seasickness. The sea was comparatively calm, however, and most of us were too excited by the limitless expanse of grey-blue water to give much thought to our stomachs. We had seen this scene a thousand times in moving pictures and Sunday rotogravure supplements: the sleek, grey destroyers, their outlines broken by camouflage, zig-zagging through the mist; the perfect marine composition of the evenly spaced transports; the worrying blimp and hawk-eyed PBYs. Now we were part of it. A chill of pride crept up and down our spines as we lined the rail and watched the unchanging scene. Despite bottomless seas, submarine wolf packs, and the gibes of tyrants, we were adding our weight toward the achievement of victory. Even the cynics and the pessimists smiled. Here, before us, was only an iota of the power of America.

Chow was an experience. Those of us who could eat, lined up around the deck twice daily and descended the almost vertical, ladder-like steps to the kitchen where meal tickets were punched and our mess-kits were filled.

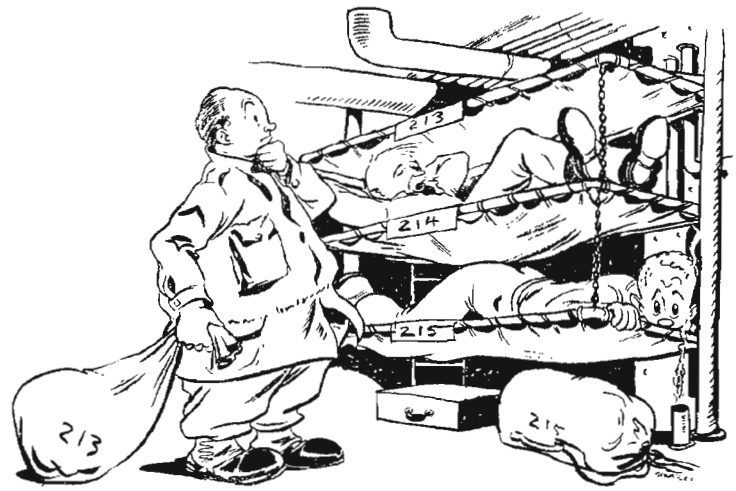
The interesting part about eating aboard ship was that one could never be quite certain whether or not he would reach the tables with half a meal or none at all. This suspense was generally made worse for those of us aboard the smaller transports where the problem of retaining what food we swallowed soon became a major one.

The days were spent leisurely and details were not too numerous if one could find a comfortable place to hide. Both deck and rail space were at a premium, the latter for obvious reasons. French and German classes

were conducted daily. Entertainment was furnished by unit bands, soldier actors, boxing matches and the thrill which comes with holding four aces. Gambling was forbidden, but it is remarkable what an excellent medium of exchange match-sticks will make. Moving pictures were shown every night, and for the price of a seven-course meal at the Waldorf one could generally talk a crew member into supplying a Spam sandwich for a midnight snack.

We were six days out of New York when the hurricane hit us. Described by veteran sailors as the worst storm in 17 years, we battled the mountainous seas for 24 hours before being forced to change course and run with the gale. At one point, the 8,000-ton *McAndrews* came within five degrees of capsizing and later that night narrowly missed colliding with the 26,000-ton *Washington.* The storm raged for 48 hours before spending itself. By the time it was over, the retching of the sick had almost drowned the roar of the sea. Even those of us blessed with gyroscope stomachs didn't eat very much. With all ports and hatches necessarily sealed against the furious waves, and no one permitted on deck, the air in the holds soon became foul and stagnant. On the smaller ships, men prayed unashamedly as the sea swallowed us and then spewed us up again like feathers swirling in a cataract. Then, as suddenly as it had descended upon us, the hurricane gave up the fight, leaving only a trail of excited, grey-green water to mark its passing. The clouds parted to reveal a patch of blue, like a shirt-sleeve peeking through a worn, grey cloak. Hatches were opened and we rushed on deck. For the first time since we had left port, we began to feel like veteran sailors.

As if realizing they had been bested, the weather remained clear and the sea calm for the next four days. Time passed slowly. We were kept informed of world events by daily mimeographed newspapers, published aboard most of the transports. The unchanging panorama of ships and heaving sea, became unbearably



Sleeping on one's back for 15 nights with a canvas-covered butt pressing into one's face is not very conducive to restful slumber.

monotonous. Even the excitement of dodging the "men with the hose"—the sailors on cleanup detail who indiscriminately soaked decks and unwary passengers —lost its humor. We began to gripe about rifle inspections, gas mask drill, physical training. We chafed at the close quarters, the long chow-lines, the difficulty of making soap lather in the salt water showers.

And then, on the afternoon of the twelfth day, with one shouted word, we forgot salt water, forgot griping, forgot even the war and seasickness. Dead ahead, rising out of the sea like a huge, white fog-bank, was land. Land! For a moment, at least, we were explorers. We were Columbus, Balboa and Magellan. We were Hudson, Drake and Vespucci, adventurers discovering the Old World anew. Shouting, cheering, singing, and shaking each other's hand, we lined the rails and peered through the mist for the first clear sight of the shoreline.

Like a colossal frieze molded before our eyes by a giant, invisible hand, the formidable cliffs of the African coast took shape and color. Signaling orders, the destroyers closed in, and we glided past the ancient

city of Tangiers and sailed proudly into the narrow waters of the Strait of Gibraltar. Hugging the coast of Africa, we watched the lights of Ceuta blink a cheerful welcome to starboard. From the Spanish shore, the electric bulbs of a tiny fishing village twinkled like grounded yellow stars, and as night hid the European coastline, mighty Gibraltar loomed defiantly out of the darkness.

We continued to sail eastward through the night to a point off Algiers before turning north toward France. A high wind, which whipped the sea into bumpy whitecaps, caused even those of us with strong stomachs to experience sensations of nausea. The calm, blue Mediterranean can become most inconsiderate of travel posters and Chamber of Commerce advertisements, as Odysseus and Centurymen found out. Retching was in order again.

Word soon spread that we would reach Marseilles the following morning, 20 October. The eventful day dawned warm and clear. The gale had subsided, and a brilliant sun combined with a brisk breeze to turn the spray into myriads of aquamarines and send them skipping over the foam.

In mid-morning, gulls, the harbingers of land, began circling over our masts, diving to snatch bits of garbage from the sea. Huge masses of refuse floated past. Fishing boats and other small craft bobbed around us like buoys. To port, a white hospital ship headed westward toward the ocean and home. We wondered about the occupants of that mercy ship, wondered what suffering it enclosed, what heroic stories its mangled cargo could tell. Wondered which of us would go home that way, too.

And then, with the queer, sliding sensation of sailing from an ocean into the still water of a lake, we were in the magnificent harbor of Marseilles. A pilot boat, flying the Free French flag and looking ludicrously tiny in comparison with our transport, tied up alongside us. The pilot came aboard while the crew, smiling and waving toil-worn hands, exchanged cheerful repartee with those of us who could speak French.

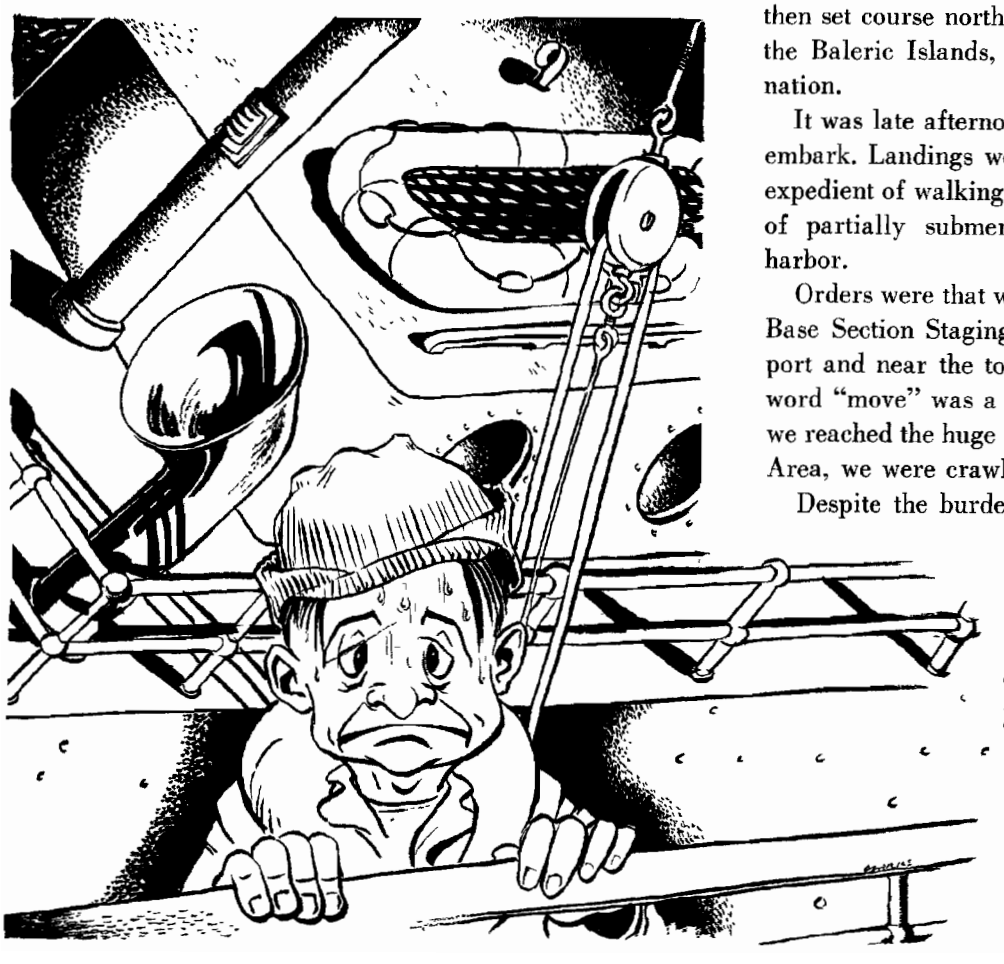
Slowly, the transports began moving in single file through a fairyland of tiny rock islets which spotted the harbor like giant stalagmites of white, blue and purple. Port facilities had been completely destroyed and we dropped anchor some distance off shore. Our 15-day voyage was over.

The general course of the convoy had been southeast for the first day out of New York, then due east, passing 180 miles south of the Azores to a point 70 miles off the coast of Casablanca. From here, we had turned north, sailed past Tangiers and thence eastward into the Mediterranean, continuing along the coast of Africa until we had reached Algiers. The convoy had then set course north again, passed south and east of the Baleric Islands, and, finally, reached our destination.

It was late afternoon before word was given to disembark. Landings were made by LCIs or the simple expedient of walking across planks laid over the hulls of partially submerged ships which cluttered the harbor.

Orders were that we move immediately to the Delta Base Section Staging Area, some 12 miles from the port and near the town of Septemes. The use of the word "move" was a deceitful misnomer. By the time we reached the huge plateau designated as the Staging Area, we were crawling.

Despite the burden of full-field packs with horse-



The calm, blue Mediterranean can become most inconsiderate of travel posters and Chamber of Commerce advertisements, as Odysseus and Centurymen found out.

shoe rolls, overcoats, helmets, rifles and cartridge belts the first few miles of the "Death March of Marseilles" were interesting to the point of causing us to forget the uphill road. The cosmopolitan aspect of the great city, accentuated by the colorful uniforms of colonial troops, caused even sophisticated New Yorkers to gape in wonder. There were picturesque, beaded curtained bars patronized by turbaned Gurkhas and red-fezzed Sengalese. Dirty little children dogged our steps begging "cigarette pour papa" or "chung-gum." Charcoal-burning automobiles coughed up the steep, cobblestone streets to be overtaken by careening, bell-clanging triple trolley cars crammed to bursting with civilians. Like soldiers the world over, we commented upon the women, taking note of their green, blue, orange and white tinted hair, whistling softly when we passed a girl with a pretty face or trim figure, comparing them generally with American girls.

But a man even loses interest in women after he has walked ten miles up the side of a mountain with 85 pounds of equipment on his shoulders. It was dark now. From the harbor came the hum of a plane followed by the staccato pumpf of ack-ack. Those were the first shots we had heard fired at an enemy. The war was very real now. Flat-footed, we plodded forward on legs which had turned into knotted rubber bands. Men began to drop back. "Breaks" came more frequently.

Finally, after marching approximately twelve miles, we left the road and cut cross-country over plowed fields. Just as it seemed we could not take another step, the order to break ranks was given. We had come to the end of the long march. Loosening our packs, we dropped to the cold, wet ground. Those of us who had the ambition, opened K-rations, which we ate cold. Then, rolling ourselves in our blankets, and with the earth for a pillow, we shut our eyes to the stars.

We awoke next morning cold and wet from a rain which had fallen during the night. With the efficiency which comes from long months of training in the field, we pitched our pup-tents and began getting our area in order. Ours was the first full division arriving from the States to occupy the DBS Area, and facilities consisted of a series of plowed fields which, after several days of continuous rain and the pressure of thousands of GI boots, soon turned into shin-deep mud. Despite these handicaps, we made a satisfactory impression when Lt. Gen. Jacob L. Devers, commander of the 6th Army Group, conducted a tour of inspection on 23 October.

Practice firing was instituted almost immediately, and this time there was a new ring to the reports of rifles and machine guns—new and reassuring. Oceans no longer separated us from the enemy. It was good to know we were ready.

The command to proceed northward came sooner than most had expected. On the morning of 29 October, with our transportation T/O bolstered by vehicles from the veteran 3rd and 45th Divisions, the 399th Infantry Combat Team began moving from the Staging Area by motor convoy toward the Seventh Army sector. The route of march followed the centuries-old invasion path up the valley of the Rhone River with overnight stops at Valence and Dijon.

Three days and some 500 miles from Marseilles,

Religious services were conducted on the rain-swept Delta Base hilltop.

Centurymen polish up their "shootin' arns" while awaiting the order to move up.

Removing protective cosmolene from heavy weapons after disembarking in France.

the 399th detrucked at the French hamlet of Fremifontaine in the foothills of the Vosges Mountains. Wearily, the 399ers dragged their equipment from the vehicles which had carried them on the last leg of their journey to the front lines, and waited patiently in the gathering darkness for the command to bivouac.

In the blacked-out village and surrounding woods, the men spoke in whispers, jumped at the sound of an approaching friend. We were so "green," we expected an attack momentarily even though we were five miles from the front lines. No one griped and even the customary wise-cracks and horseplay were lacking. There was no need for a command to dig-in. Security guards were posted and the 399ers rolled themselves in their blankets. Through the night, the big guns echoed loudly, illuminating the sky like flashes of heat lightning, while we conjectured as to whether the shells were "coming in" or "going out." But youth and tired bodies can overcome even the boom of death. The roar of the artillery soon blended into a lullabye.

The Vosges Mountains Campaign

That I may truly say with the hook-nosed fellow of Rome, I came, I saw, and overcame. —Henry IV.

Long before dawn, the cooks were scurrying about, lighting gasoline stoves, preparing breakfast. Almost imperceptibly, like a tarantula stretching one of its multitudinous legs at a time, the regiment came to life. There was no sound of bugles calling reveille, no snarling 1st Sergeants, no "goofing off" while others did the work. This was 1 November, the day of our date with Destiny. A change comes over men at such a time; a change as miraculous as the transformation of a pumpkin into a gilded coach, with results even more inspiring. For here was the miracle of the fellowship of man come true. There is neither time nor inclination to give thought to a man's antecedents or position in society when life is at stake. Foxholes are considerably more important.

The sun came up like a flaming red rocket, an unusual sight this time of year in the rain-swept Vosges foothills. Key officers and men who knew, expected the 399th to remain in this forward bivouac area until 3 November when relief of the 45th Inf. Div. was to be initiated. Orders from Seventh Army and VI Corps, under which the Century Division was to operate, had read with the usual official dryness: "Relief of 45th Inf. Div. by 100th Inf. Div. will be initiated on 3 November and completed not later than 9 November."

During the afternoon of 1 November, however, less than 24 hours after the 399th had arrived at Fremi-

Next to our weapons, our helmets were our most valuable possession. The tin hats served for everything from cuspidors to washtubs.

Hot towels and pretty manicurists were sadly lacking in this tonsorial parlor.

A couple of Centurymen demonstrate the delicate technique of helmet laundering.

There was a new ring to the reports of rifles and MGs—new and reassuring.

fontaine, orders were suddenly received from VI Corps instructing the 399th to move up immediately and begin relief of the battered 45th's 179th Inf. Regt. A hurried staff meeting was summoned by Col. Andrew C. Tychsen, 399th commander and veteran of 32 years military service. Excess equipment was gathered and stored. Last minute checks were made of weapons. And then, as the afternoon shadows began lengthening over the fields surrounding the Alsatian hamlet, a convoy of two and a half ton trucks moved out carrying the first regiment of Centurymen eastward into World War II and the opening engagement of the Vosges Mountains campaign.

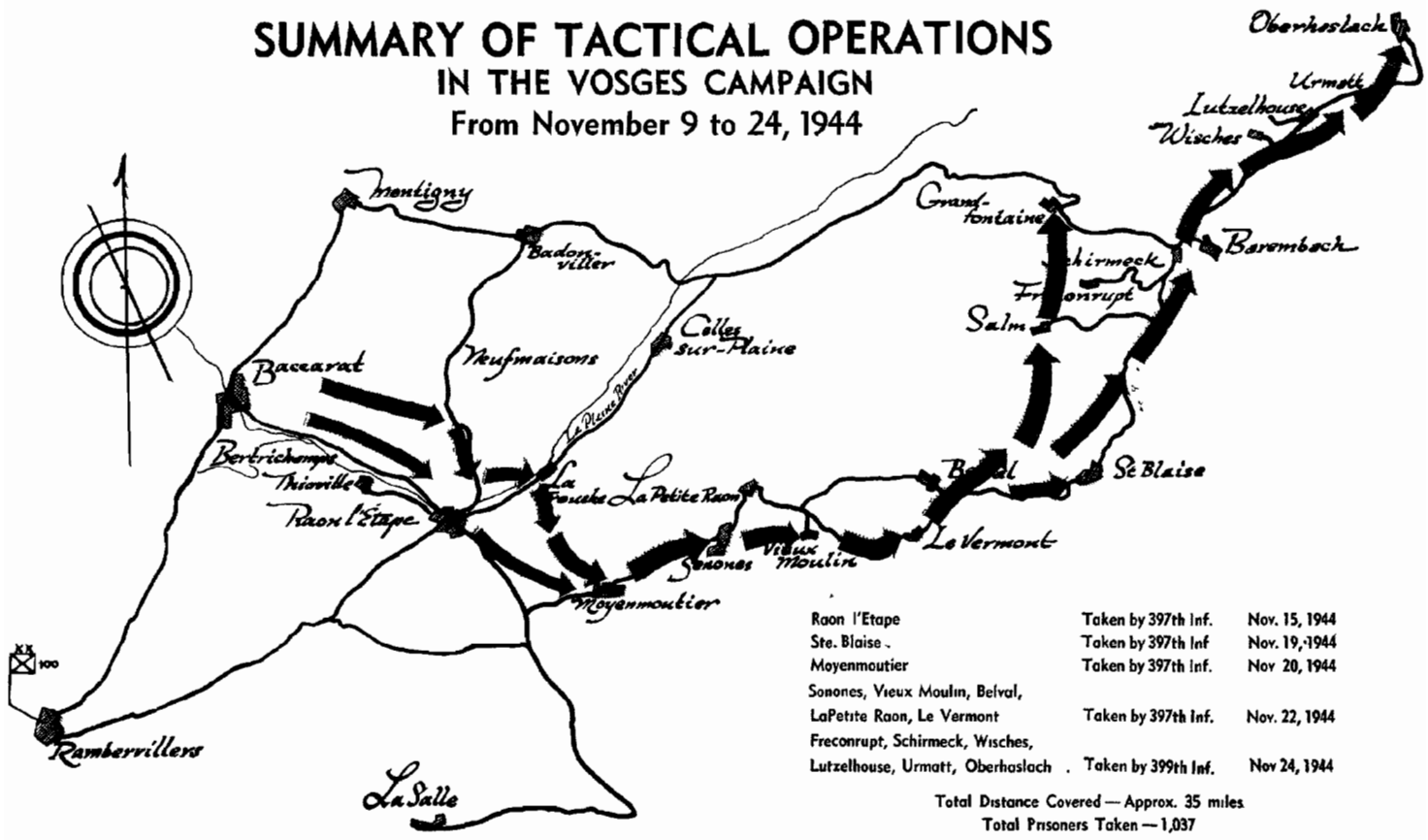
The first combat experience of the 100th Division divides itself into two phases: the initial period from 1 to 12 November was, except for the action of the 399th Inf., a time of moving into position and of intermittent contact with the enemy; the second period of two weeks, following this preparation, saw the Century Division in force spearhead the attack along the whole Seventh Army front in a drive which snapped the hinge of the enemy's defense, forced him to abandon his intended "Winter Line," and sent him reeling back for more than 35 miles to Strasbourg.

The situation on the Seventh Army's front was none too promising for a sensational breakthrough in early November. The veteran 3rd and 45th Divs. were badly in need of reinforcements. Having battled northward from the Mediterranean coast of France, the Seventh had turned its attack eastward where it was forced to pause at the hitherto impenetrable barrier of the Vosges mountains which blocked the drive to the Rhine. Winter comes early in this region, and the snow and ice which soon was to carpet the treacherous mountain trails would have given pause to Hannibal. The enemy had chosen his defensive terrain well, and had settled back in this mountain fastness secure in the belief that what had never before been accomplished in history would not meet with success now.

The sector which we were taking over from the 45th was probably among the worst for offensive operations on the entire Western Front. Extending from Baccarat on the left, through St. Benoit and St. Remy to the southeast, it encompassed a terrain heavily forested with ground which rose sharply to the east and included the formidable Meurthe River. Baccarat, straddling the Meurthe, had earlier been captured by the French. Its bridge, seized intact, was the only usable one across the river in this area. The remainder of the division front, though roughly parallel to the river, was still some distance to the west of it.

It was into this difficult strategic situation that the well-trained but battle-green Centurymen moved forward toward dusk of 1 November. At 1711 hours, Btry. B of the 925th F A Battalion, located near the town of Houssaras, and attached to the 160th F A Battalion of the 45th Div., fired the first round to be sent against the enemy by the 100th Div. That shot, hurled through the dimness of the late afternoon, was fired for registration of one of the battery's pieces. It was a sound which in the months to come was to be heard in a terrifying crescendo by the enemy.

During the next few days, Combat Team 9 was to establish a number of "Division Firsts": first to enter actual front-line positions, first to send patrols into enemy territory, first to make small-arms contact with the enemy, first to take a prisoner of war, first to stage an attack, first to take an enemy-held town—and first of a different sort—first to suffer casualties. For the initial days of November, therefore, the "Story of the



Century" in combat is the story of CT-9 which entered the line while the rest of us moved up from Marseilles.

Operating under command of the 45th Div., the 399th began relief of the 179th Inf. Regt. in earnest at 0800 of 2 November. By 1910 hours, the 179th had completely withdrawn, and with command of the sector officially given over to Col. Andrew C. Tychsen, the Centurymen were on their own. Attached to the 399th were six tanks of Co. B 191st TD Battalion, two tank destroyers of Co. C 645th TD Battalion, two platoons of Co. C 83rd Chemical Battalion, and Co. C of the 325th Engineers. The 925th F A Battalion was officially attached on 3 November. This unit, together with the 898th AAA, completed the fighting strength of Combat Team-9.

The regimental front stretched from northwest to southeast through dense woods, the eastern end of the Forêt de St. Benoit. In front lay La Salle, at the head of an open valley split by a road leading north to St. Remy, two miles away. On this first day, no one tried to start a fight. The Centurymen wanted a few precious hours to adjust minds and bodies to the reality of front line combat. A contact patrol from the 3rd Battalion found Co. I 157th Inf., 45th Div., to the north, and a patrol from the 1st Battalion made contact with Co. G 15th Inf., 3rd Div., to the south. With the 2nd Battalion in reserve, the 1st and 3rd Battalions were finding that enemy mortar shells burst without warning unless a man learns to recognize the soft cough of the mortar tube clearing its throat. One tank destroyer in support of the 3rd Battalion was knocked out when an enemy mortar shell scored a direct hit on its engine.

The 3rd day of November 1944 was the first day of actual combat for the 399th Inf. and for any unit of the division. Co. L sent out a combat patrol to look for the enemy to the front of the 3rd Battalion. As the patrol was going up Hill 416.9 a mile east of St. Remy, it approached a group of 14 men digging in on the slope. The patrol was less than 50 yards away, when they suddenly realized that these were Germans digging in. The Co. L men opened fire, and immediately all hell broke loose as the enemy spattered the area with heavy fire from entrenched and strongly fortified positions. After a fire fight which lasted an hour, probably the longest hour in the lives of these soldiers, the Co. L patrol withdrew, minus three men. Later, with the aid of supporting weapons, the company was able to recover two of their casualties.

Co. B also sent out a patrol which returned at 0930 without having run into the enemy. The 1st Battalion