



# THUNDERBOLT ACROSS EUROPE

U.S.









# *The Thunderbolt*

## *âCt()J-j Europe*



A HISTORY  
OF THE 83d INFANTRY DIVISION  
1942 -1945



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**D**EDICATED

TO THE MEN OF THE 83D INFANTRY DIVISION  
WHO FOUGHT, SUFFERED, AND DIED FOR THEIR  
COUNTRY .



OBJECTIVES FOR WHICH WE FIGHT:

*"TO REAFFIRM FAITH IN FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS,  
IN THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF THE HUMAN PERSON,  
IN EQUAL RIGHTS, OF MEN AND WOMEN  
AND OF NATIONS LARGE AND SMALL."\**

They are simple words. It is with that same sincere simplicity that the men and officers of this division dedicated themselves to the task of defeating Hitler's war machine. This history is not, therefore, a proper forum in which to speak of glamour; it was a most serious matter for us all.

The objectives gained and the victories won in the campaigns of Normandy, Northern France, the Rhineland, the Ardennes and Central Europe did not come easily. The work required was grim, dirty and deadly, but the task was completed through the courageous, self-sacrificing acts of the men whose splendid achievements are recorded within these pages.

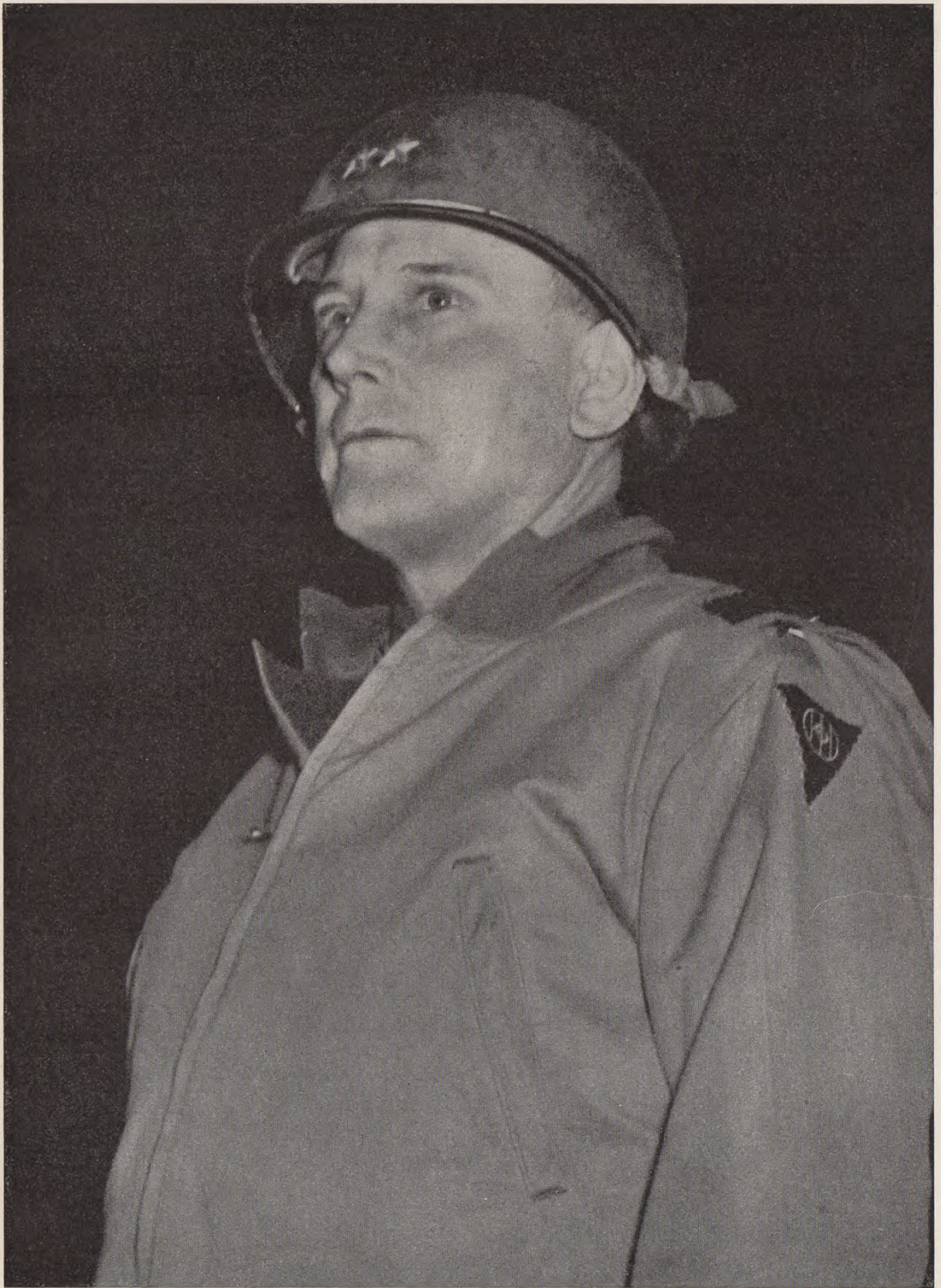
We mourn our dead. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to those who must go through life with the handicap of battle injuries. We charge those who have survived with the resolution to apply themselves to their future roles with the same high unselfish nobility of purpose that they have shown in combat.

For myself, I am deeply thankful to have commanded such valiant men.

\* United Nations Charter

ROBT. C. MACON  
MAJOR GENERAL, U.S. ARMY  
COMMANDING











# Training the Thunderbolt

Life for the 83d Infantry Division began anew on August 15, 1942, when it was re-activated at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, under command of Major General Frank W. Milburn. The cadre, officers and noncommissioned officers who had received army basic training at least once and who were assigned to the newly activated division to assist in their organization and training, was on hand in camp a month ahead of activation day.

But army life was something still very new to those of us who flocked to Atterbury during the autumn of 1942 to become Thunderbolts. Fresh from civilian occupations of all types, from high schools and colleges, and representing all of the forty-eight states, we joined the 83d still wondering what was in store for us. At the reception center we had heard all the rumors, had taken the ribbing of the Service Command "veterans", had withstood the jibes of the sometimes overbearing Pfc's (who might just as well have been five-star generals so far as their influence over us was concerned), and had even survived inoculation after inoculation. Now we, ourselves, were going to become soldiers, part of an outfit. No longer a "Joe" with a number and no unit, but members of a division. From now on we would be distinguished from reception and training center recruits by the shoulder patch we would wear.

Gold letters superimposed on a black triangle comprise the shoulder patch of the 83d Division. The letters spell "OHIO", for when the division was originally activated in World War I, the majority of its members hailed from the Buckeye State. This was no longer true, because the modern Thunderbolts came from all parts of the country.

During the cold winter months that followed our arrival at Camp Atterbury we started to become soldiers. From November 9th, 1942, when the division first reached full strength, to February 9th, 1943, we were engaged in the Mobilization Training Program (Basic Training). We learned to drill, to run, to climb, to fall. In snow, in rain, in mud, we learned to creep and to crawl, to shoot and to bayonet. We dug foxholes, only to fill them in again; we erected tents, only to take them down again; we learned to lay mines, only to pick them up again. And we marched. Boy, how we marched! "Hut, wup, hep, four!" "Whyinell can't



they call, 'one, two, three, four', in plain English, "we wondered. We didn't realize that in a couple months we would be the guys murdering the King's English. It was rough at times, very rough on the older fellows. We all accomplished physical feats that we would have considered impossible a few months before. When we thought we had reached the limit, we found we had hardly started, and we went on and on, but we stayed with it, and we finished it. We finished Basic training, still alive, indeed, in tip-top physical condition. We were learning how to soldier.







It wasn't all work and training though-not quite. We usually had every other week-end to ourselves. These we used to visit Indianapolis, Columbus, and other cities and towns. Chicagoans spent half their week-end travelling in order to spend the other half at home. On Saturday evenings there were always GI dances in town at the local USO or other recreational center. On Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons, we danced at the Service Clubs in camp. In November, Bob Hope visited Atterbury and entertained us with the biggest show ever to hit the 83d while the division was in the States. And we could always see a movie in camp, provided we weren't slated for a night problem.



Completion of Basic Training by no means meant the end of our training. We were to learn that training was a continuous process in the Army, war or no war. The things we did and learned the next few weeks came under the official heading "Combined Training". This time we trained in groups instead of individually. We learned to fight in squads, platoons, companies, battalions and regiments. Collectively we were taught to advance, to defend, to withdraw. We "captured" hills, "demolished" pillboxes, "seized" bridges and crossroads, and trapped or cut off the "enemy". We did these things in the daytime, in the evenings, and in complete blackout. At times the entire division left their comfortable barracks, PXs, and service clubs to bivouac in the fields of Atterbury and sleep in "pup" tents, to eat out of messkits, and to wash out of helmets. And always we marched. Now it wasn't so much drilling and parading but honest foot-slogging. Although it seemed that we hiked







around the world more than once, actually we limited ourselves to 25 miles at a crack. We found our way by maps, by compass, and by stars. Now we knew the full significance of the song, "What do we do in the Infantry? - we march, we march, we march!"

In May, something new was added to our program. Going through the Ranger Course became the main topic for discussion among members of the 83d, and it also became the division's pet gripe. To become "Rangers", we had to cross numerous creeks on rope bridges, while playful Engineers detonated dynamite in the water beneath us. If we fell we got wet, of course; but if we made the crossing successfully, we got wet anyway because of the spray tossed by the exploding dynamite. We crawled and wiggled through and under barbed wire entanglements of various types, then crossed a human bridge, in which one man spans the divide by use of his body and the others crawl over him. We lived through that too, and we got over it, but we never forgot it.

Then came maneuvers. Maneuvers! We had heard that term kicked around the way we had heard "Basic Training" at the Reception Centers. Early in June, the Division was alerted to participate in Tennessee Maneuvers. Although none of us knew much, if any-





ing, of what actually took place during an Army maneuver, we all secretly dreaded that trip south. But we went south. The division set up its command post in Horn Springs, and for a couple of weeks we brushed up on our training by repeating battalion and regimental combat problems. On July 5th, we started real maneuvers and found again that it wasn't much like what we had expected. During the first four problems, we were on the defense, but we found that the division thought that the best defense was to attack. It was hot and dusty, and we were thirsty and tired, damn tired some nights. But we followed orders and "fought" the "enemy". Apparently we didn't "snafu" things, because the division was later commended for its performance in Tennessee, something unusual for the youngest outfit to participate in maneuvers. ("Snafu" is a word we learned at Atterbury and means



"situation normal, all fouled up".} We learned lots of army and infantry terms those first couple months. We were "veterans" now so we used this peculiar jargon like veterans. There was "tarfu", "susafu", "T. S." and many others. It was all part of the great change that takes place when a peace loving man sheds civvies and dons ODs.

Our maneuver problems were interspersed with short rest periods, during which we rode into the nearest town (if we could catch a ride). There we quenched our thirst with cokes and beer, but that was about all. We found these small towns, the names of which are now forgotten, to be overcrowded with soldiers and with little to offer in the form of entertainment or recreation. Still, it was better than lugging an M-1 across a dusty field. On August 15th, we celebrated the Division's first anniversary. It wasn't quite the type of celebration that might have taken place had we been in a regular camp, but we enjoyed ourselves and observed the date in a manner which befitted the occasion.

Finally we "licked" the "enemy" and shoved off for Springfield, Tennessee, to await orders to move to camp. Later we moved by "shuttling" to Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky, that is, we marched fifteen miles each day and rode thirty-five miles in trucks. We were all glad to be there once we arrived, and our appreciation of such conveniences as barracks, indoor latrines, service clubs and post exchanges, was far keener than ever before.

With half of the division taking off at one time, we all enjoyed an earned fifteen days furlough during the month that followed. For many of us it was our first visit home since induction. It was our first opportunity to give our wives, sweethearts, and families first-hand





accounts of life in the Army. But we didn't spend too much time at home spinning training yarns and passing on the latest latrine rumors. (Most consistent rumor among Thunderbolts while in the States was that the 83d would "never leave the U. S.") We went out and had fun, visited old, familiar haunts, looked up old friends-that is, those who were still around. We played, we danced, we drank, we enjoyed ourselves. We availed ourselves of the special privileges afforded "servicemen in uniform" by our home town civic and business organizations. The time raced by and it seemed as though we were saying "Goodbye" before the echo of our "Hello" had faded out.

Back at camp, the division swung right back into the training routine, but now we were striving for proficiency. It was more marksmanship, unit problems, tactics, bivouacs and marches. All of us spent half the months of October and November in the field, but we were spared a more rugged winter existence when the division was alerted to move to California for desert training. The latter was eventually cancelled, but we did not return to pup tents.

It was December now, and General Milburn departed to take command of the XXI Corps. For a few days, Brigadier General Robert Montague assumed command of the Division. Brigadier General Robert C. Macon, a veteran of the landings in Africa and then Assistant to the Division Commander, was directed to lead the 83d, which he has done ever since. About this time, too, Colonel Claude V. Ferenbaugh, formerly a member of General Fredendall's staff in Africa, left







his position with the War Department to assume the duties of Assistant to the Division Commander.

Added interest in training was shown when we reached the stage where we were getting close to "the real thing". Scores of planes swooped over our heads during training, and we tried to identify their type by their silhouettes, their overall design, their engines. Then we were treated to a demonstration of dive bombing, skip bombing and strafing. The Intelligence & Reconnaissance Platoons and the Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop were engaged in Corps combat intelligence tests. The infantry and the artillery were training together. Doughboys of the rifle companies advanced under the continuous cover of an artillery barrage, "Rolling Barrage" was G-3's name for it, and it was the closest thing to actual combat that we had experienced since going through the Infiltration Course. We were getting close to the pay-off.



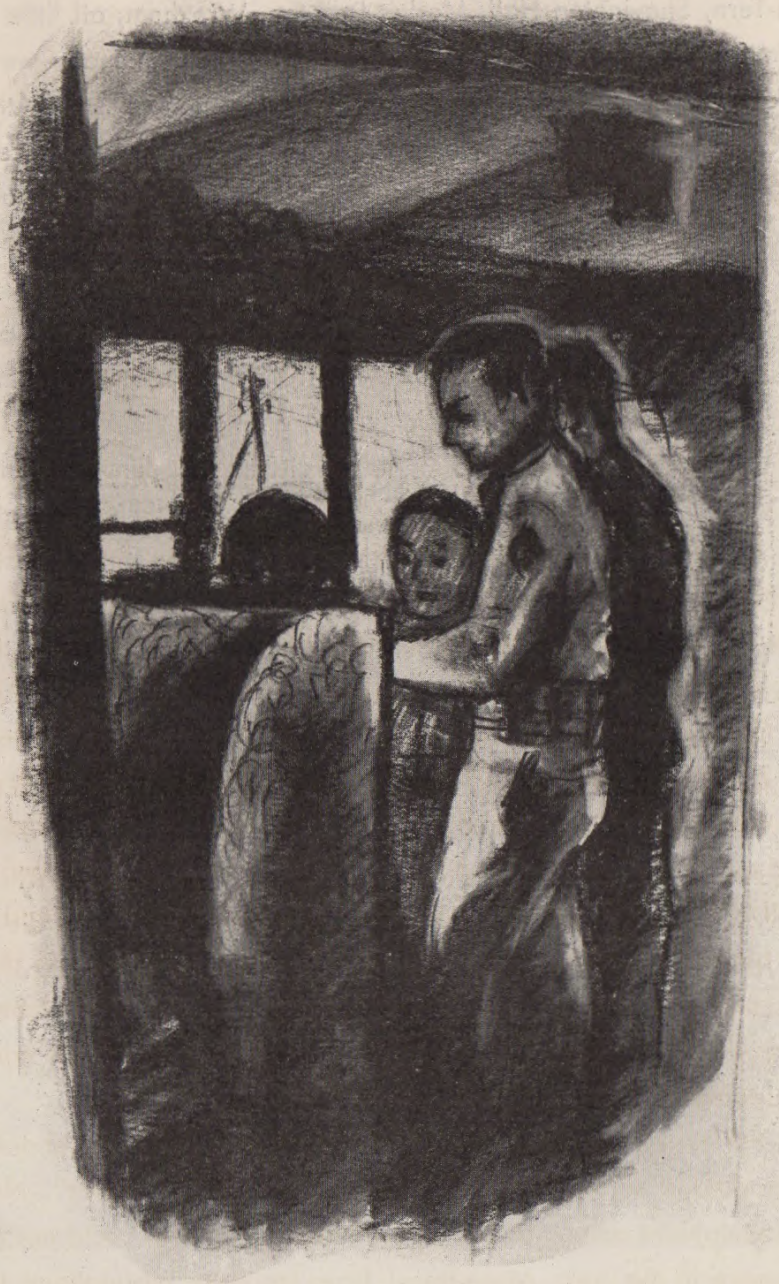
## US in the UK

Finally it happened! The 83d Infantry Division was alerted for overseas movement. Rumors flew thick and fast. Some of us knew we were heading for the vicinity of New York, and a few of us knew we were eventually going to England. For most of us, however, it was a big question mark,-Europe or the Pacific??? Those next few weeks were nightmares for Company Clerks, Supply Sergeants and Staff Sections. It was no picnic for the rest of the Division, either. A new word was added to our vocabulary-"POM" (Preparation for Overseas Movement). We were POM'd for this and POM'd for that. We were issued new clothes, new equipment, and new weapons. We wondered how we could carry it all or get it all in our duffel bags. There were showdown inspections and inoculations galore. When we boarded the trains for the East, everything we owned in the Army was either on our backs or in our bags, and we carried it all at one time, too! Some stenographers and clerks were weighed down still further by the addition of portable typewriters. That seemed like overdoing it!

For several days we Thunderbolts poured into Camp Shanks, N. Y. From the day we were alerted our movements and whereabouts were "secret". New Yorkers, Bostonians and Philadelphians among us bemoaned the fact that they could not advise their families of their presence in the area. More lines! Lines for more inoculations, lines for still more clothing, lines for physical examinations. We heard lectures, went through abandon ship drill, changed our allotments, and made guesses as to our sailing date. All of us sweated out twelve-hour passes to New York City, but only half of us were lucky enough to get into the Big Town.

On April 6, 1944, we sailed from New York Harbor for England. Some of us travelled on American ships, while others were aboard British and Canadian vessels. Many of us slept on triple-decker bunks, while some were less fortunate and had to sleep in hammocks or on the deck. The quality and quantity of the food varied on each ship. There were card games, scheduled calisthenics, boat drills, some reading facilities, and discussions of daily rumors to break the monotony of the crossing. We were part of a very forge convoy, and





other vessels were all around us as far as the eyes could see. Two weeks that seemed like two months finally ended when we docked at Liverpool, where trains were waiting to convey us to our new camp.

England was overcrowded in those days. The tiny island bulged with planes, guns, trucks and soldiers, all waiting and preparing for the inevitable assault on Festung Europa. So the 83d was split and sent to various places in the Midlands, all in the general vicinity of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire. Instead of being together in one large camp as we were in the States, we found ourselves billeted in places such as Keele Hall, Hadley Hall, Stoke-



on-Tern, Shavington Hall, Market Drayton, Wrexham, all little country towns and villages. We found England quite different from America in many ways. On board the "George Washington" and the other ships that brought us across the Atlantic we had read an Army issued booklet concerning English customs and wartime practices. This proved of some help to many of us, but we learned that parts of the booklet were already obsolete. But we got along well with our Allies. We found them friendly, grateful and understanding.

For some of us this visit to England meant an opportunity to see relatives we had not seen for some time; for a few of us it meant a return to our place of birth; for still others among us it meant the first trip away from the States. We met and made friends with the English; we drank beer in their "pubs", attended their dances, visited their theatres. Some of us were to return later to marry the girl we met during our stay in the United Kingdom.

We spent the days and some of the nights training in Wales and in the Midlands. We were putting on the final touches before taking on Hitler's best. We were well primed for D-Day long before that day came. We were charging up Welsh hills, "attacking" English villages, and waterproofing our vehicles when the news of the opening of the "Second Front" reached us. This was what we and the rest of the world had been waiting for. For us it was a question of how long. How long before we would take off to aid our 'fellow Americans and our British and Canadian Allies who had seized the initial foothold in France.

It wasn't long. On D plus 10 (June 16, 1944), the 83d Infantry Division departed from Midlands and headed for the ports of southern England. This was it!!! We were going into battle. The blue chips were down and everything we did or didn't do was really important now, for this was the real McCoy. Training ended, we were now playing for keeps.









# N O R M A N D Y





## *Hell, Hedgerows and Heivies*

The voyage from England to France was to have been short and fast for us. We rated a top priority in everything, for we were needed badly. The beachheads had been won, dearly won, but the men who had made them were hard pressed and were in need of assistance. We had to get there! We got top priority in everything, everything but the weather, as we were rushed out of England and across the Channel. But we didn't rush into France. The weather had been against the Allies since D-Day, and now a great storm arose, seemingly out of nowhere, and prevented us from landing. For nearly a week, the wind, the rain and the waves lashed at Omaha Beach and made life miserable for everyone. We roamed the decks, cleaned and recleaned our weapons, ate our landing rations. From the holds of the ships we drew more ten-in-ones which we tried to heat and cook on the decks. Days and nights passed, the monotony relieved only by wonderment of what the immediate future held in store for us.

Before our eyes lay the cliffs of France and the high-priced beaches bought with the lives and blood of our comrades-in-arms. We could still see some of the obstacles the Jerries had erected to prevent our landing. We thought of the thousands of mines that must have been placed all along the shore. As we looked at the hills and cliffs and at the blasted machine gun and mortar emplacements, we wondered how in hell the first assault waves had ever made it.

Those were sights we shall always remember. Hundreds of other ships were all around us, all part of the massive landing fleet that stood boldly off the shores of Normandy, waiting for the storm to spend itself. Scores of barrage balloons swung lazily in the wind. Occasionally, one broke loose and was carried swiftly away. Muffled sounds of gunfire inland reminded us that the D-Day men were still fighting. We could see fires everywhere along the horizon. Jerry planes circled the enormous fleet, sometimes raising hell, generally flying into sudden death.



The storm finally subsided, and we poured over the sides of our ships into barges and landing craft that were to carry us those last few hundred yards to Europe. Off the barges, we set foot on the soil of France and started the long, tiresome trek across the Normandy beaches and on up the hills and along the trails marked with white tape, towards the front. That first night in France we slept in fields, walled in by the soon to be hated hedgerows. The Division's first command post in France was established in a "circus tent" near Bricqueville. There the orders were received to move towards Carentan and to relieve the hard-hitting and hard-hit 101st Airborne Division.

Carentan | This was the roughest and most hotly contested area in the entire American zone. Landing with their wings of silk the night before D-Day, the airborne infantrymen of the 101st fought alone, entirely surrounded by the enemy. They won their objectives on schedule and were now aligned with other American divisions, holding the ground they had so dearly gained. Under cover of darkness on the nights of 26-27 and 27-28 June, riflemen, machine gunners, mortar crews, artillerymen, engineers, headquarters, and service troops of the 83d Infantry Division moved into front line positions and relieved their airborne comrades. We were already familiar with deep mud and the blackness of moonless nights, but now we were also face to face with a real enemy. We were firing at him; he was firing at







us. We got our first taste of artillery shelling, of enemy air attacks, of that "up to you, alone" feeling. We racked our brains trying feverishly to recall all we had learned in training—all the little things we once thought unnecessary, even silly. On defense, keep your head down; keep your tail down; don't show any lights; remember the password; KEEP YOUR WEAPON HANDY AT ALL TIMES. A hundred times a minute these and many other familiar instructions raced through our minds. We tried to remember all of them, for forgetting any one of them might cost us our lives.

We Thunderbolts "celebrated" July 4th, 1944, in a manner far different from any other July 4th we had known. To be sure, there was plenty of fireworks, but of a deadlier kind than those back home. This was the date we launched our first major attack. We had read of gains measured in islands in the Pacific, of attacks that carried troops miles ahead of their starting point, and of advances by Marines measured in thousands of yards. But this was the first time we had heard of fighting for hedgerows! We found hedgerow fighting treacherous, rugged, nerve-racking, murderous. Even now we find it hard to explain, for it almost defies description. One had to be there to really understand what it was like. Gnarled tree roots and vines as tough and strong as iron hoops, all woven together in an impenetrable wall! Upon completing an advance, we dug our foxholes and slit trenches right up close to the hedges. Doughboys behind us snuggled against the next hedgerow fifty to seventy-five yards to our rear; they also lay prone along the ditches that bordered the hedges on our flanks. Yes, hedges were all around us. And Jerry was all around the





hedges. We could seldom see him and he usually couldn't see, us, but each knew the other was there. The screeching crescendo of burp guns, the muffled crunch of exploding mortar shells, or the rat-a-tat-tats of machine guns never let us forget for a fleeting moment that the Hun was nearby and didn't intend to move. But we made him move. We devised new methods and applied them. There were no gigantic charges, no sensational advances. Just slow, costly movement, creeping and crawling from hedgerow to hedgerow, movement that always drew additional mortar, artillery and machine gun fire. That was the way we advanced in Normandy, hedgerow by hedgerow. We became acquainted as never before with blood, death, fear, and courage. Those were days and nights of living hell. Not until long after, were we to know how decisive this relentless fighting was.





On the memorable day of our initial attack, we were part of General Bradley's famous First U. S. Army, and served directly under "Lightning Joe" Collins and his VII Corps. We jumped off astride the Carentan-Periers road, with the entire division artillery in support. The 322nd FA Bn backed up the 329th Inf., the 323rd FA Bn behind the 330th and the 908th FA Bn behind the 331st and the medium 324th FA in general support reinforcing the fire of the entire group. We also had the VII Corps Artillery on hand with additional support if we needed it. The assault against the Germans' 17th SS Division and 6th Parachute Regiment was slow, costly, hellish. Our advance was bottlenecked by swamps. Jerry knew the routes we would have to take and from well-concealed positions, dug beneath the hedgerows; he contested every field. His mortars and artillery, ranged in on every hedgerow, rained fire on the advancing Thunderbolts. And yet we continued to push the Nazis back. "Buckshots" of the 329th Infantry entered the line, smashed through almost a mile to capture Culot, and eased the pressure against the 330th, which, over on the left of the line, had repelled repeated, vigorous enemy counterattacks. And how the men of our 322d, 323d, 908th and 324th Field Artillery Battalions poured it on! None of us doughboys will ever forget the soul-satisfying sound, of a "serenade" (all artillery battalions who hear the call



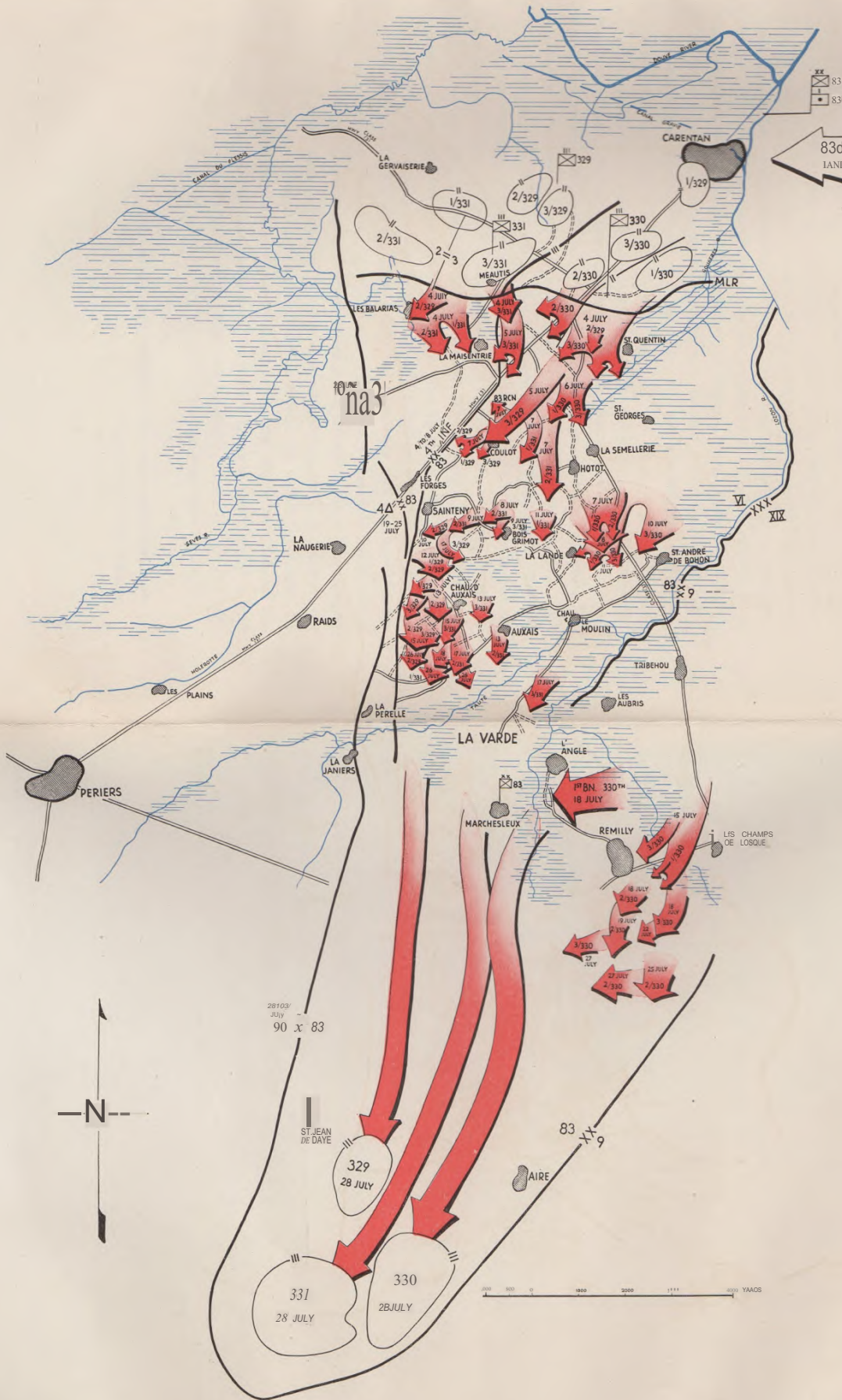


on the radio fire 5 volleys). Several times Jerry's attempts to organize tank-supported counterattacks were literally blown sky-high by Thunderbolt shells. Rugged engineers from our 308th Engineer Battalion stealthily picked their way through a myriad of mines and booby traps to clear a path for the riflemen. At times it was necessary for them to blast main supply routes directly through the hedges. Our right flank was screened and protected by our 83d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, cavalymen on "iron horses". Tankers, tank destroyers and armored infantry from the 746th Tank Battalion, 802d Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 1st Battalion of the 66th Armored Regiment were with us, too, all aiding in our attack against fanatic Nazi troops. Casualties were heavy. Fallen comrades were replaced by new men and we continued to push on. Hotot fell before the attack of the 330th. Shortly thereafter we of the 331st captured Sainteny after a smashing attack backed by fire from 19 Arty battalions consisting of our own division artillery, VIII Corps artillery, 90th Division arty on our right, 9th Division artillery on our left; and also VII Corps artillery. We pushed on towards the Taute River, where we hoped to take a breather.

Rain kept pouring down from the constantly clouded skies above, soaking the earth, filling our foxholes, and drenching our already muddy fatigues. The mud was getting deeper, threatening to prevent the movement of our tanks, half-tracks, jeeps and trucks which were often mired in the swampy fields of Normandy. There was little or no air support; the weather was against it. The 4th and 9th Infantry Divisions moved in on our right and left flanks, respectively, and now the three of us launched a coordinated attack. Again air support was cancelled due to bad weather, but we attacked anyway. The 329th passed through the 331st, advanced briefly, and were finally pinned down south of Bois Grimot. Jerry's counterattacks were getting more vicious and more frequent. For a time, they kept the 330th from moving. But we were persistent. We kept hacking away at those murderous







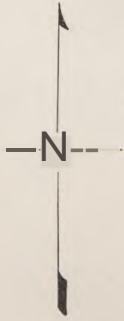
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hedges, and we started to grind forward again. The 330th shook loose and captured Le Moulin. Leaving the Reconnaissance Troop to hold it, they moved over towards Tribehou to fight along with the 9th Division. The 330th worked very closely with the 9th Division from the 14th to the 25th of July. The rest of us passed to the control of the VIII Corps and prepared for a new attack under orders of Major General Troy H. Middleton, Corps Commander. We continued to force the Nazis back and advanced nearer the Taute River. Now we were really in the swamps, the swamplands of La Varde and Tribehou. Our weapons were clogged with mud and the enemy's long prepared, wellplaced strong points were becoming harder to crack. But we cracked them. Yet we didn't always advance. Twice Colonel York's 331st Regiment with continuous artillery support struck across a narrow causeway to get a foothold on the La Varde Peninsula, Both times Jerry drove us back with tank and artillery and we found ourselves still in the swamps.

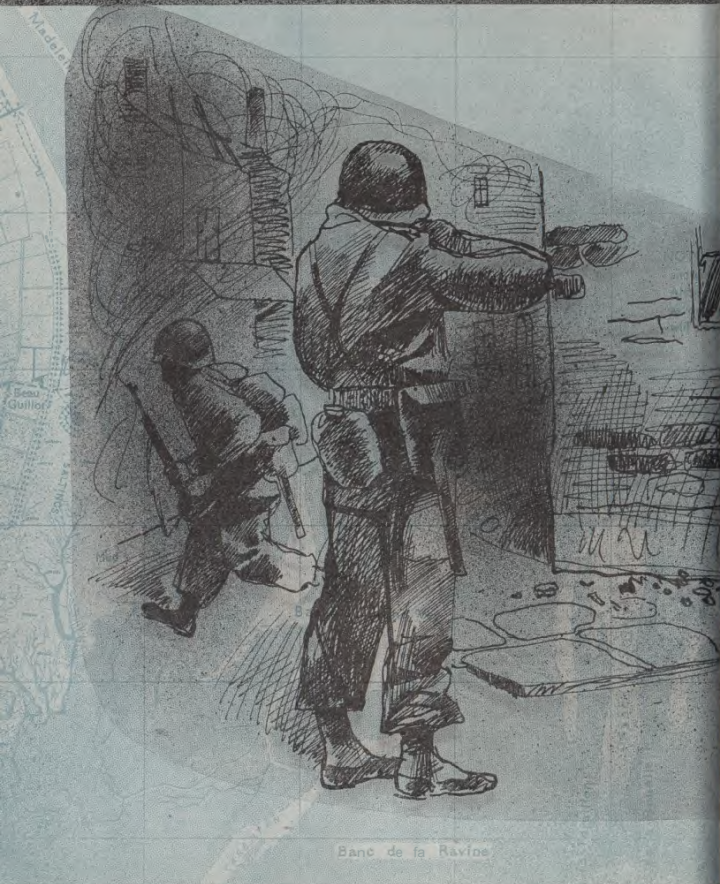
The weather finally broke in our favor. On July 25th our planes came—thousands upon thousands of them. The air was full of medium bombers, heavy bombers, attack bombers, fighters and reconnaissance planes. We wanted to stand in our foxholes and cheer. This was the kind of support we had been looking for, the kind we had urgently needed. Now it was here; now the Hun was really catching hell. All the Allied forces on the Continent charged out in pursuit of the enemy after that record breaking air attack. We jumped off again and this time we crossed the Taute River, cut the St Lo-Periers road, and forced our way into the Mosnil Vigot. It was the 330th, back under Division control, who together with the 106th Cavalry Squadron, seized these objectives. Now the enemy wasn't quite so tough. As he began to withdraw, we fought all the harder. This time our drive was sustained and reached us eight miles beyond our starting point, the Taute River. We had seized all our assigned objectives in Normandy, and Operation "COBRA" was successful. The miracle of the Breakthrough became history. We had broken out of Normandy like a hard charging Notre Dame backfield on a trick play. We, the Allies, were fanning out in all directions, out of the Cotentin Peninsula, into Brittany, into Northern France. We were trying to catch the Nazis before they could stop running and could prepare another strong line of defense. The nerve-wracking days of Normandy were over. Those damn hedgerows were behind us, and now we could see ahead for thousands of yards, even for miles. At long last, we were getting on now. We had Jerry on the run. We had shaken him loose from his position.

Days of hell, and hedgerows with heinies were gone-gone,  
but never to be forgotten.

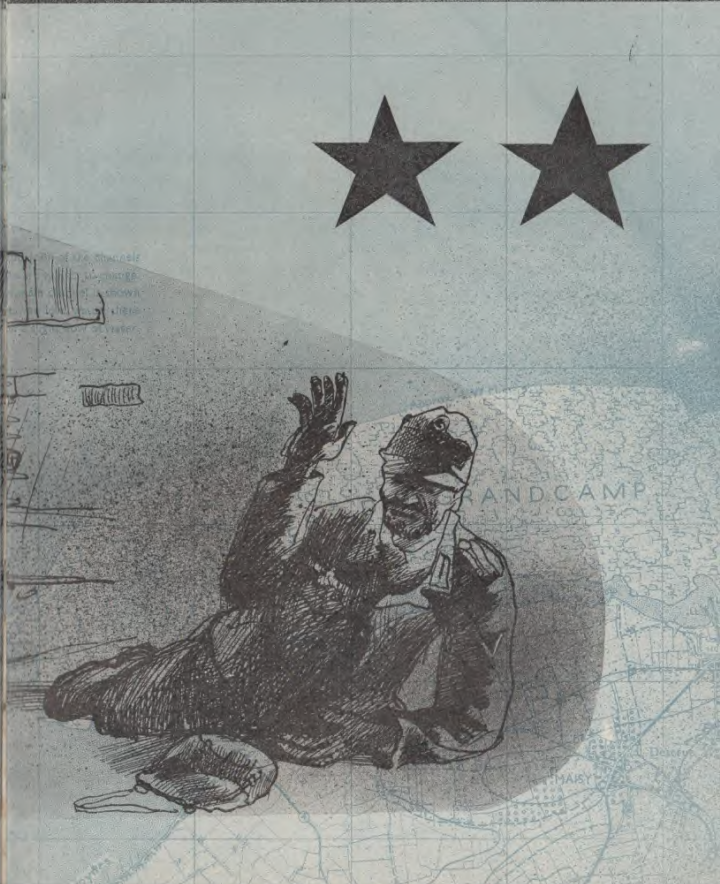


Les cartes de l'opération de 1944 ont été  
révisées pour intégrer les données de la  
Mission Spéciale (M.S.) et de la  
Commission de la Vierge.

# BRITANNY



Banc de la Ravine





## *Balfetin; Brittany's Bastions*

After the successful Normandy operations, we assembled in the vicinity of Feuges. In trucks and jeeps we made a quick trip out of the Cherbourg Peninsula, into Brittany, and halted momentarily near Pontorson. It was quite a trip. We went through Coutances, down by Avranches, then west. Jerry was trying hard to break out to the coastline again, trying fiercely, but too late to stop the Allied avalanche that was rolling against him with increasing momentum. Most of us made the trip in daylight, so we saw roads strewn with freshly-wrecked German tanks, trucks, and staff cars. Sometimes the roadsides were lined with "good Germans".

And what a reception we drew from the newly-liberated French populace! Men, women, and children crowded along the path of the Thunderbolt, cheering and waving wildly. Many of the fair sex were crying with joy as we went by. And if we slowed down sufficiently or momentarily halted, we invariably received gifts of wine, cider and occasionally champagne. The French kissed us, threw their arms around us, vigorously shook our hands, threw us flowers. We had seen nothing quite like it before. Here was a freedom-loving country saying "thanks" in their own way to the men who helped liberate them after four long years under the Nazi yoke. We began to feel that our efforts and sacrifices were worthwhile after all.

But with sundown came the detestable blackout. The French disappeared into their homes and we were alone in the night. Goering's Luftwaffe came over to contest our newly established lines in Brittany. Channel days all over again. The sky was brilliant with tracers and with ack-ack. Searchlights penetrating the darkness sought the attacker. We heard the incessant drone grow louder, and then, after Jerry had zoomed overhead, he would die away into the pitch-black night. Bombs hurtled down with a nerve-wracking whistle and splashed too close to our moving columns and the bridges we had to cross. But our columns kept moving and we got through. The long, sleepless night passed, and we watched the first of many dawns rise out of the mist of Brittany.



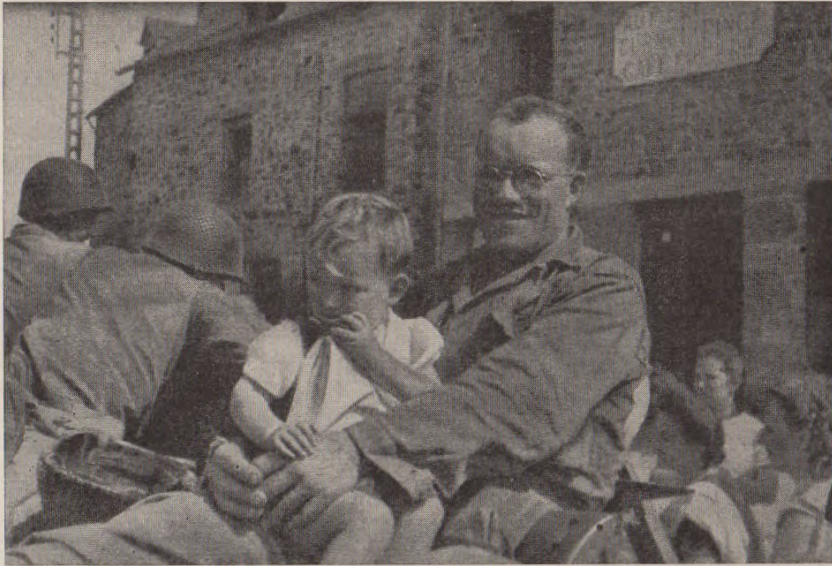


This mist reminded us of England, but what stands out in our memories today is the space that was all around us—that great expanse that went beyond human vision. Not a single hedge to block our view! And, at first, there weren't any dead animals to foul the air, no burnt-out villages to impress upon us the utter destruction brought about by modern war. That salt air wafting in from the Channel near Mont St. Michel, Pontorson, and Dol seemed good to breathe. There wasn't even much mud those first few days. We felt good to be alive. We were lucky to be alive!

In this area the Division received orders from VIII Corps Commander, Major General Troy S. Middleton, to capture the port towns of St. Malo and Dinard, two coastal ports at the edge of the small St. Malo Peninsula. Although we remained under VIII Corps, we now joined General George S. Patton's Third Army, which had landed while we were fighting in Normandy. We remembered "Blood and Guts", for we trained under him in England, where on a visit, he told all of us in plain infantry language what he thought of the Germans and how we could beat them. Now he paid us another visit, and checked our plans for the assault on the twin cities. While part of the Third Army was knifing into other parts of Brittany, other units raced for Paris and the Seine. We were to tackle this mission on our own; there would be no friendly divisions on our flanks. It was to be strictly a Thunderbolt show. And we really put on a show.

On 3-4 August 44, the entire Division moved by motor transportation from Feuges to an assembly area near Pontorson. From here we started on our mission to capture the port



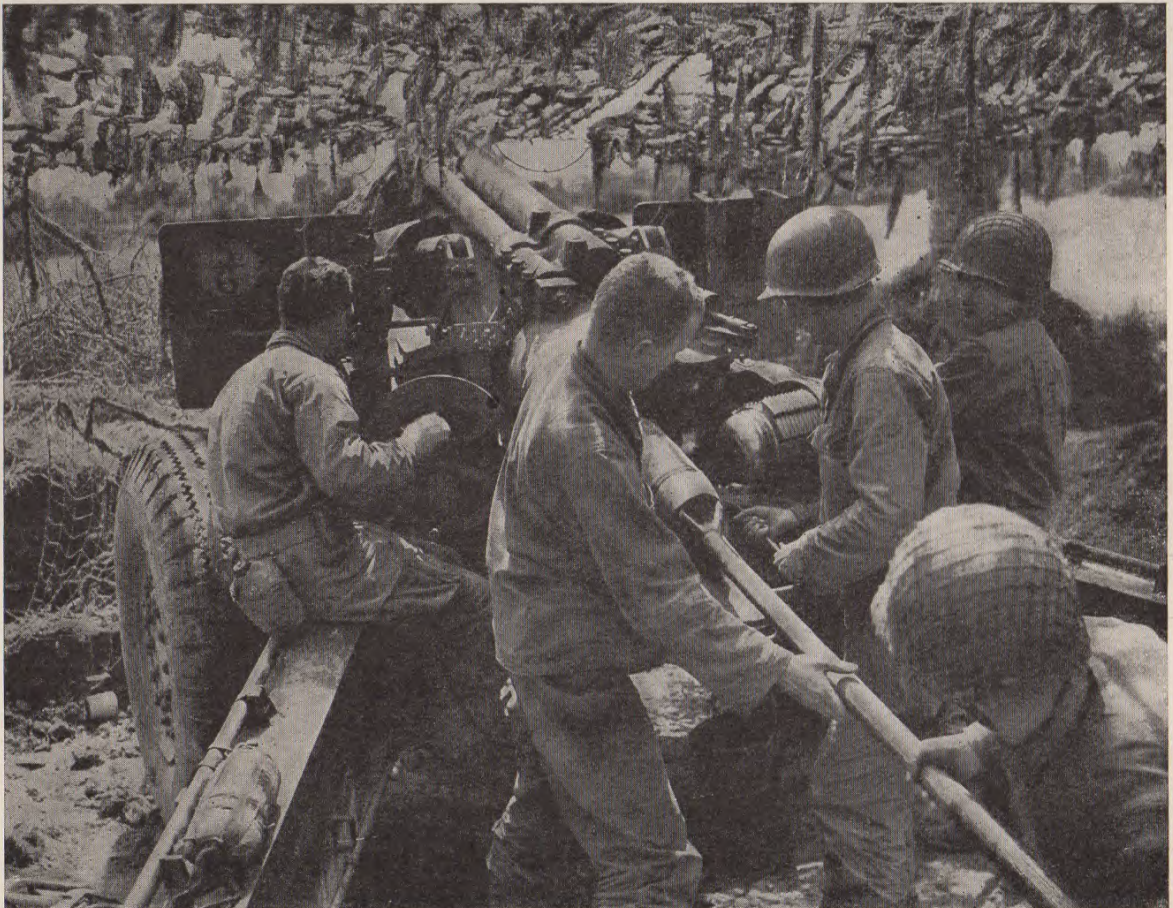


towns of St. Malo and Dinard. On August 4th, the 330th Infantry supported by the 323 FA Bn and the rest of the division artillery in general support attacked and captured Dol de Bretagne and established a bridgehead over the Rau du Guiault. Then the 329th passed through the bridgehead, ottocked still further west, and captured Miniac. Task Force "A" of the 6th Armored Division, under command of Brigadier General Earnest, was attached to the Division. Approaches to the St. Malo peninsula were bottle-necked by canals, ponds, and swamps. As we drove toward the St. Malo peninsula, Jerry's resistance began to stiffen. Col. York's 331st Regiment on the right moved out from Dol along the railroad and found bridges across the canals destroyed. The best entrance to the St. Malo peninsula was through Chateauneuf. Here the "Buckshots" of 329 and Task Force "A" met bitter resistance from enemy forces occupying commanding ground behind and on both sides of the town. After severe fighting, the 329th broke through. Task Force "A" was detached from the Division, and, with the 3d Bn, 330th Infantry, and C Battery 323 FA Bn attached, moved out toward Brest where they [oined the American Force which contained and captured that important port. With air support and with continued artillery support, we moved against St. Malo with all three regiments abreast. The 331st with 908 FA Bn attached was attacking on the northern end of the line, the 330th with the 323rd FA Bn (- C Btry) attacked in the center, and the 329th with 322nd FA Bn attacked on the south. The 324th FA Bn was reinforcing all fires on call. The advance was steady, but the enemy became increasingly stubborn. Riflemen in the 331st fanned out and, while some of them drove north and captured Le Ht. Bout, the remainder smashed into the town of Cancale and started down the road to St. Malo. From Cancale we were able to survey the beaches. The immense forts, the Nazis had spent years constructing as parts of their Atlantic Wall, were practically useless. For German guns



were aimed towards the sea and here we "stupid" Americans were coming up from the south by land ! But the Hun had other defenses that impeded our advance. Favorable approaches toward Pointe de la Varde, St. Malo, and all along the Rance River were protected by belts of wire, extensive minefields and double rows of steel gates covered by fire from machine guns in hidden pillboxes. There were also many anti-tank obstacles. All of the approaches to the city of St. Malo were covered by the enemy's prearranged artillery, mortar, and rocket fires. And big shells came whistling in from German coastal guns, firing from the tiny Isle de Cezembre. Colonel Von Aulock, commander of the Nazi garrison at St. Malo, issued his orders from a huge, underground citadel. We attacked against all these defenses in the face of intense artillery and mortar fire.

Combat Team 121 of the 8th Infantry Division was attached to us, and we sent it across the Rance River via Dinan to assault Dinard, a city on the west bank of the river just opposite St. Malo. As our own regiments converged upon St. Malo, we learned that the city area actually consists of three distinct municipalities which merge into each other. There is Pararne on the north, St. Servan on the south, and, in the center and possessing most of the coveted port facilities, the old city of St. Malo proper.







In the zone of the 329th, we made slow but steady progress through the formidable ring of enemy defenses. Wire, mine fields, mortar fire, artillery fire, and machine gun cross-fire from pill boxes impeded us but could not stop us. Mota is, Le Bourelais, and La Balue Station fell in order as our infantry and our terrific artillery poured it on. And then, following a house-to-house assault, all of St. Servan except the Fortress Citadel was ours. In the center of the line, we of Colonel Foster's 330th Regiment will never forget St. Joseph's Hill, a high, rocky land mass which dominated the avenues of approach to St. Malo. From this fortified vantage point, the Germans delivered murderous machine gun and mortar fire on both the 330th and the 3d Bn, 329th. But Colonel Foster's men with artillery support from the 323rd FA Bn smashed forward, and captured the hill and 434 prisoners. Without loss of momentum, we men of 330th drove on into St. Malo proper. Meanwhile, in the 331st on the north, we ran into barbed wire, mines; and strong enemy fortifications east of La Mettrie. Intense naval gun fire from the Isle de Cezembre and enemy gun boats off Pte de la Varde further harassed our efforts. To advance here would be costly. This time, the 3d Bn 331st,







was moved around to the center and was attached to the 330th for a main effort against Pararne. In bitter house-to-house assault, we captured Pararne. This successful attack sealed off the enemy occupying the St. Idenc-La-Varde area in front of the 331st.

On the west side of the Rance River our friends in Combat Team 121 suffered a counter-attack which succeeded in isolating the 3d Battalion near Pleurtuit. The rest of the Team made no progress. The rapid capture of Dinard became imperative to prevent an enemy withdrawal towards Brest. So, during the night of 9-10 August, Colonel York's 331st Regiment moved across the river by way of Dinan to aid their 8th Division comrades. General Mnccon preceded us and took command of the Dinard area, while General Ferenbaugh bossed the show on the St. Malo side of the Rance. We drove through the Nazis' formidable defenses and broke into Pleurtuit to link up with the battalion of the 121st which had been cut off there. Continuing the attack, we drove Jerry from bunker after bunker as we forged our way into Dinard. The street fighting in Dinard was severe and costly to us but particularly costly to the enemy. We took a lot of Germans into our PW cages, however, and also seized considerable motor transportation, bicycles, and several field pieces. We took St. Lu-noire, then Hill 42, then Hill 48. Our artillery really gave support and helped to clear the way by blasting the individual enemy pieces which had been emplaced in the fortifications. It was rough going, but somehow we managed to sustain our momentum and to drive the Germans towards the sea. When the enemy got to the sea, he had no alternative but to surrender. We weren't fussy about rank, and among our many prisoners was the entire staff of the German 77th Infantry Division, which had fought in Normandy. They were among 3600 Hei nies who showed a white flag that day. Le Briec, west of Dinard, fell to our 1st Battalion, 331st, to complete the liberation of the Dinard area. Combat Team 121 returned to the 8th Division.





Meanwhile, back on the east side of the Rance River, we were busily engaged in reducing the remaining enemy strongpoints. There was Forte de la Varde, St. Ideuc, the Chateau in old St. Malo, and the Citadel in St. Servan in which the German commander of the entire area, Colonel Von Aulock, was taking refuge.

The 2d Battalion, 330th, attacked the strong points near St. Ideuc. Once again, our artillery went to work in convincing fashion, and aided the doughboys in capturing the positions and 1800 prisoners. The 2d Battalion, 329th, was then attached to the 330th, and, immediately began an assault upon Ft. de la Varde. This fort was built upon a rocky promontory, the precipitous cliffs of which dropped directly into the sea. On the land side it was protected by concrete and steel, mutually supporting bunkers, and by a dense belt of mines and barbed wire. This was a tough nut to crack, but we were veterans now-soldiers possessing know-how, daring, and aggressiveness. The 2d Battalion, with outstanding assistance from our own and Corps artillery and the attached tank destroyers, smashed through the enemies defenses and captured the Fort and almost 200 prisoners.

At the same time, the 1st Battalion, 330th, with Company L, 331 st, smashed across the causeway leading to old St. Malo. This causeway was narrow and lined with buildings from which Jerry fought tenaciously. Our attack was slow but unrelenting. A stubborn enemy force still held out in the Chateau, a huge, stone mediovo] fort. This we bombed and shelled into submission, and all of St. Malo was finally ours.





In St. Servan, only the Citadel remained in enemy hands. This old fort, situated on the end of a short broad peninsula, dominated the bay of St. Malo and Dinard. Surrounded by very thick walls, the fort had been strengthened and improved by the Germans. Reports from civilian workers indicated that the subterranean rooms were roofed with twenty feet of solid rock, G company of the 329th then paved the way by taking the fortress of Grand Bey with 154 prisoners. The Germans considered this stronghold as second in importance to the Citadel itself. Then following a medium level bombardment and artillery preparation, the 1st and 3d Battalions launched a coordinated attack on the Citadel. The infantrymen succeeded in getting up to and on top of the fort, but were driven back by severe artillery fire from the Isle de Cezembre and by machine gun and mortar fire from within the fort itself. Another such attack was likewise repelled. But we were determined to accomplish our mission. We brought up 3 inch, 155 mm, and 8 inch guns, to within 2000 yds and pounded the fort with direct fire. One by one, we slammed shells into the mushroom type turrets of the citadel. Our shell fire tore down part of the old wall and exposed more concrete blockhouses, which, in turn, our guns worked on. Finally, [ust as fighter bombers arrived over the target ready to release [elled gas bombs in preparation for a third infantry assault, the white flag of surrender appeared over the citadel.

Colonel von Aulock, who earlier had answered our surrender demands with, "We are German soldiers and German soldiers don't surrender", surrendered himself along with his remaining 571 officers and men. The Thunderbolt had again successfully accomplished its mission. We took another check on the prisoners and found we had captured a total of 12,393 Germans during the campaign.

Shortly after the fall of St. Malo, the troops at Brest opened an offensive to take the port. Task Force "A", commanded by Brigadier General Earnest, was composed of the 15th Cavalry Group, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 6th Tank Destroyer Group Headquarters, and the 3d Battalion of our own 330th Infantry Regiment plus C Battery 323rd FA Bn. For some time now these and other forces had kept Brest cut off from the rest of Brittany, leaving the sea as the only possible means of escape for the enemy in the city. For the most part, the fighting was sporadic. Many roadblocks had been established by the Jerries and, as at St. Malo, the coastline was protected by numerous pillboxes. Our 3d Bn, 330th, joined the assault that captured this third port for the Allies (Cherbourg being the first captured, and St. Malo the second). We drove down the roads and along the coast to seize an important part of the peninsula. It was what we call straight infantry fighting-nothing like Normandy. We cracked the pillboxes systematically and drove Jerry from other entrenched positions. Once captured, Brest was held and policed by the 2d Infantry Division and our 3d Bn, 330th Inf and C Battery of 323rd Fa Bn. We did a good job in this attack and we were later commended by the Task Force Commander for our actions and tactical skill.

We remained in Brest for two weeks after fighting had ceased and, by the time we



joined the rest of the 83d, the Thunderbolt Division was preparing to move to Luxembourg. So we got our first train ride in France. It was just like all the World War I veterans said it would be-many of us jammed into one "40 and 8". In this war, however, the space originally intended for the "huit chevaux" was taken by more soldiers. We rattled along in this train that had been used by Americans in two world wars. We ate K rations and slept in shifts and in awkward positions until we reached Le Mans, France. From there, we journeyed to our new area via Army trucks, which, despite their deficiencies in riding comfort, we now know beat a 40 and 8 anytime.



# *Those Twenty Thousand*

It was early August when we left the Brittany Peninsula. Still members of General Middleton's VIII Corps, we were given the mission of protecting the south flank of the Third Army by holding the north bank of the Loire River from Redon to Auxerre. The First Army and the rest of General Patton's troops were surging through France, into Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. Lieutenant General Alexander Patch's Seventh Army had made another amphibious assault on Festung Europa by landing in the vicinity of Marseilles and was now driving north along the Rhone Valley to join other Allied forces and thus trap all enemy troops still in Southern France.

Late summer in the Loire Valley! We enjoyed the warm beauty of the French countryside. No longer confined to tents and foxholes, we set up our offices and quarters in beautiful chateaux along the valley. As often as not, company command posts were more luxurious than those of the regiments. We had time to get better acquainted with France. We met more Frenchmen and girls. They entertained us, and we tried to reciprocate. They opened the doors to their homes and to their cellars. We enjoyed passes into town again for the first *time* since we were alerted in England. Yes, we had some French wine, and occasionally champagne. Our command of the French language improved by strides as we mixed with the native populace. The conviviality we found in places like the American Bar in Angers and the Hotel Commerce in any town helped us thrust the war into the background. We visited places like Nantes, Angers, Chateaubriant, Tours, Blois, Venderne, Orleans and Auxerre.

But we also had a mission to accomplish. The 329th Buckshots were the first to move to our new area where, at Angers, they relieved the 319th Infantry of the 80th Division. The 331st moved in next, and took over from the 2d Cavalry Group at Nantes. At first the 330th (still minus the 3d Battalion, at Brest) remained to police the St. Malo-Dinard area and to prepare for an assault on the Isle de Cezembre. A couple of weeks later the 3d Battalion of the 330th rejoined *its* regiment.



The port of St. Malo still could not be used by the Allies because of the presence of German troops and guns on Cezembre, a tiny island off shore. Under orders of the Twelfth Army Group, we prepared detailed plans for the capture of the island. Our plans included an amphibious landing by elements of Colonel Foster's 330th regiment. We trained for these operations for several days. Meanwhile our division artillery and attached Corps artillery kept up an almost constant bombardment of our target. Direct fire from 8 inch guns was placed on troop shelters and pillboxes guarding our proposed landing site. At night, we placed time fire on the beaches to prevent the Germans from laying mines. We demanded the surrender of the German garrison, but they refused to yield. We called for bombing missions which resulted in the removal of camouflage from troop shelters. Then we took these exposed shelters under fire with our large caliber artillery. H-Hour and D-Day for our amphibious assault on the island was set for 1545, September 2d. But we did not make the amphibious assault. For early on the morning of September 2d, white flags were displayed on the island, and the German garrison of 323 officers and enlisted men surrendered to us. Many Italians among the prisoners had to be separated from the German soldiers to prevent fights. When we moved out to the Isle de Cezembre to accept the surrender and to occupy the island, we found that our shells had penetrated concrete walls of many pillboxes in such a manner as to make them untenable. It had been strictly an air and artillery show, and once more the might of the Thunderbolt had forced the enemy to surrender.

Simultaneously, we protected the Third Army's extensive southern flank. From time to time, the area assigned to us was changed, but, generally speaking, we guarded an area that stretched across France for over two hundred miles from Redon to Auxerre. It was the longest area, to our knowledge, ever to be assigned to one division. We patrolled the Loire River and occasionally ran into a few Germans, which we either liquidated or forced to withdraw. Even with this large area to protect, the job didn't employ all of us so that, by rotating units, we were able to devote some time to training. Our ranks had been badly depleted in Normandy, and we had to train our new men to replace our fallen comrades. Moreover, even those of us who were veterans could benefit by reviewing and re-training.

Not the least of our problems in this area was that concerned with communications. Our 83d Signal Company employed not only field wire but civilian high lines and equipment. Motor messenger runs entailed trips of 80 miles and more. But by sweat and ingenuity, headquarters was always in touch with its far flung units.

On September 5th, we left the Third Army and joined the new Ninth Army. Thus, we were one of the first divisions to be assigned to General Simpson's forces. Five days later we left the VIII Corps, and were placed directly under Army control. Our friends in the 774th Tank Battalion had joined us in August and were supposedly "permanently" attached to the Thunderbolt. Like the 453d AAA Battalion, which joined us in Normandy, they fought, trained, and played with us, and were more like an organic part of the Division than an attachment.





As the area assigned to us was changed, we relieved elements of the 6th Armored Division. We continued our patrolling and our training. Contact with the 2d French Armored Division was established. One day, 240 Russian soldiers, serving with the German Army, crossed the Loire River near Nantes and were captured by the 331st Infantry. We killed a few more Heinies and took a few more prisoners.

We had been accustomed by now, to publicity, to hearing the name of the 83d mentioned in radio newscasts, to having our front lines and command posts visited by many reporters representing various publications in the States and in the United Kingdom. But the attention the world was about to pay us was far more than we had expected. It was on September 9th that 1st Lieutenant Samuel Magill's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon from the 329th Regiment made contact south of the Loire River with Free French forces, members of the famed FFI. Our French Allies reported that there was a large group of Germans moving north who wished to surrender to American forces, so we raced on further into enemy territory. The French were right. There was a large group of Jerries around, all right-nearly twenty thousand of them. Word was received from their leader, Major Gene-





rai Erich Elster, that he was willing to surrender his troops to us under certain circumstances. He wanted us to stage a mock battle, then capture his troops, and thus permit him to "save face" before giving up himself and his men. Lt. Magill raced to Regimental Headquarters where he reported to General Macon and Colonel E. B. "Buckshot" Crabill. General Macon rejected Elster's request for a mock battle, and instructed Colonel Crabill to arrange a meeting at Issoudun. On the following day, in accordance with General Simpson's orders,

General Macon and General Elster met at Issoudun where the terms of surrender were made and accepted.

Reporters and newscasters have described, or attempted to describe, this unique surrender in various ways. All agreed, however, that it was definitely unusual and far different from any other surrender on record. They all swarmed to the 329th area to see for themselves. Photographers came along to picture the marching German columns, the huge stacks of arms, the gigantic piles of bicycles and other equipment. It was an amazing sight. Here were nearly twenty thousand Germans, still armed, marching towards the river, under surveillance of a dozen men—the patrol from Lt. Magill's platoon. We had to let the enemy retain his arms during the march to protect himself from attack by Free French forces, for we had neither the time nor the facilities to notify all units in the area of the surrender. It took two days for the entire march group to cross the river at Beaugency and Orleans to enter our bulging PW cages. At Beaugency, General Elster formally surrendered himself and his troops to our Division Commander, General Macon, who accepted the German general's pistol on behalf of the Army of the United States. For a little while, at least, the name of the









83d Division was heralded throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, and as a matter of fact, in almost every other country. But we took it in stride and didn't let it go to our heads. Individually we were glad to receive this widespread publicity, for it let the folks at home know something of our activities. We, ourselves, were unable to tell much because of the rigid censorship regulations.

Other outstanding patrol actions were accomplished by another Thunderbolt unit. Although not widely publicized, they were nevertheless important and unusual accomplishments. While most of us were patrolling the Loire River and training, we in the 83d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop crossed the river in our M-8s, M-20s and jeeps and set out for Bordeaux, a port in southern France, two hundred miles into enemy territory. We had received reports that Bordeaux had been liberated by the FFI. Remarkably, we travelled the whole distance to Bordeaux and returned to our own lines without losing a man. Again the French were right, and Bordeaux was in their hands. Later, we crossed the river again with the mission of making contact with our Seventh Army. We were split into two groups which fanned out, one group going to Dijon, then on down to Lons le Saunier, where it joined the second group and continued to the Swiss border. Apparently the surrender of General Elster's march group had about wiped out the Germans remaining in that area, for we again made a safe round trip. At St. Claude, just north of Geneva, we accomplished our mission and made contact with elements of the Seventh U. S. Army, which was driving up along the France-Switzerland border to close the Belfort Gap.





## *Liberating Luxembourg*

During the latter part of September, the need for the Thunderbolt in the Loire Valley passed, and we moved farther east, out of France, into the Duchy of Luxembourg. The 94th Division took over our area in France and, after changing our watches to conform with the switch from "B" to "A" time, we assembled for the three hundred mile journey to the new front lines. We were back in the Third Army now and assigned to the XX Corps. We had already been informed of our new mission: "Destroy the enemy in the Remich area, patrol vigorously east to the line of the Moselle-Sauer Rivers, prevent the enemy from crossing the rivers." Task Force "POLK", composed of the 3d Cavalry Reconnaissance Group reinforced, was attached to the Thunderbolt and became an important part of the Division.

Again we made something of a sight-seeing trip, but our minds were on our new area, on the Germans, on the Siegfried Line. For two days and nearly two nights we rode towards the tiny country about which we knew nothing. It was an exhausting trip, and someone remarked that it was also a masterpiece of logistics. As we passed through town after town and city after city, we began to see signs pointing to places our fathers talked about in their reminiscences of World War I: Verdun, St. Mihiel, Chalons, Bar-le-Duc and St. Dizier. We stopped overnight at St. Mihiel, where many of us slept on the ground again and a few of us dozed in trucks. Although we say we slept, what we actually did was catch forty winks, for our bodies were stiff and sore from the half-completed ride, and our minds were pre-occupied with thoughts of the immediate future. We rode on and finally completed our journey, which took us through the thick forests of the highland country east of Verdun.

As we peeled off and took our positions in the line, we relieved elements of the 90th Division, the V Corps, the 112th Infantry of the 28th Division, and Combat Command "A" of the 5th Armored Division. Now we were up front again. Now once again we were face to face with the enemy who occupied his concrete fortifications east of the Sauer and Moselle Rivers. We wondered how the fighting would go this time, how soon we would cross the river to smash into the Siegfried Line. We did not know that we were to remain in the Luxembourg area longer than we stayed in England.





The Division's Command Post was established in a school building in the city of Luxembourg. Those of us who passed through the capitol were greeted by large banners stretched across the streets, proclaiming, "Welcome to our Liberators". Store windows were full of photographs of officers, men, and tanks of the 5th Armored Division which had liberated the city just nine days before. The people seemed to still be surprised at the sight of American soldiers in their city. We, ourselves, were surprised to be there.

We members of the 331st were the first to see action in our new area. Our first limited objective attack resulted in our capture of Greveldange without much opposition. As our patrols ventured towards Remich, we occupied the towns of Remerschen, Assel, and Bous. The only Heinies we ran into up to this point were those out on patrol missions. Later, a Jerry counterattack, supported by machine guns and mortars struck from high ground southeast of Greveldange, but we were seasoned troops now and quickly repulsed the German attempt to disrupt our lines. As our 2d Battalion advanced further towards Remich, we knocked out machine guns which the enemy had emplaced in concrete. It took the direct



fire of our attached 774th Tank Battalion to accomplish this. After taking the towns of Walenstein, Bech and Kleinmacher, we captured Schengen. For the first time in over a month, we faced heavy enemy artillery fire. German guns in the Siegfried Line east of the Moselle River poured their salvos into our lines, and we suffered thirty casualties. It seemed a lot after a month of almost negligible casualties. We continued to pursue our mission, and Remich became ours on September 28th. Our 3d Battalion captured the high ground northwest of Ehnen, but we had to fight through heavy machine gun and mortar fire to do it. We breached a gap in the roadblocks in and around Remich and prepared three of them for our own use. Next day we occupied Hautekontz and Coets. Company B went further and took the town of Ehnen. It was the same story-few Germans but plenty of mortar and artillery-Are. But we didn't just sit there and take it; our own 83d Division Artillery laced Jerry's positions with terrific counterbattery fire. After several patrols had felt out the strength and positions of the enemy occupying Wormeldange, the 1st Battalion, 331st Infantry, with strong artillery support, drove Jerry across the Moselle and captured the village.

Meanwhile we 329th Buckshots were active, too. First, as we advanced towards the Moselle-Sauer River line, we captured Osweiler, Dickweiler and Montage. We met a few German patrols, but they did not prevent our 1st Battalion from taking Oberdonven. Our advance continued, and we were now within 1500 yards of Grevenmacher. After several attempts against strongly organized resistance in daylight, we took the high ground overlooking Grevenmacher, and completed the capture of the town by means of a night attack with bayonets and grenades after a tough house to house attack with tanks and infantry.

On the following day, October 7th, the 3d Battalion, 329th, launched a coordinated tank infantry attack against Echternach. A very old and historic city located on the Sauer River, Echternach and the approaches from the west were under direct fire and observation from Jerry's Siegfried Line on the commanding east bank. The enemy resisted our attack with intense mortar, artillery, and machine gun fire, but the "Buckshots" drove through and took the town. Now we were at the river line. The dragons teeth and concrete fortifications of the Siegfried Line loomed menacingly above us on the high bank beyond the river. The road leading into Echternach was directly exposed to Jerry during the last quarter mile and soon became known as the "bowling alley." It wasn't healthy to dawdle along this stretch of road, and nobody did.

Our newly acquired friends in Task Force "POLK" made a reconnaissance in force to the area around Manon and came back with eleven prisoners. Then they attacked the enemy in the vicinity of Gavisse, took more PWs and inflicted casualties on the Germans there.

The Luxembourg area became the scene of another 83d Division Artillery show. Ever hear of the Konz Karthaus Express? Konz is a little switchyard west of Trier. Trains used to go through there regularly, and just as regularly we redlegs would shell the hell out of the





place. At night the Germans (or some of their slave labor) repaired the damage we caused, just so more trains could operate the next day. Next day the trains operated; next day Thunderbolt shells rained in on them. This went on for some time. The Germans never gave up, nor did we artillerymen. The city of Trier, major communications center for the Germans in this area, was many times a target for our shells. Our planes helped out, too, and quite a few bomb-loads exploded in the city. We searched out and reduced pockets of resistance on the west side of the Moselle. Whenever Jerry would send us a few rounds, our artillery repaid him with interest. We sometimes saw German soldiers running to and from their pillboxes across the river. If there were just two or three, we picked them off with machine gun or mortar fire. Whenever a group of Heinies foolishly got together, we gave them a large dose of artillery time fire. One night the city of Luxembourg received seventeen rounds from a German railway gun of 280 mm caliber, but Jerry missed the mark if he was aiming for military installations. A German counterattack from the east in the vicinity of Petite Hettange developed on November 12. This time we were joined by XX Corps artillery, who assisted our own artillery to beat off the attack with considerable loss to the enemy.

It must be apparent to the reader by now that the 83d Division was almost constantly changing from one Corps to another and from one Army to the next. This was true, also, while we were in Luxembourg. On October 11th, we were re-assigned to the VIII Corps,



under Ninth Army. The French Group Lorraine, consisting of the 1st and 2d regiments of Paris, had joined us nine days earlier but now they stayed with XX Corps. We lost Task Force Polk, too. Another change took place on October 22nd when the VIII Corps passed to control of the First Army. Three days before, the 32d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was attached to the Division and later took positions in the line alongside regular Thunderbolts.

We pulled a big bluff on Jerry on October 20th, just to see how he would react. We layed down a huge smoke screen along the river bank on our side to make the enemy think we were preparing to come after him. Then we followed with simultaneous demonstrations of river crossings at Echternach, Wasserbillig and Palzen. We let go with our artillery, mortars, and machine guns. It was all coordinated and all planned to fool the enemy into thinking we were going to cross the river and smash at his Siegfried Line. Around Echternach, the Heinies became quite worried, apparently, for they countered with heavy artillery concentrations. At other points where we faked a crossing, Jerry reacted slowly even sluggishly. So counterbattery fire was received at these points from German guns, but it was a little late in coming-too late to forestall initial waves had we really gone across. A German report claimed that they had repulsed a strong enemy attack.

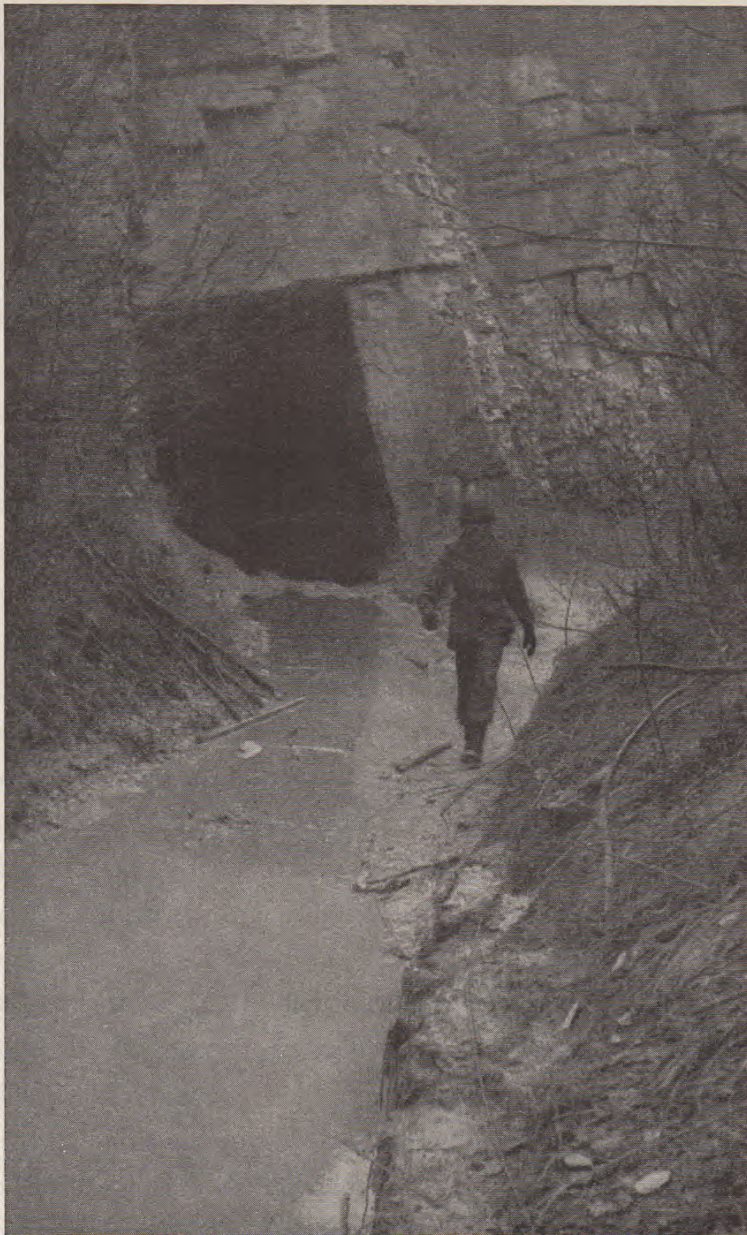
Once, Company A of the 774th Tank Battalion, which was still with us, fired at some pillboxes in the supposedly impenetrable Siegfried Line. This, too, seemed to cause the enemy some concern, for we received five hundred rounds of German artillery in exchange for our tank fire. It was like that most of the time now, although the concentrations were seldom so heavy. We had finished the job of liberating Luxembourg, and Jerry and the Thunderbolts were firing back and forth at each other across the rivers. Meanwhile we were drawing winter clothing, and stockpiles of ammunition, gasoline, and food were brought up nearer the front. These had greatly diminished after the long armor thrusts through France and our supply lines were stretched over many miles. Now we faced the same problems that confronted the Germans when we were fighting in the Cherbourg Peninsula. Supply troubles! We had been rationed on ammunition before, and now we were rationed on gasoline and ammunition. Yes, civilian readers, we, frontline troops, were rationed on gasoline too! Artillery ammunition was low, because Generals Hodges' and Patton's troops had driven the enemy back so far and so quickly that supply points had been unable to keep up with them.

With all of Luxembourg liberated, and no orders to go further than the Moselle River, we pulled back from the frontlines, one or two battalions at a time and, guess what?-we started training again. Frontline troops undergoing training while still holding a portion of the line! The 308th Engineers had earlier made a thorough reconnaissance of the portions of the Maginot Line that ran through our assigned area. Now we went down to examine this French counterpart to the Siegfried for ourselves. We not only examined it; we trained



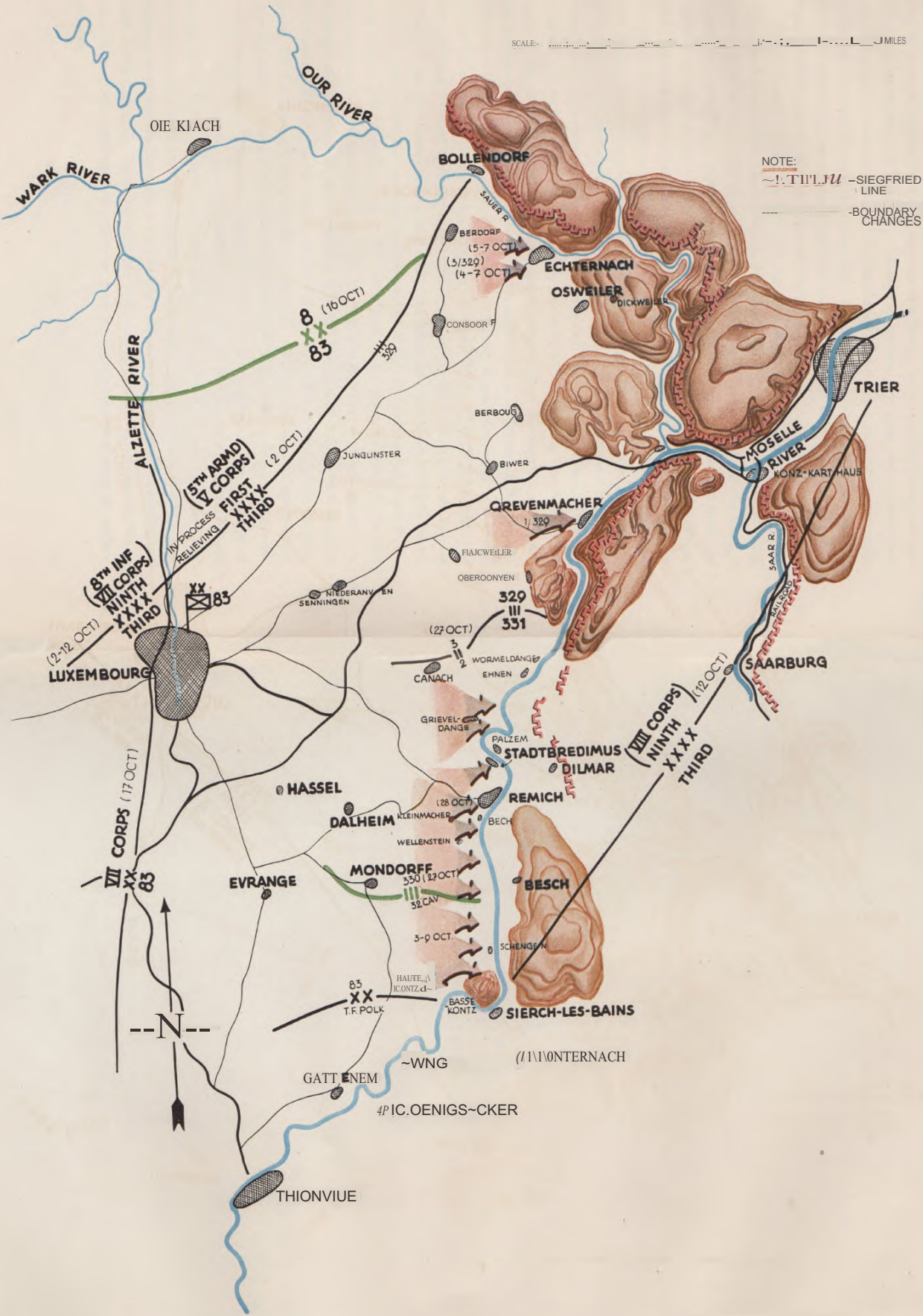
in it. Here we got excellent practice in attacking and demolishing heavily fortified positions, concrete pillboxes, and underground positions. We also polished up our tank-infantry team tactics. Some of our officers and seasoned non-coms were employed in training the two French regiments.

Occasionally, we enjoyed passes in town. Although there were not too many recreational facilities, we were treated very well by Luxembourgers. We found differences in language even less of a barrier now, for these people often spoke several different languages each, and many spoke at least some English. We spent Thanksgiving in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The local citizens invited us to their homes for dinner. It wasn't quite the





SCALE: 1:100,000 (1 INCH = 2.5 MILES)



NOTE:  
 ~~~~~ SIEGFRIED-LINE  
 - - - - - BOUNDARY CHANGES



some as gathering around the turkey with our own family, but we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and appreciated this hospitality. Some towns opened new cafes and re-opened old ones and in these places we enjoyed some good quality beer. A few places furnished music, and we danced with the local girls. No, life in Luxembourg wasn't as bad as we had expected. It didn't look like we were going to cross the river for a while, so we began to forget about the once formidable Siegfried Line and relax a little.

Then we were suddenly awakened to the genuine possibility of our going over to the other side of the Moselle. We learned that "Blood & Guts" would be taking the offensive again and that we would be borrowed by the Third Army. "UNICORN" was the name of the operation in which we were to participate and we moved further south in our area, and prepared to cross the Moselle at a point where the 90th Division would first establish a bridgehead. We were grateful that we were not to be among the assault waves. But we had a little job to do even before the 90th jumped off. We were under operational control of the Third Army's XX Corps now and were ordered to seize the high ground at Basse Kontz. That's what it says on the maps, -Basse Kontz-but we Thunderbolts know it better as Le Stromberg Hill. Company B of our 308th Engineer Battalion joined with the 32d Cavalry Squadron and on November 4th at 0900 they launched the attack to capture the hill. We fought all day and moved across the open spaces to the edges of the objective, while Jerry rained bullets and shells on us from his favorable positions atop Le Stromberg Hill. Around supper time the 1st Battalion of the 330th took over, dug in and readied for a continuation of the attack the following morning. We jumped off again at 0800 the next day, with Company A going northeast around the slopes of the hill. We fought all day but still had to put the finishing touches to the job. The following morning we seized Le Stromberg Hill and secured our positions against possible enemy attempts to regain the formidable terrain. D-Day for Operation "UNICORN" was set for November 8th, but, the 90th was scheduled to cross the river on the 9th. On that day they sent over two regiments in the vicinity of Koenigsmacher and established a bridgehead. The plan now was to send the 10th Armored Division, the 3d Cavalry Group and part of the 83d Division across the river, into the 90th's bridgehead, and then all four divisions were to launch a coordinated attack -the first attack on German soil to be made by the Third Army. We made our plans for the crossing and prepared to go over. Bridging operations were delayed due to the height of the river. Plans were changed. The 10th Armored and the 3d Cavalry went across but we returned to our former positions and were again placed under VIII Corps, First Army. But our artillery was not through with Operation "UNICORN". As the 10th Armored Division advanced north towards Saarburg, our artillerymen supported their advance by blasting the enemy out of their path, just across from our own positions. Later the 3d Cavalry Group passed through the armored outfit, and we gave the Cavalry the same type of artillery assistance.



We had spent two months in the Luxembourg area now and the records revealed that our Division Command Post in the country's capitol was visited by much "brass" and once by royalty. At various times Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall; Allied Supreme Commander, General "Ike" Eisenhower; Twelfth Army Group Commander, General Bradley; First Army Commander, General Hodges; Third Army Commander, General Patton; and Ninth Army Commander, General Simpson, all visited our CP, in addition to the visits paid by various Corps Commanders. Once Prince Felix, Prince Consort of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, dined with the Thunderbolt Commander and his staff.

By this time the Allies had about completed the [ob of reinforcing their frontline troops and of stockpiling supplies, equipment, and ammunition. Some forces had already renewed the offensive and we knew it was inevitable that the Thunderbolt would soon be turned loose against the Nazis once more. Many of us felt that this was going to be the "Big Push", the Anal drive of the war.





## *Hurttling the Hurtgen*

The Allies' latest offensive in Europe started in the northern portion of the wide First Army sector while we were still guarding Luxembourg. The going up north was slow and costly, because the Germans were bitterly contesting every inch of their native soil. Our infantry and armor was smashing hard at the enemy, but the enemy was fighting back almost as persistently, and the vicious warfare began to take its toll on both sides in killed and wounded. So it was that the call came for the Thunderbolt to take an active part in this latest offensive and to relieve some of the hard-pressed troops who had initiated the drive.

Approximately in the center of the triangular area marked by Aachen, Duren and Cologne, lay the Hurtgen Forest. It was here that the men of the 4th Infantry Division were fighting, fighting and dying. In this thickly wooded forest, Jerry easily concealed himself and his weapons. It was a forest filled with death. There were many Heinie snipers; there were machine guns, mortars, and camouflaged and entrenched Nazis with rifles and burp guns. Besides all this, there were the ever deadly tree bursts-artillery shells fired so that they would explode near the tops of the trees and send fragments flying in all directions. In places, nearly every tree contained a booby trap and nearly all the space between the trees was covered with mines. The terrain lent itself naturally to the defense, and the Hun was exploiting his many advantages to the utmost.

It was here that the 83d was to be committed. Our mission was to relieve the 4th Division, to continue through the Hurtgen, and to seize the west bank of the Roer River. This would be our first fight in Germany, our first engagement with the enemy in his homeland.

Some armchair strategists long before had ventured the opinion that Jerry, once he had lost his hold of the occupied countries, was beaten, and that he wouldn't elect to muss up the sacred soil of the fatherland by fighting for it. But the experiences of our 4th Division comrades in the Hurtgen Forest indicated that these prognostications were, at best, the products of wishful thinking. We, ourselves, were soon to learn that Jerry was fighting, and fighting like hell, on his own soil.



The 330th and the 323rd FA Bn the first Thunderbolt units to enter this stubbornly defended area, were attached to the 4th Division in the vicinity of Gressenich on December 3rd. We relieved the 4th's 22d Regiment. Our 1st Battalion was on the right, 2d on the left, and the 3d Battalion in reserve. Immediately, we received intense artillery and mortar fire which inflicted casualties. Then our artillery moved up north, followed by the 774th Tank Battalion, the 308th Engineer Battalion, the 331st, and, afterwards, the 83d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop. We had rejoined the VII Corps of the First Army.

Our first Division CP on German soil was established at Krewinkel, a little ghost town on the edge of the forest. Colonel York's 331st men with 908 FA Bn in direct support relieved the 4th Division's 12th Infantry, the 24th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron joined the Division, and we attached our own Cavalry Troop to the 24th Squadron. Now that most of us were in the new area, the 330th with 323rd FA Bn backing it up was relieved from its attachment to the 4th Division and again took its place as a part of the Thunderbolt.

We of the 330th, first in the 83d to enter the shell torn forest, were also the first to attack the Germans in their homeland. On December 9th, Companies A and B took Hill 375, causing considerable loss to the enemy and capturing 22 prisoners, including the German commanding officer. Next day we attacked towards Strass, one of the several small towns near the eastern edge of the Hurtgen. As always, we encountered extremely heavy mortar and artillery fire from the enemy, but our 3d Battalion, by means of a vicious assault with tanks of our 774th Tank Battalion, fought its way into Strass. We had by passed Schafberg, but later our Company G was ordered to clean out the one hundred German troops entrenched there and to seize the town. But German mortar and artillery shells was by no means our only form of opposition. There were plenty of Jerries around who vigorously counter-attacked.





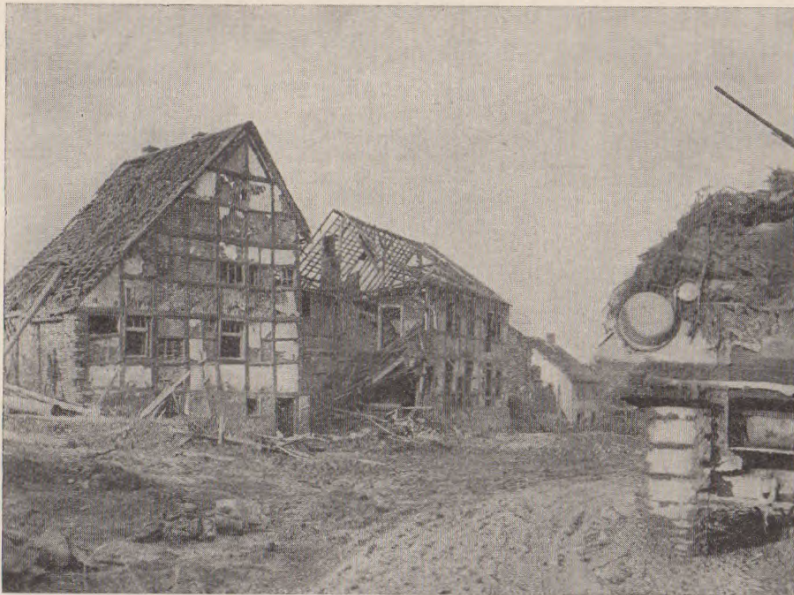


our troops in Strass. Companies I, and K, 330th, became isolated in the town. Attempts by our tanks and tank destroyers to contact them were driven back by German infantry, tanks, and artillery fire. The Luftwaffe was active in strength again for the first time since Normandy days. We shot down three enemy planes the first day of our attack and on December 11th men of the 453d AAA Battalion bagged six more. Each day, Jerry came over to strafe and bomb our lines, or just to make a reconnaissance. Each day, the 453d gave Jerry a warm reception.

While the 330th went after Strass, we in Colonel York's 331st Regiment attacked and entered Gey. We found a great many mines in and around the town and here, too, the mortar and artillery fire was extremely heavy. If Jerry was beaten, he either didn't know it or was too stubborn to admit it. There was no longer any doubt about his fighting on his home soil; he was bitterly contesting every inch of it.

The 329th Buckshots came up from Luxembourg and [joined] the Division on December 11th. Next day we attacked through the mine-infested forest in the face of machine gun, small arms and artillery fire and captured Hof Hardt. From Hof Hardt, the 2d Battalion, 329th, with 322nd FA Bn in direct support launched an attack across 1500 yards of open ground into Gurzenich, a village just across the Roer River from Duren. Moving in a co-





lumn of companies, the battalion slugged its way into the village by nightfall. This rapid and aggressive advance drove a deep salient into the enemy's defensive positions west of the Roer. With both flanks exposed, the 2d Battalion consolidated its positions during the next two days in spite of repeated enemy attacks and intense artillery fire.

At 0530, 16 December 1944, German artillery began a concentration which blanketed the entire village. During the next fifty minutes, the 2d Battalion was subjected to the most unremitting and concentrated artillery fire it had received during five months of combat. At 0620, the Germans struck in force from the northeast and east. Moving under cover of the early morning darkness and their artillery preparations, a reinforced battalion, supported by tanks and assault guns, struck from east, southeast, and south. During the ensuing





four hours, a pitched battle was fought in yards, in buildings, and in streets. But the men of the 2d Battalion held, smashed, and drove Jerry back across the Roer with the blasting support of our 83rd Div arty and Corps artillery. This vicious attack was part of Von Rundstedt's push which broke through in the Ardennes. As a result of this outstanding action, the 2d Battalion, 329th Infantry Regiment, was later awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation.

Meanwhile, 3d Battalion, 329th Infantry Regiment, struck vigorously southeast from the forest, captured Birgel, and, during the ensuing two days, smashed repeated vicious German counter-attacks employing tanks and infantry. Following this, the 1st Bn., supported by a platoon of Co A, 774th Tank Bn, attacked swiftly south from the vicinity of Gurzenich and hit the German positions defending Reisdorf from the rear. The Germans in the defending trenches had enough. They came out with their hands up. This operation netted the 329th approximately 1050 prisoners.

Meanwhile, Companies F and E of the 330th continued the attack on Schafberg. Initially we made some progress, but were delayed by direct fire from enemy guns in the town and from Jerry's well concealed tanks and self-propelled guns. We slugged away at this opposition and finally occupied and cleared Schafberg. Then our 1st Battalion moved in to hold the town while our 2d Battalion attacked north to contact the 3d Battalion cut off in Strass. Our Battalion re-inforced by Company C, 774th Tank Battalion, and Company B, 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion, had maintained their positions in the town against repeated counterattacks for two days. At 0330, one of our patrols contacted these isolated troops and delivered medical supplies. In the afternoon an artillery liaison plane dropped food to the men cut off in Strass. Late in the afternoon, our 2d Battalion made contact in force and the situation was thus considerably relieved. However, we still could only move supplies into Strass during hours of darkness, because the Germans covered all roads leading into town by direct fire.







By December 14th, we had opened a way through the forest for passage of tanks of the 5th Armored Division. They came through this passage and attacked on our left. The 2d Battalion, 330th, in a closely coordinated attack with Combat Command B, 5th Armored Division, advanced through mortar and artillery fire against enemy positions on the high ground just west of the Roer. On this occasion, we encountered the heaviest artillery concentrations we had received since our entry into Germany. On December 15th we captured Bergheim.

The 1st Battalion of the 331st seized the high ground south of Birgel. Then our 2d Battalion, 331st, passed through and advanced another 1,100 yards to take the high ground west of Berzbuir. Progress was slow, for Jerry kept shelling us with artillery and mortar concentrations. Those of us left in Gey were also still feeling the might of German artillery. More enemy planes came over and strafed our front lines, repeating the action later in the day. Then, in the face of intense small arms fire, we fought our way into Berzbuir. The 3d Battalion, 331st, moved into Kufferath where they relieved Combat Command A of the 5th Armored Division. The enemy left behind many booby traps and mines. Russians from forced labor battalions were among the prisoners we captured. The Hun was using everything and everyone at his disposal in a vicious effort to halt our advance.

A very large number of German planes attacked our front lines, but the 3d Battalion of the 331st continued the attack and captured Lendersdorf. So many enemy planes were coming over our area now that we began systematically to check the entire area for German paratroopers possibly dropped behind our lines. None was found, however.







With the west bank of the Roer River in its area cleared of Germans, the 329th sent two platoons towards Duren. We seized the west end of the bridge and some buildings in the vicinity. Later a dozen men from Company A crossed the Roer River, entered Duren, and came back to report two spans of the bridge destroyed. Thus these Buckshots became the first Americans to Berlin as of December 18th. That day is remembered also by the 453d Anti-Aircraft men who shot down 29 Heine planes.

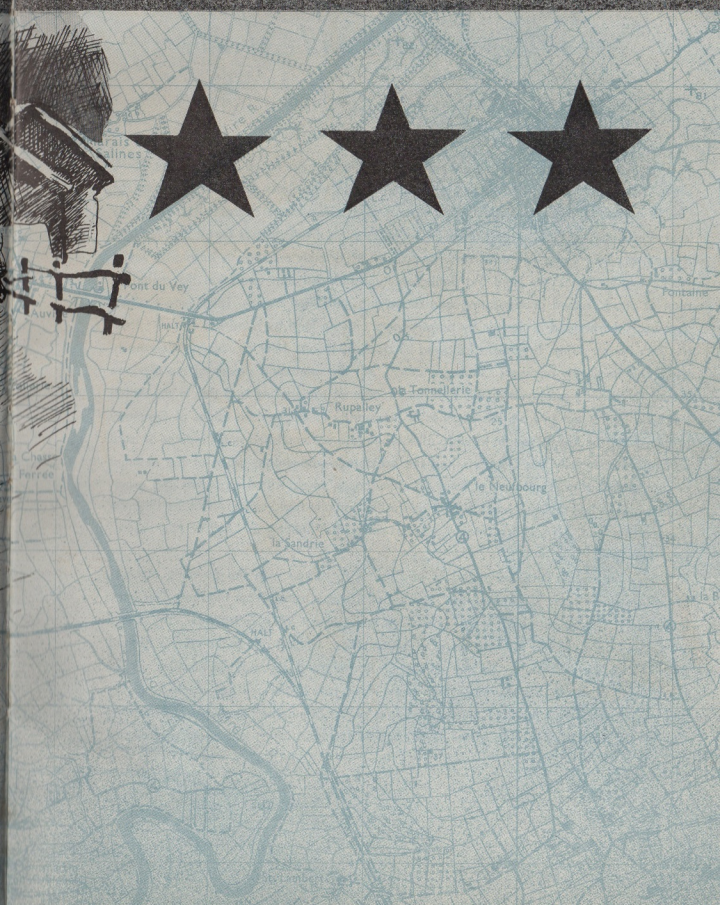
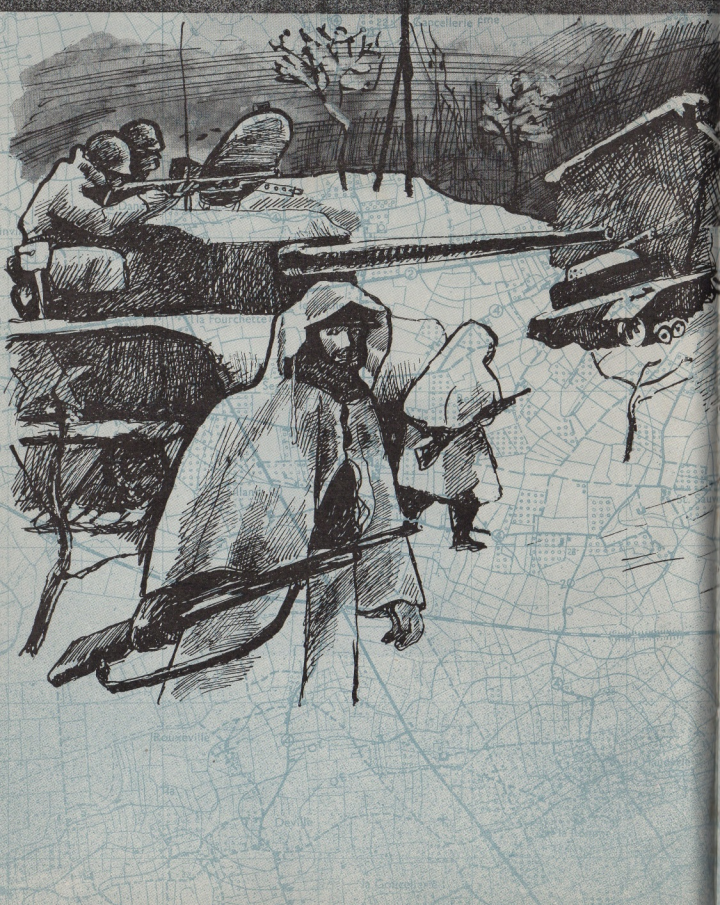
At Division Headquarters, the men who issue the orders became concerned over the possibility of the enemy flooding the Roer Valley by blowing the Urft Dam on the Urft River, and the Earth Dam on the Roer River. Blowing of these dams would flood many of our front line positions. We were under Major General McClain's XIX Corps now, and we began to make plans for completing our mission prior to moving into Ninth Army Reserve.

The 114th Infantry of the 104th Division relieved the Buckshots. But the additional mission was given to the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 330th to take an objective formerly assigned to the 5th Armored. We attacked towards Winden and reached the edge of town. Again the enemy opposition was extremely heavy, and our progress was slow. We continued the attack through the night. Our 2d Battalion, relieved from attachment to the 5th Armored Division, supported the attack on Winden by mortar fire. Winden became ours on Christmas Day. Our mission was completed. We had hurred the Hurtgen and roared to the Roer.





# A R D E N N E S





## *Arctic Ardennes and Armor*

While we were engaging the enemy between the Hurtgen Forest and the Roer River, other German units launched their winter offensive. In what later became known as the "Battle of the Buldge", Germany's best Panzer and SS Divisions charged through thinly held Allied lines in Belgium and drove a wedge through the Ardennes Forest that reached a depth of some eighty-five miles and ran to a width of sixty miles at its base. The whole world held its breath as Field Marshall Von Rundstedt put into execution his ambitious plan of attack, aimed at separating and destroying the Allied armies. The enemy's offensive was spearheaded in the air by paratroopers and on land by hundreds of tanks from the sixth Panzer Army. They were followed by crack SS troops, later by regular Wehrmacht units, and finally by members "Volksgranadier". All the remaining power of the German armed forces was employed in this final major attempt to separate and defeat the Allied tide who had swept in from the beaches of Normandy to the western edges of Germany proper. Now the enemy sought to undo all that we had accomplished in six months of hard fighting. Momentarily the Germans had the advantage—advantage born of the element of surprise and of concentration of force. In many cases, whole Allied regiments and sometimes whole Allied divisions were cut off during the initially rapid advances of the German forces. This was Jerry's first major success since the fighting in Africa. His success was short-lived.

Jerry had either under-estimated or had failed to reckon with the amazing mobility of the American Army. Overnight, the Thunderbolt Division raced from Northern Germany into Belgium. We, ourselves, were employing the element of surprise now. The entire VII Corps had moved to the new scene of action. Now, without rest or let-up, we dashed from the outskirts of Duren to the vicinity of Rochefort, a distance of 75 miles, to hit the "Bulge" at its tip. Slightly more than twenty-four hours after the last elements of the 83d moved away from the Roer River, other units of the Thunderbolt smashed Jerry's thrust right on the nose. We Buckshots of the 329th attacked Rochefort, which was an important road.



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BARVAUX-  
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SINSIN

83-84

WAILLET  
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HAVERSIM  
31 DEC.

HOQNE  
25 DEC.

MARCHE

MELREUX  
31 DEC.

MELI-

DER

SOY  
20 DEC.

FISENNE

30 DEC.

30 DEC.

ROCHFORT  
RELIEVED  
B-100<sup>th</sup> REGT 63-0 DIV I BRITISH

SCALE: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 MILES







counter taken in the advance made by the enemy. The 83d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop had successfully screened our entry towards the German lines, and now we of the 329th, with the full support of all of the 83d Division Artillery lashed out at Jerry to put an end to his advances and to destroy him before he could successfully withdraw from his self-made death trap.

The German offensive had slowed considerably by the time the 329th reached the outskirts of Rochefort. But Jerry was by no means beaten; he was only catching his breath before attempting to exploit his initial gains. Company B of the 329th Buckshots entered Rochefort on December 28th and spent the rest of the year there alone. For the Germans succeeded in cutting off Company B from the rest of us. Repeated attempts to break through to the beleaguered Company were beaten back by the Hun's intense small arms fire and his direct fire from high velocity weapons. From time to time, Company B reported to us by radio, but this type of contact was uncertain as the radio batteries weakened. Our artillery rose to new heights as they blasted Rochefort almost continuously. We smoked the town and then set it on fire but still couldn't get through to our "lost" company. Three days of intense shelling however, proved too much for the 9th Panzer Division, and they withdrew from the town. Company B, which had unofficially been given up as captured or destroyed, returned



to its battalion. Because of skillful leadership and the fighting ability of every man, Company B had beaten off repeated attacks with the loss of only seven men wounded and none killed.

We continued to employ the element of surprise against the Germans. As the 160th Brigade of the 53d British Division relieved us around Rochefort, we side-slipped to the east and aligned ourselves with the 3d Armored Division near the center of the northern edge of the bulge. Colonel Fosters' 330th Regiment was attached to the "Spearhead" Division. The remainder of us were ordered to ottock in close support of the armor and to finish off any Germans by-passed by the tankers. The 3d Armored smashed at the Germans in force on the morning of January 3d and advanced against stubborn resistance. The 83d Division artillery was attached to them to give additional fire support. Then when we passed our infantry through the 3rd Armored their artillery came under our division control so as to give additional support to our douqhs. Floret and Malempre were re-captured by our cohorts and then we passed through the 3d Armored to seize a bridgehead across the Rance Rau, later across the Langlir River, ondthen to clear a passage through that part of the Ardennes forest known as Bois de Ronce..

Certainly, no record ~~o~tM~~~ Ardennes Campaign is complete without reference to the terrain and the weather. For in the snow-laden hills of the Ardennes Forest we fought the weather as much as we fought the Germans; indeed, the bitter cold and heavy snow took as large a toll in Allied casualties as did German bullets and shells. "With the oil on their rifles frozen, with chapped faces and frozen hands and feet, riflemen of the 83d Infantry Division fought continuously in the arctic-like climate of the Ardennes Forest for five days and nights, to pave the way for the 3d Armored Division in the "Battle of the Bulge" ... The advances made by the 83d were directly responsible for enabling the 3d Armored to cut the vital St. Vith-Houffalize highway ..." -so spoke Commentator Robert Barr in one of his January newscasts over BBC. We had lived in the field during winter months in the States, but we had never experienced anything quite like this. We had to plow our way through deep snowdrifts, up and down mountain-sized hills, and against biting winds. We had to camouflage ourselves so that we blended with the whiteness-that whiteness that was everywhere. We had to stalk the enemy in the *forest*; we had to fight him during the day and to keep fighting him all through the night, and the next day, and the next night. We kept at Jerry until we had driven him from the woods, out into the open, in between the armored jaws of the First and Third Armies, driving south and north respectively. Our casualties equalled those of Normandy days, but this time most were due to the weather. We carried ammunition and food up to the front on our backs, for the huge snowdrifts prevented movement of tanks and holftracks. To survive called for great stamina and grit and a generous amount of good luck. Many of us did survive, and with us the memory of the Ardennes Campaign will be everlasting.







The 83d Infantry Division became of age in the Ardennes. It was there that we proved beyond all doubt that we had power, tactical skill, courage, and fortitude. Under conditions never before experienced, we hammered at the German's Panzer might. We out-fought the enemy, out-flanked him, drove him into a trap that brought his defeat. Day and night our at-tack continued. Langlir, Petite Langlir, Bihain, Bovigny, Courtil, and Honyelez were the



small towns which we captured after fierce fighting in bitter cold. But our victory in the Ardennes cannot be measured by towns captured or by miles gained. We did not advance far, as compared to some of our other successes, but we never fought harder, were never faced by stronger opposition than that which we encountered in the "Bulge". It was a three week endurance test which called for the "impossible" in physical stamina, in self-confidence, and in individual courage. "The difficult we do right *away*; the impossible takes a little longer." Perhaps it took us a little longer to advance a thousand yards in the Ardennes than it took us to reach the Rhine, or to race to the Elbe, but we successfully achieved our mission and accomplished what appeared to be the impossible. Enemy counter-attacks were numerous and frequent, but each time we repelled them or destroyed them before they could actually start. Many times our artillery was unable to register on targets because of the weather. And yet, Langlir and Petite Langlir received some of the heaviest artillery concentrations ever employed in Europe. Thirteen artillery battalions-156 guns-fired simul-







taneously on these two small towns fifteen different times to pave the way for the riflemen's capture of the targets.

By the time we cleared the Bois de Ronce, swung east, and occupied Courtil, Honeyelez and Bovigny, the Bulge had been considerably reduced. Then the 3d Armored Division passed through our bridgeheads, shot off to the left, to the right and down the center to cut the all-important Houffalize-St. Vith Highway. This maneuver, together with the advance of the Third Army from the south, cut the remaining elements of the German Sixth Panzer Army in two and set the stage for the final elimination of the Bulge and the restoration of our original front lines in Germany.

The 83d was relieved, and we moved back to the vicinity of Hamoir, Belgium, where, for the first time since we were committed last June, we were entirely out of contact with the enemy.





# RHINELAND





## *Roaring from Roer to Rhine*

We spent most of the month of February licking our wounds, resting, and re-training. New reinforcements arrived to replace those lost from our ranks during the Ardennes counter-offensive. Our good friends, the 774th Tank Battalion, left the Thunderbolt on February 3d to join the 78th Infantry Division. In their place, we welcomed the 736th Tank Battalion, which was to play an important role in each of our last two combat operations in Europe. On the Meuse River near Liege, Belgium, we trained in river crossing tactics. We reorganized and again readied ourselves for combat.

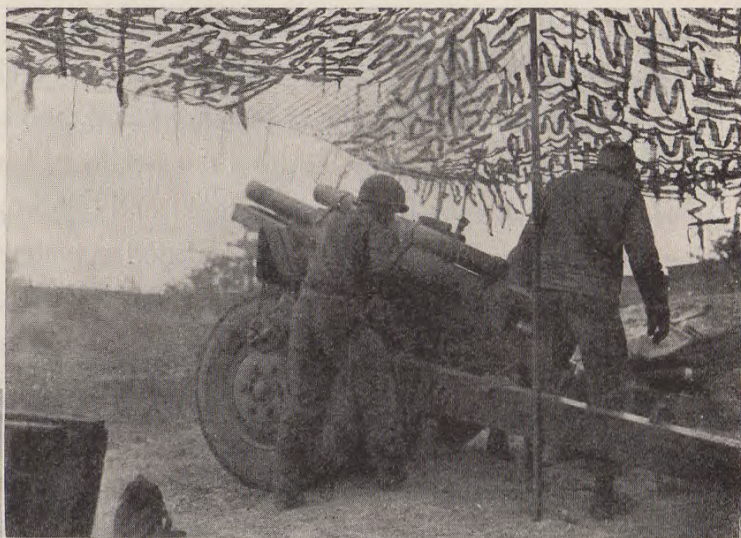
The "Bulge" had been completely eliminated now. Not only were the Allies' former front lines restored but, in some places, we had advanced farther into Germany. Another great Allied offensive was forming. Once more the chroniclers heralded this next drive as the one that would sound the death knell for the Nazis. We were after something pretty big and pretty important, something that might put the finishing touch to German morale were we to reach or cross ~~it-the~~ Rhine River.

Late in February we moved back into Germany and assembled in the area around Schaffenberg and our crack 83rd Div arty was employed to support the crossing of the 29th Inf Division. Another change in Corps and Army: We were assigned to the XIX Corps, part of the Ninth U. S. Army. The 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions and the 2d Armored Division comprised the remainder of the Corps. Major General Raymond S. McClain, Corps Commander, issued a plan which would carry us from the Roer River to the Rhine and perhaps farther. The 29th "Let's Go" Division and the 30th "Old Hickory" Division were to cross the Roer River and, later, the 2d Armored "Hell on Wheels" Division and the 83d Thunderbolt Division were to pass through and push on to the major objective.

Members of the 330th Combat Team were attached to the 29th Division after the latter launched its assault across the Roer in the wee hours of the morning of February 23d. When the 29th cried "Let's Go", "Old Hickory" took off with them and the race to the Rhine was on. Colonel Foster's Regiment launched its attack on February 24th and quickly captur-



ed Pattern and Mersch. By the end of the day, Company L was in Sevenich, and the 1st Battalion, 330th, occupied the town of Muntz. Our artillery again had 'scored.' Just before the crossing, every gun in every artillery battalion of XIX Corps and its four Divisions shelled the German positions east of the Roer as far as they could reach. This gigantic artillery assault proved devastating to the enemy and was directly responsible for the Corps' rapid advance across the Rhineland. We in the 330th moved on to capture Hasselsweiler, Gevelsdorf and Isen Kroidt-all against comparatively light resistance. On February 27th, we re-

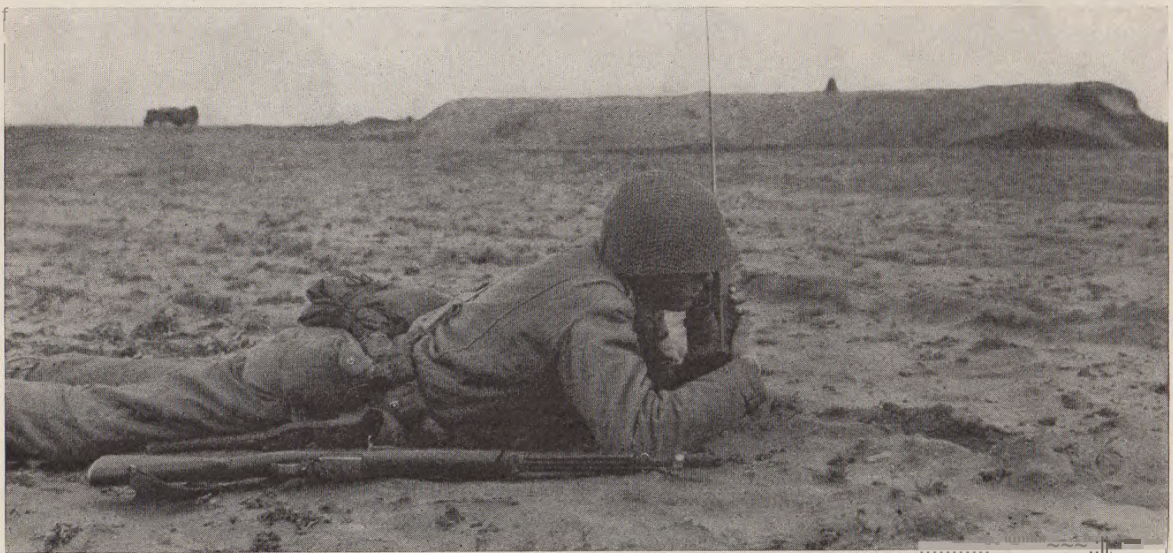




turned to the Thunderbolt. Later that same day, Combat Team 331 was attached to the 2d Armored Division. Our 1st Battalion, 331st Inf, moved forward with the 908th Field Artillery Battalion in support of the 2d Armored's advance.

The end of February found Operation "GRENADE" progressing rapidly. The 29th Division turned north towards Munchen-Gladbach while the 2d Armored Division shifted northeast towards Krefeld. Now it came time for the Thunderbolt to take its part in the operation. We passed north of the 30th Division and advanced along the Erft Canal towards Neuss. This three pronged drive resulted in the total collapse of all German forces in the Corps area. It was at noon on March 1st that the 83d was committed as a unit. We received the mission of capturing Neuss and of securing the three Rhine River bridges connecting Neuss with Dusseldorf. We planned our action to maintain vigorous pressure without let up.

At 1300, on the first day of March the Buckshots of 329 with our dependable pals of the 322 FA Bn, attached, attacked from the vicinity of Leveling. We moved out across the flat, open terrain, opposed by German tanks and self-propelled guns. We exploited our tactical training to advantage and out-flanked and out-maneuvered the German positions until we reached the outskirts of Neuss. There our attack was slowed somewhat by machine gun fire from inside the city. After dark, Jerry put up a strong perimeter defense of heavy machine guns, which fired at us through prearranged zones. We were active during the night, too, moving through and around batteries of concrete emplaced 88's sited to sweep the approaches to Neuss. Our attack continued throughout the night. By 0430 on March 2d we had secured Neuss. Two hours later, our 1st Battalion, 329th, advanced through the city to the eastern outskirts from where they could see the Rhine. By now our operations were impeded by the mobs of civilians who crowded the streets. The streets were also crowded with Germans in uniform, for we promptly marched the large numbers of prisoners we captured to the rear.





Shortly after midnight, March 1st, our 3d Battalion, 329th, assembled for a drive east to seize the railroad bridge at Neuss. It was 0045, 2 March, when we began our initially slow advance towards one of the three bridges the Thunderbolt had been ordered to seize. While our sharp-shooting 83rd Div arty placed intermittent artillery fire on the east bank of the river to try and prevent the Krauts from blowing up the bridge, the Heinies occupied dug in positions across the open terrain that remained between us and the coveted bridge. Company I in the lead was stopped by fire from Jerry's heavy machine guns and 20 mm. antiaircraft artillery. Company L was placed on the left and, accompanied by a platoon of Co A, 736th Tank Bn, crossed the entrenched position between the town and the Rhine with marching fire. The defenders came out with their hands up, and our end of the bridge was captured. We sent patrols across the Rhine and they returned to report that the eastern span had already been blown by the Germans. This explained the explosion we had heard around eight o'clock that morning. We secured the area on the western bank of the river and later made more thorough reconnaissance of the railroad bridge. To our dismay we learned that the center span had been entirely demolished and that the bridge was useless.

Colonel Foster's 330th regiment was assigned the task of crossing the Nord Canal and driving on to help the 329th secure Neuss. Our 2d Battalion took off from the vicinity of Epsendorf at 1400, March 1st. It took us just two hours to clear the towns of Lanzeratiff and Grefrath. We crossed the Nord Canal during the night, and before three the next morning we were already fighting alongside the Buckshots in the built-up portions of Neuss. Right after midday, our 3d Battalion, 330th, left Neuss, maneuvered in a wide, swinging arc around the city, and headed for the bridge at Oberkassel, a west bank suburb of Dusseldorf. We moved out with the aid of tanks from the 736th Tank Battalion, but this armor support was delayed by road blocks. We kept moving, though and managed to destroy six of Jerry's 75 mm. high velocity guns. When darkness came, men from the 308th Engineer Battalion removed the enemy's roadblocks and once again the tankers supported our advance. At 0900, March 2, as the 1st Bn, 331st Inf, attached to 330th Inf and 3d Bn, 330th, raced to secure the Neuss-Dusseldorf Bridge, the center span blew up almost at our feet.

In the early afternoon of March 1, the 331st Regiment, less the 1st Battalion, returned to Division control, and continued the attack we had launched while under control of the 2d Armored Division. We advanced steadily upon Grevenbroich, cleared the town, and patrolled along the Erft Canal, which was the Division's right boundary. And then, at 0700 on March 2, an enemy build-up on our right flank in the vicinity of Kapellen created a serious threat to the entire Thunderbolt operation. While XIX Corps was smashing northeast to the Rhine, the First Army's VII Corps, far to our south, was attacking almost due east toward Cologne. These drives left a triangular area between the First and Ninth Armies occupied by the enemy. Approximately three hundred German infantrymen, supported by more than twenty tanks, attacked our exposed flank near Kapellen and overran our initial

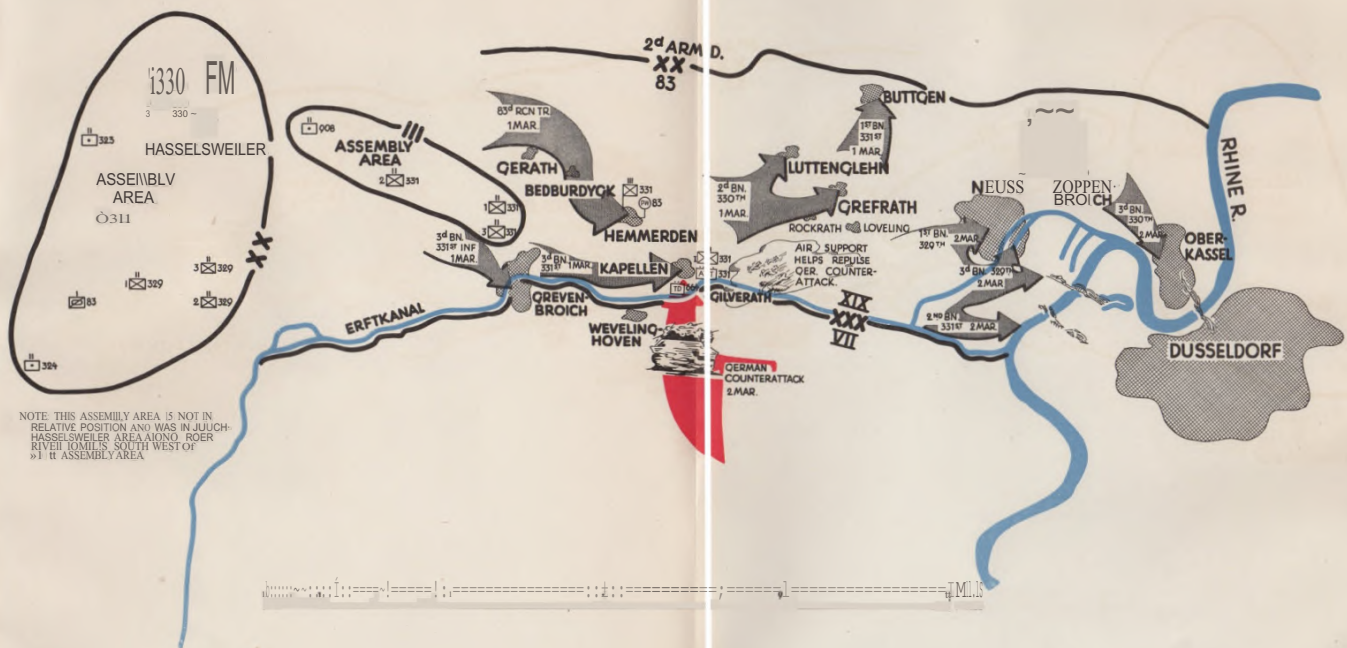




defenses. Company I of the 331st became completely surrounded by enemy tanks and infantry. The anti-tank platoon, 3d Battalion, 331st, and a platoon from our attached 643d Tank Destroyer Battalion also were cut off. Jerry drove, right through the TD's who sustained heavy losses. But the weather was on our side, and we were able to employ the air forces against the German attack. Five squadrons of P-47s bombed, strafed, and fired rockets at Jerry continuously from early morning until mid-afternoon. The Air Corps boys destroyed 14 of the enemy's tanks and half-tracks, while our hard-hitting 83rd Division artillery, tank destroyers and our infantry, with rocket launchers, took care of another seven Heinie tanks. By two-thirty that afternoon the threat was completely eliminated, but we will always be grateful for the excellent and timely assistance rendered us that day by men and planes of the IX Tactical Air Force.

Meanwhile, at one-thirty on March 2, the 2d Battalion, 331st, took the offensive and attacked from the vicinity of the Erft Canal in a swift drive to the Rhine River. Just four hours later, Company E reached the major objective and became the first Allied troops to reach the lower Rhine. Again the world turned its eyes on the Thunderbolt. Again the photogra-







phot's and reporters rushed to our area to give world-wide publicity to our achievements. Just seven and one-half hours after the 83d Division was committed as a unit, we had reached the highly publicized Rhine River and had won the race from the Roer. And now the Thunderbolt maintained "Die wacht am Rhine".



# CENTRAL EUROPE





## *Race from Rhine to Russians*

Upon completion of our operations from the Roer to the Rhine, the Thunderbolt moved into portions of Belgium and the Netherlands where again we began training in river crossing tactics. We all thought we were to make an assault crossing of the Rhine in the near future, so we trained hard as we crossed and re-crossed the Maas River.

Before March ran out, we found ourselves back in Germany for the third time. All the Allied Armies had reached the Rhine River, and the First U. S. Army had seized a bridge intact near Remagen and had made the first crossing of Germany's vaunted western bastion.



During the last days of March, the Allies launched their final and greatest offensive of the war against the Germans. The Ninth Army, following the lead of the First, forced a crossing of the Rhine north of the Ruhr basin after a gigantic aerial and artillery bombardment of the river's eastern banks. Airborne troops who participated in the operation were dropped well east of the river. It became evident that the Nazi war machine was crumbling and everywhere our advances were swift and sure. We crossed the Rhine near Wesel on March 30th and proceeded to follow the fast-moving 2d Armored Division, ostensibly for the purpose of cleaning out pockets of enemy resistance bypassed by the armor. It became apparent that speed was to be the keynote, but we didn't want to achieve it at the cost of firepower. Gen Montague, our able Div Arty commander recommended that the organic light battalions be placed under combat team control with two medium battalions, our 324th and 967th



(an attached unit) in general support. Gen Macon called the signals from quarterback and we had a neat Notre Dame shift with the 322nd backing the 329th, the 908th behind the 331st, the 25th (another attached FA Bn) joined task force Biddle and blocked the right flank of the division and the 330th with the 323rd behind it faded back to hold the Lippe Canal until relieved. We were ready, the ball was snapped and on April 4th, the 83d Division raced out on its own, sometimes abreast of, sometimes behind, frequently ahead of the "Hell on Wheels" 2nd Armored Division to our north.

Important history was recorded during the two weeks that followed. Gentlemen of the press ran out of adjectives and superlatives with which to describe the Thunderbolt Division, which now, more than at any other time, was truly living up to its name. We set new infantry speed records-records that surpassed those of the best Allied armor. Yes, at times, we moved faster than the tanks of a top-notch armored division, faster than was conceivably possible with what is known as "Organic transportation". For sometime, the secret of our lightning-like advances was ours and the world wondered how we moved so rapidly. Reporters referred to us as "crack troops of the 83d Division", "ace shock troops of the Ninth Army", "ETO veterans from Normandy to the Rhine".

We chased the Germans up and down hills and mountains, across canals and rivers; raced through, around, and after them towards the Russians. The 83d Thunderbolt Division swept across northern Germany from the Rhineland through the Prussian provinces of Westphalia, Hannover and Sachsen, and the German states of Lippe, Braunschweig, and Anhalt; through the Teutoburger Forest, over the Hills of Hasse and the Harz Mountains; across the Lippe, the Weser, the Leine, the Saale and the Elbe Rivers. 280 miles in thirteen days! It hadn't been a soft touch throughout however. The 329th had met resistance in the mountains east of Bad Lippspringe but our artillery and TD fire had blasted it apart. Then too the 331st met opposition in attempting to force a bridgehead in the vicinity of Holzminden, so







Gen Montague's 908th and 96th went into position along with the 228th Group from Corps. We threw 2,083 rounds at the enemy in preparation for the attack and the 331st Inf smashed across.

It was the 3d Battalion of the Colonel Crabill's 329th Infantry (reinforced) that was in the lead most of the time during our sweep into the heart of the Reich. We were later referred to as the "Rag-Tag Circus", but to us it was no circus. Admittedly, however, we may have looked like a summer carnival group entering a country town as we dashed along the highways and byways of the Prussian provinces, for we pressed into service every conceivable means of transportation we encountered. If it had wheels, we used it. It was not unusual to see thirty or more riflemen clinging to a single tank, or to see two or three men on one motorcycle, or a whole platoon riding down the street in a dilapidated German salopy. The 331st sped along, not far behind us, on our flank, as we all raced on across five rivers until we were ordered to stop less than sixty miles from Berlin.

We in the 330th, although detached from the 83d Division part of the time, played an







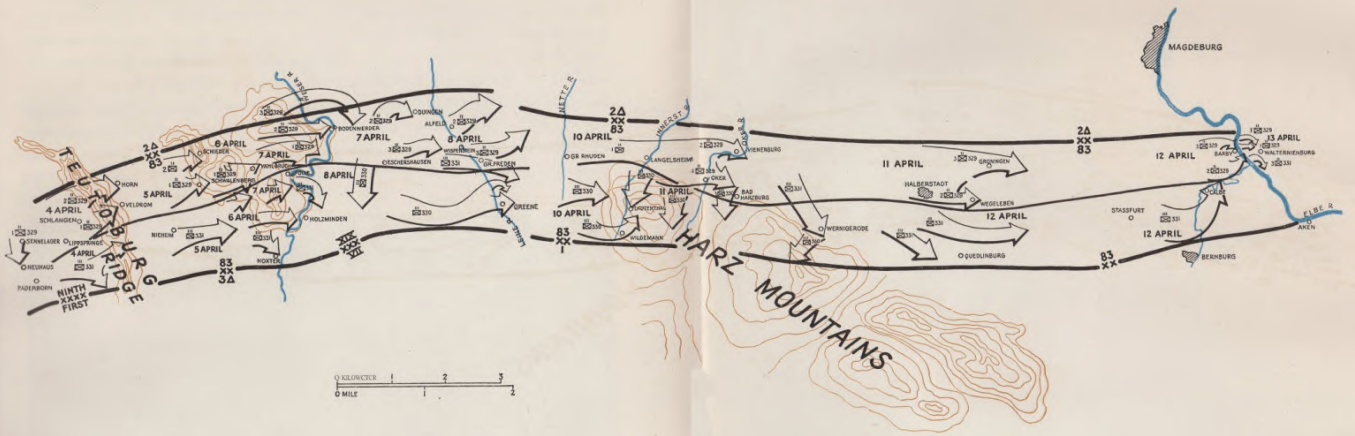




important role in this final phase of the European War. We were assigned to the much more rugged task of helping to clean out the Harz Mountains area. This "strong pocket of resistance" had been by-passed by the fast riding 329th and 331st and by the time we had slugged our way into woods and up the mountains, 60,000 Germans were captured-all from the Harz Mountains area.

Our service units rose to new heights during this race. Confronted with the problem of supplying the attacking echelons, which were literally running away from supply points, the men of our 83d Quartermaster Company and the 83d Ordnance Company bore down as







never before. Truck drivers were at the wheel round the clock. And they produced. At no time were we short of ammunition, gasoline, food, or water-the lack of which can sometimes stop an advance more effectively than the enemy. The 83d Signal Company too, distinguished itself. In spite of the rapidity of the advance, Division Headquarters was always in both telephone and radio communication with the regiments.

Our division artillery also kept up the mad pace and overcame the terrific handicap of communication in such a rapidly moving situation, and they were there with their supporting fires, when the doughs needed it, to the tune of 10,350 rounds.

The Truman Bridge, named in honor of our new Commander-in-Chief who had just taken office, was erected across the Elbe River at Barby. It was here that we met the first real opposition in our drive across Germany. Jerry put up a stubborn defense of the city which we won, only after fighting it out by the house-to-house method. On the following day, April 13, we crossed the river and established the only bridgehead east of the Elbe. The 329th and 331st Regiments, supported by the 736th Tank Battalion and the 643 Tank Destroyer Battalion, poured across the river on ferries constructed and operated by our own 308th Engineer Battalion. The 453d Anti-Aircraft Battalion moved to the site of the bridgehead along with the 113th Cavalry Group. Two bridges were constructed across the Elbe by the supporting 295th Engineer Battalion and 992d Bridge Company. These the Heinies







tried desperately to destroy. The Germans tried to shell the bridges with his artillery, he tried to bomb them with his remaining planes, and he even sent swimming saboteurs and floating mines down the river in vain efforts to demolish our bridges. But the historic structures were protected and remained intact.

The night before we crossed the Elbe, a Combat Command from the 2d Armored Division had ventured across the river at a point near Magdeburg, to our north. All the armor and infantry Jerry had left between the Ninth U. S. Army and the Russians were thrown at the "Hell on Wheels" bridgehead. This desperate, last minute attack caused the 2d Armored Division to abandon their bridgehead. Part of their outfit moved down, crossed the river over the Truman Bridge, and became attached to us. Now Jerry concentrated his efforts on eliminating the Thunderbolt foothold east of the Elbe. Almost continuously for several days and nights, German tanks, artillery, and riflemen slashed at our positions. But the Thunderbolt men not only held; they drove Jerry back with disastrous losses. We slugged it out toe to toe, and never yielded an inch. Jerry was badly beaten as we held firm.



With our bridgehead firmly established, we were ordered to patrol east to contact the Russians. Optimistically, those of us back at the Division CP in Calbe marked one of the Nazi Party chairs in the War Room "Reserved for Joe". When the 329th Infantry made radio contact with the Russians, the world was electrified by news of the impending meeting of the great armies of the United States and the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. At first, a special task force was organized and held in readiness near the 329th Buckshot CP, and the 125th Cavalry Squadron of the 113th Cavalry Group, attached to the 83d Division, was given the mission of patrolling east to make physical contact between the American Ninth Army and the XXVII Russian Corps. Arrangements were made immediately for a meeting of the respective Division and Corps Commanders. Shortly thereafter, the Russian troops moved in to the Elbe River to make the first link-up in force with American troops. We withdrew from our much heralded Elbe Bridgehead, and active participation in World War II for the Thunderbolt ended just two days before V-E Day.





# *Governing Germany*

The cessation of hostilities in Europe brought about a new phase of operations for Allied troops on the Continent—the occupation and government of Germany and its Axis satellites. For all of us, divisions, corps and armies-officers and enlisted men alike, this was a new experience. We had fought the Germans, had controlled those who were in our respective areas during combat, and had even arrested some troublemakers. Never before, however, had we attempted to take over the complete government of any part of the country.

We found our new mission a novel one. It posed many problems and brought us twice as many headaches. There were Nazi Party members to be removed from public offices; there were non-Nazis to be found and freed to take over minor roles in the administration of the many landkreises, provinces, and states. We had to track down people listed as "War Criminals". There were thousands of records and documents to be confiscated and examined arms and ammunition to be collected and destroyed; former munitions and aircraft plants to be closed and guarded. We had to institute new food and clothing rationing procedures. We had to put the Germans to work clearing away some of the rubble in order to clear a path for our own service vehicles.

Far from the least of our headaches were the ones that occurred with every mention of the term "DPs". The Germans exploited their forced foreign labor until the last day of battle. Thus the end of the war found millions of French, Polish, Hungarian, Belgian, Russian, Czechoslovakian, and Dutch people still in Germany, hundreds of miles from their homeland and with no means of their own for returning home. These were labeled "Displaced Persons", and the abbreviation "DP" was added to our Army vocabulary. Many of these people were diseased, ill, or crippled as a result of the Nazis' maltreatment. The wheels were set in motion to return the Allied Nationals to their homelands. They made the journey via the shuttle system, so that it became our job to receive many DPs into our area, to feed and house them, and then to start them on the next leg of their journey. Simultaneously, we moved others eastward to areas occupied by other divisions. The expression, "we had them coming and going" was literally true.



The first area occupied and governed by the Thunderbolt for any length of time was located in northern Germany and included Landkreise Braunschweig. Near the southern border of our area was the famous German summer resort, Bad Harzburg. Here, the Division established its headquarters and set up a Division Rest Center so that we might enjoy the recreation and scenic views the area afforded. Bad Harzburg is located in a valley, surrounded on three sides by the Harz Mountains, where the 330th fought so hard just two months before. The Rest Center opened an outdoor beer garden in which German vaudeville entertained us. We rode electric lifts to the top of the mountain and explored the dense woods that were everywhere. We went swimming in an elaborate pool, fully equipped with diving boards and towers. We played softball, volleyball and badminton. Sometimes we just stretched out on the grass on the side of a hill and soaked up the warm sunshine.

Luckier ones got away to Paris, others returned to England, and still others among us won a furlough to the French Riviera. Those were wonderful days - days of happy contrast to those we had lived during the previous eleven months. This was the closest thing to civilian life we had experienced since sailing from the UK. We took in all the sights, sometimes spent a lot of money, did a little drinking and some dancing. It was a welcome and exhilarating change from war.

About a month after V-E Day, we moved to Bavaria where we took over an area previously controlled by the 5th Division. For a while, we continued our occupational duties. After a few weeks, the 102d "Ozark" Division moved into the area with us and relieved us of occupational responsibility, so that we could devote full time to training as a Category II Unit. Some of us then moved up to the arid wastes known as the Grafenwohr Training Area, site of one of the Wehrmacht's largest training centers. The artillery battalions trained for firing tests. The Buckshots of the 329th Infantry took company and battalion tests and prepared to engage in small scale maneuvers. We were all glad when the Japanese surrender brought an abrupt end to this sort of training, and we returned to the Division area to take up once again our former mission of occupying our sector and to participate in the Information-Education Program.

The Army Education Program was just getting into full swing about this time. We set up the machinery to start bottolich, regimental, and division schools operating. Many Thunderbolts left us to attend army and civilian colleges and universities in France and the United Kingdom. We studied French Language and French Civilization at such civilian institutions as Dijon, Grenoble and Sorbonne Universities. A few of us took a course in Political World Problems at England's famous Oxford University, while others studied music in the UK at the Guildhall School of Music. The Army's University Centers at Shrivenham, England, and Biorritz, France, were the places of study for many of us taking courses in Journalism, Agriculture and Commerce. On-the-job Training in automobile mechanics, electricity and radio repairs was conducted right here in Bavaria, and also in England and France.



I & E took an active part, too, in our recreational activities. The "City of Vienna", an Austrian passenger vessel, operated daily from historic Passau to a point near Linz. Two hundred Thunderbolts sailed on the "Vienna" each day, and this I & E Danube Excursion became one of our favorite recreational pastimes. Many of us boarded six by sixes and ventured over the hilly, winding roads that lead from Bavaria to Berchtesgaden. Hitler's notorious retreat at this spot was only one of many points of interest we examined. We took other I & E Tours to all parts of Bavaria and into Austria and Czechoslovakia.

The Division Chemical Warfare Section, never used for its primary purpose since we arrived in England, established and operated a Rest Center. The Oberhaus, an old, historic castle overlooking the confluence of the Inn, the Ilz, and the Danube Rivers, at Passau, was chosen for this newest Division Rest Center. It proved ideal for the purpose. It was a photographer's paradise, and, when the CWS boys were ready to open the doors to other Thunderbolts, it was a GI's dream: no uniform regulations, and no saluting. We ate at the Oberhaus in civilian style while German frauleins waited on us. We drank beer at the Terrace Bar and danced there to the music of the Division and various local bands. We slept between freshly laundered sheets. The Rest Center provided game rooms, a movie theater, a portrait photographer, a barbershop, a swimming pool, and volley ball archery, quoit, tennis, and badminton courts. Red Cross doughnut dugouts serviced those of us who slept late in the morning or who wanted a bite between meals. Personnel of the numerous USO shows which visited the Thunderbolts were generally quartered with us GIs at the Oberhaus, and we had an opportunity to meet and talk with such celebrities as Jack Benny, Ingrid Bergman, Bob Hope, Jerry Colonna, and Martha Tilton.

Sometimes we would venture into the city of Passau, scene of many uprisings in the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries. The complexity of narrow, winding streets in this centuries old city, along with its history-laden background reminded New Englanders of Boston. But, unlike the Massachusetts port, Passau had few stores operating and there was little for sale in the handful that were open. We found entertainment here at the large Passau Arena where we witnessed USO shows. Jock Benny, Bob Hope, Glenn Miller's Orchestra, Ella Logan and Hal Mcintyre and his band headed the list of comedians, singers, musicians and dancers who appeared before us in the Passau Arena, the Oberhaus and at the open-air Sportsplatz Theatre in Vilshofen.

During all this time, uppermost in our individual minds were thoughts of returning to the States and being discharged from the Army. We sweated out the "Interim Score", the "Critical Score", and the suspense-filled period during which surrender negotiations were conducted with our enemy on the other side of the globe. In between manning roadblocks, training, studying, and fishing from the banks of the green-not blue-Danube, we looked forward to the day when we could see our families again, wear civvies, and eat at home or in a restaurant of our own choosing. We even permitted ourselves the folly of expecting the







return of these freedoms and luxuries "soon". Fortunately, for many of us these fond dreams started to become realities. In August, the first large group of Thunderbolts left the Division, when the lucky holders of 85 or more points were transferred to the 99th Infantry Division. From time to time, smaller groups of veteran 83d men left the Division, destined for the States and eventual discharge. Regardless of our own ASR score, or our age, or our length of Army service, we all secretly hoped to make one of these quotas and head towards the United States and the long sought, much cherished "white" discharge. Pushed aside for the moment were our vivid memories of the hedgerows of Normandy, the snow and the bitter cold of the Ardennes, and the treachery and danger of fighting in the Hurtgen Forest and the Harz Mountains. We forgot, momentarily, our meeting with the Russians, our record sweep from the Rhine to the Elbe, and our capture of 20,000 Nazis at Beaugency in one fell swoop. We could only think of getting home. Many of us were now starting to achieve that aim. But another fond hope, which all of us shared as one, was not to be realized. The 83d Infantry Division that had established a record of which we are all proud will not return to the States. The 83d will go home eventually, but the officers and men who trained and fought together, who ate and slept together, who shared each other's troubles and joined together in victory, in short, the veterans who had been with the Thunderbolt during all or most of the three year period during which it was active in World War II, will not be with the Division when it arrives at an east coast port on its return from Europe. There will be no joint welcome at home which we can all share together; we will not march side by side down the streets of New York in any victory celebration. Instead, we are leaving the Thunderbolt now, in separate groups-piecemeal. We, the real members of the 83rd are going home with other outfits and, elated as we are at the thought of returning to civilian life, we all regret that it is not possible for us to make this last move together. The transfer of another 6,500 Thunderbolts to the 8th Armored Division and hundreds more to other Category IV units marks the almost complete disintegration of the fighting team whose activities and accomplishments have just been related. So as we fidget in Assembly Area Camps, as we try to kill the monotony of the sea voyage home, as we sweat out the last forty-eight hours in the Separation Centers we say "Farewell to the 83d Infantry Division, United States Army." "Farewell", but not really "Goodbye", for we will always remain members of the Thunderbolt in spirit if not in fact.



XII

# *Salute to the Services*



Stories of wars and battles, as recorded by globe-trotting representatives of the modern world press, nearly always depict the life and struggle of the frontline riflemen, the men in the tanks, the pilots of the planes, and the crews of the ships that take an active part in the operations depicted. This is as it should be, for surely the brunt of an attack, the dangers from a counter-offensive, and the discomforts of attempting to live while only a few yards from the enemy are borne by those individuals closest to the scene of action. Although we remembered that personnel from the Engineers and Medics were always attached to each infantry-artillery combat team. All too often, however, the invaluable services of those who serve a little further behind the frontlines are overlooked in the rush to sing the praises of the man with the gun—the man carrying the ball while the linesmen plug away unnoticed.

So it is that those who work tediously night and day are frequently slighted when incidents relative to the various campaigns are recorded. But no battle record is complete and no history is finished unless deserved credit is given to personnel of the thousands of service organizations who play an equally important part in every battle, along with the men who kill and capture the enemy. For no war could be waged, no attack could succeed, not even a plan could be disseminated without the assistance afforded by far-reaching communications systems, constant supplies of food, clothing and ammunition, and the prompt and efficient repair of vehicles and equipment. No infantryman can long continue his attack



without the strength supplied from meals brought to him by mess personnel; no doughboy can survive the rigors of winter warfare without the heavy clothing that is carried to the front by members of Quartermaster Supply units; no reports of the progress of an attack, the location and strength of the enemy, the condition of the terrain can be sent to those who need the information without an adequate and continuous communications system; wounded combatants cannot be evacuated and cared for without medical personnel to render this service; no frontline troops can cross rivers and lakes or advance safely across enemy territory without first having the Engineers establish ferries, build bridges and clear paths through minefields. No tank can long pursue the enemy and no gun can continually fire upon any target without the prompt and continuous maintenance and repair service rendered by Ordnance units.

This chapter is not intended as an exclusive portrayal of the role played by the division service units. Their contribution can be read between the lines of each page of the preceding chapters and is present in the record of each shot fired, each yard gained, each counter-attack repulsed. In the following pages we merely intend to present a more specific picture of their untiring efforts. A better understanding of the quality and quantity of services rendered by the 308th Engineer Battalion, 308th Medical Battalion, 83rd Quartermaster Company, 83rd Signal Company, 783 Ordnance Company and the Headquarters Company and MP Platoon of the Division, all organic parts of the Thunderbolt may be gained from a glance at the following sections:

## *Bridges - Bombs - Bridge Heads*

308 Engineer Battalion

We engineers spent most of our time with our respective companies working hand in hand with the infantry regiments. Company "A" was nearly always working with the 329th, Company "B" spent most of its time with the 330th, while Company "C" stuck close to the 331st. There were times, though, when we operated as a battalion and were assigned our own mission. We were always reconnoitering roads, sweeping enemy mines, and laying our own. Likewise we often destroyed German bridges, only to return to the site later and build our own. Fourteen times we operated ferries in order to get other combat elements of the Thunderbolt across a river, and four times we, ourselves, made assault river crossings.

Our routine duties included the distribution of maps-more than one million sheets; the purifying of water for the troops-four and a half million gallons; laying concertina wire-three thousand yards. We even buried four hundred dead animals. Thirteen of the Prisoner of War cages built in the Division areas were constructed by 308th Engineers. Eight-five times we dug artillery emplacements, and our bulldozers also saw plenty of action in



the snow-filled Ardennes Forest. In the deadly Hurtgen Forest, we constructed sixteen splinter proof shelters for use as outposts and battalion headquarters.

When our advances were delayed by German roadblocks, we were the boys who moved in to remove the blocks-two hundred and fifty of them and we filled forty-five craters.

Then there were the bridges-Baileys-pontons-foot-class 40 and class 70. It was always hurry, hurry. Time was short, for the infantry had gone ahead-it always does-and secured its bridgehead. They were precarious toe-holds, but they would hold. Now they needed [eeps, ammo, litters, friendly tank destroyers, and anti-tank guns to stop the Nazi panzer counter-attack that always came. It was the dough in a wool shirt against those 70 ton Kraut tanks, so it was "Come on you guys, get the lead out-Give!" Boy, and we gave, in July and December, day and night, in clouds of dust, and in waist-deep water cold as ice, in quiet, sneak crossings and in assaults when Kraut was on the alert and dropped artillery, rained mortars and cut the hell out of our pontons and us with automatic weapon fire. Yes, we gave, look for yourself!

- 3,000 miles of road reconnoitered
- 150 miles of road swept for mines and posted
- 135 miles of road repaired
- 17 miles of new roads constructed
- 250 road blocks of various types removed.

These include concrete, steel rail and log obstacles and abatis.

- 45 road craters filled
- 90 wrecked tanks and vehicles removed from roads
- 5,000 yards of debris removed from city streets.
- 55 bridges built. This includes 11 treadway, 2 Bailey, 19 timber and 23 footbridges.
- 3 bridges destroyed by demolition.
- 14 ferries operated
- 4 assault river crossings made
- 15,000 AT and AP mines removed
- 28,000 AT mines laid
- 3,000 yards of triple concertina wire laid
- 400 dead animals buried
- 7,500 signs painted
- 1,050,000 sheets of maps distributed
- 4,500,000 gallons of water purified
- 13 prisoners of war cages built
- 85 artillery emplacements dug
- 16 splinter-proof shelters and OP's constructed.



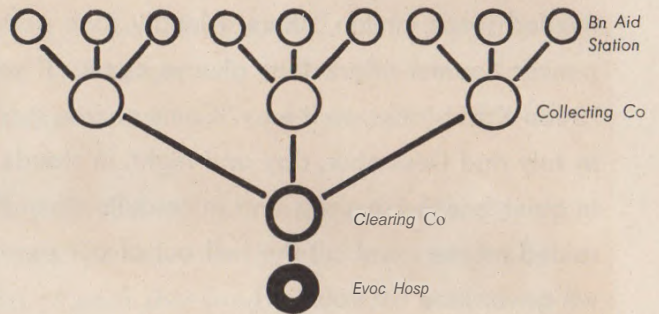


# *Sulfa - Surgery - Speedy Care*

308th Med Bn

We sort of feel that you would like to know just how we work. Maybe it is because we are sure you want to know of the detailed scheme that we had for caring for those that were hit.

Scattered out in those circles was all of the combined skill and experience of the best medical schools in America, all doctors who had practiced, members of the College of Surgeons and the American Board of Specialists.



That top line of circles represents the three battalion aid stations in each regiment. Here casualties receive their first treatment after having been given emergency treatment by the company aid man who had sent them in. The company aid man is right in there and advances on long with the troops-the battalion aid station is no picnic either, its only 800 yards from the front, but to save lives that's where they have to be, so the "Doc" and his assistants grit their teeth when they hear those incoming shells and keep on working.

From the aid station the casualty moves back to our collecting companies where the condition of the patient is thoroughly checked. He then passes back to our clearing company, which is set up as a hospital, usually with an attached surgical unit from Army. The integral link in the whole set-up is the litter-jeep and the ambulance. It isn't a matter of driving down a road on which Heinie has his artillery zeroed in that gets you, its just the awful feeling of responsibility of running through that stuff with those helpless men behind you. The clearing company, is the last echelon of medical care within the division. If the condition warrants it, the patient is sent back to an evacuation hospital and further still, if necessary.

Now for our story. All stories for all soldiers seem to start in Normandy, and many end there (but that was not due to lack of medical care-even though it meant working up to and past the point of exhaustion). After the 4th of July attack one of our platoons in the clearing company set an ETO record for the number of patients treated in a 24 hr period. That 24 hours stretched into 48 but we were saving lives and that was the only reward we wanted. We even laughed at the time that the platoon sergeant mistook one of the dog-tired attendants, who had fallen asleep in a litter, for a casualty.

Normandy was our proving ground. There we had been apprehensive of putting our training to the acid test of combat and that first day of combat found us as nervous as the





doughfoot attacking for the first time. But we settled down when the first casualties came in and we saw their confidence and their need for our services.

Our medical personnel picked up their own Purple Hearts as the division got its baptism of fire, for our collecting companies took many near hits. Then too, we had to continually feed our own battalion personnel down to take the places of the company aid men who were being lost faster than they could be replaced, through normal channels.

We passed on to Brittany. We were more seasoned now and the casualties were much lighter, caused mostly by shell fragments because of the nature of the fighting as distinguished from the mine, grenade and small arms wounds which the close fighting of Normandy had added to the normal artillery casualties. So we now had a little time to perfect our techniques and find new solutions to our problems.

The Loire River was a real breather. It was our own phoney war—a German patrol crossed our over-extended lines and entered our clearing company—discovered the nature of the installation and courteously departed. We took advantage of the lull to the full, knowing that its quietude would be shattered soon, so we fussed about the sick calls which resembled those of garrison life, and prepared for the future.

We moved into Luxembourg and the Clearing Company went indoors for the first time. In the past we had never been able to find a building standing that was big enough for our purposes, but ironically enough it was a quiet sector and the company was not busy.



Then came the Hurtgen Forest with its close-fighting {and attendant small arms wounds), and outdoors we went again. Once more we had to battle the elements as well as the Krauts. We had to protect our patients from the cold, damp of the sector that attacked them as well as those who had not been hit—we mean the bugaboo of trench foot that reached into foxholes and dugouts, to attack the men who were too busy fighting Krauts to keep their feet dry and warm.

The Ardennes and its bitter cold posed the same problem of protecting the patients from exposure while we treated them. Our tents looked like a gigantic winter circus in the snow. In fact, we had three times as much tentage as Barnum & Beiley and could give the latter boys a head start and still get our tents up first.

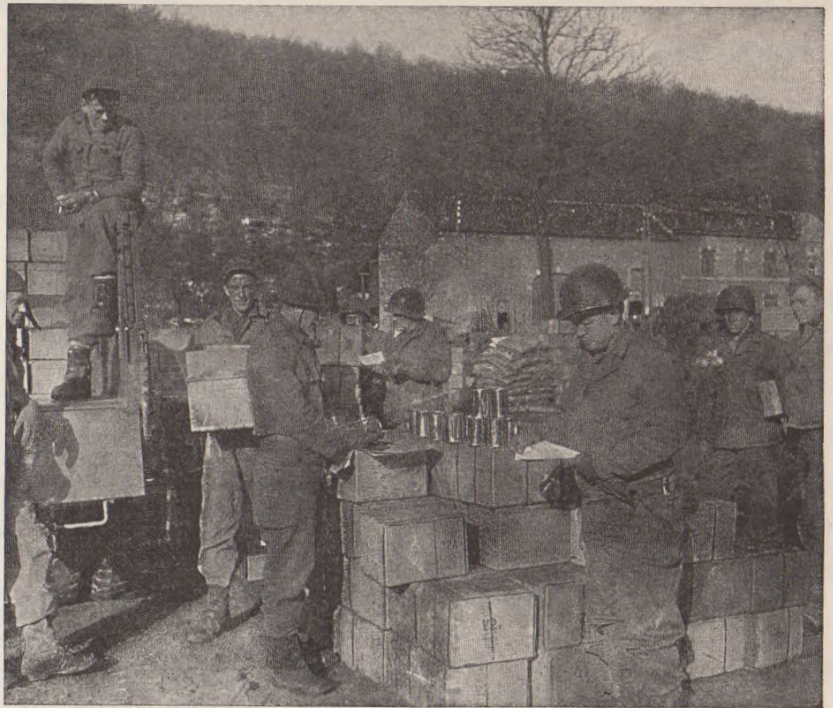
Then followed the succeeding campaigns of the division. The problems were the same, and so was our job—Save lives. We looked backwards from the Elbe River and proudly remember that 98% of the casualties who reached the Clearing company were saved. We are proud of that and also of the fact that all the visiting doctors from the States marveled at the complete facilities and service that a mobile unit, such as ours, afforded.

83d Inf Div

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We started out as the 408th QM Bn, but on the 22nd of October 1942 we were reorganized into our present form.

Immediately upon arrival on Omaha Beach, we began servicing the Division in all phases of Quartermaster activities. In general, the company was usually located near the



Rear Echelon, but at times, we were well forward of the Division Artillery. This operation was the first severe test of the supply system. It created no great problems and we functioned smoothly. It "prepped" us for the things to come and as a result we took our jobs in Normandy and Brittany in our stride.

Then came the Loire River Operation, and the flexibility of Division Quartermaster Staff and the Quartermaster Company, in supplying the Division was severely tested. Many times, supplies were hauled 200 to 300 miles from Base Section Supply Points in Normandy and also from the Port of Cherbourg.

We kept the supplies moving up for the men and machines of the Division through the picturesque streets of war-spared Luxembourg the rubble of Aachen-the mud and tree scarred Hurtgen Forest. Then came the Nazi winter smash and our company convoy streaked with the division on the 90 mile midnight jaunt the night of December 26th to Belgium. The Krauts strafed the road but we kept them rolling.

We made contact with the enemy and with the damndest cold we had ever seen. The truck platoon boys still talk about the cold, the snow, and the ice on those long hauls...Lboy how we hoped that Army would move up its supply points.

With the Kraut drive in the Ardennes stopped and while the division poised itself South and East of Maastricht, Holland we concentrated on building up supplies for the push across the Roer River. We followed the division across and set up our installation at Orken. Soon after we were hit by a Nazi counter-attack but the 331st galloped up in the nick of time. Boy how we loved those doughfoots after that. But don't get the idea that we couldn't handle ourselves. By now it was second nature for us to work with one hand on our weapons. This was especially true of the truck drivers. On many occasions we had to jam down on the brakes and grab for an M1, or push down on the accelerator while the assistant driver swung the 50 caliber machine gun around so that we could blast through some Krauts along the road.

We then started to prepare for the push across the Rhine and toward the Elbe. We did maintenance work until our heads swam, and then thought we were ready, but mother, never told us that there would be days such as those that followed.

The Elbe River Drive, was a nightmare of long hauls of supplies, great numbers of prisoners to be evacuated, feeding and hauling of supplies for displaced persons, and operation of all installations close to enemy territory and subject to enemy action. Supply runs averaged a distance of 150 to 200 miles one way, for each day of the operation. That was the secret of getting hot food to the Rag-Tag Circus as it streaked for the heart of Germany.

We're still too tired to do much talking, so we'll let the following figures for the period of 26 June 1944 to 8 May 1945 do the talking.



CLASS I SUPPLIES ISSUED TO THE DIVISION

|                       |           |                             |         |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---------|
| "A" Rations . . . . . | 4,269,890 | "K" Rations . . . . .       | 403,416 |
| "C" Rations . . . . . | 128,403   | "10-in-1" Rations . . . . . | 623,781 |
| "D" Rations . . . . . | 81,397    | " 5-in-1" Rations . . . . . | 5,175   |

CLASS III SUPPLIES ISSUED TO THE DIVISION

V-80 Gasoline . . . . . 2,927,540 Gallons

as well as huge quantities of Grease, White gasoline, Kerosene and Diesel fuel.

*Tools - Tanks - Trouble*

783d Ordnance Company (LM)

The history of the Ordnance Company is short and fast moving, true to the nature of the work we do and have done. Our goal was to keep all ordnance equipment in the hands of the users at all times, to repair or to reclaim the material which was broken or damaged in the bitter clashes with the German Wehrmacht. The task was not a simple one. Parts were always difficult to obtain. There was very seldom a shop available, so that we were forced to resort to makeshift establishments in the field in order to do the job. Rain, dust, mud, snow, and ice hampered operations, but we kept working with the hail pelting our faces and our numb fingers fumbling with our tools. At times, while enroute to a new location, we had to pull our convoy off at the side of the road to accomplish emergency repair work that had been rushed to us.

There was the incident when one of the regiments had a mess truck throw a rod while moving in a convoy-by pooling the talents of various crew chiefs, the complete engine assembly was changed and the truck was back on the road in one hour and fifteen minutes. We have never heard of any unit which has equalled or beaten this record while working in the field as we were at the time.

Previous to crossing the Roer River, 2500 carbines in the Division were modified to fire automatically, and all the carbines in the Division were modified with the new adjustable rear sight.

Several times in all operations, men from the Artillery Section repaired artillery pieces on the spot under fire. Mortar mechanics also worked under fire in mortar positions to repair pieces. During the Normandy campaign, automatic weapons were in great demand, and the supply section was called on at all hours of the day and night to supply these items. 286 of the total 697 BAR's were issued during the Normandy campaign, and 209 light machine guns and 63 sub-machine guns were issued during the same period. The Welding Section installed approximately 700 wire cutters on jeeps and installed armor plate on a equal number.



The following is a list of replacement supplies issued to division units by the Supply Section:

|                                                           |       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Vehicles . . . . .                                        | 950   |
| Howitzers, 105 mm . . . . .                               | 46    |
| Howitzers, 155 mm . . . . .                               | 13    |
| Guns, 57 mm . . . . .                                     | 48    |
| Small Arms (incl. MG) . . . . .                           | 5292  |
| Mortars (60 & 81 mm) . . . . .                            | 372   |
| Launchers, Rocket AT . . . . .                            | 699   |
| Mounts, Gun (Misc) . . . . .                              | 868   |
| Instruments (all types) . . . . .                         | 4255  |
| Bayonets & Trench Knives . . . . .                        | 4432  |
| Tires . . . . .                                           | 9668  |
| Tubes . . . . .                                           | 5801  |
| Tanks, acetylene . . . . .                                | 293   |
| Tanks, oxygen . . . . .                                   | 399   |
| Tool Sets . . . . .                                       | 31    |
| Spare Parts & Equip (bulk) . . . . .                      | 348   |
|                                                           | tons  |
| Msc. Items (scabbards, Launcher, Grenade, etc.) . . . . . | 11136 |



Here are statistics of the Automotive Section from June 1944 until VE Day, May 8, 1945:

|                                                |      |
|------------------------------------------------|------|
| Number Vehicles received . . . . .             | 2992 |
| Number Vehicles evacuated . . . . .            | 603  |
| Number Vehicles repaired in shop . . . . .     | 2389 |
| Percentage performed in shop, approx . . . . . | 80%  |

Miscellaneous jobs included the following items repaired or rebuilt:

|                                   |      |                                           |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------|------|
| Generators (all types) . . . . .  | 202  | Radiators (all types) . . . . .           | 711  |
| Carburetors (all types) . . . . . | 1238 | Tarpaulins (all types) . . . . .          | 265  |
| Fuel pumps (all types) . . . . .  | 177  | Brake shoes relined (all types) . . . . . | 2861 |
| Starters (all types) . . . . .    | 144  |                                           |      |

Like all other units, we Ordnance men had our troubles. We can never forget, even now that the war is over, the phrase "Got to have this job right away." No matter how large or small the job or how busy the shop is, nine out of ten men bringing in work will say that they must have it in a hurry.



We are all glad that the "Pack up, we move in ten minutes" days are at last over. Anyone who has ever moved with a service or ordnance company will understand why we say this. During the dash from the Rhine to the Elbe, we were sometimes forced to tow vehicles merely because we had no drivers for them. At other times we had to shuttle our load because of insufficient transportation to haul it at that particular time. Like all ordnance companies, we try to live up to our motto: "The impossible we do immediately-miracles take a little time." And like all Thunderbolt men, we are proud to be one of the rings of the "Rag-Tag Circus."

## *Constant - Capable - Communication*

83d Sig Co

When the division hit Omaha Beach, we broke up into 2 echelons, a practice that we maintained for the duration of the war. The forward elements of the company dug in at Carentan and occupied itself with establishing and maintaining wire, radio and messenger communication with the regiments and lower units. The rear echelon set up in Vierville, and began to service the forward elements and to run the administrative end of the company.

We adopted for our own, the Signal Corps motto of "Get the message through." And *we* got them through. That meant getting a line in, and keeping it in-running it in under artillery fire and then going back to fix the gaps that were blown in it. You can't splice wires from the safety of a covered position-although we often wished we could; nor can you find that gap in the wire while toasting your tootsies around a fire. You just go out and fumble through a cold, pitch-black night until you find the break.

The motor messengers lived by that same creed. Windshield down, rain, wind and snow slapping the hell out of us as we drove down the road blacked out. If we hit something we hoped it wasn't a 2Y<sub>2</sub> ton truck or a parked tank. Thinking about things like that made us forget the black woods that hugged either side of the road, the mines that the Krauts had laid the day before, the Krauts that had been by-passed that day—and the patrols that were infiltrating our lines that night.

We can't forget the boys on telephone and teletype, and the times, when we pulled those 18 hour shifts and still no relief—when the boards were jammed and we were out on our feet—when we thought we would "blow our tops" with the next call that came in.

That's the real story, but when we sit down at that first big Legion Convention back in the States, we'll probably "talk shop" and reminisce about:

The construction platoon laying 85 miles of wire at Carentan .

The headaches in the Brittany Peninsula when telephone and teletype had to work over circuits 70 miles long, with some of the local lines as long as 7 miles!



The even worse Loire River sector where we were really hurting with the division spread from Brittany to Central France, and the construction platoon maintaining 800 miles of open wire-the telephone and teletype boys using 2 TC-4's at Division to handle the 80 circuits running into the board-and the motor messengers making 80 mile runs.

Luxembourg with its permanent installations was a snap, but the Hurtgen Forest took our measure, with its 100% set up of field wire; but by the time we pulled out we had 60 miles of field wire and 12 mile of spiral 4.

We really sweated out the rush from the Roer to the Rhine. We'll never forgive Col Crabill and the 329th for that race to the Elbe River but we used every trick in the bag-even the German's own open wire circuits-but we kept up with the "Rag-Tag Circus"-and liked it. Guess "the Boss" up in Division Headquarters liked it too because we have the Meritorious Service Plaque in our company. Guess we'll have to "Roger out", now the lines going dead.





## *Decorations and Awards*

Number of Awards made to this Division  
through and including General Order 228.

|                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR.....     | 1    |
| DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL .....     | 1    |
| DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS .....     | 5    |
| LEGION OF MERIT .....                 | 5    |
| SILVER STARS .....                    | 798  |
| SOLDIER'S MEDAL .....                 | 34   |
| BRONZE STAR MEDAL .....               | 7776 |
| PURPLE HEART .....                    | 4747 |
| MEDICAL BADGE .....                   | 271  |
| MERITORIOUS SERVICE UNIT PLAQUE ..... | 20   |
| AIR MEDAL .....                       | 106  |

### *British Awards*

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER ..... | 2 |
| MILITARY CROSS .....              | 7 |
| DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL ..... | 2 |
| MILITARY MEDAL .....              | 7 |

### *French Awards*

|                                               |    |
|-----------------------------------------------|----|
| LEGION D'HONNEUR (AU GRADED' OFFICIER) .....  | 1  |
| LEGION D' HONNEUR (AU GRADED' CHEVALIER)..... | 8  |
| CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC ETOIL DE VERMEIL .....   | 12 |
| CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC PALME .....              | 17 |
| CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC ETOILE D'ARGENT .....    | 12 |
| CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC ETOILE DE BRONZE .....   | 15 |



## Commendations and Citations

### HEADQUARTERS VII CORPS

Office of the Commanding General, U. S. Army

201.22

23 January 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO: Commanding General, 83d Inf. Div. APO 83, U. S. Army

1. As the 83d Infantry Division comes out of line after three weeks of continuous offensive operations in the Ardennes, I wish to express to you and to the officers and men of your division my appreciation of the job the 83d Division has accomplished during this period.

2. Fighting under the most severe weather conditions yet encountered on the Western Front, with little or no shelter from driving snow and freezing cold, the division advanced almost twenty thousand yards in the First United States Army's drive against the north shoulder of the German salient. In the critical stage of the attack to break across the Langlir-Ronce River and through the heavy woods to the south, the 83d Division made two consecutive night attacks and fought continuously without let-up for three days in order to open the way for the final drive of the 3d Armored Division to cut the vital Houffalize-St. Vith road which spelled disaster for the entire German position north of the Ourthe River. The officers and men bore the fury of the elements as well as the vicious fire of the enemy's defense and overcame them both.

3. The 83d Division can well be proud of its record in the Ardennes counter-offensive which may prove to be the decisive battle on the Western Front. Please convey to your officers and men my hearty congratulations and best wishes for your future success.

/s/ J. LAWTON COLLINS

Major General, U. S. Army, Commanding

### HEADQUARTERS NINTH U. S. ARMY

Office of the Commanding General, APO 339, U. S. Army

330.13 GNMCS

15 March 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

THRU: Commanding General, XIX Corps, APO 270, U. S. Army.

TO: Commanding General, 83d Infantry Division, APO 83, U. S. Army.

1. I am informed that E Company, 331st Infantry, 83d Infantry Division, was the first unit of any troops participating in Operation "GRENADE" to officially reach the Rhine River, at 0930 hours 2 March. I can assure you that I share your pride in this accomplishment, characterizing as it does the splendid record of the 83d Infantry Division since it began operations on the Continent.

2. The report on Operation "GRENADE" leaves no doubt that your Division distinguished itself in this successful and decisive action. I was particularly impressed by the expeditious manner in which the Division, once committed, quickly reduced and cleared the key strongpoint of Neuss, elimination of which permitted the successful continuation of the Corps and Army advance northward along the west bank of the Rhine River.

3. Four times during the last seven months, the 83d Infantry Division has been carried on the troop list of the Ninth Army: First during operations in the Brittany Peninsula; second briefly in Luxemburg; third during the early stages of the critical "Battle of the Bulge" in December; and lastly during Operation "GRENADE". During each period of association, I feel that the Division has added to its long and distinguished record. It gives me extreme pleasure at this time to express my appreciation of the splendid work done by the Division during Operation "GRENADE" and I desire to personally commend every officer and man of your organization.

/s/ W. H. SIMPSON

Lieutenant General, U. S. Army, Commanding



## HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 83, U. S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 221

2 November 1945

### UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 22 December 1943, and as approved by the Commanding General, Third United States Army and Eastern Military District, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, 329th Infantry is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy from 4 September 1944 to 16 September 1944.

On 4 September 1944, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon crossed the Loire River into enemy held territory with the mission of scouting enemy positions and movements. After about six days of extended patrolling through an area some seventy miles wide and one hundred miles deep south of the Loire River, the platoon received word through French informants in Issoudon, France, that a large force of approximately 20,000 Germans was moving eastward in an attempt to escape through the Belfort Gap into Germany. Racing through enemy territory, heedless of the threat of capture or annihilation which faced them at every turn, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon boldly effected a contact with the Commander of the German forces and convinced him of the desirability of surrendering his force to the American Army. While the Platoon Leader returned to the Regimental Command Post for instructions, the platoon was charged with the mission of maintaining contact with the enemy force and restraining the local FFI from making any premature show of force. Armed with but a few rifles, machine guns and pistols, this courageous group virtually contained the entire enemy force by their sheer audacity and bold and aggressive patrolling. Constantly patrolling the area, tracking down rumors of other enemy groups, being sniped at by isolated enemy armed with burp guns and having their vehicles sabotaged by authorized American representative. This meeting occurred on 11 September 1944 at the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon Command Post at Romorantin. Arrangements were made to have the German Force proceed to three assembly areas along the Loire River where they would formally surrender and collaborationist French, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon held on to their prize until arrangement could be made to have the German Commander meet with an authorized American representative. This meeting occurred on 11 September 1944 at the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon Command Post at Romorantin. Arrangements were made to have the German Force proceed to three assembly areas along the Loire River where they would formally surrender and turn in their weapons. The long trek to the river began with the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon acting as guides, flank Guards, and liaison agents with the French Forces along the way. Only the timely intervention of the men of the platoon prevented frequent outbreaks by the FFI who were not familiar with the situation or the terms of the surrender. Finally, on 16 September 1944, at Beaugency, France, the German commander surrendered himself, his troops and all of their equipment to Major General Macon, Commanding General of the 83d Infantry Division, acting on behalf of the Army Commander. The outstanding gallantry of this intrepid group of soldiers in arranging and executing the first and largest mass surrender of the war up to that time is without parallel in the annals of military history. The courage and devotion to duty of every man of the platoon reflect the finest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States.

### HEADQUARTERS XII CORPS

Office of the Commanding General

Major General Robert C. Macon

Commanding, 83d Infantry Division, APO 83, U. S. Army

APO 312, U. S. Army, 1 September 1945

My dear General Macon:

It is with genuine regret that I relinquish command of the XII Corps.

Before I leave I want you to know how grateful I am for the fine performance of the 83d Infantry Division while under my command. Its actions have always reflected the leadership of its commander, the experience of its staff, and the high soldierly standards of its veteran troops.

Ours has been a most pleasant association. Please accept for your division this expression of appreciation together with my warmest good wishes for yourself and my friends in the 83d.

Sincerely,

/t/ S. LEROY IRWIN

Major General, U. S. Army, Commanding.



HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO 83, U. S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 222

3 November 1945

UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 22 December 1943, and as approved by the Commanding General, Third United States Army and Eastern Military District, the First Battalion, 330th Infantry; Company C, 774th Tank Battalion; First Platoon, Company B, 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion; First Platoon, Anti-Tank Company, 330th Infantry; and Mine Platoon, Anti-Tank Company, 330th Infantry are cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy from 9 January 1945 to 11 January 1945.

With its weary ranks depleted after a week of constant exposure to severe cold, including four days of bitter fighting, the First Battalion was assigned the mission to seize and hold the town of Bihain, Belgium, and protect the right flank of the 83d Infantry Division in conjunction with the Division's mission of establishing a bridgehead over the Langlir Ronce River. Despite the handicap of deep snow and extremely low temperatures, the assault companies of the battalion advanced over 900 yards across flat, exposed terrain. In the face of intense artillery, mortar and automatic weapons fire this battalion succeeded in driving the enemy from his outpost positions east of Bihain. After a night characterized by heavy enemy shelling of the bitterly won position, the battalion resumed its attack on Bihain at 0730 hours, 10 January. Defending the town stubbornly, the enemy employed tank, mortar, artillery, and automatic weapons fire and fanatically held their positions until either killed or overpowered by unrelenting pressure. Due to the exposed terrain each house was an enemy fortification. Although the enemy fire caused heavy casualties on the attackers it resulted only in an increased determination within the ranks to secure the objective. Evacuation of the wounded was extremely difficult because of the inclement weather conditions, the nature of the terrain and the fact that the enemy artillery covered every approach to the town with heavy fire. On the morning of 11 January, the enemy completely blanketed the town with a half-hour artillery barrage of great intensity and, at 0900 hours, an estimated force of 200 enemy infantrymen supported by five tanks attacked the town from the woods to the south. Once again the First Battalion displayed its indomitable fighting spirit and although outnumbered rose to new heights in completely halting the enemy attack. The final assault was crushed decisively, the enemy annihilated, and the five tanks destroyed. In these three days of action the First Battalion sustained 130 casualties against an estimated 525 for the enemy. Thus, as a result of the unswerving aggressiveness and outstanding courage of the men of the First Battalion, 330th Infantry Regiment, from 9 through 11 January 1945, a fanatical enemy was dislodged from the town of Bihain, Belgium, and the right flank of the Division was secured. The aggressiveness and superb devotion to duty displayed by each man of the battalion is in keeping with the finest traditions of the armed forces.

HEADQUARTERS THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY  
Office of the Commanding General, APO 403

30 July 1945

My dear General Macon:

Please accept for yourself and express to the men of your division, my sincere admiration for the soldierly appearance, deportment, and bearing; also, for the high state of vehicular maintenance and excellent tactical instruction.

You and your officers and men are hereby highly commended for your superior performance in administrative and tactical instruction.

Truily yours,

/s/ G. S. PATTON, JR.,  
General.

TO: Commanding General,  
83d Infantry Division,  
APO 83, U. S. Army.

THRU: Commanding General,  
Xli Corps,  
APO 312, U. S. Army.



## HEADQUARTERS 830 INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 83, U. S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 227

23 November 1945

### UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 22 December 1943, and as approved by the Commanding General, Third United States Army and Eastern Military District, the Third Battalion, 331st Infantry is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy from 1 April 1945 to 3 April 1945.

The Third Battalion, 331st Infantry Regiment is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy at Hamm, Germany. After having completed relief of 2d Armored Division, Third Battalion, 331st Infantry was assigned the mission of seizing crossings of the Lippe River intact. As the leading elements approached the bridges leading into Hamm from the north, the enemy succeeded in destroying the highway bridge but leading elements pushed over the fire-swept 500 foot railroad bridge and cut the wires leading to the demolitions set under the bridge. The remainder of the battalion continued to cross and take up positions south of the river. Supplies were hand carried through almost continuous fire over the railroad bridge and casualties were evacuated over the same difficult route. At 1100, 2 April, the enemy launched the first of a series of counter-attacks in which he committed large forces of infantry and armor in an attempt to drive the men of the Third Battalion out of the bridgehead. The counter-attacks, characterized by individual fighting at close range in the subways of the railroad station, in houses and in the streets, were repulsed by maximum use of rocket launcher teams, mortar, artillery and all available weapons combined with the eager and bold aggressiveness of the troops. During the night, infiltrating enemy, attacking under the cover of darkness, were driven back. The enemy attacks the following day were even of greater strength and ferocity. Cooks and ammunition carriers who had carried food and ammunition to the troops shouldered weapons and fought. The troops, isolated by accident of terrain and limited approaches over natural carriers, held their ground tenaciously and in the face of direct fire of the enemy. During the three day period, the men of the Third Battalion, 331st Infantry exhibited unwavering courage and fighting determination in establishing the bridgehead at Hamm and repulsing the determined counter-attacks without yielding a yard of ground. As a result of the battalion's vigorous attack and spirited defense, the enemy suffered stunning losses in men and material and a bridgehead was provided for future operations into the Ruhr Valley. The unflinching devotion to duty and the courage displayed by each man of the battalion reflect the highest traditions of the armed forces.

## HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 83, U. S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 230

4 December 1945

### UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 22 December 1943, and as approved by the Commanding General, Third United States Army and Eastern Military District, the Third Battalion, 330th Infantry is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy from 10 December 1944 to 13 December 1944.

The Third Battalion, 330th Infantry, is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. On the morning of the 10th December 1944, from an assembly area near Grosshau, Germany, the battalion attacked with the mission of capturing and securing the town of Strass, Germany, and thus permitting the 5th Armored Division a place of debouchment from the Hurtgen Forest in its drive to the Roer River. Taking advantage of darkness, the battalion entered the town of Strass, completely surprising the enemy but when the enemy discovered the battalion had entered the town, intense resistance was encountered. The enemy maneuvered its supporting forces until it had sealed off the assault companies by completely surrounding the town. Despite constant artillery, mortar and MG fire, the Third Battalion threw back daily counterattacks by numerically superior forces of enemy infantry supported by tanks and assault guns. During the four day period which saw six battalion commanders in command, due to wounds or death incurred in action, the battalion displayed its superb fighting spirit by refusing to allow itself to be defeated. Without food for three (3) days and without sufficient medical supplies to treat the ever increasing number of its own and enemy wounded, the battalion never lost its determination to succeed in the face of what appeared to be a desperate and hopeless situation. During this period the Third Battalion lost 293 men killed, wounded and missing, while enemy suffered as estimated five hundred and fifty (550) casualties. Five enemy tanks were destroyed by our forces during this period. As a

(Continued on Page 113)



(Continued from Page 112)

result of the outstanding courage and determination to succeed displayed by every fighting man of the Third Battalion, 330th Infantry, from the 10th through the 13th of December 1944, a strong enemy force was repeatedly driven from the town of Strass, which enabled the 5th Armored Division to execute its drive toward the Roer River and seal off the vitally important Roer River Dam area. The aggressiveness and superb devotion to duty displayed by the Third Battalion against overwhelming odds and under extremely difficult conditions merits much praise and is in keeping with the finest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.

#### HEADQUARTERS 830 INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 83, U. S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 231

5 December 1945

#### UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 22 December 1943, and as approved by the Commanding General, Third United States Army and Eastern Military District, the Second Battalion, 330th Infantry is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy from 7 August 1944 to 9 August 1944.

The Second Battalion, 330th Infantry is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy. At 0830 on 7 August 1944, the Second Battalion, 330th Infantry launched an attack toward St. Joseph, France. By 0930 the leading company began receiving intense artillery, machine gun, and small arms fire. All through the rest of the day, heavy fighting went on and the two leading companies were able to advance another three hundred yards before darkness came and defensive positions were prepared for the night. Before dawn on the 8th, the German artillery began a concentration which blanketed the entire battalion area and lasted for forty-five minutes, and its intensity delayed the jump-off time of the battalion's attack. The battalion sector was some 1800 yards in width and ran through woods of varying density and over bald open hills that were under direct enemy observation and subject to all their fire power. At about 0800, the battalion resumed the attack. Here the battalion bore the brunt of the division attack, being almost in the center of the division sector. It encountered the strongest of enemy installations, including permanent gun emplacements hewn out of the granite rocks of a quarry and an extensive series of foxholes and trenches reinforced by stone walls and barbed wire entanglements. Several times hand to hand combat was needed to reduce these positions. Even though outnumbered, it continued the attacks against fanatical opposition in the face of intense artillery concentrations, including multiple-barrelled rocket projectors, anti-tank guns, 88 mm. guns, mortar, and machine fire. Through aggressiveness, determination, and sheer courage, by 1030 it had gained six hundred yards of bitterly contested ground. Then the enemy counter-attacked. The numerically superior enemy closed in upon the battalion and a furious hand to hand battle raged. Radio operators, runners, and liaison personnel all joined in the battle to muster every available weapon to force the enemy back. Finally the fighting skill and spirit of the Second Battalion showed its effect. Those enemy who were not killed, wounded or captured were put to rout and their morale broken. Without respite the battalion's attack continued. When one company was suffering heavy casualties and became disorganized by fire from a self-propelled gun, the last remaining officer in the company, at great risk to his life knocked it out with a bazooka. Such leadership and disregard to personal safety characterized the actions of all members of the battalion. By night-fall it had advanced to within five hundred yards of the St. Joseph Fortress, and by constantly pouring fire from small arms, mortars and artillery into the Fortress, they prevented the enemy from manning their gun positions atop the Fortress, thus being able to clean up the outposts of the enemy that surrounded the Fortress. The heavy shelling shook the Fortress continuously throughout the night. The next morning, the German Commander of the Fortress, his troops decisively defeated and thoroughly demoralized, and seeing the hopelessness of his situation, surrendered the Fortress. Battalion losses during the three days action were one hundred fifty-four killed, wounded or missing. An estimated two hundred sixty-one Germans were killed, four hundred twenty eight taken prisoner, and one hundred seventy-eight wounded. Five enemy assault guns, three self-propelled guns, five anti-tank guns, seven anti-aircraft guns, one tank, and seven mortars were destroyed. An undetermined but large amount of enemy small arms ammunition, and food stores was captured or destroyed. Thus, during the three day period from 7 August through 9 August 1944 the Second Battalion, 330th Infantry with a notable display of courage, combat skill, and determination, broke stubborn enemy resistance at St. Joseph and the approaches to St. Malo, decisively defeated the enemy, and prevented them from denying our entry into the St. Malo-Dinard area. The undaunted courage and unswerving devotion to duty shown by each man of the battalion reflect the highest traditions of the armed forces.



## HEADQUARTERS 83D INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 83, U. S. Army

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 190

4 September 1945

## UNIT CITATION

Under the provisions of Section IV, Circular 333, War Department, 22 December 1943, and as approved by the Commanding General, Third United States Army, the Second Battalion, 329th Infantry is cited for outstanding performance of duty in armed conflict with the enemy from 12 December 1944 to 16 December 1944.

On the morning of 12 December 1944, Second Battalion, 329th Infantry Regiment from positions in the Hurtgen Forest, Germany, initiated an attack toward Duren, with Gurzenich as its objective. In two days of bitter fighting it advanced three thousand yards. It traveled through a dense, heavily mined coniferous woods, constantly menaced by deadly artillery and mortar tree bursts and heavy machine gun and small arms fire. For twenty-five hundred yards it traversed an open plain against an enemy firmly entrenched astride the only axial road, and in the face of converging fire from the wooded areas to both flanks, and in the face of direct observation by the enemy. It suffered severe casualties but its men never faltered, carrying on with a determination that forced a fanatical foe to give ground although possessing every advantage of terrain, disposition and observation. Arriving at the edge of its objective after dark on 13 December it secured a toehold in the town. Its position was precarious. It occupied a salient deep into enemy terrain, its only contact with friendly troops being over a three thousand yard stretch of heavily mined road. It had no heavy materiel with which to defend against an armored attack because of the mined condition of the road. Men worked heroically clearing mines under constant heavy interdiction fire and before dawn friendly armor and supply vehicles came to the aid of the beleaguered garrison. For the next two days the Second Battalion courageously struggled to clear the town of a determined defense which utilized every basement and window as a pillbox. It withstood heavy concentrations of artillery fire and repulsed heavy infantry and armored counter-attacks. By dark of the 15th it completely controlled the town. Before dawn of the 16th a terrific artillery preparation shook the town for fifty minutes, completely blanketing Gurzenich. Then the enemy struck. German infantry and self-propelled assault guns moving under cover of early morning fog succeeded in penetrating the town. A vicious hand to hand fight raged for two hours in houses, streets and courtyards. Assault guns and tanks fired high velocity fire at point blank range. Several wounded men ran out of the Battalion Aid Station and joined the fighting despite their wounds. The effect of the indomitable fighting spirit of the Second Battalion finally made itself evident. Those of the enemy not killed, wounded or taken prisoners were routed and their offensive spirit completely broken. Battalion losses in the four days action were one hundred sixty-two killed, wounded or missing. It inflicted losses on the enemy of an estimated two hundred fifty killed and five hundred eighty taken prisoners. Three enemy assault guns, two tanks, four anti-tank guns and three mortars were destroyed. Two assault guns and two tanks were damaged, and an undetermined amount of enemy small arms and equipment captured or destroyed. Thus, as a result of the unwavering fortitude and aggressive fighting spirit of the men of the Second Battalion, 329th Infantry Regiment, from 12 to 16 December 1944, a determined enemy was forced to abandon his Roer River Bridgehead and relinquish terrain which would have proven extremely valuable to the enemy in connection with any contemplated large scale offensive across the Roer River. The unflinching devotion to duty and superb courage displayed by each man of the Battalion reflect the highest traditions of the Armed Forces.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL MONTAGUE:

C. L. BOYLE,  
Colonel, GSC,  
Chief of Staff

## OFFICIAL:

N. P. COWDEN,  
Major, AGD,  
Adjutant General

## DISTRIBUTION:

"C" Plus 1025 to 329th Inf.  
TAG (3)  
CG, USFET (2)  
CG, XII Corps

CG, TUSA (12)  
Central MRU  
37th MRU



# Statistics

## CASUALTIES

|                                   |             |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Killed in action .....            | 2850        |
| Died of wounds .....              | <u>425</u>  |
| Total killed .....                | 3275        |
| Seriously wounded in action ..... | 3809        |
| Slightly wounded in action .....  | 6096        |
| Seriously injured in action ..... | 111         |
| Slightly injured in action .....  | <u>1044</u> |
| Total wounded and injured .....   | 11060       |
| Captured .....                    | 177         |
| Missing in action .....           | <u>501</u>  |
| Total captured and missing .....  | 678         |
| Total Battle Casualties           | 15,013      |

## REPLACEMENTS

|                          |               |
|--------------------------|---------------|
| Returned to duty .....   | 10,187        |
| Reinforcements .....     | <u>15,736</u> |
| Total replacements ..... | 25,923        |

## ENEMY EQUIPMENT DESTROYED

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Tanks .....            | 480 |
| Planes .....           | 61  |
| Supply trains .....    | 29  |
| Artillery pieces ..... | 966 |

## MISCELLANEOUS

|                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Days of contact with the enemy .... | 270        |
| Prisoners captured .....            | 82,146     |
| Battlefield commissions .....       | 75         |
| Rounds of artillery fired           |            |
| (By Organic Artillery) .....        | 410,251    |
| Rounds of small arms and            |            |
| mortar fired .....                  | 21,899,955 |
| Miles of field wire laid .....      | 11,868     |

## MAJOR ENEMY UNITS ENGAGED

|                 |                                                          |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Normandy:       | 6 Para Rgt, 2 Parachute Division                         |
|                 | 17 SS Panzer Grenadier Division                          |
|                 | "GOTZ VON BERLICHINGEN"                                  |
|                 | 2 SS Panzer Regiment of 2 SS Panzer Division "DAS REICH" |
|                 | 13 Parachute Regiment of 5 Parachute Division            |
| Brittany:       | 7 Parachute Regiment,                                    |
|                 | 2 Parachute Division                                     |
|                 | 77 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | 266 Infantry Division                                    |
|                 | 343 Infantry Division                                    |
| S. Loire:       | 16 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | Combat Group Reinhardt                                   |
|                 | 159 Reserve Infantry Division                            |
| Luxemburg:      | 5 Parachute Division                                     |
|                 | 36 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | 48 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | 19 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | 416 Infantry Division                                    |
| Hurtgen         | 212 Volksgrenadier Division                              |
| Forest:         | 47 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | 91 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | 272 Volksgrenadier Division                              |
|                 | 353 Infantry Division                                    |
| Ardennes:       | 9 SS Panzer Division "HOHENSTAUFFEN"                     |
|                 | 12 Volksgrenadier Division                               |
| To Rhine River: | 59 Infantry Division                                     |
|                 | 183 Volksgrenadier Division                              |
|                 | 130 Panzer Lehr Division                                 |
|                 | 338 Infantry Division                                    |
|                 | 363 Volksgrenadier Division                              |
| To Elbe River:  | 116 Panzer Division                                      |
|                 | 3 Panzer Grenadier Division                              |
|                 | SCHARNHORST Division                                     |
|                 | POTSDAM Division                                         |
|                 | 21 Panzer Division                                       |
|                 | 25 Panzer Grenadier Division                             |



# Attached and Supporting Units

## ATTACHED UNITS

|                                                  |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 802d Tank Destroyer Battalion (T)                | July 1, 1944-December 7, 1944       |
| 453d Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (AW)      | July 1, 1944-June 5, 1945           |
| 1st Bn, 66th Tk Armd Regt                        | June 26, 1944-July 5, 1944          |
| Company A, 634th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)   | July 10, 1944-July 13, 1944         |
| 746th Tank Battalion                             | July 5, 1944-July 16, 1944          |
| 70th Tank Battalion                              | July 17, 1944-July 18, 1944         |
| Company C, 749th Tank Battalion                  | July 20, 1944-July 29, 1944         |
| Company A, 813 Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)     | July 17, 1944-July 29, 1944         |
| 106th Cavalry Squadron                           | July 16, 1944-July 28, 1944         |
| 24th Cavalry Squadron                            | July 18, 1944-July 19, 1944         |
| Companies A & C, 87th Chemical Battalion         | July 31, 1944-August 2, 1944        |
| Company B, 86th Chemical Battalion               | July 5, 1944-July 16, 1944          |
| 400th Armd Field Artillery Battalion             | July 19, 1944-July 29, 1944         |
| 250th Field Artillery Battalion                  | July 1, 1944-August 2, 1944         |
| 174th Field Artillery Group                      | July 31, 1944-August 4, 1944        |
| Companies A & C, 26th Chemical Battalion         | August 1, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| Company A, 709th Tank Battalion (Med)            | August 1, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| Company B, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)   | August 6, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| CT 121                                           | August 6, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| 121st Infantry Regiment                          | August 6, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| 56th Field Artillery Battalion                   |                                     |
| Company C, 8th Medical Battalion                 |                                     |
| Company B, 168th Engineer Battalion              |                                     |
| 12th Field Artillery Obsn Battalion (-Btry A)    | August 7, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| 196th Field Artillery Group                      | August 7, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| 202d Field Artillery Group                       | August 7, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| Company C, 644th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)   | August 9, 1944-August 16, 1944      |
| Company C, 709th Tank Battalion (Med)            | August 12, 1944-August 16, 1944     |
| Company B, 86th Chemical Battalion               | August 13, 1944-August 16, 1944     |
| Assault Gun Platoon, 709th Tank Battalion        | August 13, 1944-August 16, 1944     |
| 333d Field Artillery Group                       | August 15, 1944-August 18, 1944     |
| 473d Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (AW) (SP) | August 22, 1944-September 17, 1944  |
| 774th Tank Battalion                             | August 28, 1944-February 3, 1945    |
| 291st Field Artillery Battalion (8" How)         | August 29, 1944-September 3, 1944   |
| 751st Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)        | August 30, 1944-September 11, 1944  |
| 268th Field Artillery Battalion (8" Gun)         | August 30, 1944-September 11, 1944  |
| Task Force POLK                                  | September 23, 1944-October 11, 1944 |
| Hq & Hq Tr, 3d Cav Sq                            |                                     |
| 3d Cav Sq (- Dets)                               |                                     |
| 43d Cav Sq                                       |                                     |
| 135th Engr (C) Bn                                |                                     |
| Dets, 6th Cav Gp                                 |                                     |
| Dets, 1st Regt of PARIS                          |                                     |
| 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion (T)               | September 29, 1944-October 11, 1944 |
| 241st Field Artillery Battalion (105 How)        | September 29, 1944-October 11, 1944 |



|                                                        |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 689th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)              | September 29, 1944—October 11, 1944 |
| 81st Field Artillery Battalion                         | October 13, 1944—December 7, 1944   |
| 32d Cavalry Squadron                                   | October 19, 1944—November 9, 1944   |
| 174th Field Artillery Battalion (155 Gun) (Sp)         | October 25, 1944—December 7, 1944   |
| Hq & Hq Btry, 422d Field Artillery Group               | November 6, 1944—December 7, 1944   |
| Task Force POLK                                        | November 9, 1944—November 11, 1944  |
| 3rd Cav Gp                                             |                                     |
| Hq & Hq Tr, 3d Cav Gp                                  |                                     |
| 3d Cav Sq                                              |                                     |
| 43d Cav Sq                                             |                                     |
| 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)                    |                                     |
| Company A, 135th Engr (C) Battalion                    |                                     |
| Company C, 81st Chemical Battalion                     | November 11, 1944 only              |
| Btry C, 558th Field Artillery Battalion (155 Gun) (Sp) | November 11, 1944 only              |
| Btry A, 285th Field Artillery Obsn Battalion           | November 21, 1944—December 4, 1944  |
| Tr A, 89th Cavalry Ren Squadron                        | November 22, 1944—December 7, 1944  |
| Tr B, 89th Cavalry Ren Squadron                        | November 22, 1944—December 7, 1944  |
| Company B, 52d Armd Infantry Battalion                 | November 22, 1944—December 7, 1944  |
| Btry C, 559th Field Artillery Battalion (155 Gun)      | November 27, 1944—December 7, 1944  |
| Tr C, 89th Cavalry Ren Squadron                        | November 28, 1944—December 7, 1944  |
| Company C, 52d Arm Infantry Battalion                  | November 28, 1944—December 7, 1944  |
| Plat, Co B, 297th Engr (C) Battalion                   | December 7, 1944—December 9, 1944   |
| CT 22 (4th Inf Div)                                    | December 3, 1944—December 7, 1944   |
| CT 8 (4th Inf Div)                                     | December 7, 1944—December 11, 1944  |
| 8th Inf Regt                                           |                                     |
| Company A, 803d Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)          |                                     |
| Company A, Plat Co D, and Assault Gun Plat 70th Tk Bn  |                                     |
| Company A, 4th Engr Battalion                          |                                     |
| 29th Field Artillery Bn, w/Btry A, 377th AAA Bn (AW)   |                                     |
| Company A, 4th Med Battalion                           |                                     |
| 4th Cav Gp                                             |                                     |
| 759 Lt Tk Battalion (-Co C)                            |                                     |
| 635th Tank Destroyer Bn (T) (-Co A & Plat of Co C)     |                                     |
| Tr A 24th Cav Ren Sq                                   |                                     |
| 2 Plats, Co C, 297th Engr (C) Bn                       |                                     |
| Company C, 297th Engr (C) Bn (- 2 Plats)               | December 11, 1944—December 18, 1944 |
| 24th Cav Ren Sq (- Tr A)                               | December 7, 1944—December 18, 1944  |
| 193d Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)               | December 13, 1944—December 21, 1944 |
| 951st Field Artillery Battalion (155 H9w)              | December 7, 1944—December 21, 1944  |
| Company A, 87th Chemical Battalion                     | December 9, 1944—December 21, 1944  |
| 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)                    | December 9, 1944—December 23, 1944  |
| 25th Field Artillery Battalion (105 How)               | December 22, 1944—December 24, 1944 |
| Company C, 87th Chemical Battalion                     | December 31, 1944—January 25, 1945  |
| 772nd Tank Destroyer Battalion (T)                     | December 22, 1944—January 1, 1945   |
| RCT 290                                                | December 31, 1944—January 2, 1945   |
| 898th Field Artillery Battalion (105 How)              |                                     |
| Btry B, 440th AAA Battalion (AW)                       |                                     |
| Company B, 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)         |                                     |
| Company B, 750th Tank Battalion                        |                                     |
| 1st Plat, Co B, 275th Engr Battalion                   |                                     |
| Company B, 275th Med Battalion                         |                                     |
| 629th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)                    | January 1, 1945—January 30, 1945    |
| Company B, 87th Chemical Battalion                     | January 2, 1945—January 25, 1945    |
| 643d Tank Destroyer Battalion (T)                      | February 2, 1945—May 27, 1945       |
| 736th Tank Battalion                                   | February 6, 1945—July 29, 1945      |



|                                                     |                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2 Secs, 83d Chemical Smoke Gen Co                   | March 1, 1945-March 2, 1945        |
| 24th Field Artillery Battalion (105 How)            | March 1, 1945 only                 |
| 25th Field Artillery Battalion (105 How)            | March 2,-March 11, March 28-May 5, |
| 751 st Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)          | March 2, 1945-March 15, 1945 (1945 |
| 351 st Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)          | March 9, 1945-March 12, 1945       |
| Btry 8, 8th Field Artillery Obsn Bn (for opns only) | March 16, 1945-March 20, 1945      |
| 967 Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)             | March 28, 1945-May 5, 1945         |
| 15th Cav Group                                      | March 31, 1945-April 3, 1945       |
| Btry A, 2261-h AAA Srlt Battalion                   |                                    |
| 3 sections                                          | March 3, 1945-March 9, 1945        |
| 6 sections                                          | March 10, 1945-March 12, 1945      |
| 1 platoon                                           | March 13, 1945 only                |
| 1 platoon (3 Srlts)                                 | March 14, 1945-March 20, 1945      |
| 83d CIC det                                         | August 29, 1943-October 8, 1945    |
| Mli Team No. 428-G                                  | May 12, 1944 to present            |
| OB Team No. 20                                      | May 14, 1944-September 21, 1945    |
| IPW Team No. 51                                     | April 26, 1944-September 15, 1945  |
| IPW Team No. 58                                     | August 1, 1944-July 19, 1945       |
| PI Team No. 42                                      | May 13, 1944-August 1, 1945        |
| Mil Govt Det 18C2                                   | March 2, 1945-March 21, 1945       |
| Mil Govt Det Fl D3                                  | March 9, 1945-March 21, 1945       |
| Mil Govt Spearhead Det 112E3                        | March 1, 1945-April 30, 1945       |
| 168th Sig Photo Det                                 | March 5, 1945-May 31, 1945         |
| 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion                      | April 10, 1945-April 12, 1945      |
| 113th Cavalry Group                                 | April 3, 1945-May 6, 1945          |
| 65th Armd Field Artillery Battalion                 | April 21, 1945-May 5, 1945         |
| CC"R", 2nd Armd Division                            | April 14, 1945-April 19, 1945      |
| 696th Armd Field Artillery Battalion                | April 21, 1945-May 5, 1945         |
| 92nd Chemical Battalion                             | April 15, 1945-May 4, 1945         |
| 27th Smoke Gen Co                                   | April 18, 1945-April 30, 1945      |
| Regt Combat Team 320, 35th Inf Division             | April 15, 1945-April 21, 1945      |
| 3rd Battalion, 67th Armd Regt                       | April 19, 1945-April 30, 1945      |
| 83d Smoke Gen Co                                    | April 18, 1945-April 30, 1945      |
| 280th Field Artillery Battalion                     | May 17, 1945-May 31, 1945          |
| Company A, 524th MP Battalion                       | May 10, 1945 only                  |

#### SUPPORTING UNITS

|                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 188th Field Artillery Group         | July 1, 1944-July 8, 1944        |
| 183d Field Artillery Battalion      | July 1, 1944-July 16, 1944       |
| 202d Field Artillery Battalion      | July 17, 1944-July 22, 1944      |
| 204th Field Artillery Battalion     | July 17, 1944-August 2, 1944     |
| 145 Engr Battalion                  | July 17, 1944-August 2, 1944     |
| Task Force "A"                      | August 3, 1944-August 5, 1944    |
| Troops E & F, 15th Cavalry Squadron |                                  |
| Troops E & F, 17th Cavalry Squadron |                                  |
| 159th Engineer Battalion            |                                  |
| 509th Engineer Bridge Co (LP)       |                                  |
| 6th Tank Destroyer Group            |                                  |
| 15th Cavalry Group                  |                                  |
| 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion      |                                  |
| 206th Engr (C) Battalion            | October 3, 1944-October 12, 1944 |



|                                                |                                       |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 241st Field Artillery Battalion (105 How)      | October 11, 1944 only                 |
| 1 Co. 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion (T)       | October 11, 1944 only                 |
| 689th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)      | October 11, 1944 only                 |
| 202d Engr (C) Battalion                        | October 13, 1944-December 7, 1944     |
| 9th Armd Division Arty                         | October 24, 1944-December 7, 1944     |
| 73d Armd Field Artillery Battalion             | October 25, 1944-December 7, 1944     |
| 3rd Armd Field Artillery Battalion             | October 26, 1944-December 7, 1944     |
| Btry B, 16th Field Artillery Obsn Battalion    | November 7, 1944 only                 |
| Btry A, 285th Field Artillery Obsn Battalion   | November 8, 1944-November 20, 1944    |
| 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP)            | November 28, 1944-December 7, 1944    |
| 294th Engr (C) Battalion                       | December 7, 1944-December 22, 1944    |
| 183d Field Artillery Battalion                 | December 13, 1944-December 22, 1944   |
| 295th Engr (C) Battalion                       | December 22, 1944-December 27, 1944   |
| 300th Engr (C) Battalion                       | December 27, 1944-December 30, 1944   |
| 291st Engr (C) Battalion                       | January 2, 1945-January 3, 1945       |
| 49th Engr (C) Battalion                        | January 4-9, January 17-20, 1945      |
| 237th Engr (C) Battalion                       | January 10, 1945-January 20, 1945     |
| 18th Field Artillery Group                     | January 10, 1945-January 20, 1945     |
| 666th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)      |                                       |
| 188th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)      |                                       |
| 991st Field Artillery Battalion (155 Gun) (SP) |                                       |
| 295th Engr (C) Battalion                       | March 1, 1945-March 20, 1945          |
| 288th Field Artillery Group                    | March 2, 1945-March 17, 1945          |
| 228th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)      |                                       |
| 967th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How)      |                                       |
| 979th Field Artillery Battalion (155 Gun)      |                                       |
| 793d Field Artillery Battalion (8" How)        |                                       |
| 1115th Engr Group                              | March 31-April 3, April 20-May 4, '45 |
| 82d Engr (C) Battalion                         |                                       |
| 234th Engr (C) Battalion                       |                                       |
| 295th Engr (C) Battalion                       |                                       |
| 228th Field Artillery Group                    | April 7, 1945-April 30, 1945          |
| 132d AAA Battalion (90 mm)                     | April 18, 1945-April 30, 1945         |
| 295th Engr (C) Battalion                       | April 1, 1945-April 3, 1945           |
| 246th Engr (C) Battalion                       | April 4, 1945-April 8, 1945           |



