

# Speedhead

IN THE WEST

1941-45



THE THIRD ARMORED DIVISION



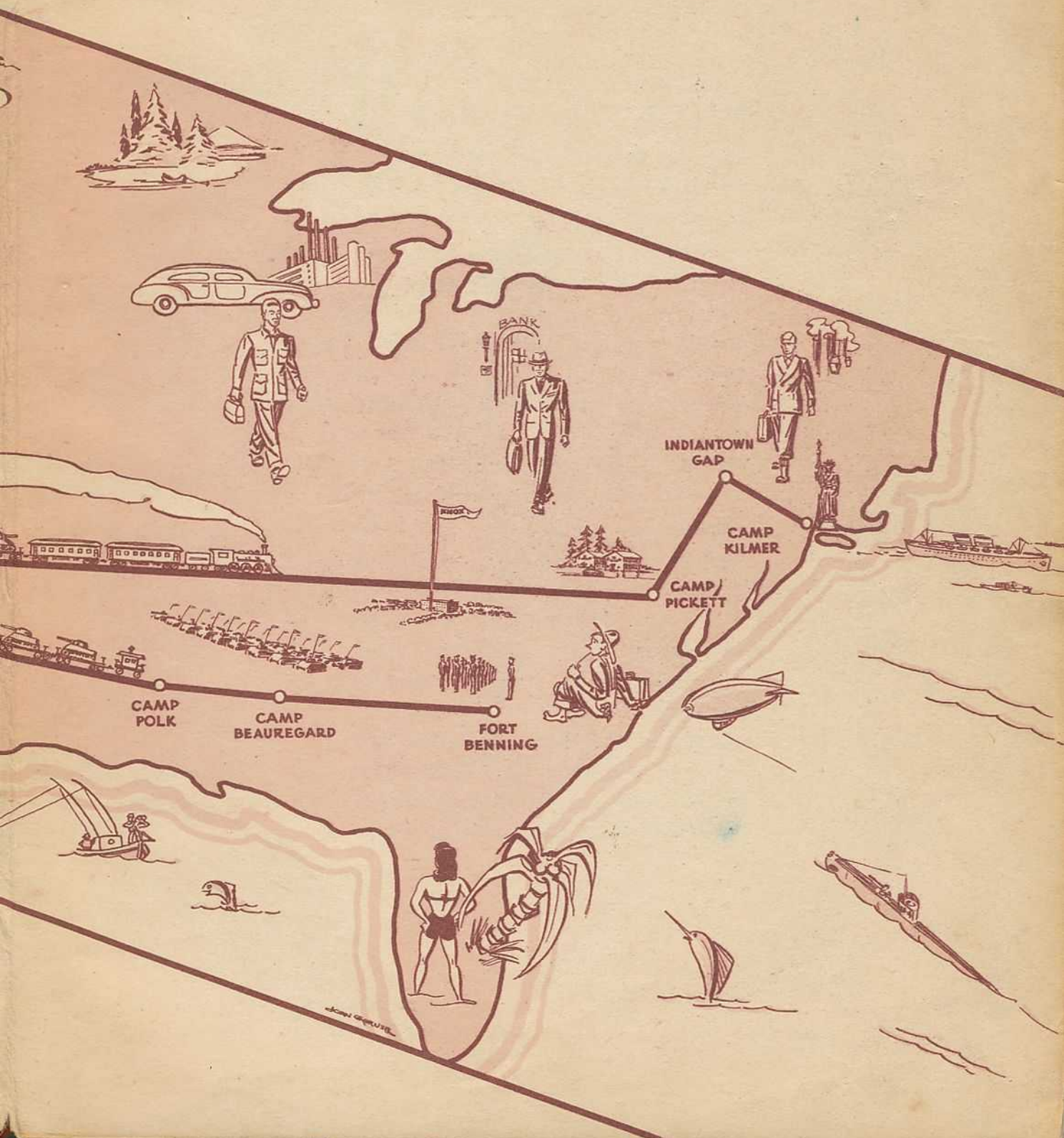


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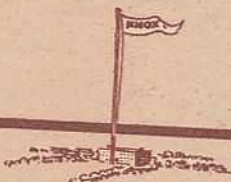




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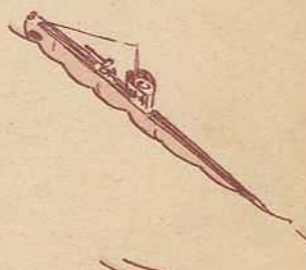
CAMP PICKETT



CAMP POLK

CAMP BEAUREGARD

FORT BENNING



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# D E D I C A T I O N

This book is dedicated to the American soldiers who were killed in action with the 3rd Armored Division in Europe. They did not want to die, and yet they gave their lives so that we might come on to final victory and peace.

Words are a difficult medium in which to express our reverence, and the words of a soldier, especially, may be strange to the mind of man untouched by the awful miracle of combat. We only know that these dead were with us shoulder to shoulder in the great drives, in the mud and the fear and the flame in the night. When the hot steel found them, and they fell, we cursed a little, dry eyed: shrugged our shoulders wearily, and went on. Yet, be sure of this: each individual death left a raw scar on our immortal souls.

For that reason this book is dedicated to those who were more than brother and who lie now in the soil they freed. Encompassed by the 3rd Armored Division, they were our blood, and our sinew, and our soul. We shall never forget.





**MAJOR GENERAL MAURICE ROSE**



## MAJOR GENERAL MAURICE ROSE



Major General Maurice Rose, 1899-1945, was a soldier's soldier. Immaculate, ruthless in his calculated destruction of the enemy, he was qualified by his experience, achievement and character to lead the spearhead of the first Americans. General Rose came up from the ranks. He joined the United States Army in 1916 as a buck private and served on the Mexican border. Upon graduating from the first officer's training course at Fort Riley, Kansas, in 1917, he was commissioned in the infantry and sent overseas with the 89th Division. In France, he was wounded at St. Mihiel, but went back to fight through the entire Meuse-Argonne offensive.

During World War II, General Rose served with the three greatest of American armored divisions; in Africa and Italy with the 1st, "Old Ironsides", and the 2nd, "Hell on Wheels": finally throughout the climactic western European campaigns at the head of his own 3rd Armored Division, the organization he claimed to be the greatest tank force in the world and one worthy of the soubriquet: "Spearhead."

He was over six feet tall, erect, dark haired, and had finely chiseled features. He was firm and prompt of decision, brooking no interference by man, events or conditions in order to destroy the enemy. No armchair strategist, General Rose directed operations from a peep at the point of the cutting edge. He travelled with the forward elements of his command, up with the tankers and the blitz doughs. General Rose went up front, and that's where he was on a dark evening in late March, 1945. He was killed in action at the head of his men. He was mourned as a GI tanker mourns a dead crew-mate, and he was buried at Ittenbach, Germany, beside the men he led. War correspondent Hal Boyle wrote, at the time: "Rose lived and died as a professional, as a career he loved and followed since he was a boy of 17. He would be the last to regret that he had a soldier's ending."

Fit epitaph for a great fighting man. General Maurice Rose, who tempered the spearhead of the first Americans, and gave his life in the culmination of its greatest achievement. He was a soldier's soldier.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE





# FOREWORD

The story of SPEARHEAD IN THE WEST recounts the early history of the 3rd Armored Division, its training in various locations, both in the United States and in England, and its combat record from Normandy to the banks of the River Elbe, in Germany. It is a narrative of hard training and bitter combat, of local reverses and the stunning victory that befits a great armored division.

Realizing that it would take volumes to relate the day by day stories of each individual unit, this book intends to cover, in three distinct sections, the combined history and battle lore of the entire division. The first section is given over to an introduction of "Spearhead" units and organization, the second to a popular narrative account, together with sketches and photographs of important scenes, persons and events. The third section retells the accurate battle history of the division as compiled from the mass of official documents, journals and records.

The 3rd Armored Division was activated and trained in Louisiana; maneuvered widely over California's Mojave Desert, the hills of Virginia, and the mountainous terrain of Pennsylvania, before sailing for England in the autumn of 1943. The men of the command were a cross section of America: no picked troops. They entered the maelstrom of combat as green but determined soldiers. They emerged from the conflict as the supreme commander's conquerors.

The 3rd came of age in the bloody hedgerow fighting of Normandy, in June, 1944. Through northern France, leading the whirlwind summer offensive of the American First Army's crack VII Corps, the division was first into Belgium, first into and subsequently through the Siegfried line, first to take a German town.

The men of the 3rd Armored Division fought in five western European campaigns, in Normandy, northern France, the Rhineland, the Ardennes, and in central Germany. They made a sensational 18-day dash from the Seine to the Siegfried. They led the might of America to Cologne. They spearheaded the magnificent Ruhr encirclement and they lost a great general in that clash of desperate steel which precipitated Germany's unconditional surrender. From the last battle, the last dusty, hell-clamorous storm of mortal conflict, these men emerged as hardened veterans and champions of armored force. They had gained renown as the battering ram of the first team, the cutting edge, the spearhead of the first Americans in the west.

The men of the 3rd were good, and they knew it. They also knew the cost of the laurels. Back along the old, torn roads of conquest nearly 3,000 comrades lay beneath the white crosses of military cemeteries. Battle is never one-sided. By that token the most famous of fighting divisions are store-houses of sorrow. The "Spearhead" was no exception.

Colonel John A. Smith, Jr.,  
Chief of Staff.





BRIGADIER GENERAL  
**DOYLE O. HICKEY**

COMMANDING

**Combat  
Command**

Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey, CG of the 3rd Armored Division and fighting leader of Combat Command "A", was noted for his air of cool confidence in action. During the vicious fighting around Villiers Fossard, in Normandy, and throughout the 1944 summer offensive drive which took American forces through northern France and Belgium to the Siegfried Line, General Hickey operated from the forefront of his command. The men who fought with this unit drew added inspiration from the sight of their commanding general personally appraising the situation, giving his orders without the necessity of raising his voice, and calmly putting on a battered briar pipe while small arms and shell fire raked the area. General Hickey's combat reputation was such that veterans of the 3rd Armored Division felt him the only officer who could acceptably assume command when Major General Maurice Rose was killed in action on March 30, 1945, in the closing of the Ruhr pocket.

Contending that the success or failure of a large fighting unit depends upon the accumulated results of small unit engagements with the enemy, General Hickey constantly stressed the

perfection of platoon and squad tactics. As commander of CC "A", his task was to develop into a smoothly operating whole the various elements of an armored division: tanks, tank-destroyers, artillery and infantry. Applying the principle of small unit perfection General Hickey made Combat Command "A" an extremely well balanced and powerful striking force.

General Hickey was born in Rector, Arkansas, on July 27, 1892. He graduated from Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas, in 1913, and had embarked on a legal career when the United States became involved in the first world war.

After graduating from the officer's training course at Leon Springs, Texas, the general was assigned to the 31st "Old Dixie" Division, and served in France as an artillery officer from September, 1918, to February, 1919.

During the peacetime years, General Hickey served as a regular army officer in various artillery commands. He attended the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He joined the 3rd Armored Division during the 1942 desert maneuvers in southern California and there assumed command of CC "A". He was promoted to Brigadier General in September, 1942.

The "Spearhead" general wears the Legion of Merit for his part in the success of the First Army's drive from Normandy to the Siegfried Line in the great summer offensive of 1944. He also wears the Silver Star Medal with two clusters, the original for reducing the Villiers Fossard salient in Normandy, during late June, 1944: the first cluster for successful planning and execution of his part in the Normandy breakthrough, and the second cluster for the brilliant action at Ranee-Fromental, France. He also wears the Distinguished Unit Citation, awarded to Headquarters, Combat Command "A" for heroic action at Mons, Belgium, in early September, 1944.

General Hickey also wears the Bronze Star and cluster, and two French decorations: the Legion of Honor and Croix de Guerre with palm.





BRIGADIER GENERAL  
TRUMAN E. BOUDINOT

COMMANDING

**Combat  
Command**

Brigadier General Truman Everett Boudinot, leader of Combat Command "B" in action from Normandy to the River Elbe, was famed for his firecracker temperament and competitive drive. He was a commander who knew the capabilities of both armor and infantry, having studied both throughout a long army career.

General Boudinot joined the 3rd Armored Division in March, 1942, as commanding officer of the 32nd Armored Regiment. He remained with the regiment from that time until July 15, 1944, when he assumed command of CC "B" during the pre-breakthrough phase of the Normandy fighting.

At the head of CC "B", General Boudinot planned and helped to accomplish the great breakthrough, the pursuit across France, and the storming of the Siegfried Line. He commanded the first allied units to cross Germany's border in force, on September 12, 1944, and the first to take a German town, Roetgen, since the days of Napoleon. Later, in the furious Ardennes struggle, his Combat Command "B" inflicted one of the first serious setbacks to von Rundstedt's winter offensive when, at La Gleize, Belgium, it teamed with elements of the 30th Infantry Division to cut up much of the 1st SS LEIBSTANDARDE ADOLF HITLER Panzer Division. In the subsequent return to the Rhineland area, General Boudinot entered Cologne with forward elements of the division. And, during the final drive, it was CC "B", which liberated the death camp slaves at Nordhausen after sharing in the magnificent Ruhr encirclement. His troops went on without rest to Dessau, Germany, and had thrown a bridgehead across the Mulde River when army orders halted forward action at that point.

General Boudinot was studying civil engineering at the University of California when America became involved in the first World War. He was given a direct commission and saw action with the 8th Cavalry in Mexico.

Although the general has always been a horseman, he early realized the capabilities of armored force and the value of an integrated command. In 1928 he was graduated from the Advance Infantry Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. He served with the air forces and is noted as an army free balloon racer. At Fort Sam Houston, Texas, while with the Signal Corps, he built the first meteorological station at Kelley Field.

After tours of duty at various American and territorial posts, the general went to Fort Knox, Kentucky, with the 13th Cavalry in 1937. Here he grew up with the armored force and had much to do with the development of this new and potent arm of service. Because of his intimate knowledge of tanks, the general was made plans and training officer of the AFRTC, at Fort Knox, on December 20, 1940. His know-how preceded tank victories on the western front of 1944-45.

The general led his old 32nd Armored Regiment at Villiers Fossard, Normandy, in June, 1944, but was soon given command of the powerful assault force which he led to many victories throughout the five campaigns in western Europe.

General Boudinot's decorations include the Mexican Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, Silver Star with three clusters, Bronze Star, Air Medal, the French Legion of Honor and Croix de Guerre with palm. He also wears the Distinguished Unit Citation.







# GENERAL STAFF

The General Staff of a fighting division corresponds roughly to a brains trust in big business. Its job is the coordination of all principle services, the personnel placement, intelligence, plans and operations, supply, and military government, which have so much to do with the winning of a war. The success or failure of any combat operation depends initially upon the workings of this divisional nerve center.

The 3rd Armored Division's Chief of Staff, Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., with the officers and men of his various staff sections, therefore deserves much of the credit for "Spearhead" successes in action. As a veritable division "assistant commander", Colonel Smith carried out the policies of Major General Maurice Rose, and Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey. The logistics of armored warfare were the concerns of his entire expertly trained staff.

G-1, which encompassed the problems of personnel administration, came under the jurisdiction of Lt. Colonel Jack A. Boulger and his section. Lt. Colonel Andrew Barr, G-2, was the intelligence chief. His decisions on enemy capabilities and on our own security measures hastened the end of hostilities. Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, G-3, and his section, handled all plans and operations. Supply, in all of its various and important aspects, was the problem of Lt. Colonel Eugene C. Orth, Jr., G-4.

Originally there were only four general staff sections in the division headquarters. However, a fifth was added during the last phases of the western campaign: it was G-5, or Military Government. G-5, presided over by Lt. Colonel George F. Cake, solved those problems which were posed by occupation of the German homeland.

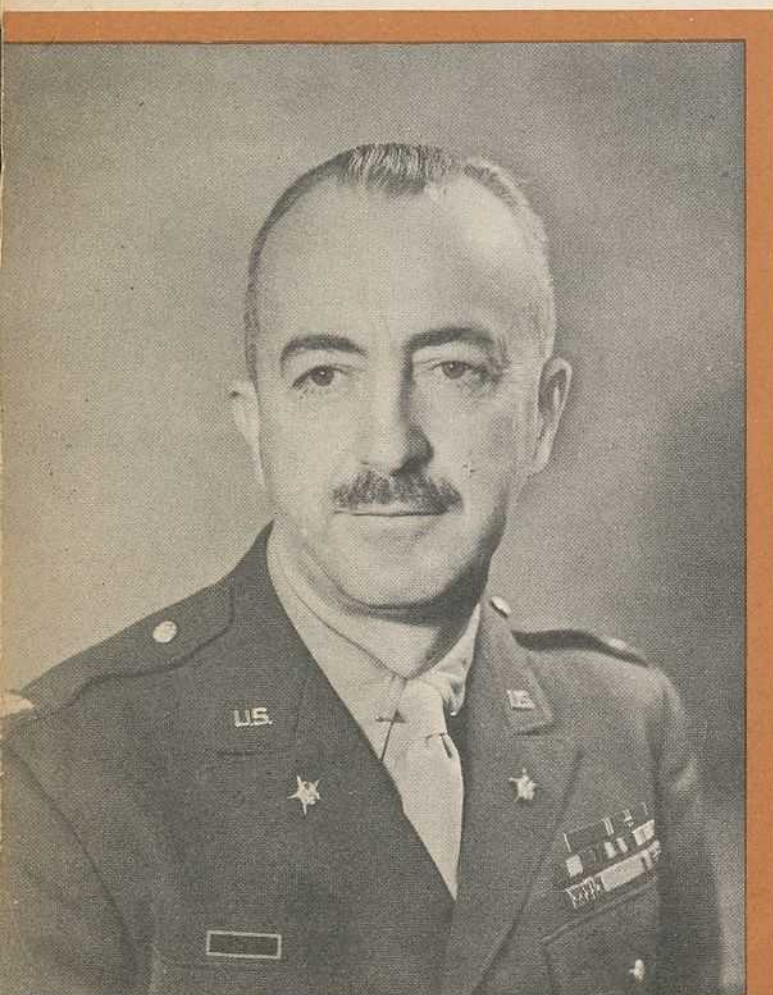
## CHIEF OF STAFF

Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., tall, distinguished professional soldier, has been with the 3rd Armored Division since its activation. As Chief of Staff under four generals: Walton H. Walker, Leroy H. Watson, Maurice Rose, and Doyle O. Hickey, the slightly greying Texan played a vital role in "Spearhead" history. His story is the very saga of the 3rd from final training to furious combat on the western front of Europe.

Born in San Antonio, Texas, Colonel Smith finished high school there and attended the University of Texas for two years before entering the army in 1917. He was commissioned at Leon Springs, Texas, as an artillery officer at that time. A veteran tactician, Colonel Smith has more than a passing knowledge of cavalry, artillery and armored force strategy. He is a crack polo player, a graduate of the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

As General Maurice Rose's right hand man during the 3rd Armored Division's successful European actions, Colonel Smith and his staff engaged the enemy so frequently that they earned the nickname: "Combat Command Smith"!

The towering Texan who made himself so indispensable as "Spearhead" Chief of Staff, wears the World War I victory medal, the Mexican Border campaign ribbon, the Bronze Star Medal with cluster, the Legion of Merit, French Legion of Honor, Croix de Guerre with Palm, and a Distinguished Unit Citation which was awarded for the heroic action participated in by his section at Mons, Belgium, during early September, 1944.



Col. John A. Smith Jr.



**G-1** Lieutenant Colonel Jack A. Boulger, tall, blonde North Dakotan, was the 3rd Armored Division G-1, throughout most of the European campaign. His task was the judicious placement of all "Spearhead" soldiers. No stranger to the front line, Colonel Boulger often acted as billeting officer. His method in selecting proper bivouac areas was dangerous, but extremely effective: he rode at the point of the attack! Wounded and captured by enemy troops during the great Paderborn drive, the Colonel was later liberated by friendly forces. He returned immediately to the division. A graduate of North Dakota Agricultural College, Colonel Boulger is one of the division's original officer cadremen. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Bronze Star with two clusters, and the Purple Heart.



Lt. Col. Jack A. Boulger



Lt. Col. Andrew Barr

**G-2** Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Barr, canny intelligence chief of the "Spearhead", slept little and worked incessantly during the 3rd Armored Division's drive through Nazi Europe. Under his expert direction enemy capabilities were constantly estimated, checked, calculated and finally published for the benefit of lower echelon combat teams.

A graduate of the University of Illinois, Colonel Barr was a member of the Chief Accountant's Staff, Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, D. C. He entered military service in 1941, and is one of the division's original officer cadremen. Colonel Barr's decorations include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with cluster. Throughout five western campaigns he kept a sensitive finger on the pulse of war.



Lt. Col. Wesley A. Sweat

**G-3** Lieutenant Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, operations and training czar of the division, headed a crack staff of strategists and draftsmen throughout the long months of battle. His job encompassed the operational aspects of combat, the training of new replacements, and the plans for proper deployment of troops. In common with all of the general staff officers, Colonel Sweat rarely slept during the long, sweeping drives of the armor. Captured in action near Paderborn, Germany, at the time of General Maurice Rose's death, the Colonel was wounded by British Typhoon fighter bombers attacking enemy installations. Upon liberation a month after capture, he returned to duty with the division.

Colonel Sweat is a graduate of the University of Florida, entered military service in 1939, and is one of the division's original officer cadremen. He holds the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Bronze Star with cluster, and the Purple Heart.

**G-4** Lieutenant Colonel Eugene C. Orth, Jr., 3rd Armored Division G-4, supervised the monumental task involved in the daily delivery of fuel, ammunition, rations and equipment to those swiftly moving combat elements of the "Spearhead" Supply, always of primary importance, assumed even greater stature during the long drives and relentless fighting of the European campaigns. Invariably the success or failure of an operation depended upon G-4 activity. Although routes of supply were sometimes painfully long, unmapped, and cut by fanatic enemy troops who had been bypassed, the lifegiving essentials of battle got through.

Colonel Orth graduated from West Point in 1935, and joined the 3rd Armored Division in 1941. He is one of the division's original officer cadremen. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Silver Star and the Bronze Star with cluster.



Lt. Col. Eugene C. Orth

**G-5** Lieutenant Colonel George F. Cake, in command of 3rd Armored Division Military Government, helped formulate the American occupational policy in newly conquered German territory. His work set a precedent for later MG officials to study. G-5, as an integral part of the division general staff, was not brought into being until late in the western fighting. Earlier, it was known as the Civil Affairs Section. Lt. Colonel William E. Dahl was the first G-5. He served with the division until April 9, 1945, when he was transferred to the 15th Army. Lt. Colonel Cake assumed responsibility at that time.

Colonel Cake is a graduate of Polytechnic High School, Los Angeles, California. He entered service in 1942 and joined the division in early 1945. He holds the Bronze Star Medal with cluster.



Lt. Col. George F. Cake



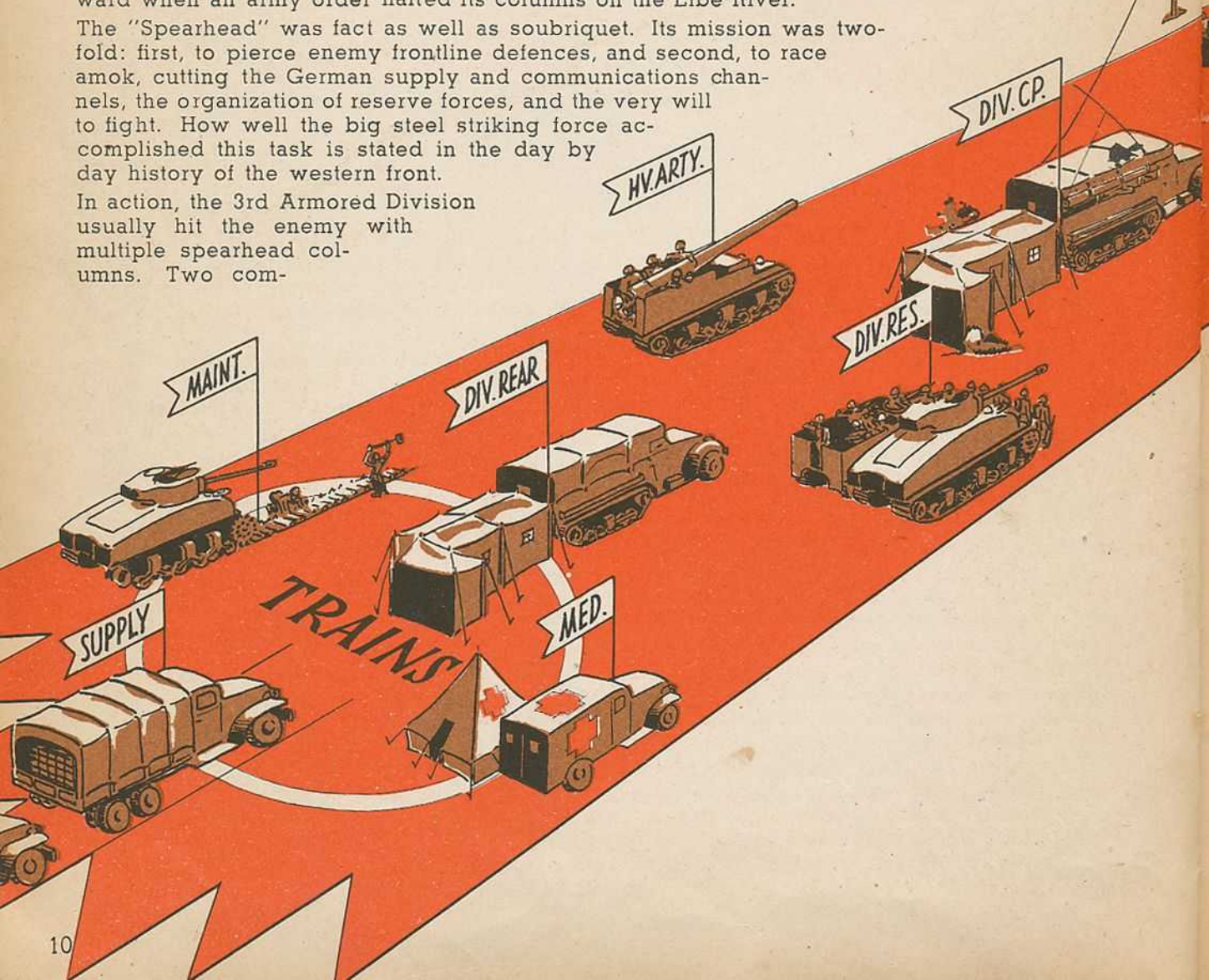
# COMPOSITION OF THE *Spearhead* DIVISION

The 3rd Armored Division, one of America's largest tank outfits, was designed and trained for all-out attack. It was the spearhead of the First Army's brilliant VII Corps from the St. Lo-Perriers breakthrough, in Normandy, to the Elbe River, in central Germany. The 3rd was a workhorse unit and it saw heavy combat all the way. The division raced from the Seine to the Siegfried in 18 days, halting long enough to team up with the 1st Infantry Division and completely destroy a German corps at Mons, Belgium. First through the Westwall in force, and first to take a German town, the "Spearhead" enjoyed a brilliant reputation among men who knew the real front.

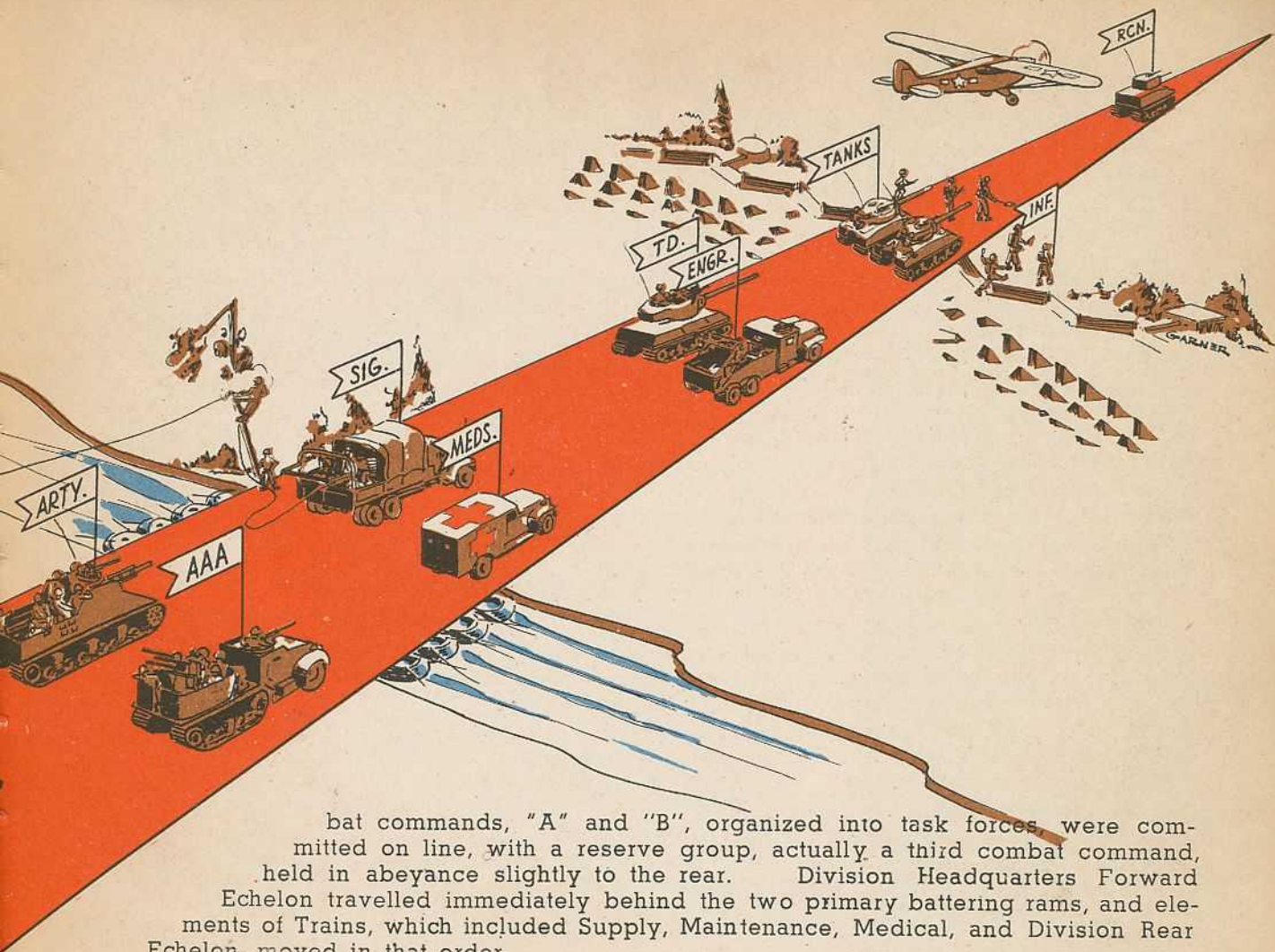
The 3rd Armored Division fought through the entire Ardennes struggle and, almost before the echoes of that bitter winter campaign were memories, was back in the Rhineland, driving for Cologne. Foremost in the sweep to isolate Germany's rich, industrial Ruhr, during the last phases of the war in the west, the 3rd was still fighting, still battering forward when an army order halted its columns on the Elbe River.

The "Spearhead" was fact as well as soubriquet. Its mission was two-fold: first, to pierce enemy frontline defences, and second, to race amok, cutting the German supply and communications channels, the organization of reserve forces, and the very will to fight. How well the big steel striking force accomplished this task is stated in the day by day history of the western front.

In action, the 3rd Armored Division usually hit the enemy with multiple spearhead columns. Two com-







bat commands, "A" and "B", organized into task forces, were committed on line, with a reserve group, actually a third combat command, held in abeyance slightly to the rear. Division Headquarters Forward Echelon travelled immediately behind the two primary battering rams, and elements of Trains, which included Supply, Maintenance, Medical, and Division Rear Echelon, moved in that order.

Actually, because of the nature of armored warfare, every man in the division saw something of action during the long drives. Supply trains were ambushed during their important trips back and forth over the roads of conquest; command post soldiers found themselves battling bypassed Nazi troops, and rear echelon maintenance men helped to round up prisoners of war.

Theoretically each of the spearheads were of the same basic composition. Due to a changing situation in action, this was not always the case, but deviation was the exception and not the rule.

Reconnaissance elements in light tanks and armored cars invariably rode the point of the attack until opposition was encountered. Tanks and infantry, always well supported by artillery, tank-destroyers, anti-aircraft units and engineers supplied the Sunday punch. Communications were maintained by signal men well to the front, and medical corps detachments also travelled with the probing spearheads in order to hasten evacuation of the wounded.

Driving immediately behind these forward elements was the command post, often within small arms range of the enemy; the heavy artillery, represented by attached 155mm self-propelled units, and the division reserve ready to go into action on call.

Division Trains were at the haft of the spearhead. Here were the administrators, the supply, maintenance and medical headquarters which catered to frontline elements.

In action, this entire phalanx of power was highly mobile and fluid of composition. Thus, reserve forces could be, and were, rushed into the line when it appeared that one of the primary combat commands was weakening, or needed a rest. Similarly, attached units: artillery, infantry, or air support might be incorporated on short notice. The "Spearhead" at war was self-supporting, extremely fast, and packed an incredible wallop in fire power.



# DIVISION

## OMAHA FORWARD ECHELON

Division Forward Echelon was the tactical nerve center of the "Spearhead" in action. Basically, the element consisted of the general staff, plus a number of special staff sections, and a headquarters company whose sole function was the servicing of Forward Echelon. During the great drives across France, Belgium, and Germany, the coordinated planning and direction of forces, so necessary in modern warfare, stemmed entirely from these officers and men of "Omaha Forward."

Major General Maurice Rose, CG of the 3rd Armored Division, made his headquarters here. Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., Chief of Staff; Lt. Colonel Jack A. Boulger, G-1; Lt. Colonel Andrew Barr, G-2; Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, G-3; Lt. Colonel Eugene C. Orth, Jr., G-4; and Lt. Colonel George F. Cake, G-5; with their respective staffs, helped to coordinate the vast and complex machinery of the big armored division. Assisting in this task were the various special staffs: those of Colonel James L. Salmon, Division Surgeon; Lt. Colonel George V. Bussey, Signal Corps; Lt. Colonel Marion E. Whitten, Chemical Warfare Service; Lt. Colonel William E. Dahl, Civil Affairs Section; Major Charles H. Kapes, Provost Marshal; and Captain Gove Johnson, Headquarters Commandant. In addition, the Forward Echelon complement always included an artillery officer, Colonel Frederic J. Brown; Lt. Colonel Lawrence G. Foster, Engineer Officer; Captain Francis T. Farrell, killed in action on December 10, 1944, and Major Ray W. Haney, air officers; Major Charles H. Gravely, killed in action on September 3, 1944, and Major Evan Regas, anti-tank officers.

Also attached to Forward Echelon and working under the control of G-2, were the Military Intelligence Interpreter team, the Interrogation of Prisoners of War team, Order of Battle section, Counter Intelligence Corps team, and Photo Interpretation team. These units aided the swift and necessarily accurate decisions of Forward Echelon.

Although Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company, the latter commanded by Captain William L. Rodman, were not intended to be used as fighting units, they were often forced to defend themselves and in many cases fought hot actions against bypassed pockets of fanatic enemy resistance. In early September, 1944, the command post fought a heroic action against heavy enemy forces at Mons, Belgium. For this successful engagement, the Forward Echelon, Headquarters Company, and attached Signal Company personnel, were awarded Distinguished Unit Citations.

Throughout the entire European campaign, from Normandy through northern France and Belgium to the Siegfried Line, back to the Ardennes struggle, and again on through Germany to the final objective at Dessau, Division Forward Echelon worked in close harmony with combat elements. The command took hundreds of prisoners, sweated out vicious artillery barrages, and went on with the vital planning and coordination that spelled victory in the west. Major General Maurice Rose was a front line soldier. His headquarters was seldom any appreciable distance behind spearheading tanks of the division.

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Colonel James L. Salmon, Division Surgeon

Lt. Colonel George V. Bussey, Signal Corps



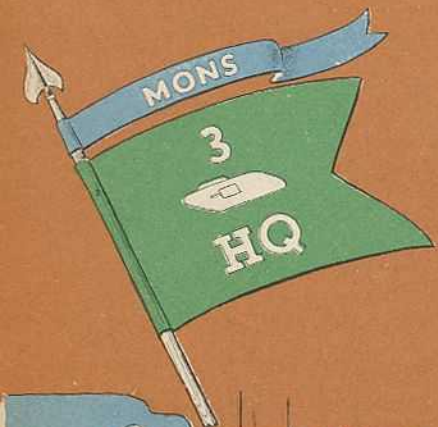
Lt. Colonel Marion E. Whitten, Chemical Warfare Service

Lt. Colonel William E. Dahl, Civil Affairs Section



Major Charles H. Kapes, Provost Marshal

Capt. Gove Johnson, Headquarters Commandant





# HEADQUARTERS . . . . .

OMAHA  
REAR

## REAR ECHELON

Administration and service were the keystones of Division Rear Echelon, but personnel of the unit also saw hot action along with every other member of the "Spearhead." In the long drives which took the 3rd Armored Division through Normandy, France, Belgium, and Germany, the troops of this headquarters continually found themselves battling bypassed Nazis and hunting snipers. They were bombed, shelled and strafed periodically. In fact, the term "Division Rear" sometimes appeared to be a grim joke!

Basically, the organization of Rear Echelon consisted of a number of expert officer administrators and their enlisted staffs. These men kept the complex and highly important records of the big steel division. Here the knotty problems of personnel, finance, quartermaster procurement, and ordnance were resolved and acted upon. While Forward Echelon made the tactical plans and worked within sight and sound of tank spearheads, Rear carried out those administrative steps necessary in order to service properly the front line. Service Company, commanded by Captain John E. Casey, had as its primary duty the support of Rear Echelon Headquarters.

With their respective staffs, Lt. Colonel Robert M. Gant, Adjutant General; Lt. Colonel Elmer W. Gude, Finance; Lt. Colonel Harry P. Wolfe, Judge Advocate; Lt. Colonel Lasley Richardson, Quartermaster; Lt. Colonel Ellis P. Sylvester, Inspector General; Lt. Colonel Paul H. Maurer, Division Chaplain; Lt. Colonel Rager J. McCarthy, Ordnance; and Captain Roscoe E. Miller, Special Services; worked at Division Rear. Captain Raymond J. Davey, Army Postal Officer, also had his headquarters here. All of these men were old members of the division. The transfers of Lt. Colonel Joseph L. Cowhey, ordnance officer preceding Colonel McCarthy, to XX Corps late in August, 1944, and that of Major Thomas J. Murphy, predecessor of Captain Miller, to a rehabilitation post, early in February, 1945, were the only changes in ten months of operation on the western front.

In action, Division Rear Echelon moved immediately behind the heavy mobile artillery and reserve forces. This was the point which enemy aircraft seemed most likely to bomb and where bypassed pockets of resistance attempted to cut the "Spearhead" column. Early in the European campaigns, in Normandy, the headquarters received an aerial bombardment which might have caused heavy casualties, excepting for the fact that all bombs dropped were duds! Cpl. Harold Mose, a unit personnel clerk, was neatly bracketed by two 500 pound missiles, and the division chaplain's tent was nearly blown down by the rush of air attendant to the falling of another of these big but relatively harmless bombs. It was a night, however, which will always live in the memory of Rear Echelon.

At Raeren, in the Siegfried Line area of Germany, the headquarters was situated in a "buzz-bomb alley." Several of the robots landed nearby. Shellfire from railway guns, and an occasional fighterbomber attack, kept the clerks and administrators from boredom.

Division Rear Echelon landed on Normandy's Omaha White Beach on June 24, 1944, with combat elements of the division. The headquarters was never far behind fighting units from that time until final victory deep inside Germany.



Lt. Colonel  
Robert M. Gant  
Adjutant General

Lt. Colonel  
Lasley Richardson,  
Division Quartermaster



Lt. Colonel  
Elmer W. Gude,  
Division Finance Officer

Lt. Colonel  
Ellis P. Sylvester,  
Inspector General



Lt. Colonel  
Harry P. Wolfe,  
Judge Advocate

Lt. Colonel  
Paul H. Maurer,  
Division Chaplain

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# COMBAT COMMAND



Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey led Combat Command "A", later became CG of the 3rd Armored Division.



Lt. Colonel William G. Barnwell, Jr., Executive officer and S-3 of the command.



Major Sherwood L. Adams, imperturbable S-2 officer of the command, was an old campaigner of the "Spearhead".



Captain Dale D. Bunch, served as assistant S-3 officer of Combat Command "A".

The history of Combat Command "A", Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey's crack armored assault force, is all interwoven with the saga of the 3rd Armored Division. CC "A" was the first division element to go into action during the European campaign, at Villiers Fossard, Normandy, on June 29, 1944. With those two other "Spearhead" battering rams, Combat Command "B" and Combat Command "Reserve", General Hickey's organization took the brunt of all 3rd Armored Division battle operations. His tankers were the point of the attack on innumerable occasions. They were in the forefront of the great Normandy breakthrough, led the First United States Army's history making drive across France and into Belgium. On September 12, 1944, CC "A" entered the Siegfried Line with CC "B", and later pushed first troops completely through this heavily defended area.

Returning to the Rhineland front, after the bitter Ardennes campaign, General Hickey's command led the First Army assault on Cologne. His tankers and infantrymen were the first Americans to reach that long-besieged city.

In the final offensive to defeat Germany, Combat Command "A" played an equal part with "B" and "Reserve" in that magnificent drive which sealed the industrial Ruhr. Without a pause for rest or maintenance, the command turned eastward and continued the drive which halted, only on army order, at Dessau, during the last days of the European war.

The composition of Combat Command "A" in Europe normally consisted of the 32nd Armored Regiment, less one battalion; the 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion; one battalion of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment; one battery of the 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion; one company of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion; one company of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion; one company of the 45th Armored Medical Battalion, and one company of the 3rd Armored Division Maintenance Battalion. Those division units which were not attached to combat commands "A" or "B" were part of Combat Command "Reserve," led in action by the commanding officer of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment. The reserve force had, as its backbone, the infantry regimental headquarters, plus one battalion of blitz doughs. Naturally, all of these combat commands maintained a fluid composition. Thus, when the situation demanded, extra infantry, artillery, or other branches were added to bolster fire power and drive.

The staff of Combat Command "A" early achieved that fine balance which is essential to a smoothly operating unit. General Hickey, the cool, impersonal master of tank-infantry warfare, inspired confidence in his men. Lt. Colonel William G. Barnwell, irascible, keen old-army soldier, allowed himself only an occasional cat-nap in lieu of sleep during the long rat races. He was the executive officer and S-3. Major Sherwood L. Adams, smoothly operating G-2, Major Stanley Hidalgo, S-3 Air, and Captain Dale D. Bunch, were old members of Combat Command "A".

CC "A" was born early in 1942 when a reorganization of armored force abolished the old separate brigade system in favor of the more versatile combat command. Originally, "A" was the 1st Combat Command of the 3rd Armored Division, led by General Leroy H. Watson.

Combat Command "A" trained, like other elements of the 3rd Armored Division, throughout the desert maneuvers; at Camp





# "A"

Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, before sailing for England early in September, 1943. Upon arrival in the British Isles, the headquarters was set up at Stockton House, near Codford, Wiltshire. This was a base for operations which extended over the downlands of Salisbury Plain, for beach landing exercises along the English coast, and special training of various kinds.

Combat Command "A" landed on Omaha Beach, Normandy, on June 24, 1944, and was committed to action five days later at Villiers Fossard. Although sustaining heavy casualties, the command drove through to reach its objective. Under the cool and expert leadership of General Hickey, CC "A" swiftly tightened into a veteran unit. Throughout the five campaigns of the 3rd Armored Division in Europe, Combat Command "A" thenceforth worked as a well oiled and directed machine.

No history of General Hickey's command in action would be complete without mention of that colorful and efficient task force led by Colonel L. L. Doan, commanding officer of the 32nd Armored Regiment. Colonel Doan, the tall, loose-jointed Texas polo player, led his men as though he knew that death was on a holiday. He waded the Seine River in a hail of mortar and machine gun fire. He walked into blazing Fromental with the infantry scouts. He was a typical front line commander who could get more drive out of his men than a baker's dozen of rear echelon martinets. Long before the war came to an end, Colonel Doan and his Task Force "X" had acquired an aura of legend. Usually at the point of the "Spearhead", Doan's exploits were woven into CC "A" history.

When Major General Maurice Rose was killed in action during the approach to Paderborn, General Hickey assumed command of the division. His old, elite Combat Command "A" went on to succeeding victories under the leadership of Colonel Doan. However, the war was close to an end, and troops of the "Spearhead" Division will always associate General Hickey with CC "A". Hickey was the command, and the command was Hickey—exemplified by that cool, precise strategy, the unhurried, thoughtful attitude that could suddenly produce a drive so electrifying that it left staff officers gaping in admiration while the enemy floundered to certain defeat. Combat Command "A" was a colorful organization, but it had an approach to battle which may only be described as professional. Esprit de corps was there, and know-how in every branch of service. Hickey's men didn't guess that they were good: they knew damned well that they were!



CC "A" men remember their routes of advance in such scenes as these. Top to bottom: a Belgian celebrator holds aloft a china pig labeled "Hitler"; German General Karl Wahle and his staff, captured at Mons, explain to a "Spearhead" interrogator; and CC "A" headquarters passes through the town of Lierneux, Belgium, during the "Bulge" campaign.





# COMBAT COMMAND



Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot led Combat Command "B" from Normandy to the Elbe.



Lt. Col. Robert D. Albro, Executive Officer, saw heavy action with the combat command.



Major William A. Castille, S-2 of Combat Command "B" kept units informed of enemy capabilities.



Captain Robert M. Angel, S-3, plotted the operations and training of the big assault force.

Like Combat Command "A", the story of CC "B" is the history of the 3rd Armored Division. Under Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot, the volatile California horseman, tanker, and one-time army free ballon racer, Combat Command "B" fought many of the hardest and most successful actions ever engaged in by "Spearhead" forces. CC "B" totted up a record of successive victories throughout the entire western campaign. From Normandy to the Elbe, General Boudinot led this big, versatile command to final victory. It was no accident that CC "B" took the first German town to fall to an invader since Napoleonic days. These same dusty, triumphant tankers, infantrymen and engineers, along with their comrades of CC "A" and "Reserve", later led the American First Army into flaming Paderborn to encircle the vital Ruhr area of industrial Germany. During heavy action through the Normandy, northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and central Germany campaigns, this crack armored assault force ground ahead against all odds.

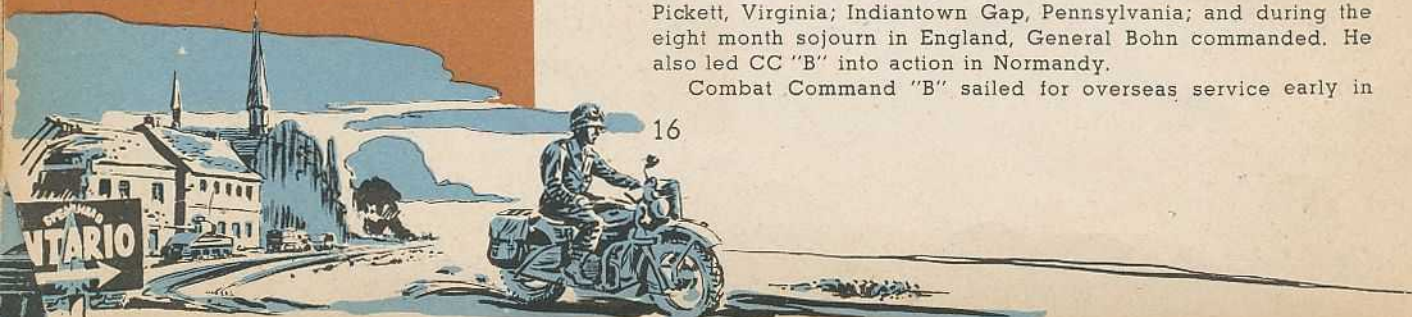
The composition of Combat Command "B" in Europe, normally included the 33rd Armored Regiment, less one battalion; the 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalion; one battalion of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment; one battery of the 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion; one company of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion; one company of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion; one company of the 45th Armored Medical Battalion; and one company of the 3rd Armored Division Maintenance Battalion. While this battle tested array often varied — extra infantry units and other elements added as the situation demanded — the original composition remained without radical change.

Working in close harmony with General Boudinot were his headquarters officer personnel: Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, executive officer, who was transferred to division forward echelon late in August, 1944, and replaced by Major Ralph M. Rogers. Major Rogers later became S-3 Air Officer. Lt. Colonel Robert D. Albro then assumed the duties of executive, an office he ably administered throughout the Ardennes and German campaigns. Major William A. Castille, S-2, and Captain Robert W. Angel, S-3, were also veterans of the entire European operations of Combat Command "B".

Originally, CC "B" was the 2nd Combat Command of the 3rd Armored Division when, back in early 1942, a streamlining of armored force organization disbanded the old separate brigade set-up in favor of a more modern, integrated system. Brigadier General Geoffrey Keyes was commanding then, and his staff included: Lt. Colonel Julian H. George, 1st Lt. Melville I. Starke, and 1st Lt. John T. Wingard.

The modern combat command, which dominated armored warfare in the west, came into being during that summer of 1942. CC "B" was commanded by Brigadier General John J. Bohn, after General Keyes left the division and, indeed, throughout all of the command's training at the California Desert Center; Camp Pickett, Virginia; Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania; and during the eight month sojourn in England, General Bohn commanded. He also led CC "B" into action in Normandy.

Combat Command "B" sailed for overseas service early in





# "B"

September, 1943. Upon arrival in the United Kingdom, the headquarters, along with its primary combat force, the 33rd Armored Regiment, was billeted in Warminster, Wiltshire. Then, throughout the fall, winter and spring of 1943-44, the command maneuvered over chilly Salisbury Plain, engaged in numerous landing exercises along the British coast, and generally received a last minute review of training for the great crusade which was to begin on June 6.

The wartime record of Combat Command "B" is indicative of its spirit in action. On the debit side, General Boudinot's command sustained more casualties than either "A" or "Reserve". It was this competitive drive which, in the opinion of many competent military observers, contributed much to the dogged stand at Mortain in early August, 1944, when elite German panzer elements attempted to break through American lines to reach the sea at Avranches. Units of the 30th Infantry Division, backed by General Boudinot's tanks, tank-destroyers, and infantry stopped the enemy effort in its tracks. For this action, the elements of the 30th Infantry Division concerned later received a Distinguished Unit Citation.

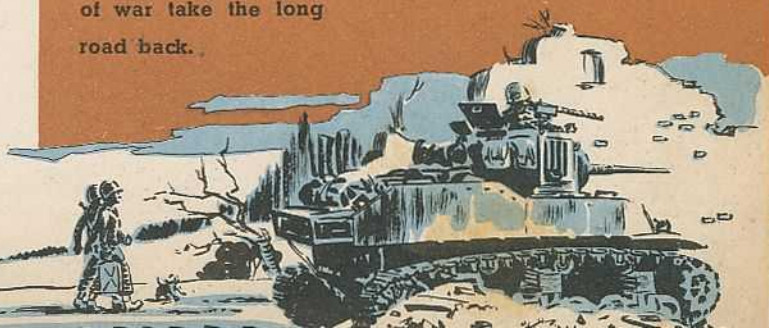
After the highly successful summer campaign through France and Belgium, CC "B" elements were the first allied troops to enter Adolf Hitler's Third Reich in force, and the first to capture and occupy a German town, Roetgen, on September 12, 1944. Later, during the terrible Ardennes winter campaign, General Boudinot's tankers and other arms combined again with the 30th Infantry Division to create and then eliminate the "La Gleize Pocket", an early victory for defending Americans. Here, the SS LEIBSTANDARTE ADOLF HITLER Panzer Division sustained heavy losses.

Beyond the Rhine, in the great, final offensive of 1945, Combat Command "B", battling heavy odds, as usual, smashed through to liberate the death camp slaves at Nordhausen after playing a great part in closing the important Ruhr, or — as the First Army named it, "Rose Pocket."

When the 3rd Armored Division came out of the fighting lines shortly before the official declaration of Germany's surrender, CC "B" was the only "Spearhead" unit that could boast having bridged the Mulde River. The command, and all of its component units, had a habit of getting out front. They were there when the final whistle sounded.



Such battle scenes were commonplace to personnel of Combat Command "B". Top: an interrogator questions German civilians in demolished Altenkirchen, Germany. Center: a Mark-V Panther tank bears a gaping hole in its turret. Bottom: German prisoners of war take the long road back.







# ORIOLE 32<sup>ND</sup> ARMORED

"Victory Or Death," the motto of the 32nd Armored Regiment, served as an inspirational order to this first of the 3rd Armored Division's two great battering rams. Commanded by Colonel Leander L. Doan, the 32nd contributed much to the powerhouse drive of the "Spearhead" Division through Europe.

The 2nd Armored Regiment, forerunner of the 32nd, was activated on April 15, 1941, at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, by a cadre of 85 officers and 565 enlisted men of the 2nd Armored Division's 66th Armored Regiment and the 1st Armored Division. On May 12, 1941, the unit was redesignated the 32nd Armored Regiment (Light). Its weapons were a very few of the old "Mae West" light tanks. The first commander was Colonel Roderick R. Allen, later commanding general of the 12th Armored Division.

Under armored force reorganization early in January, 1942, the old 40th Armored Regiment (Medium) was disbanded and its tanks issued to the 32nd and 33rd Armored Regiments. The new table of organization guaranteed greater striking power to each of the latter units.

With the 3rd Armored Division, the 32nd Armored Regiment trained at Camp Beauregard and Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, before sailing for overseas service on the Capetown Castle on September 5, 1943. Upon arrival in England, the regiment was stationed at Codford, Wiltshire, and trained over Britain's Salisbury Plain during the nine month period before invasion.

Commanded by Colonel Truman E. Boudinot, men of the 32nd received their baptism of fire at Villiers Fossard, Normandy, on June 29, 1944. Against well dug in infantry, bazooka teams, heavy mortar and antitank fire, the 32nd's armored teams pitted their Sherman tanks. In spite of losses, the tankmen paced Combat Command "A" to the final objective.

Assuming command on July 25, 1944, Colonel Leander L. Doan, then Lt. Colonel, soon won the admiration and respect of each officer and soldier of the regiment. Colonel Doan's personal direction in combat was largely responsible for the outstanding record of the 32nd Armored Regiment in Europe.

The 1st Battalion of the 32nd was commanded by eight separate officers during the western fighting. Lt. Colonel Elwyn W. Blanchard led the battalion in its initial action at Villiers Fossard, through the Normandy breakthrough, and during much of the pursuit across France and Belgium to the Siegfried Line. He was wounded at Ranès, France, and his executive officer, Captain Nicholas D. Carpenter, commanded the battalion until he was wounded and taken prisoner an hour later. Captain Foster F. Flegeal then assumed command, but relinquished it when a 500 pound bomb wounded him the next day. Major Frank S. Crawford was the battalion commander for about three hours. His tank was knocked out, and he was wounded by the fire of an enemy tank. Lt. Colonel John K. Boles, Jr., commanded the 1st Battalion for the remainder of the action at Ranès-Fromental: turn-

Colonel Leander L. Doan,  
commanding officer of the 32nd



Lt. Colonel  
Matthew W. Kane

Lt. Colonel Elwyn  
W. Blanchard



Lt. Colonel Na-  
thaniel O. Whittaw

Lt. Colonel  
Clifford L. Miller



Lt. Colonel Walter  
B. Richardson

Major  
Olin Brewster



Lt. Colonel  
John K. Boles, Jr.





# REGIMENT

ed it over to Major William G. Yarborough who kept it until Colonel Blanchard returned from the hospital to lead through the Siegfried Line. Colonel Blanchard was again evacuated for treatment of his old wounds, and Lt. Colonel Matthew W. Kane took command to lead the battalion from September 22, through the battle of the Ardennes, and from the Roer River to the vicinity of Dessau, Germany, where he was wounded and evacuated. Lt. Colonel Boles took command until the end of the engagement, and Major Robert L. Coughlin then assumed command.

Like so many battle wise units of the division, Lt. Colonel Clifford L. Miller's 2nd Battalion took its full share of casualties. The first commander in action, Lt. Colonel Nathaniel O. Whitlaw, was twice wounded in the Normandy breakthrough. Major Richard L. Bradley, Jr., who succeeded him, was hospitalized for treatment of wounds after leading the battalion for less than a month. Major William K. Bailey, who then assumed command, was wounded a week later just before the storming of the Siegfried Line. His successor, Lt. Colonel Sydney T. Telford, became commander of the 2nd Battalion on September 13, and was killed in action on the 14th while leading the battalion through Siegfried defenses. Colonel Miller, the self styled "Army Brat", proceeded to break that chain of bad luck which had thus far dogged 2nd Battalion commanders. He led the unit to successive victories in the Rhineland, the Ardennes, and central Germany.

Lt. Colonel Walter B. Richardson, commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion, was one of the few combat leaders who seemed to bear a charmed life. The courageous, hard-driving Texan led his crack unit from Normandy to the final action in Dessau, Germany. Although he was wounded four times, he never missed a day of action.

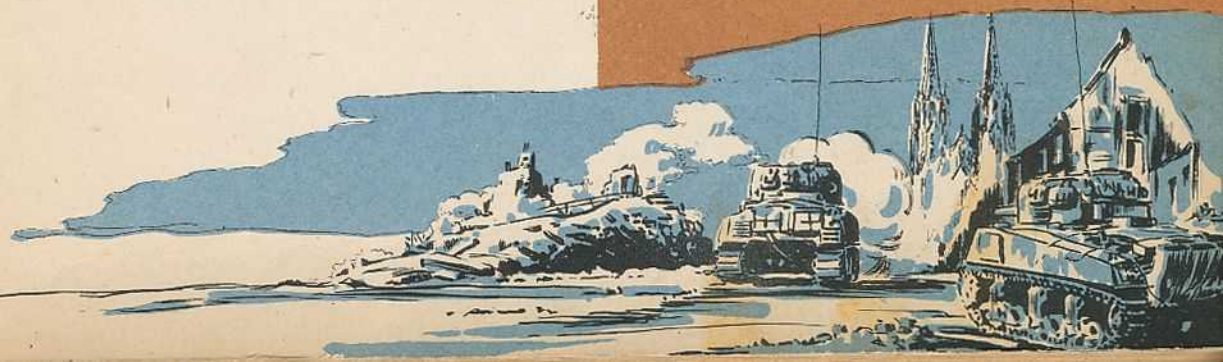
One of the 3rd Battalion's great soldiers was S/Sgt. Lafayette G. Pool, whose tank, IN THE MOOD, was credited with the destruction of more than 250 enemy armored vehicles, and scores of other transport. Pool led the spearheading task force in 21 separate drives before he was wounded in the breaching of the Siegfried Line.

The 32nd Armored Regiment was a well knit unit. Its reputation was that of a frontline fighting outfit. On VE day the Reconnaissance Company and 2nd Battalion were able to boast Distinguished Unit Citations, the former for heroic action at Mons, Belgium, and the latter for its part in smashing Hitler's Westwall. The Meritorious Service Plaque was twice awarded to Service Company and Maintenance Company for their outstanding record of support during the entire campaign in Europe.

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Wherever action was hottest in the Europe of 1944-45, there was the 32nd Armored Regiment. Above: a German soldier who forgot to duck. Center: a Mark-V tank knocked out by one of Colonel Doan's gunners in front of the Cologne cathedral. Bottom: Task Force "X" crosses the Rhine for the final show-down.





# ORCHARD 33<sup>RD</sup> ARMORED

The 33rd Armored Regiment, Sunday punch of Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot's Combat Command "B", was the second half of that massive tank battering ram which made the 3rd Armored Division famous. Its Shermans were the first allied fighting machines to reach the Third Reich and to capture a German town. Commanded by Colonel John C. Welborn, veteran of North Africa and Sicily, the 33rd "Men Of War" emerged from the European conflict with a brilliant reputation for fighting ability.

The 33rd was an original "Spearhead" unit. It was activated at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, on April 15, 1941, by a cadre of 92 officers and 524 enlisted men from the 68th Armored Regiment (Light) of the 2nd Armored Division. The new organization was designated the 3rd Armored Regiment (Light), until May 12, 1941, when it became the 33rd Armored Regiment (Light). Lt. Colonel Robert W. Strong was the first commanding officer, and the unit trained on a small number of the old "Mae West" light tanks.

Early in January, 1942, the 33rd received a number of medium tanks from the disbanded 40th Armored Regiment. The new table of organization, then put into affect, added more striking power and modernized the entire unit.

The 33rd Armored Regiment trained with the rest of the 3rd Armored Division at Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Early in September, 1943, the regiment sailed for Europe on the John Erickson. Upon arrival in Great Britain, the men were stationed at Warminster, Wiltshire, England. During nine months of pre-invasion training, they maneuvered extensively over Salisbury Plain, engaged in practise landing operations up and down the British coast, and received special courses of instruction in various subjects.

Colonel Dorrance S. Roysden led the 33rd in its baptism of fire on bloody Haut Vents, Hill 91, in Normandy. In spite of serious losses, the combat team took the hill, was driven off, and came back to hold the ground a day later. In their first combat, here at Haut Vents, at Pont Hebert, and Belle Lande, the men of the 33rd Armored Regiment, fighting alongside other units of Combat Command "B", helped to turn back a vicious counter attack by Germany's elite Panzer Lehr Division. During this period, Colonel Roysden assumed command of CC "B", and Lt. Colonel L. L. Doan became regimental commander. Later, when Brig. General Boudinot became CC "B" commander, Colonel Roysden reverted to regimental C.O., and Colonel Doan assumed command of the 32nd Armored Regiment.

Colonel Roysden was transferred to SHAEF on August 31, 1944. Lt. Colonel Littleton A. Roberts then assumed command, but reverted to executive officer under Colonel John Welborn, two days later. Colonel Welborn led the regiment during the remainder of the European war.

The 1st Battalion of the 33rd Armored Regiment was led by eight different officers during the western campaigns. They were: Lt. Colonel Rosewell H. King, Lt. Colonel Herbert M. Mills, Major Kenneth T. McGeorge, Major William S. Walker, Major Charles W. Walson, Lt. Colonel Elwyn W. Blanchard, Major Ralph M. Rogers, and Major George T. Stallings, respectively. Of these, Colonel King, who was wounded in action on August 29, Lt. Colonel Mills, killed in action on November 18, Major Kenneth McGeorge, wounded in action

20



Colonel John C. Welborn, led the 33rd Armored Regiment in furious action



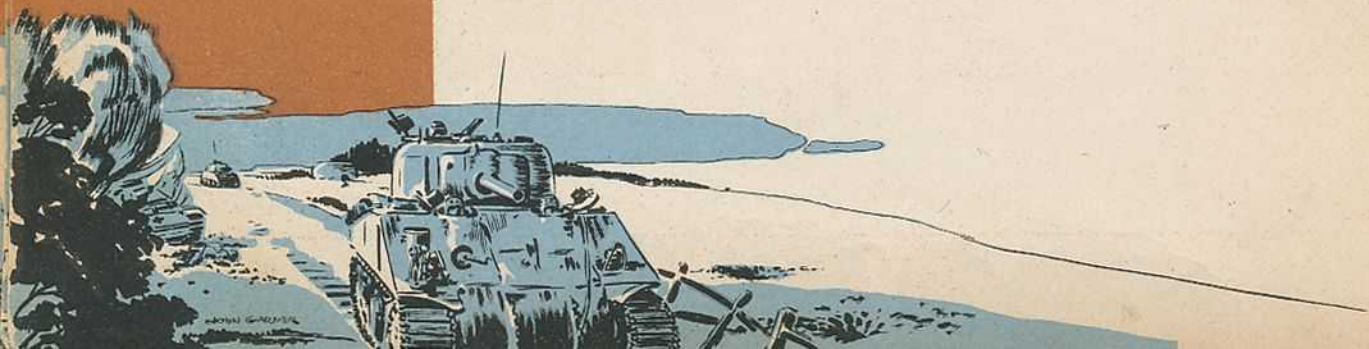
Lt. Colonel Rosewell H. King Lt. Colonel Herbert M. Mills



Lt. Colonel William B. Lovelady Major George T. Stallings



Lt. Colonel Samuel Hogan Major William S. Walker





# REGIMENT

on January 8, 1945, and Lt. Colonel Blanchard, who at various times commanded a battalion of the 32nd Armored Regiment as well as that of the 33rd, were most notable for length of service.

The 1st Battalion was accorded the great honor of receiving a Distinguished Unit Citation for its heroic action at Scherpenseel and Hastenrath, Germany, late in November. Lt. Colonel Mills was killed in this action. For extraordinary heroism, he was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

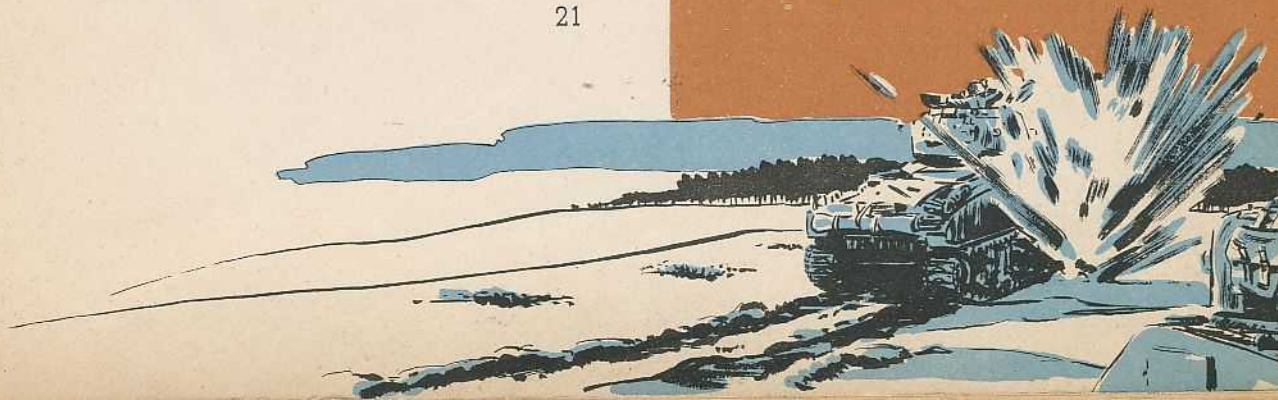
The 2nd and 3rd battalions were more fortunate in the matter of preserving their commanding officers than was the 1st. The 2nd Battalion was led through all five European campaigns by Lt. Colonel William B. Lovelady. It was his task force which first reached Germany on September 12, 1944, and took Roetgen, first German town to fall to an invader, and later occupied by men of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. The 2nd Battalion of the 33rd saw much action during the Ardennes, the Rhineland and the central Europe campaigns. Task Force Lovelady was a work-horse unit of the regiment.

Equally colorful and effective was the 3rd Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel Samuel Hogan. Colonel Hogan made history by leading one of the division's multiple spearhead columns through Belgium flying a Texas lone-star flag on his tank. To curious inquiries from the populace, Hogan replied that the banner was that of the "Free Americans!" The 3rd Battalion was well represented at Marcouray, Belgium, during the bitter Ardennes fighting, when Task Force Hogan was cut off and surrounded by enemy troops in that town. After refusing a surrender ultimatum and fighting until gasoline and ammunition had been expended, the famous "400" proceeded to destroy their vehicles and infiltrate out through German lines. Led by reconnaissance men, the "400" did escape the trap by way of a daring 14 hour march through enemy siege forces.

The 33rd Armored Regiment earned in furious combat the right to its monicker, "Men Of War." Spearheading the powerful drives of Combat Command "B" the regiment saw heavy fighting in all five western campaigns. The regiment took part in the closing of the Argentan-Falaise gap, the drive across France and Belgium to the Siegfried Line, and had the honor of being the first allied unit to enter Germany in force. In the Ardennes fighting and the Rhineland battles, the 33rd was again well represented, and in the final drives to isolate the Ruhr and to reach the Elbe River at Dessau, Colonel Welborn's troops were constantly in the van of Combat Command "B"



The 33rd Armored Regiment slugged its way through five campaigns. In so doing, Colonel Welborn's men dished out lots of punishment. Above, a German assault gun and volkswagon knocked out in France. Center: GI's examine Nazi vehicles on a Belgian road. Bottom: Sherman tanks proceed cautiously along a snow covered road in the Ardennes.





OZARK

# 36TH ARMORED



Colonel Robert L. Howze, Jr., commanded the "Blitz Doughs" through heavy action; also led Combat Command "Reserve."



Lt. Colonel  
William R. Orr



Lt. Colonel  
James T. Owen, Jr.



Lt. Colonel Vincent  
E. Cockefair



Major Thomas  
O. Curlee, Jr.



Major  
Robert E. Chaney



Major Thomas  
G. Tousey, Jr.

Men of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, "Blitz Doughs" of the 3rd Armored Division, trace their immediate history back to Brownsville, Texas, where the unit was activated in July, 1916, by personnel of the 4th, 26th, and 28th Infantry Regiments. The new organization did not go overseas in World War I, but saw service on the Mexican border.

Reactivated by a cadre from the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Armored Division, on April 15, 1941, the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment became an original "Spearhead" element.

At Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, the first commander was Colonel Walton H. Walker, the officer who later became a lieutenant general in command of the famous XX "Ghost Corps" of the 3rd American Army. Other commanders, during training at Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Training Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania; were Colonel Edwin A. Smith, Colonel William L. Roberts, and Colonel Graeme G. Parks.

Upon arrival in England, during mid-September, 1943, the 36th was billeted at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. With the rest of the division it maneuvered widely over Salisbury Plain, engaged in landing exercises along the British coast, and took part in various special training courses.

Colonel Parks led the "Blitz Doughs" in their baptism of fire at Villiers Fossard, Normandy, but on July 18, 1944, he was succeeded by Colonel William W. Cornog, Jr. Colonel Cornog was the first regimental commander to be killed in action. From August 9 to September 23, 1944, the regiment was under the command of Lt. Colonel Jack R. Hutcheson, Colonel Louis P. Leone, and Colonel Carl J. Rohsenberger. At that time, Colonel Robert L. Howze, Jr., came to the regiment and led it through the remaining eight months of the European campaign.

Men of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment figured prominently in every 3rd Armored Division action on the continent. Companies "A" and "C" of the 1st Battalion, were the division's first tactical units to be awarded the Distinguished Unit Citation. This honor was bestowed as the result of heroic fighting in the December Roer River salient. The entire 1st Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel William R. Orr, was later awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation for its work in storming the Siegfried Line. The action began during Orr's first day in battle! That was characteristic of the regimental spirit.

The Distinguished Unit Citation was also given to men of the 2nd and 3rd Battalion medical sections for outstanding gallantry in action at Fromental, France, and the Stolberg area, in Germany, respectively. And, in September, the 36th was declared a combat infantry regiment with more



Lt. Colonel  
Carlton P. Russell,  
Executive Officer





# INFANTRY REGT.

than 65 percent of its personnel wearing the coveted badge.

During the "Spearhead" Division's five western campaigns, six separate commanders led the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment. The casualty rate was even more severe in lower echelons. Colonel Orr's 1st Battalion went into its initial action at Villiers Fossard, Normandy, under Lt. Colonel Walter Abney. Before the unit reached German soil, three months later, it had been commanded by seven officers. They were: Colonel Abney, Major Paul W. Corrigan, Captain John C. Chapman, Major Theodore P. Mason, Captain Frank D. Hall, Captain Louis F. Plummer, and Colonel Orr. Captain Plummer was wounded during the first phase of the Siegfried line attack.

In the 2nd Battalion, Lt. Colonel Vincent E. Cockeair landed at the head of his troops in Normandy and was killed in action on August 9. The records disclose that 14 succeeding officers commanded the battalion from that time until VE day! Of these, Major Thomas G. Tousey, Jr., and Lt. Colonel Thomas J. Moran served longest, the latter fighting with his troops throughout the Roer-Rhine slug fest, the great Paderborn sweep, and the steady drive to Dessau.

Lt. Colonel Carlton P. Russell, wounded in action on August 5, 1944, was the first combat commander of the 3rd Battalion. Eight other officers succeeded him, with Lt. Colonel Paul L. Fowler, and Major Robert E. Chaney leading for the longest period of time. Major Chaney was killed in action ten days before the "Spearhead" Division came out of the line for the last time, at Dessau. Major Gordon Thomas then assumed command.

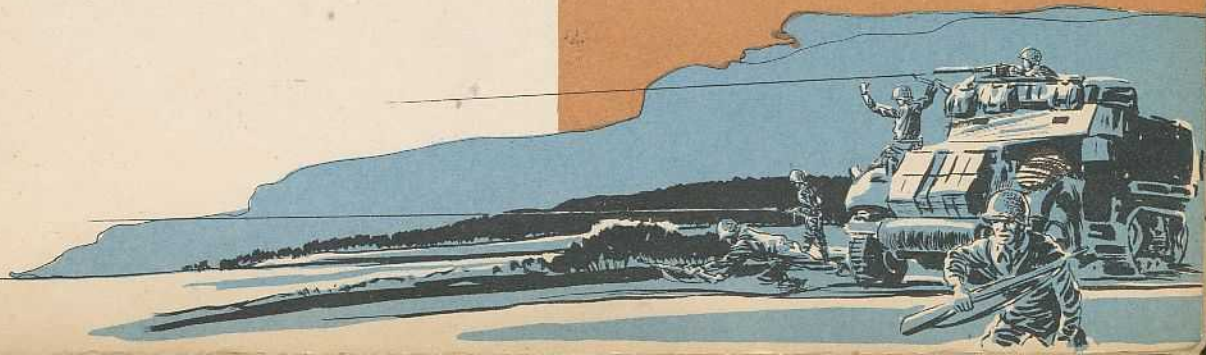
Many enlisted men of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment gave their lives to bring final victory. The job of the "Blitz Doughs" was not an enviable one, and yet there was such esprit de corps among Colonel Howze's troops that not one man would have changed places with a tank. These men were the infighters of the division, the soldiers who insured victory after the cutting edge of the armor had slashed enemy positions. Indeed, in street fighting, the armored infantry often preceded the tanks. For all of heavy casualties, constant fighting and fatigue, the "Blitz Doughs" maintained a brilliant reputation for valor.

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The Armored Infantry didn't have much armor in combat. It was man against man in the time honored tradition of the foot soldier. Above: "Blitz Doughs" hitch a ride on a "Spearhead" tank. Center: the infantry crosses the Weser River in central Germany. Bottom: two doughs seek shelter from incoming mail on the Paderborn drive.

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Colonel Frederic J. Brown, graduate of West Point and the Field Artillery School, felt that no expenditure of ammunition was excessive when the lives of dough-boys or tankers could be saved by protective fire power.



## ATTACHED ARTILLERY

Attached artillery battalions, under division control, played a part in every "Spearhead" victory. Two of these units, the 991st and 183rd Field Artillery Battalions, 155mm SP gun and howitzer, respectively, were so frequently under Colonel Brown's command that they considered themselves part of the 3rd. That high regard was mutual. Men of the 991st fired the first allied shell into Germany and were first to bombard Cologne. The 183rd lobbed projectiles across the Rhine before any other unit.

Distinguished attachees were the 58th and 87th Armored Field Artillery Battalions (SP), veterans of North Africa and D-day in Normandy; the 18th Field Artillery Battalion, which was first to fire rockets in combat; and the 188th Field Artillery Battalion, 155mm (Towed), which gained undying fame among tankers by knocking out an enemy Panther Mark-V with a first round direct hit at 8,500 yards!

Included among other fine attached battalions were: 967th, 957th, 258th, 730th Field Artillery Battalions, all using 155mm guns; the 897th, 898th, 83rd, and 84th Field Artillery Battalions, using 105mm pieces, and the 13th Field Artillery Observation Battalion. The 897th, 730th and 898th battalions were units of the 75th Infantry Division, and the 84th Field Artillery Battalion ordinarily worked with the 9th Infantry Division.

# THE DIVISION'S

## ONSET DIVISION ARTILLERY HQS.



Lt. Colonel Lawton F. Garner, Division Artillery executive officer.

The headquarters commanded by Colonel Frederic J. Brown, was a nerve center designed to serve all of the various integral and attached artillery battalions of the 3rd Armored Division. This centralized control made possible a perfect synchronization of fire power from self propelled 105mm pieces of the division's own 54th, 67th and 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalions, plus the tanks and tank-destroyers which were frequently used for indirect fire on targets of opportunity, and the larger 155mm guns of units like the frequently attached 991st Armored Field Artillery Battalion.

The numerous separate battalions which were attached whenever the situation demanded more fire power, found that Colonel Brown's command was well organized. His communications system was so famous for its speed and dispatch that combat commanders often used artillery channels in preference to their own. With their highly mobile, armored artillery pieces, the separate battalions played a decisive role in each succeeding action. Under Colonel Brown and Lt. Colonel Lawton F. Garner, executive, the division artillery headquarters insisted upon a maximum use of fire power. In so doing, it undoubtedly saved countless lives of American soldiers. During the five western campaigns, this coordination of forces placed more than 500,000 shells on the enemy, a record which is believed to stand alone in the history of armored warfare.

## OZONE 67<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BN.



Lt. Colonel Edward S. Berry, commanding officer.

The 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which normally supported Combat Command "A" in action, was led throughout the five western campaigns by Lt. Colonel Edward S. Berry, a graduate of West Point and the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Colonel Berry, one time commander of the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, brought his mobile 105mm self propelled guns ashore on Omaha Beach, Normandy, with other units of the 3rd Armored Division, on June 24, 1944. He went into action almost immediately and the men of the 67th were rarely out of shooting range of the enemy from that time until final victory.

The 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion is a direct offspring of the 2nd Armored Division's old 14th Armored Field Artillery Regiment, which supplied a cadre of 51 officers and 299 enlisted men to the original 67th Field Artillery Regiment, activated at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, on April 15, 1941. Later, the regiment was split to form the present 67th and 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalions.





# ARTILLERY

## ORLANDO 391<sup>ST</sup> ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BN.

The 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel George G. Garton, graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, led all 3rd Armored Division artillery elements in the number of high explosive shells delivered to the enemy during the western campaigns. When the battalion came out of the line at Dessau, shortly before VE day, it could boast a total of 172,100 105mm projectiles fired in support of the "Spearhead" drive.

The 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which normally supported Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot's Combat Command "B", in action, was activated at Camp Polk, Louisiana, in January, 1942, from personnel of the old 67th Field Artillery Regiment. With the 54th and 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalions, Colonel Garton's 391st supplied most of the division's close support fire.



Lt. Colonel George G. Garton, commanding officer.

## OSHKOSH 54<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BN.

The veteran 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion is another early member of the 3rd Armored Division. The 54th was at Camp Polk, Louisiana, on December 7, 1941, when Japan attacked America at Pearl Harbor. Personnel of the battalion were on the firing range when word came that the United States was at war.

In Normandy and northern France the 54th was commanded by Lt. Colonel Robert J. Moore, a graduate of Florida University and the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. When Colonel Moore was wounded in the early phases of the Rhineland campaign, Major John P. Sink assumed command. He was later replaced by Lt. Colonel Mont Hubbard, who led the battalion through the rest of the European fighting.

Like the 67th and 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalions, the 105mm mobile guns of the 54th were a constant mainstay of 3rd Armored Division power.



Lt. Colonel Robert J. Moore, commanding officer.



Armored field artillerymen earned their pay. From top to bottom: self propelled 105mm guns in firing position somewhere in the Remagen bridgehead area; a 128mm "Jagdtiger" knocked out by shell fire during the Paderborn drive; and a battery of 88mm dual purpose guns destroyed while on their railway carriages at the Weser River bridgehead.





Lt. Col. Prentice E. Yeomans led the 83rd to fame, then was killed in action during the last days of the war



# 83<sup>RD</sup> ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BN.



Lt. Colonel William L. Cabaniss led the battalion in Normandy.

Major John R. Tucker, Jr., assumed command, then became executive officer under Col. Yeomans.

Major Richard L. Bradley assumed command of the battalion when Colonel Yeomans was killed.



Above, recon men on the alert. Center, a blazing road block which failed to halt the column. Bottom: reconnaissance elements were the first Americans in most towns.

The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion is an original "Spearhead" unit, having been activated at Camp Beauvoir, Louisiana, on April 15, 1941, as the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion. Major Edwin C. Greiner was the first commander, and the organization's core was made up of 20 officers, and 224 enlisted cadremen from the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Benning, Georgia.

On May 12, 1941, the then 3rd Reconnaissance became the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. As such it made history in the five western European campaigns of World War II.

With the 3rd Armored Division, the 83rd trained at Camp Polk, Louisiana; at the California Desert Center; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, before sailing for England on the John Erickson early in September, 1943. Upon arrival in Great Britain, the battalion was stationed at Longbridge Deverill, Wiltshire, and took part in extensive maneuvers along the British seacoast and over Salisbury Plain.

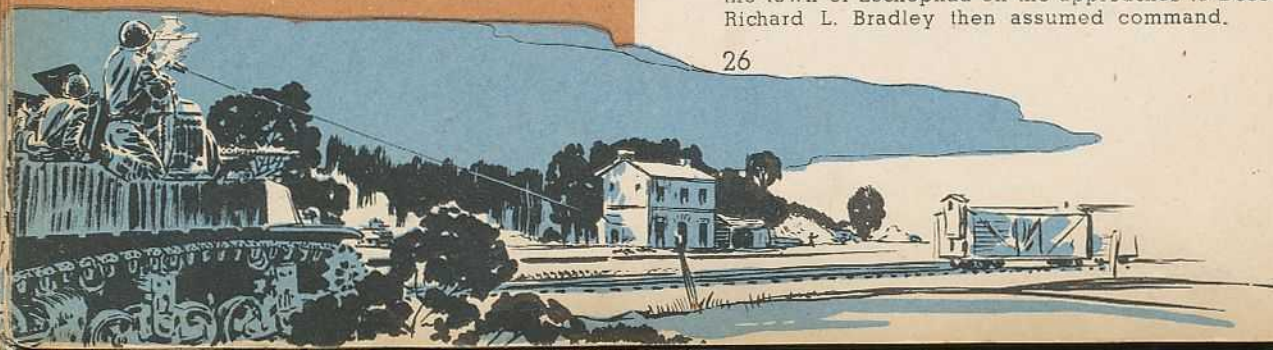
Four officers commanded the 83rd in combat. They were Lt. Colonel William L. Cabaniss, who led the organization in Normandy and was transferred late in August; Major John R. Tucker, Jr., who then assumed command, became executive officer upon the assignment of Lt. Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans, two weeks later. Colonel Yeomans commanded the battalion through most of its great triumphs on the battlefield and was himself killed in action during the last weeks of the war. Major Richard L. Bradley then assumed command.

Under the leather lunged and capable Colonel Yeomans, the 83rd came into its own as a great fighting force. With Combat Command "B", the battalion was among the first Americans to reach German soil in force. The 83rd also occupied Roetgen, on September 12, 1944, the first German town to fall to allied troops.

During the bitter winter campaign in Belgium, the battalion was again in the limelight. Company "A" was with Task Force Hogan's "400" at Marcouray: personnel of the unit reconnoitering a route out of that death trap and leading a 14 hour march through German lines on Christmas night. Later, the company, along with the rest of the battalion, spearheaded an attack which cut the vital St. Vith-Houffalize road.

Back in Germany for the last great offensive early in 1945, the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion again led the "Spearhead" in several of its most notable drives. The battalion was the first unit of the First Army to reach the Rhine, touching the "sacred river" at 4 A. M. on March 4, north of Worringen. In the magnificent Paderborn sweep to encircle the industrial Ruhr, Colonel Yeoman's men again whipped out in front to lead the entire division on the longest armored drive ever made in the history of warfare, 90 road miles against opposition.

During the last days of the war in the west, Lt. Colonel Yeomans was killed in action while leading his troops in the town of Zschepkau on the approaches to Dessau. Major Richard L. Bradley then assumed command.





Lt. Colonel  
Lawrence G.  
Foster led the  
23rd through  
five European  
campaigns.



# 23<sup>RD</sup> ARMORED ENGINEER BN.

The history of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion encompasses both world wars. The original regiment was activated at Camp Meade, Maryland, in 1917, and served brilliantly in France. Known as the "Road Builders Of The AEF," the first 23rd set a high standard of achievement for its modern namesake.

The Battalion was reactivated on April 15, 1941, at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, with the 3rd Armored Division. Cadres were made up of 28 officers and 729 enlisted men from the 17th Engineer Battalion of the 2nd Armored Division. Major Fremont S. Tandy was the first commanding officer.

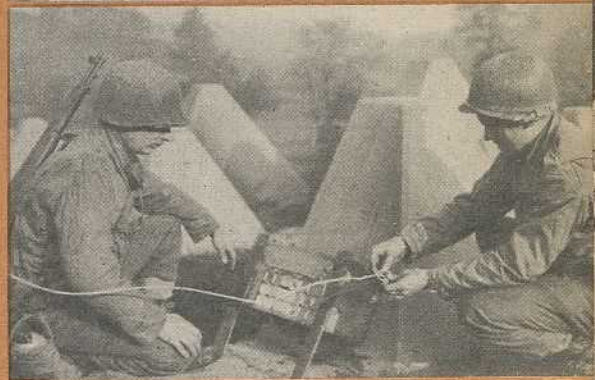
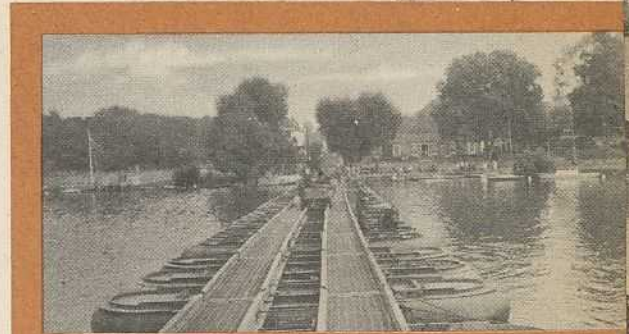
The 23rd trained at Camp Beauregard and Camp Polk, Louisiana; at the Desert Training Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, before sailing for Europe early in September, 1943. Upon arrival in the United Kingdom, the battalion was stationed at Fonthill Bishop, Wiltshire, England, and took part in extensive maneuvers over Salisbury Plain, and along the coast.

Lt. Colonel Lawrence G. Foster led the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion through all five campaigns in the west. He and his troops went ashore on Omaha Beach on June 23, 1944. The hedgerows of Normandy presented an immediate problem. Some method had to be devised to get tanks through, or over these formidable embankments. After blasting passages with TNT at bloody Villiers Fossard and Haut Vents, Foster's men invented a double blade hedge cutter which was attached to the division's Sherman tanks by maintenance crews. These proved highly successful.

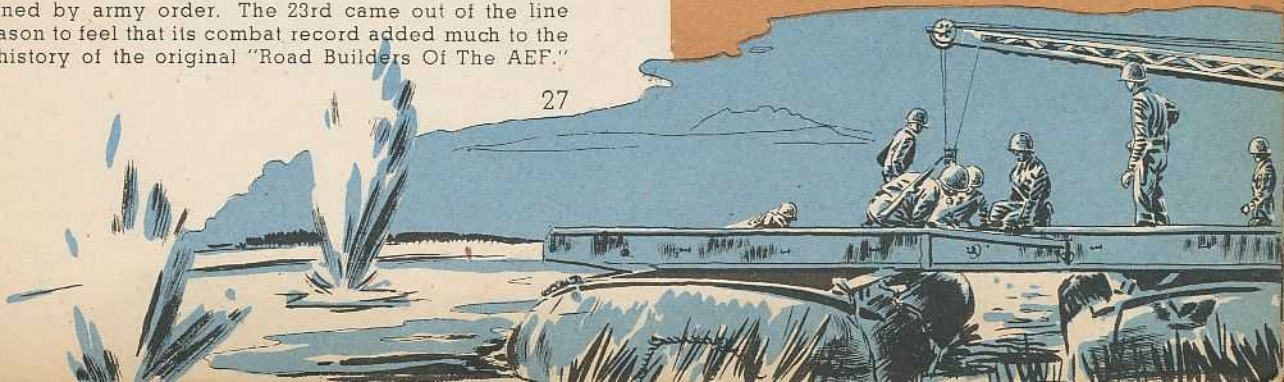
The battalion's first big combat bridging operation was carried out near Corbeil, France, when 540 feet of treadway were thrown across the Seine River. After the Seine, the engineers bridged the Marne, Aisne, and a number of other streams which paved the division's march into Belgium. At Mons, they exchanged shovels for machine guns and declared a Roman holiday by mowing down disorganized enemy columns trying to break out of encirclement. Two bridges at Namur, one across the Meuse, and one spanning the Sambre Canal, were built under hazardous circumstances.

Working under vicious mortar, artillery and sniper fire, men of the 23rd mastered the dragon's teeth of the Siegfried Line, lifted thousands of mines, destroyed pillboxes and cleared road blocks. During the Ardennes fighting, units of the battalion aided in the successful defence of Hotton, and later took part in fierce battles at Lierneux, Cherain, and Sterpigny. The normally hazardous work of lifting mines was made more difficult by severe cold and snow which prevailed during this period.

Back in the Rhineland, the engineers constructed four bridges across the Ertf River and Canal under observed enemy artillery, mortar and small arms fire. In the final great offensive, the bridge company also aided an engineer group in the bridging of the Rhine near Bonn. The battalion's last operation, the bridging of the Mulde River, was abandoned by army order. The 23rd came out of the line with reason to feel that its combat record added much to the proud history of the original "Road Builders Of The AEF."



No one envied the job of the armored engineers. Above, that 540 foot trestleway across the Seine. Center: engineers pull the teeth of the Siegfried Line with TNT. Bottom: an icy road in the Ardennes is carefully searched for mines, one of which has already knocked out the Sherman in the background.

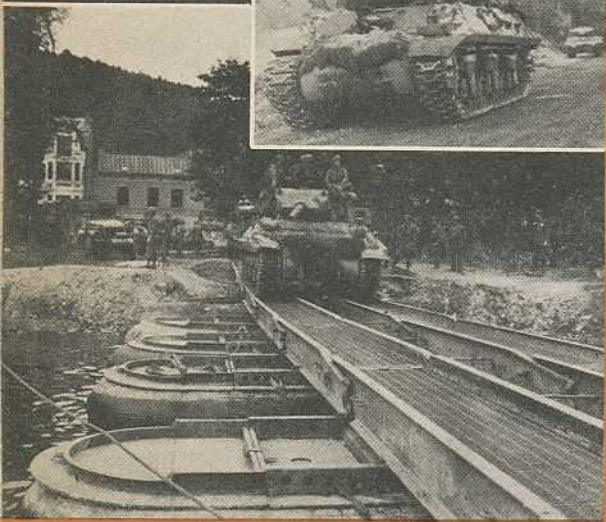




Lt. Col. Wilbur  
E. Showalter,  
703rd TD Bn.,  
commanding  
officer through  
the five west-  
ern campaigns

AMBER

# 703<sup>RD</sup> TANK DESTROYER BN.



Tank busters were big poison to enemy armor. Top: one of two Mark-V Panther tanks knocked out at 25-yard range by Cpl. Joseph Juno, who was himself killed in the action. Bottom: an M-10, 3-inch gun tank destroyer, crossing the Meuse, in Belgium. Insert: M-36, 90 mm gun tank destroyer, operating in the Ardennes.

The 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, upon its activation at Camp Polk, Louisiana, on December 15, 1941, may have been considered by some as an "8-ball" outfit. One year later, at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, while troops of the 3rd Armored Division gazed wide eyed, the "8-ball" tank busters proceeded to steal the show at a demonstration of fire power and big gun accuracy. Under the expert, harsh discipline of Lt. Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans, later commanding officer of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, the 703rd had whipped itself into shape as a smoothly functioning, well trained organization.

Formed at Camp Polk, from 3rd Armored Division cadres, the 703rd was yet an attached unit owing allegiance not to Armored Force, but to Tank Destroyer Command, a new branch of service. Excepting for a short TD and commando training course at Camp Hood, Texas, however, and a period during the Ardennes fighting of 1944-45, the battalion always remained under "Spearhead" control. With the 3rd it trained on California's Mojave Desert and at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. Although originally wearing the black and orange tiger patch of TD service, the fiercely independent 703rd finally adopted the "Spearhead" patch and was as much a part of the division as any of its own tank battalions.

Crossing the Atlantic on the Shawnee, the battalion was stationed at Mere, Wiltshire, England. Here, Lt. Colonel Wilbur E. Showalter, a West Point graduate, assumed command.

Used as road blocks, flank protection, and as a base of fire, the M-10, 3-inch gun carriages used by the battalion added security and heavy fire power to the division's drive through Normandy, France and Belgium to the Siegfried Line. Here, the 703rd was the first TD unit to receive the new M-36, 90 mm gun carriage, which was used for both direct and indirect fire.

Throughout constant operations in five western campaigns, the tank destroyer soldiers chalked up a record of efficiency that was cited by the ordnance offices at Aberdeen, Maryland. For every tank destroyer lost to the battalion through enemy action, men of the 703rd destroyed ten German tanks or assault guns!

The battalion's most notable actions were: first, at Ranès-Fromental, France, where seven tanks and assault guns fell to the TD's, among them two Panthers destroyed at a range of 25 yards by Cpl. Joseph Juno, who was himself killed as he attempted to aid the wounded enemy tankers; at Mons, Belgium, when column after column of fleeing Jerries ran into the point blank fire of the TD's; and in the Ardennes fighting, when the 703rd was temporarily attached to the 1st Infantry Division and to the 82nd Airborne Division. The battalion returned to the 3rd in time to take part in the all out counter attack which deflated the "bulge."

Throughout the five European campaigns, the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion destroyed 90 German tanks and SP guns, scores of other transport and enemy line troops. In the final analysis, accuracy and big gun performance paid off.





# 486TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT BN.

Lt. Colonel Raymond E. Dunnington, commanded the 486th AAA, AW (SP) Bn. throughout the western fighting



The 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion, an attached unit of the 3rd Armored "Spearhead" Division, wasn't in action long before it had acquired a soubriquet of its own. They called it the "Anti-Anything" Battalion!

During the United States First Army's five campaigns in Europe, men of the 486th constantly demonstrated their versatility with fifty caliber quadruple mounts and 37 mm automatic cannon. Whether the target was an enemy Focke Wulf 190, or a Mark-V tank, Colonel Raymond E. Dunnington's ack-ack soldiers were ready and willing to pass the ammunition. They did so, to the tune of more than 30 Category I (totally destroyed) and 16 Category II (damaged and probably destroyed) confirmations on everything from light bombing planes to jet-propelled fighters. On ground targets, conservative figures show that the battalion destroyed more than 200 German combat vehicles of all types, including tanks, armored cars, horse drawn artillery pieces, and at least two railway trains. The battalion was the first of its kind on German soil in World War II, the first to shoot down an enemy aircraft from that German soil.

The 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion, Automatic Weapons, Self Propelled, was activated at Camp Davis, North Carolina, on December 10, 1942. Its first commander was Lt. Colonel John W. Paddock. One month after activation, Lt. Colonel Raymond E. Dunnington assumed command and the unit, originally a 40 mm battalion, was reorganized, issued the latest of mobile equipment and embarked on a strenuous training program. As one of the first mobile, modern flak battalions, Colonel Dunnington's outfit aided in the preparation of numerous training films and publications for the army.

After comprehensive maneuvers at Camp Polk, Louisiana, and Camp Hulen, Texas, the battalion entrained for Camp Shanks, New York, and boarded the Queen Mary for overseas shipment. The ack-ack men provided AA protection for the big ship on its Atlantic crossing.

Exactly one year after activation, the 486th arrived at East Knoyle, Wiltshire, England, and was attached to the 3rd Armored Division, an association which was to prove fruitful in the bitter days ahead. With the "Spearhead" Colonel Dunnington's battalion landed on Omaha Beach, in Normandy, on June 23, 1944: promptly began to earn the "Anti-Anything" nickname by scoring on all swastika marked vehicles, in the air or on the ground.

From the time that the 3rd Armored Division landed on the continent of Europe until VE day, the 486th AAA Bn., was operational. In more than 70 direct attacks, on division areas protected by M-15 and M-16 half-track AA mounts of the battalion, there was not a single case of serious damage caused by the attacking planes.

Although an attached unit, the flak-men of the 486th were always considered "Spearhead" troops. In a division which gained fame as the first team of the First Army, the battalion which came to be called "Anti-anything" had a reputation for straight shooting and uncommon versatility in the business of total war.



Anti-aircraft gunners of the 486th had a reputation for accuracy. From top to bottom: a gun crew marks up one German plane downed; an AA gun crew covers a Rhine crossing; and a wrecked Me-109 testifies to the shooting ability of the "Anti-Anything" soldiers.





Lt. Col. Rager  
J. McCarthy  
led the Main-  
tenance Battal-  
ion throughout  
most of the  
European  
campaign



# ARMORED MAINTENANCE BN.



Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Division Maintenance Battalion retrieved and repaired combat vehicles under shell fire. In the swift war of movement, their efforts assumed heroic proportions. Above, front-line mechanics retrieve a half-track, repair battle-weary Sherman tanks.

The 3rd Armored Maintenance Battalion was one good reason why the "Spearhead" Division kept rolling when, by all the laws of machinery, it should have been halted for overhaul. During the long rat race across France and Belgium in the rapid summer offensive of 1944, the maintenance crews worked furiously while on the move. They welded and brazed the broken armor, improvised when material was scarce, cannibalized other vehicles on the battlefield; begged, borrowed, and actually stole the necessities which kept their charges rumbling forward against the enemy. How well that task was accomplished is all in the record: it's in the brave story of the long, grueling drives, the miracle of supply, the smash into and through the Siegfried Line of Germany early in September, 1944.

The 3rd Armored Division's Maintenance Battalion was activated at Camp Polk, Louisiana, during the reorganization of armored forces on January 1, 1942. Its components were: the 18th Ordnance Battalion and Company "B" of the 15th Quartermaster, both charter members of the "Spearhead" Division. Lt. Colonel William R. Hamby was the first commanding officer. The battalion trained with its parent unit at Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, before sailing for overseas service early in September, 1943. In England, the battalion was stationed at Codford St. Mary, Wiltshire, and maneuvered over Salisbury Plain during pre-invasion months.

After thorough training, the Maintenance Battalion supervised waterproofing of all the division's vehicles before embarkation for France. Under Lt. Colonel Joseph L. Cowhey, the battalion went ashore in Normandy, on July 4, 1944, and was immediately given a problem to solve: that of producing a suitable hedge-cutting arrangement to fit on the division's medium tanks. After a few days of experimentation, a double plow chopper, designed by the armored engineers, was evolved. In one week, 100 of these gadgets were fitted to tanks. The materials used were I-beams and boiler plate salvaged from blown bridges and buildings. Two hundred of the choppers were ultimately installed and used to good effect in the bocage country.

Lt. Colonel Rager J. McCarthy assumed command of the battalion on August 29, 1944, and led the unit throughout the rest of the western campaign.

During bitter attrition on the western front near Stolberg, Germany, the battalion's personnel worked night and day under vicious shell fire in order to repair the numerous "Spearhead" tanks which had been damaged in action. The magic of the maintenance crews returned vehicles to duty within short hours of retrieval.

Aside from swift repair on division combat vehicles, the Maintenance Battalion aided the mammoth task of supply. Nine M-25 tank transporters, the largest wheeled vehicles in the army, carried extra equipment, gasoline, and ammunition for the "Spearhead." As if this were not enough, Colonel McCarthy's men volunteered, at one time, to give their blood for the wounded. That was, after all, a typical gesture from the men who had adopted as their own, the slogan: "We do the difficult immediately: the impossible takes a little longer!"





# ARMORED SUPPLY BN.

Major Rodney J. Banta commanded the Supply Battalion in all five western campaigns



The 3rd Armored Division's Supply Battalion, commanded by Major Rodney J. Banta, became the lifeline of the "Spearhead" in action. The battalion's big 2½-ton trucks brought vital fuel, ammunition, rations and supplies to the pace setting front line units. Battalion trucks were also assigned to each of the spearheading task forces and used to transport thousands of infantrymen in the great drives.

Regardless of heartbreaking road conditions, a fluid enemy situation and lack of rest on the long overland hauls, supply was maintained with exceptional speed and efficiency. Trucks were loaded far beyond their normal capacity and drivers slept behind their wheels after rolling day and night in the wake of the attacking armor. On several occasions, the supply trucks passed through enemy lines in order to deliver their cargoes. The great summer offensive of 1944, which took General Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group from Normandy to the Siegfried Line, was largely made possible through the herculean efforts of such divisional forward echelon supply troops as those of the "Spearhead." They were the storekeepers of the front line.

The 3rd Armored Division Supply Battalion is a direct descendant of the 15th Quartermaster Battalion formed at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, on April 15, 1941, by a cadre of 165 enlisted men and 17 officers of the 2nd Armored Division's 14th Quartermaster. Colonel George H. Rarey was the first Commanding Officer.

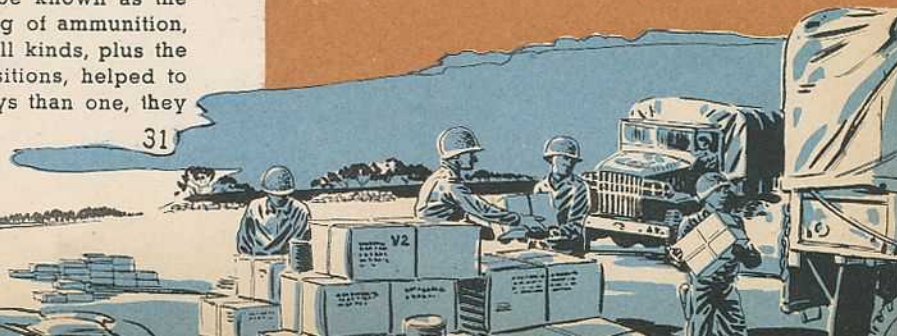
In the armored force reorganization of January, 1942, the Quartermaster Battalion was redesignated the Supply Battalion, re-arranged and streamlined accordingly. All motor maintenance work, heretofore done by the quartermaster sections, was dropped from the battalion's agenda, and new training schedules stressed the problem of supply in modern warfare of swift movement.

The battalion trained with its parent unit at Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, before sailing for overseas service on the Capetown Castle. In England, the Supply Battalion was billeted at Codford St. Mary, Wiltshire, and received final training in the division's extensive maneuvers over Salisbury Plain.

Men of the Supply Battalion landed in Normandy on July 3, 1944, and immediately began the work which was to assume such critical proportions in the breakthrough and the subsequent pursuit across France and Belgium. When that staggering task was presented to the men and officers of Major Banta's command, they were not found wanting. The storekeepers of the "Spearhead" Division added much to that accomplishment which came to be known as the miracle of supply in Europe. The hauling of ammunition, fuel, rations, clothing and equipment of all kinds, plus the transportation of infantry in front-line positions, helped to shorten the war in the west. In more ways than one, they delivered the goods.



The Supply Battalion was the haft of the "Spearhead." The swift and sure delivery of fuel, ammunition, rations and equipment to front line troops was the task given to Major Rodney Banta's soldiers. In spite of distance, poor roads and frequent ambush, they kept the division rolling forward.







Lt. Colonel Charles L. Steyaart, commanding officer of the 45th Armored Medical Battalion, took the red cross into the line of battle.



# 45<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED MEDICAL BN.



"Spearhead Medics" saved countless lives in action. Above, top to bottom: a GI is quickly placed on a stretcher for evacuation after he was wounded by shell fire in the Ardennes; medical men give first aid to a soldier while infantry hunts the sniper who shot him; and German troops are bandaged after being wounded and captured.

The combat record of the 45th Armored Medical Battalion is an almost continuous saga of heroism under fire, of never-ending labors to lighten the burden of the front line soldier, minister to his wounds, and save his life in spite of "impossible" field conditions. Lieutenant Colonel Charles L. Steyaart, commanding officer of the battalion, found the task arduous, but he and his troopers of the red cross shrugged off all limitations. They just went to work. The medical corps motto, "Service Above Self", was characteristic of the 45th.

Although aid men of the battalion carried no firearms or other weapons they accompanied "Spearhead" combat troops throughout every battle, from Normandy to central Germany. In order to save precious time, one half of a treatment section travelled with the forward elements of each fighting task force. The very presence of these men during the most critical of situations was a constant morale builder to combat GI's.

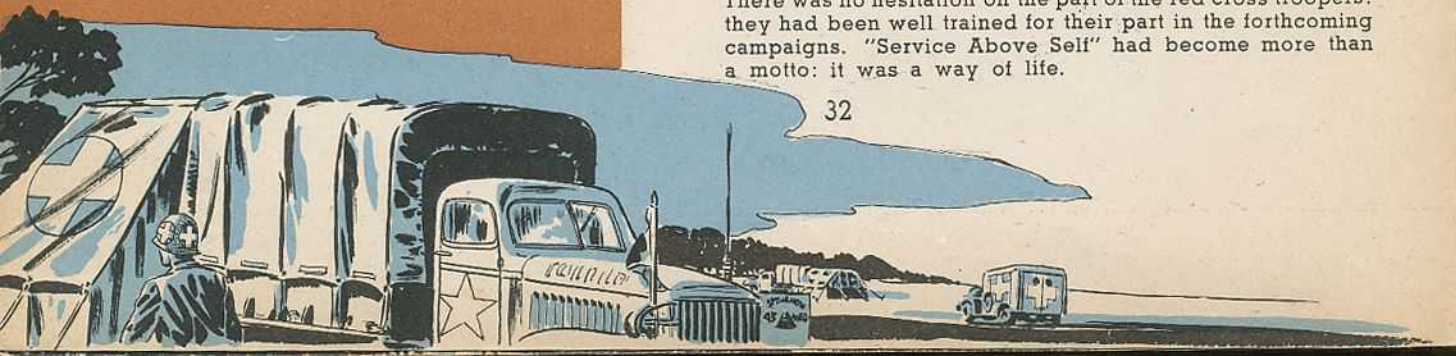
In action, a fleet of armored half tracks,  $\frac{3}{4}$  ton panel ambulances, and peeps, carried injured men from the battlefield to a relatively safe place in the rear, often through a hail of shell fire and small arms bullets. Many of the medical men were killed or wounded while performing their errands of mercy. After temporary dressing, the wounded were sent further to the rear, often, in the great drives, for distances of 50 to 150 miles, to the larger field hospitals.

Throughout all of the European campaigns, the battalion operated advance rest centers and portable shower bath units to accommodate bone-tired GI's just off the blazing front line. It was a service these men never forgot.

The "Spearhead Medics" were activated with the 3rd Armored Division at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, on April 15, 1941. The original cadre consisted of 19 officers and 96 enlisted men of the 2nd Armored Division's 48th Medical Battalion. Lt. Colonel William L. Tatum was the first commanding officer.

The new battalion trained with its parent 3rd Armored Division at Beauregard and Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania; before sailing for European service on the John Erickson, early in September, 1943. Upon its arrival in England, the battalion was billeted at Stockton House and Bapton Manor, near Codford, Wiltshire. During the division's nine month pre-invasion training in Great Britain, the 45th engaged in maneuvers over Salisbury Plain and along the English coast.

Advance companies of the "Spearhead Medics" landed in Normandy on June 24, 1944, and went into action with the rest of the division at Villiers Fossard, five days later. There was no hesitation on the part of the red cross troopers: they had been well trained for their part in the forthcoming campaigns. "Service Above Self" had become more than a motto: it was a way of life.





OSTRICH

# 143RD ARMORED SIGNAL CO.

Capt. John  
L. Wilson  
Signal  
Company  
Commander



The 143rd Armored Signal Company was an original unit of the 3rd Armored Division. It was activated on April 15, 1941, at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, by a cadre of 92 men from the 48th Signal Company of the 2nd Armored Division. Then known as the 46th Signal Company, the unit was commanded by Major Frank G. "Red" Trew.

With armored force reorganization on January 1, 1942, the unit was designated the 43rd Armored Signal Company. Personnel then numbered 9 officers and 247 enlisted men.

The 143rd trained with the 3rd Armored Division in Camp Polk, Louisiana; Desert Center, California; Camp Pickett, Virginia; and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. With the division, it embarked for Europe early in September 1943, and, upon arrival in England, the company was stationed at Cucklington, Somerset. During the nine month stay in Great Britain it engaged in extensive maneuvers over Salisbury Plain and along the coastal areas.

Because of heavy channel storms, the Signal Company did not land in Normandy until ten days after the rest of the division had reached France. By the time Lt. Colonel George V. Bussey's troops had come ashore, the 3rd had been committed to action and discovered that it could not function properly without the communication system which the 143rd was designed to provide.

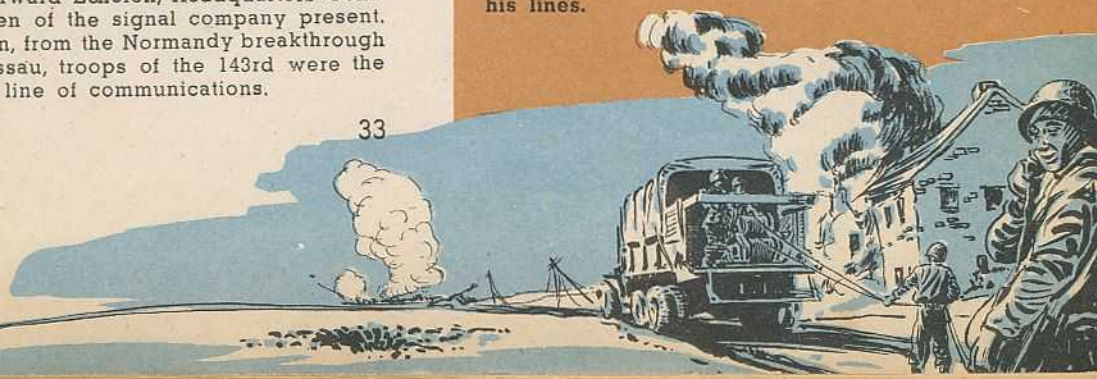
Colonel Bussey, Division Signal Officer, and Captain John L. Wilson, company commander, deserve much of the credit for the excellent record of the Signal Company in action. The very successful division plan for airground coordination in the Normandy breakthrough, was worked out by these men in cooperation with the G-3 Air and air support experts of 9th TAC.

As the communications branch of the 3rd Armored Division, the 143rd was charged with four main responsibilities. They were: that of the Operations Platoon, which had radio, wire, and message center sections; Signal Supply, which issued all signal equipment to the division; Radio Maintenance and Installation teams, and Signal Administration, which determined the overall policy for division communications. The amount of work done by these various sections ran into astronomical figures. For example, signal men covered ten times the mileage distance of the division in attack, and often had to fight their way to deliver important dispatches. Radio messages handled, totaled over 65,000, and all other types of dispatch were in proportion. Trouble shooting on wire under heavy shell fire was an everyday job. 3,379 miles of telephone wire were laid by the company during its five European campaigns.

Signal Company officers and men fought and died with the "Spearhead". The company was at Hotton, led by Captain John Wilson; and certain sections of it were at Mons during the action which won a Distinguished Unit Citation for Division Forward Echelon, Headquarters Company, and for those men of the signal company present. In every important action, from the Normandy breakthrough to the last night in Dessau, troops of the 143rd were the 3rd Armored Division's line of communications.



Soldiers of the 143rd Armored Signal Company assisted the "Spearhead" in every great drive. Above, Radio maintenance trucks in the Ardennes winter campaign. Below, left: a switch-board operator at the front, and right: a wire shooter checks his lines.





Colonel Carl J.  
Rohsenberger,  
commanding  
officer, Division  
on Trains.

OREGON

# DIVISION TRAINS

Headquarters, 3rd Armored Division Trains, was activated at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, on April 15, 1941. At that time the headquarters was a special staff section. Later, at Camp Polk, Louisiana, during the January, 1942, reorganization of Armored Force, Division Trains became a separate unit and gained a headquarters company.

The original cadre for the headquarters came from the 40th Armored Regiment. Later, the cadre was supplemented by men from other units of the Division. With the rest of the future "Spearhead," Trains took part in maneuvers over the Mojave Desert, in California; saw service at Camp Pickett, Virginia, and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, before sailing for overseas duty early in September, 1943. During the long period of American training, the headquarters had operated firing ranges for the entire division.

Upon arrival in England, Trains moved to Stockton House, Wiltshire; took part in maneuvers over Salisbury Plain; and along the British coast.

Colonel James B. Taylor was in command during the early Normandy fighting. He was killed in action on August 2, 1944. Shortly thereafter, Colonel Carl J. Rohsenberger assumed command. Colonel Rohsenberger commanded throughout the five campaigns of the "Spearhead" division.

In combat, Trains Headquarters was responsible for the movement, defence, and bivouacing of elements entrusted to its control. Normally, these consisted of Maintenance Battalion, the 45th Armored Medical Battalion, Supply Battalion, Service Company, and the rear echelon of Division Headquarters, the 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion, 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, and 143rd Armored Signal Company.

Trains Headquarters landed in France on July 2, 1944, and received its first taste of enemy action at St. Jean de Daye, when low flying nuisance raiders bombed its area.

In the great armored drives of 1944, the trucks of Division Trains hauled everything from infantry to gasoline and ammunition. Fuel supply was critical and any retreat would have been impossible because of lack of gasoline. Often the Trains were far ahead of mop-up infantry, and were taking prisoners with the aplomb of a combat unit.

During the final stages of the summer drive, the headquarters operated an auxiliary prisoner of war cage for the division provost marshal. Maximum use was made of transportation to move these prisoners to the rear.

At Raeren, just outside the German border, in Belgium, the Division Trains were located in "Buzz Bomb Alley." The pilotless craft roared over day and night. Some fire from railway guns, and a few fighter bomber attacks were also experienced here.

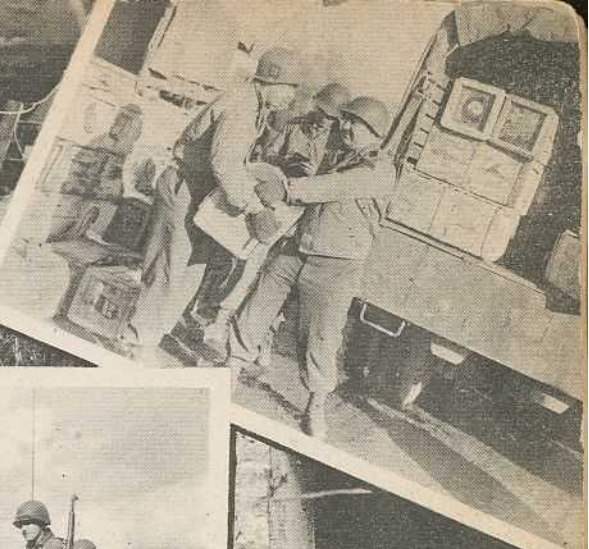
During the early months of 1945, Colonel Rohsenberger's command operated a Rehabilitation Center for GI's with battle fatigue, light wounds, or exhaustion. Later, after the last great offensive had begun, there was no time for anything but movement. Typical of the period was the order: "Keep moving east as far and as fast as you can." The Division Trains, along with the rest of the "Spearhead", did just that.



Units attached to Division Trains supplied the "Spearhead." Above, high explosive shells are loaded for transportation to the front. Center, the Trains in column. Bottom: maintenance operations on the western front.







**THE SPEARHEAD WAS A TEAM**  
 The reputation of the 3rd Armored Division was built on plain, old fashioned American teamwork. There were no favorite branches of service, no applause for the tanks without mention of the plodding, indispensable infantry. They were all one, working together for common good. And when the chips were down they all fought hard, as brother for brother. Each branch of service depended upon the other for support and they rode to win together.







## DIVISION PATCH

The shoulder patch insignia of the 3rd Armored Division has a distinct heraldic meaning and a proud history in its mixture of form, color, and symbols. The basic pattern is that of three interlaced torques, no one of which would be sufficient without the other two. Combined, to form a single triangle, the device indicates integrity and esprit de corps.

The predominating colors of the armored force patch, yellow, red and blue, are those of the basic arms: Cavalry, Field Artillery, and Infantry - all of which are components of the present integrated armored command and progenitors of the present armored force. The super-imposed black symbols have a more modern meaning: the tank track for mobility and armor protection, the cannon for fire power, and the bolt of lightning to designate shock action. The arabic numeral "3" is, of course, a division designation.

The basic design and combination of colors are taken from the original insignia of World War I Tank Corps, plus that of various infantry-tank organizations; and the superimposed symbols from that of the old 7th Cavalry Brigade (Mechanized).

Most modern component of the 3rd Armored Division patch is the SPEARHEAD flash which was authorized by Major General Maurice Rose after his division had brilliantly led many of the First Army's drives in France, Belgium, and Germany, during 1944 and 1945.



# FORGING THE *Spearhead*



APRIL 15, 1941 to JUNE 23, 1944





# BIRTH OF A GREAT DIVISION

## Activation at Beauregard

“Spearhead!”

The very name is magic to those who recall the beach at Isigny and the jungle-like hedgerows of St. Jean de Daye; the crackling hell of Argentan-Falaise; the long drives and the bitter marches, the death and the flame and the watch in the night. Liege and the Siegfried Line! The terrible Ardennes, and Cologne: Altenkirchen, Marburg to Paderborn for victory, and the final drive to Dessau.

You wouldn't call it romance. Your combat tanker curses the word, romance; and yet he has a heart lifting memory of flaunted power when the great armored division ground relentlessly forward in those grim days, devouring the miles and destroying the enemy.

“We seemed to be stunned by the ferocity of the German small arms and mortar fire, but — pushed on to our objective. I am sure that these men will give great accounts of themselves in future battles.” Colonel Nathaniel O. Whitlaw, describing the baptism of fire at Villiers Fossard, Normandy.

“Made contact with British armor on road to Putanges.” Sgt. Donald Ekdahl, laconically reporting the momentous closing of the Argentan-Falaise gap, the action which was later described as the end of the battle for France.

“Reconnaissance on objective — where's division?” Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans, heckling his commanding general at Paderborn in the culmination of the greatest armored drive in history.

Men of the “Spearhead!” The brave, hard-hitting people you'll never forget. The officers and GPs who didn't look like heroes, but who were heroes all the same. They were lean and tired, hard as spring steel, red-eyed from the swirling dust, their faces lined and stubbled with whiskers. No time to clean up — no time to do anything but fight and go forward. The men of the “Spearhead” had a job to do and they did that job well. The bitter, dusty road from Normandy to Dessau was littered with the flame gutted wrecks of a once arrogant Nazi war machine. German soldiers fought to the end, but the “Spearhead” ground them into the very dust that they had stolen: routed them, captured them in thousands. And, because battle is a give and take proposition, the 3rd suffered too.

There were constantly changing faces in the gun crews, new officers to replace those who had been killed or wounded. The division rumbled ahead and, from the old men of the outfit, the new replacements drew a necessary know-how, a pride of organization, a knowledge of the background which made such teamwork possible.

The old men knew, of course. The majority of them recalled Camp Polk, Louisiana, which was the division's first permanent station. Many recalled Fort Benning, Georgia, and that day in mid-April, 1941, when 600 officers and 3,000 enlisted men of the 2nd Armored Division entrained for Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, to activate the yet unborn 3rd. They were the genuine old timers, and yet — it wasn't so long ago.

The 3rd Armored Division traces its immediate history back to those men who left General George S. Patton's 2nd Armored Division on April 14, 1941. Through them the “Spearhead” may further trace its lineage back to the old GHQ tank regiments of World War I, and to some of the toniest of early American cavalry regiments. The armored force was an extremely new branch of service in 1941, but its background was good and its very youth promised a strength unappreciated by outmoded theory and prejudice.

Those men of the division, selectees included, who were part of the 2nd Armored Division, are actually the charter members of the “Spearhead.” So are the reserve officers who are graduates of Major J. L. Billo's “Academy,” more officially termed the Officer's Training Center. It was these men, developed around a core of trained regular officers, who went on to command units of the 3rd Armored Division in the baptism of fire at Villiers Fossard, Normandy, and in the long drives which culminated in the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany.

Centering the core of regular officers, and designated commanding general of the new division, was Brigadier General Alvan C. Gillem, Jr., non West Point, but a Sewanee graduate who had come up through the ranks. A notable quarterback of his day, he was a former commander of the 2nd Armored Brigade, a tanker of old, and known to be



a shrewd tactician. Later, on the western front, General Gillem led the XIII Corps of the 9th Army.

As Chief of Staff to General Gillem, went Lt. Colonel Roland P. Shugg, former CO of the 14th Field Artillery, who was recognized as a "motor man." For the various G's were Major A. C. Blain, G-1; Lt. Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., G-2; Lt. Colonel W. S. Jones, Jr., G-3; and Lt. Colonel John L. Pierce, G-4.

Activation meant but one thing to the officers and men of the new 3rd Armored Division; rigid training of the cadre to act as instructors for the schooling of selectees to come. There was a signal communications class under Major F. G. Trew, CWS under Captain J. C. Lowery, and tank maintenance supervised by Captain Joseph L. Cowhey and Captain Noel M. Cox.

Colonel G. H. Harvey, of the 15th Quartermaster Battalion, conducted a clerical and administrative course, and Major Fremont S. Tandy, of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, started a motorcycle driver and repair school. There were various courses of instruction, all designed to provide the necessary background for the success of a great armored division.

An important part of the training program was an athletic set-up under the direction of Major A. G. Cameron, Jr., Division Morale Officer, and Lt. L. C. McIntyre, Athletic Officer. The general desired that his men be fit in body as well as mind. That combination of virtues was a constant aim of the 3rd Armored Division.

Camp Beauregard, where the division first set into motion the machinery of organization, was a Louisiana National Guard station. It was hot and dusty, well populated by insects, and subject to a quickly changing climate of sunshine and showers. The old 3rd Armored Brigade set up headquarters in the dust bowl where Esler Field was later laid out, and the separate units were quartered in

pyramidal tents on the post proper. There, all personnel cursed the dust, the mud, and the soft ground. On a perfectly dry day vehicles were known to sink hub-deep in the spongy soil of unit motor parks. Truly, Beauregard was the original of that spot where a man could walk in the mud and have dust blowing in his eyes!

The American armored force of May, 1941, was a far cry from that powerful steel striking force which went charging across the plains of Germany in 1945. The United States was still at peace although Europe was blazing after the first great application of motorized blitz warfare. Back in the states a few M-1 rifles were being issued to the doughboys, while armored troopers learned the fine points of a pitifully few light "Mae West" tanks. At Beauregard, Captain Noel Cox, Motor Officer, farmed out 20 of these early models to the various units.

Still, there was progress. On May 12, 1941, several of the units which made up the 3rd Armored Division changed their number designations and adopted new T/O's. The 2nd Armored Regiment (Light), became the 32nd Armored Regiment (Light); the 3rd Armored Regiment (Light), became the 33rd Armored Regiment (Light); the 4th Armored Regiment (Medium), became the 40th Armored Regiment (Medium); and the 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion had its name changed to the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. Later, the 46th Signal Company was redesignated the 143rd Armored Signal Company.

The entire American army was in a state of flux. New designs were coming off the drafting boards. New regulations were going into effect. There was the usual "chicken" and the usual mistakes. The color of piping on a tanker's cap was announced to be henceforth infantry blue, a recommendation for a distinctive green and white piping having been turned down by the war department. (And later

### BRIGADIER GENERAL ALVAN C. GILLEM, JR.,

beloved first commander of the 3rd Armored Division, came up through the ranks to become one of America's most notable Armored Force officers. He called the 3rd his "Always Dependable" division, and he helped instill, by word and deed, the fiercely proud esprit de corps which lingered with the new "Spearhead" long after he, General Gillem, had been promoted to higher command.

The 3rd Armored Division was led by another famous commander on the flaming western front of Europe, but among those of its troops who had come the whole long way, from activation at Camp Beauregard, in 1941, to the road blocks of Dessau, Germany, in 1945, the memory of General Gillem, and his administration of a hard hitting young division in its early training, remained forever clear and brilliantly etched.

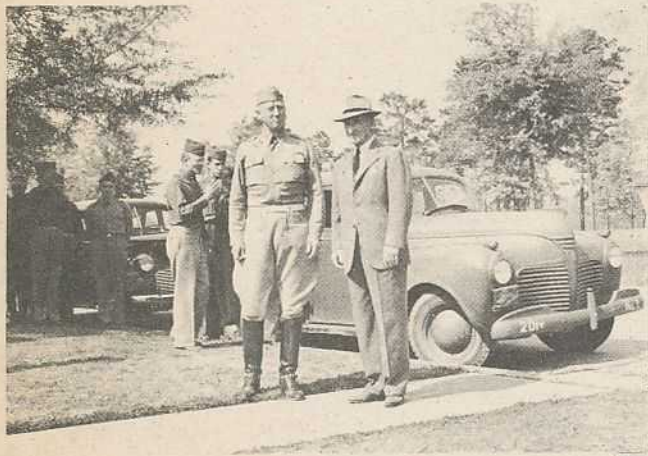




adopted.) Lieutenant, later Major, Haynes W. Dugan, Public Relations Officer, picked a nickname for the new division. It was: the "Bayou Blitz."

Army life during early 1941, wasn't especially rigorous. Off duty, troops were allowed to wear civilian clothing. Passes were frequent, and rationing was not yet in effect. The social aspect of the service was not forgotten. Enlisted men attended dances in nearby Alexandria, and the 40th Armored Regiment fostered the first officer's club in the division. Governor Sam Jones, of Louisiana, Thomas E. Dewey, then of the United Service Organization, Walter Hoving, USO president, and Marshall Field III, of Chicago, were some of the distinguished visitors who inspected the camp.

There was drama in the ranks of the new division too. Pvt. James M. King, of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, leaped into the turbulent waters of the Red River, at Alexandria, to rescue



General George S. Patton, Jr., wishes luck to Brigadier General Alvan C. Gillem, first commander of the 3rd Armored Division. The place: Fort Benning, Georgia, on April 15, 1941.

a struggling national guardsman. Pvt. A. G. Short, of Americus, Georgia, died at Charity Hospital, Alexandria, after a motorcycle accident. His was the first death within the division.

On June 2, 1941, an advance detachment proceeded to Camp Polk, which was rapidly nearing completion and, on the 11th, the mass movement of troops began, to be completed by June 14. The light tanks proceeded to the new area under their own power, a miraculous achievement!

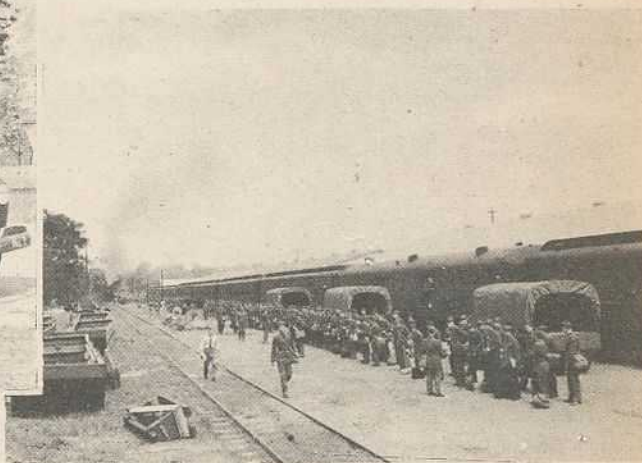
At Camp Polk, the division was joined by the 36th Infantry Band, led by Warrant Officer Frank A. Reed. The band came from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and was formerly a part of the 20th Infantry. Later, a second band was to be organized and activated, this one for the 32nd Armored Regiment, and led by Lt. Edwin Hickson, composer of the "General Gillem March."

Just before the move to Camp Polk, the general

was notified that 28 applications had been made for Armored Force Officer's Candidate School, at Fort Knox, Kentucky. With his approval, it became increasingly clear that in the 3rd Armored Division, ambition would not go unheeded. Among those who were offered the opportunities of a growing armored force, were the 7,000 selectees who arrived in June. The first man off the train on June 18, was Pvt. John J. Tartol, of Chicago, a former stock clerk. Tartol was the first of many to come from the windy city.

The procedure on selectee reception was standard: they were met at the train, usually with a band, relieved of their luggage, given a hot meal and a bath and assigned to bunks. Then came a hasty medical inspection and the remainder of the day to rest. On the second day in camp, these men visited the classification center and were assigned to units. Captain John N. Scoville, who ran the classification

Original cadre of the 3rd Armored Division arrive at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana.



and tried to fit square pegs in square holes, was an extremely busy officer.

Basic training, 13 weeks of it, was the order of the day. New recruits to the armored force found that hitting a target was no miracle and that road marches became easier with practise. There was plenty of the latter. The song was - "I'll Be Back In A Year, Little Darlin'," and OHIO was a watchword which meant Over the Hill In October!

Polk was 97 percent complete on June 30. The 3rd was growing up. New selectees were pouring in: new items of equipment, including half-tracks were issued. The firing ranges were completed and used for the first time under the jurisdiction of a special staff section which later became Division Trains. Truck convoys carried off-duty troops to neighboring cities. Beaumont, Texas, and Lake Charles, Louisiana, were favorite playgrounds.

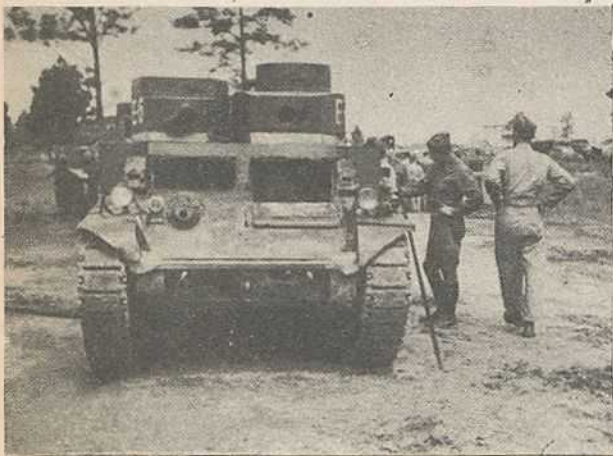
Closer to camp were the boom towns: Sandy



Hill, and Leesville. They were raw and loud but as much a part of "Spearhead" history as the army itself. The old soldiers of Camp Polk will never forget the Red Dog Saloon, Tip Top Inn, and the Roof Garden. Here, a sufficiency of liquor and an over abundance of esprit de corps led to a number of wild, free-for-all fights which, in the Roof Garden especially, were wont to reach a climax in a flurry of slats jerked out of the railing which enclosed the dance floor of that venerable institution. New Iberia, Alexandria, DeRidder, and Shreveport, Louisiana, as well as the nearby Texas cities, also became favorite 3rd Armored Division haunts as the influx of selectees continued.

Selectees from Texas began arriving during the first week in July. At that time Major Fremont S. Tandy's engineers were engaged in whittling down a hill in front of division headquarters. The flag staff was raised here, and work begun on five

The light "Mae West" tanks made the Beauregard-Polk trip under their own power. It was a miraculous achievement.



chapels. Organization Day, July 10, first anniversary of the Armored Force, was celebrated at Polk with a mass gathering of troops and an intent General Gillem saying: "The same cause that made necessary an Armored Force, made necessary your being called into service."

Soldiers of the command listened thoughtfully, but America was still at peace, and most of the men were counting each month toward eventual discharge.

On July 18, General Gillem received his second star, and Colonel Walton H. Walker, who had commanded the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, became a brigadier general. Present for the ceremony of pinning on the stars, were Major General Irving Fish, commander of the 32nd Infantry Division, then at Camp Livingston, Louisiana, and Senator Allen J. Ellender, of Louisiana. General Walker, who later assumed command of the 3rd Armored Division when General Gillem left to command the

II Armored Corps, himself stepped up to lead Patton's famous XX "Ghost Corps" in the 1944-45 dash across Europe.

By July 25, the 3rd had received the bulk of its selectees. G-1 announced that the best represented states were: Illinois, with 2,675 men; Michigan, with 1,053; and Texas, with 924. Other figures were: Wisconsin, 777 men; Missouri, 451; Georgia, 432; Minnesota, 419; Iowa, 407; Louisiana, 404; New York 373; Alabama, 283; Kansas, 234; and Florida, 218. Every state had at least one representative, and division GI's came from outside the continental limits of the republic. Later, in February and March, 1942, recruits arrived in numbers from the New England states, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico.

On August 5, it was announced that the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and the 67th Armored Field Artillery Regiment would go to



Boom town by an army camp.

Camp Shelby, Mississippi, to conduct firing problems, an activity prohibited at Polk because of the Louisiana maneuvers then going on. The trip was the first of many such training expeditions made by 3rd Armored Division units during their long battle preparation in the states and later in England.

Major General Jacob L. Devers, new Chief of the Armored Force, visited Polk on August 20. Addressing division officers, he said: "You are going to have to be top-flight to play in the major league — the 3rd Armored Division is well conceived, and the spirit is here."

Meanwhile, new light and medium tanks were delivered to unit motor parks. To early tankers of the then "Bayou Blitz," General Lee and General Grant battlewagons represented the last word in armored might. It was unthinkable to these men that Germany, winding up a whirlwind campaign in France and the low countries, actually possessed





The division's first all-out mounted review was held on the occasion of a Purple Heart award to M/Sgt. Josef Plotnick, veteran of World War I.

more advanced machines for the waging of total war. This, however, was the case. American medium tanks of 1941 were already obsolete when they rumbled off the production line at Detroit. It was a failing which lost lives in the western desert of Libia and which was never fully remedied in the European campaigns. The later Sherman and Pershing tanks were a vast improvement over earlier models but, aside from greater maneuverability and mechanical endurance, never approached the excellent armor and ordnance of the German Panther and Tiger tanks.

Early in September, 900 men left Polk to form part of a cadre for the 5th Armored Division at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Later, the 3rd was to provide nuclei of trained tankers for the 7th, the 8th, and the 11th Armored Divisions, as well as numerous smaller cadres to Armored Center, Tank Destroyer Command, and the various artillery headquarters.

This old French Renault tank was a curiosity.



On September 18, nearly 2,000 men were lost to the division when the first selectees over 28 years of age were released. With the attack on Pearl Harbor, shortly afterward, many of these men returned to their units after requesting such assignment. Thanks to General Gillem, esprit de corps was already molding the 3rd into a crack organization.

Forward Echelon of Division Headquarters took to the field during the third week of September, and on October 3, all elements engaged in an exercise which was intended to acquaint the various units with their relation to each other and to the division. Hollywood photographers filmed the first bridge-building attempt of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, a highly successful ponton structure across the Sabine River. Earlier, Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer had filmed background material at Camp Polk, for a Wallace Beery picture, "The Bugle Sounds." There was no lack of publicity for the 3rd.

There weren't enough guns to hop at Polk. The men constructed their own.





Six months after activation, the "Bayou Blitz" had become a power in American Armored Force history. Competing with the older 1st Armored Division on a field problem late in October, the 3rd flashed ahead to secure objectives on the Calcasieu River, in Louisiana. From the very beginning of its recorded history, the 3rd has been bucking for first place. That was the spirit on the Calcasieu, and it was the same ride-to-win attitude which gave the old "Bayou Blitz" a new soubriquet in the great 1944 drive across France. It became, simply, the "Spearhead."

While field problems were a major part of the gradually accelerated schedule at Camp Polk, schooling was not forgotten. A spot check on October 14, showed that 274 enlisted men and 40 officers were attending army instruction courses, studying subjects which ranged from gunnery and tank mechanics to medical laboratory techniques. A great percentage of the enlisted men later attended officer's candidate school and finally led the might of America's armor in 1944-45.

On November 1, Company "I" of the 32nd Armored Regiment, was sent to MacDill Field, Florida, to take part in the training of a provisional air base defence, and on that day the division gave yet another general officer to the nation when Colonel Vincent Meyer received his star. Brigadier General Meyer was subsequently given command of the 18th Field Artillery Brigade at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Armistice Day found the 3rd parading in Port Arthur, Texas, and at New Iberia and Lake Charles, Louisiana. General Gillem and Governor Jones, of Louisiana, were at the head of the Lake Charles spectacle. The troops who swung down that wide thoroughfare, to the brass and drums of their regimental bands, little guessed that they were observing the last peacetime armistice day for many bitter years.

Back at Polk, the army wives banded together to form the "Service League," an organization which operated and maintained thrift shops in Leesville and DeRidder for the benefit of post GI's. Five new chapels had been dedicated by Chaplain, Lt. Colonel Oscar Reynolds. Major Harvie Matthews had assumed the duties of G-3, after Colonel John J. Bohn was designated chief umpire to the 2nd Armored Division in the Carolina maneuvers.

Fall weather at Polk was delightfully like Indian summer. There was plenty of cold beer and coca-cola at the PX. Gas rationing was somewhere in the dim future. Juke boxes were hammering out various arrangements of "Give Me One Dozen Roses," and GI's of the command still counted each day toward the required 18-month duration of selective service. Half a world away the grim air fleets of Nippon were bombing up for an attack that

would alter the world's history.

Sunday, December 7, 1941. Camp Polk, Louisiana.

It was a crisp, cool day. Men of the command slept late after their Saturday night dates in town. Artillery units were in the field on a gunnery problem. Brigadier General Brehon Somervell, War Department G-4, was at Camp Polk to check on maintenance and supply. The first announcement came in the early afternoon: "Unidentified aircraft are attacking Pearl Harbor!"

That was all: the slightly excited, suave voice of the radio announcer, the nervous interlude of chamber music, and then a hurriedly prepared statement by a famous news analyst. Japan was attacking America.

War came to the U. S. on a crisp Sabbath, and its coming was an unreal thing. The attitude of America was — it can't happen here. But it could, and had happened. The United States of America was at war! Men and officers began coming back to the post. There was a feeling of supercharged suspense in the air. The fact of the attack was so enormous that personnel found it hard to digest. Acting almost simultaneously, Brigade and Division G-2 staffs raced for the post library to corner data on the Pacific theater. Lt. Colonel John A. Smith's division staff got there moments ahead of Major Andrew Barr's Brigade 2-section.

Discipline tightened after war was declared on Japan and Germany. Furloughs and leaves were cut drastically. Civilian clothing was packed in moth-balls for the duration. New selectees, to replace those lost under the over-age ruling poured in from Des Moines, Iowa, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and Fort Knox, Kentucky. In a shakeup of officer personnel, Colonel Roland P. Shugg went to the general staff at Washington, D. C., and subsequently became head of the automotive center at Detroit. The army's modern mechanization owes much of its rapid growth to Colonel, later General Shugg. At Division, Colonel John J. Bohn became Chief of Staff.

One week after Pearl Harbor, the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion was activated at Camp Polk. Although a GHQ outfit, the TD's drew cadres from practically every integral unit of the 3rd, and remained under division control. Regarded as "8-balls," a common appellation applied to new branches of service, the tank-busters were led by Major John Meade, a far-sighted professional soldier. His faith in the worth of TD elements in armored command was amply demonstrated in Africa, and on the shell wracked roads of Europe in 1944-45.

The new year of 1942 brought a real change to the 3rd Armored Division. Under armored force organization, the brigade command was abolished. Two combat commands were established to replace the more unwieldy brigade set-up. The 40th Arm-



ored Regiment (Medium), was deactivated, its tanks going to the 32nd and 33rd Armored Regiments. This was a change which led to greater versatility in tank tactics. The old 40th was disbanded sorrowfully: it had the record of a crack unit and had supplied well trained cadres for many of the new armored elements then springing into being.

The 67th Field Artillery Regiment was also split up, its component parts emerging as the 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, and the 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalion. The 15th Quar-



New Garand rifles were issued, and training began.

termaster Battalion was redesignated the 3rd Armored Division Supply Battalion and was authorized to drop all motor maintenance duties, these to be taken over by the Maintenance Battalion, formerly called Ordnance.

In addition to these changes, the division headquarters received a service company and the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion was enlarged. A Train Headquarters, made up of former staff sections, was also added to the division. With these far reaching regroupments came the knock of opportunity for officers and men of the 3rd. There were lots of promotions in the offing.

The first practice blackout of the war was observed at Polk on January 7. No one took the event seriously, although there was no breach of discipline. Theater crowds sang, motorists halted on the road and, for twenty minutes all activity ceased. The blackout was a huge success.

The advent of war placed no restrictions on ambition or ability. More men were sent to officer's candidate schools and there were the usual technical courses for enlisted men and officers who wished to better their position in the division. Neither was athletic competition curbed. Over at DeFour Field House, Lt. Glenn Morris was busily working out a string of boxers to represent the organization in golden gloves competition at Chicago. One of his

stars was tanker Lafayette Pool, a Texas slugger who declined to make the Chicago trip because his company was due to receive an allotment of the new General Grant tanks! Pool became one of the "Spearhead" Division's legendary heroes when, after leading 21 separate drives in Europe, he was wounded while blasting his way through the Siegfried Line.

One of the disheartening aspects of Camp Polk training was the frequency with which key men were transferred to higher headquarters. The 32nd Armored Regiment lost Colonel Roderick R. Allen, a crack commander who left to become Chief of Staff of the 6th Armored Division and later to command the 12th Armored Division. Colonel W. H. Jones, former G-3, replaced Colonel Allen.

On January 16, Brigadier General Geoffrey Keyes, former Chief of Staff of the 2nd Armored Division, arrived to take command of the 2nd Combat Group, the forerunner of Combat Command "B". Colonel Leroy H. Watson commanded the 1st.

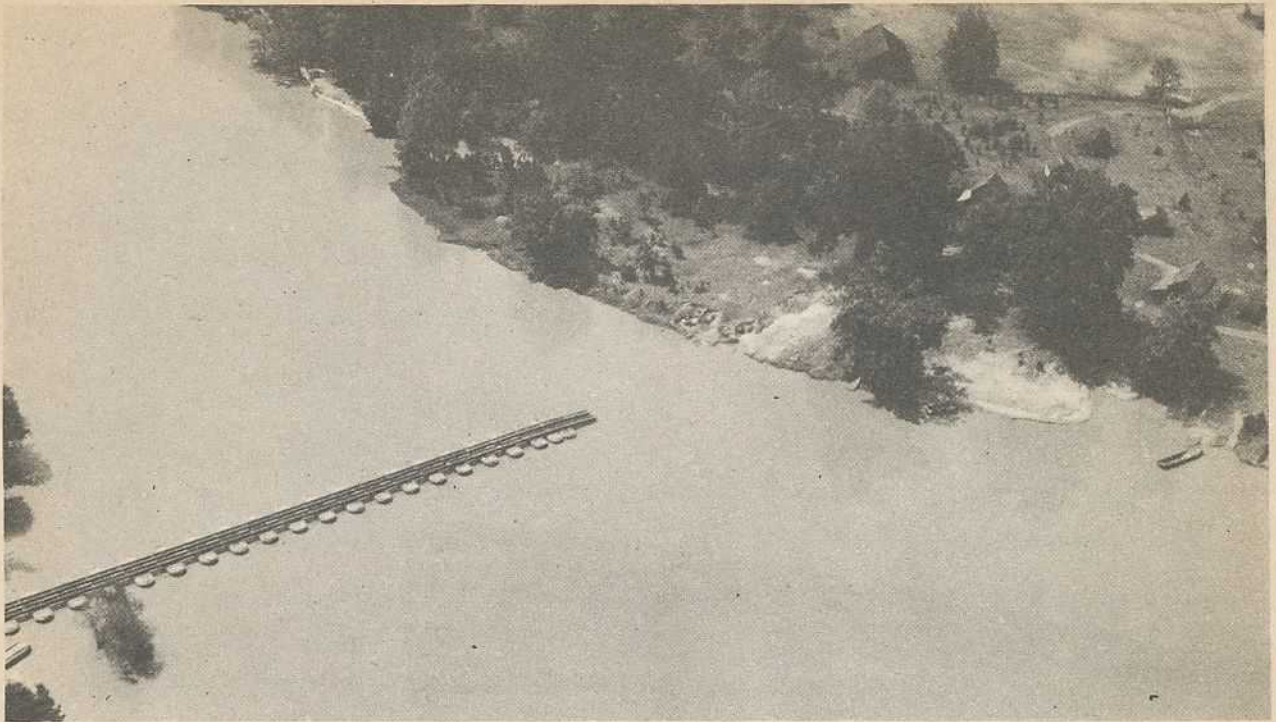
On the following day, Major General Gillem was named to command the II Corps. He was replaced as division commander by Brigadier General Walton H. Walker, Texas born West Pointer, and

Field problems, sand and pine trees were part of Camp Polk.



former executive to General Marshall. Colonel Bohn moved up to Corps Chief of Staff and was replaced by Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., former G-2. Colonel Craig Alderman, General Gillem's aide, became G-2, and Colonel John L. Pierce was made Corps G-4, being replaced at Division by Lt. Colonel Dorrance S. Roysden, formerly of the 2nd Armored Division. Lt. Colonel B. H. Coiner, former Division G-1, became Corps G-1, and was replaced by Lt. Colonel Charles G. Hutchinson. Lt. Colonel John Meade was relieved of command of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion to become Corps G-2, and the old 40th Armored Regiment Headquarters became Corps Headquarters Company. Lt. Colonel Prentice E.





On October 9, 1941, the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion attempted its first bridging operation. This span across the Sabine River, was successful: took five hours.

Yeomans assumed command of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Probably more than any other branch of service, the history of Armored Force is all interwoven. Just as the 3rd Armored Division sprang from a 2nd "Hell On Wheels" cadre, the 3rd was destined to supply trained personnel to many of the new organizations, some of which were the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 11th, 12th, and 20th Armored Divisions, the II, III, and IV Armored Corps. During the spring of 1942, the 7th Armored Division was brought into existence at Camp Polk, a direct offspring of the 3rd. Major General Lindsay McD. Sylvester commanded the new division, headquarters for which was set up in tents behind the 3rd's quarters. The older 3rd not only provided the cadre for the 7th, but also trained the entire group of selectees, largely through the efforts of the division's G-3, Lt. Colonel Harvie R. Matthews.

Late in the spring of 1942, the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion under the command of Lt. Colonel Frederic J. Brown, was sent to the desert wastes of California, to be the first unit of the division and one of the premier units at the Desert Training Center, then commanded by Major General "Old Blood & Guts" Patton.

At this time the division was ablaze with rumors, a condition which was chronic throughout training — and through and beyond the European war. Chief of Staff, Colonel Smith, and General Walker made

flying trips to the Mojave desert and brought back elaborate tales of its wonders. The 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion was suddenly whisked off to Camp Hood, Texas, for a month-long study of TD tactics and commando warfare. Yellow jaundice swept the division — along with the rest of the U. S. Army. Everyone had it, even the general, who was never hospitalized, and Colonel Smith, who was. At Camp Hood the men of the 703rd were also stricken with dysentery. June and early July were dark months for 3rd Armored Division personnel.

In mid-July the orders came down. More than 30 trains were used to transport the "Bayou Blitz" to California. No vehicle went overland because rubber was too precious to waste in the undertaking. After a four-day journey, during which troops were given periods of rest in small towns of west Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, the caravan reached Rice, California, and a whistle-stop called Freda. From the relatively cool interior of day coaches, the men of the 3rd Armored Division stepped out into a brilliant expanse of sun and sand and jagged rock. The thermometer squirmed at 130 degrees, and the wind was furnace-hot!

The Mojave Desert was no vacationland, but men who trained over its sandy expanse, through the dry salt lake beds and around the well-remembered Turtle and Old Woman mountains, grew to have a certain affection for the waste-land they had entered. The climate was healthy, albeit un-



comfortable. There were the compensations of frequent passes to Banning, Palm Springs, Riverside, Los Angeles, and Hollywood. One was forced to live rough in the desert, but not miserably as had been the case in some of the more inaccessible army camps.

Doggedly, troops worked through the day and sought the shelter of their tents during a short siesta period at noon. A great deal of water was consumed at first, but later a small amount was found to suffice. Salt tablets were issued and eaten by the dozens. Burlap water bags, which looked rugged, actually yielded a delightfully cool drink. The burning wind tanned soldiers to a saddle leather color and, although lips chapped painfully in the early days of the maneuvers, a cure was soon found for the ailment: it was crimson lipstick, definitely not GI!

Hot! The desert was hot at dawn when a red sun blasted up out of the thin mist, and it was hot at night when a sultry wind went breathing through the pyramidal tents. Mid-day was impossible with heat: and yet, gradually, the men of the division disregarded siesta periods and began to hike the desert for adventure in their off duty hours. Before an official ban outlawed hunting, some of the men shot jackrabbits with their issue pistols or with the new carbine. There was always a strong desire to scale the jagged peaks too: perhaps an unconscious desire to demonstrate that the awe-inspiring desert had been licked. "We weren't bothered by sun and sand and jagged rock. Not us. We were the masters!"

The cockiness was premature. One day the desert showed the men of the 3rd that they had much to learn. At noon the eastern horizon showed a mounting cloud of coffee colored dust. Slowly the wind sprang up. The cloud towered higher, became omnious in its murky billows and poisonous rose tints. The wind lagged, then freshened steadily: suddenly rose to a whistling shriek! The air was immediately full of dust and sand particles. Latrine tents went flapping off through the murk like great, broad winged bats and almost everything that wasn't staked down went cartwheeling before the enormous sweep of the gale.

Slowly the sand storm abated. Presently a yellow sunset emerged to light the wrecked camps of the future "Spearhead." The entire division shook the sand out of its blankets and went to bed with a new respect for the vast powers of the desert.

The 3rd was bivouaced 13 miles west of Freda, and Freda was a name on a weathered board. There was no actual camp, just an area of sand and runty greasewood brush. The various units threw up pyramidal tents, dug latrines and erected kitchens. The 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, direct descendant of the famous old World War I "Road

Builders Of The AEF," maintained its tradition by constructing more than 40 miles of roads through the wastelands, a number of firing ranges in the lee of the Granite Mountains, and a showerbath arrangement adjacent to the aqueduct which supplied Los Angeles with water. Here, troops of the division laundered their clothing and bathed each afternoon.

Before the desert maneuvers were fairly launched, General George S. Patton was mysteriously relieved of command and ordered to Washington. Unbeknownst to the world, the North African campaign was then in its final stages of preparation. The 3rd's own beloved General Alvan C. Gillem assumed command of the Desert Training Center. Shortly afterward, all units were alerted for division and corps problems.

Desert maneuvers of 1942 probably did more to toughen the 3rd and prepare it for ultimate combat than had all previous training. Stripped of essentials, the tankers and supporting arms took to the wide open spaces in mock battle. Pitted against superior forces, the division never failed to turn in a creditable performance even though individual soldiers were often baffled by the exigencies of strategy. Tank Destroyer Corporal Paul Keller provided an example of the humor American selectees found in the most serious of situations. Lost during a night movement, Keller radioed his section leader, Sgt. Manry, for directions. Manry tried to help.

"What is your location in regard to the milky way?"

"Right under it!" Keller snapped, "and I think it's the same one I was under in Texas!"

It was no joke to be lost in the fastness of the great, arid Mojave, but the civilian-soldiers of the new Armored Force were still able to find grim humor in their most trying experiences.

Usually the division was fighting superior numbers of, "enemy forces" during the maneuvers. Several times, therefore, supply columns were cut by opposing combat teams. On these occasions water and rations were spread thin. Sardines, of course, were a staff of life. No man of the 3rd will ever forget the constant diet of "goldfish." It was sardines with tomato sauce in camp, sardines right out of the can while moving. Sardines and more sardines! Along with these despised "desert trout," tomatoes, fruit salad and canned turkey were issued often enough to become tiresome. There was no bread: rusk substituted for that, and the rusk issued on the Mojave was blood-brother to the enamel-chipping "dog-biscuits" of the western front, two years later.

While in base camp, rations were usually good, with plenty of fresh fruit from the nearby Imperial Valley of California.

On the desert, the 3rd Armored Division first





Mojave  
Desert



became part of the VII Corps, an association which was resumed and continued throughout the European campaigns, and which paid off in wrecked enemy armor from Normandy to the Elbe. Commanded in action by Major General J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins, the VII Corps was then led by Major General Robert C. Richardson.

Newspaper accounts of the California Desert maneuvers gave a great deal of space to "Gage's Gangsters," a group which was never fully identified at the time due to censorship regulations. The "Gangsters" were a company of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and their job was the reconnoitering of "enemy" lines, sudden raids and will-o-the-whisp disappearances, leaving destruction in their wake.

The leader of this reckless, hell-for-leather outfit, was Captain John Gage. He and his lieutenants, his non-coms and his troopers, stole the show in those realistic sham battles of 1942. Later, on the bloody western front, the recon men lived up to advance billing. Gage was wounded in the St. Lo-Perriers breakthrough. Lt. John Patrick Reilly was killed in action while leading a tank force into Belgium. Lieutenants Dave Evanson, Walter E. Grimme, and Marion J. Stimson, were also evacuated after suffering severe wounds in the early fighting. Less than 100 of the original 202 officers and men of "Gage's Gangsters" were left on VE day, but the men of the company had exacted a terrible toll from the Boche during 10 months of flaming battle. The training John Gage gave to his men on the hot, sandy wasteland of California, paid off magnificently.

During periods of maneuver, the army wives of the 3rd Armored Division settled in Palm Springs and Indio. Here they kept the gossip factory running at peak capacity, went "Hollywood" with slacks and sunsuits. The swimming pool at the Desert Inn was a popular playground on occasional weekends, while many visited the film capital itself.

General Walker left the division in mid-August. He assumed command of the new IV Armored Corps. Brigadier General Leroy H. Watson assumed command of the 3rd, which General Gillem had re-christened the "Always Dependable" Division.

General John J. Bohn, former chief of staff, returned to lead Combat Command "B", and General Doyle O. Hickey, then a colonel, arrived to assume command of the fighting force he was to manage so long and successfully. General Hickey's CC "A" became almost a legendary force in "Spearhead" combat.

After a concluding two-week maneuver in late September and early October, the rumor factories began to grind out a story that the 3rd was about to move again. The 6th Armored Division had arrived in the desert and the trains which brought

them were waiting.

"This is it!" said the army wives sorrowfully. "Africa, here we come," chuckled the tank drivers.

And, sure enough, the division was alerted, packed up and boarded trains for the east coast. The destination was Camp Pickett, Virginia.

After the wide, cloudless desert, Camp Pickett presented an almost ominous appearance. The barracks were crowded and damp, splotchy with camouflage war paint, and hard to keep clean. Along with other inconveniences, the area was short on firing ranges. There was an abundance of rain, however, and no shortage of old fashioned doughboy mud.

A strange feeling of hurry-hurry finality pervaded Camp Pickett. The men who went home on furlough or leave decided that "this one" had to be good, because it would be the last before overseas shipment. Army wives, who settled in Blackstone, a sleepy little southern town that not even the army could awaken, were constantly agog with rumors of troop movement. The division was alternately "hot" and "cold". Originally, plans called for embarkation early in January, but the German submarine campaign, then at the height of efficiency, resulted in a postponement of orders.

In spite of inadequate facilities, the men of the 3rd Armored Division shook Mojave sand out of their equipment and began a vigorous schedule of work and instruction. The latest of ordnance items were issued to units: command post exercises, road hikes, and range firing were stressed. Everyone caught cold, for late fall in Virginia was wet and raw. Desert tanned soldiers found themselves constantly shivering in the east coast wind which swept over Pickett.

Meanwhile, radio reports told of alarming new successes by German Admiral Doenitz's submarine wolf packs. America wasn't yet out of the woods. Gas rationing had begun to pinch and blackout regulations didn't bring the chuckles they had engendered in the beginning. There was a nasty little story going the rounds about German tanks. They were, said the wise guys, raising hell with our inferior armor in Tunisia. This observation, in the light of subsequent experience, proved only partially correct. Both sides were committing advanced weapons in the desert campaign.

Back in Virginia, "Take It Off" was the juke box favorite of the season, and railway service to Washington and points north reached a new low in cleanliness and efficiency.

The move to Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, a former Pennsylvania National Guard camp, surprised all of the armchair strategists. The division arrived at the beautifully laid out reservation in mid-January, and found — to its immense satisfac-





Field problems at Camp Pickett, Virginia. Men ate their dinners in the open.

← Full field inspections were part of the preparation at Pickett.

tion, that the barracks were clean and modern.

The Gap proved to be a far colder place than Pickett. It was situated in a rolling hill country, 28 miles from Pennsylvania's capitol city of Harrisburg. Here, at Indiantown, the firing ranges between Blue and Center Mountains were adequate. The nearby towns of Lebanon, Hershey, and Pottsville, most of them populated by prosperous farmers of Dutch descent, were — along with Harrisburg, immediately "taken over" by the 3rd Armored Division.

There was no slacking off at the new camp. Rather, an accelerated training program was put into effect. In spite of winter weather, deep snow and cold; gunnery, maintenance and physical conditioning were the touchstones of progress. Road marches and command post exercises went on as usual, while the new infiltration course which necessitated crawling through an area deep in mud and barbed wire, sown with small charges of dynamite, and covered with machine-gun fire, was required of each officer and enlisted man.

Although training at Indiantown Gap was extremely hard and comprehensive, troops of the division found their seven months sojourn in Pennsylvania the happiest of all army periods. This, more than any other station, was civilization. Transportation was better than it had been in Louisiana, California, or Virginia, and personnel were able to spend weekends in New York and Philadelphia, as well as in the hospitable Pennsylvania towns nearby.

There was always a concerted dash for seats on the gigantic "40 & 8" busses which plied the roads between the "Gap" and Harrisburg each evening at 3, and at 11 A. M. on Saturdays. In the capitol city, soldiers often lined up for five hundred yards at dawn on Sunday morning, waiting for transportation back to camp. For all of the crowded conditions, bus lines functioned efficiently.

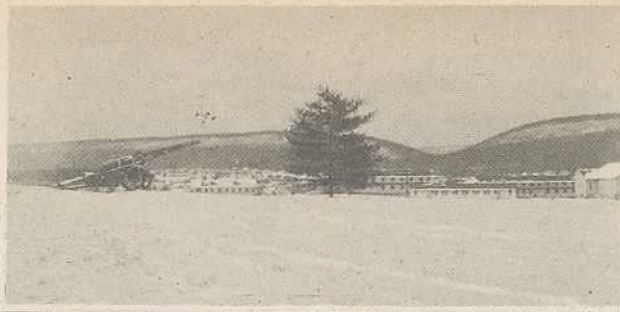
At Indiantown Gap, the artillery, under Colonel Frederic J. Brown, trained seriously for the job ahead. Tanks and tank-destroyers also learned the fine points of indirect fire. The pine-clad slopes of Blue and Center mountains echoed to a continuous crash and rumble of big guns.

Intensive training was no idle phrase at the "Gap". The War Department prescribed a 25 mile road march with full equipment to be taken by all personnel under 40 years of age. The battalions went out, complete to staff officers and cooks, to make the hike over snow banked, icy roads. Command Post Exercises went on, in spite of bitter cold, and division personnel added winter weather know-how to the knowledge which was to stand them in such good stead during the hard Ardennes struggle almost two years later.

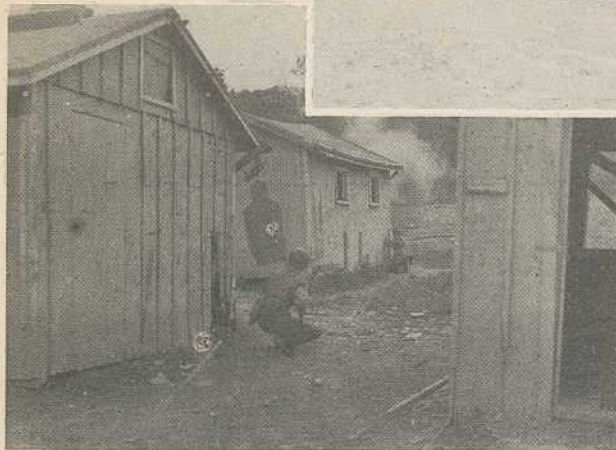
In February of 1943, Americans were beginning to realize that the war had entered a critical stage. German Field Marshal von Paulus had surrendered at Stalingrad after a bloody stand, and the cornered Afrika Korps was lashing out viciously from a narrowing sector in Tunisia. The newspapers screamed KASSERINE PASS, and suddenly, with heavy casualty reports, the stark reality of total war began to pervade the strange, provincial naivete of America. While civilians labored, or thought they did, under the new rationing of gasoline, foodstuffs, and other necessities, the army cut down too. Placards, urging conservation of food, appeared on



Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania, was



the 3rd Armored Division's favorite camp.



The Nazi village was a preview of things to come.



Man of the future "Spearhead" round the bend at Lickdale, at the end of a 25 mile march. (Full field equipment.)

mess hall doors, and supply sergeants began to dole out rations carefully. The various PX branches still sold cigarettes, chocolate and beer and, although porterhouse steaks had begun to assume the qualities of legend, a soldier could still order and receive one in the Penn Harris Hotel, or at any restaurant in Harrisburg. Peanut Joe's place did a rushing business, and "Spearhead" soldiers spent many pleasant evenings in the K-Bar and English Tavern. "Pennsylvania Polka" and "Take It Off" were juke box favorites, and the 1120 train for New York invariably left at 1320 or later!

Discipline was strictly enforced on Harrisburg streets. Woe to the GI who failed to salute an officer or was observed to be disgracing the uniform in any way: he was promptly packed aboard a bus and sent back to camp.

Along with the battle inoculation course early in the spring of 1943, which was supervised by the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion conducted a vehicle camouflage experiment which resulted in some of the most monstrously painted tanks and scout cars ever seen on American roads. At this time, too, the supervision of training was revised in that General Hickey assumed full responsibility for the progress of the 32nd Armored Regiment, the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, the 143rd Armored Signal Company, Division Headquarters and Service Company, while General Bohn supervised the 33rd Armored Regiment, the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, the 391st and the 67th Armored Field Artillery Bat-

talions. The Division Trains was commanded by Colonel James O. Taylor.

In April, engineer units engaged in a minefield demonstration for the division. The carefully prepared program showed that buried explosives might only be cleared by the most painstaking of methods. During the demonstration, one mine blew the track off an M-4 tank. It was a graphic illustration to support the engineer show.

Various courses of instruction were prescribed in rapid fire order. Lt. Alfred Krebs, of the G-2 office, conducted a class in French. Lt. Colonel Marion E. Whitten began a CWS study of poison gas warfare. All troops were given the opportunity to smell mustard in the open field, and, with masks, to pass through gas chambers in which lethal concentrations of chlorine had been released.

On April 15, 1943, the division was two years old. The following day a review was held at Muir Field. On the stand with General Watson, were Governor Martin, of Pennsylvania, and Brigadier General Howard McC. Snyder, father of Division G-3. In spite of a cold, whipping snowstorm, troops paraded smartly.

Qualification firing for record was announced on April 22. In the ensuing weeks many men of the division who had never before successfully completed a normal course gained badges for putting bullets right where they were supposed to be, in the bullseye. Platoon combat firing and tactical proficiency tests followed. These combined arms problems had been prescribed by Army Ground Forces as spring came to the Pennsylvania hills.



The reinforced tank battalion tests were conducted from May 11 to 16, armored infantry tests from May 19 to 24, and tank-destroyer tests from May 25 to June 1. Reconnaissance elements received a separate examination. During all of these exercises, the division came as close to combat firing as was possible without having the enemy fire back. Lead was thrown freely throughout, and artillery used on call. Overhead firing by both artillery and small arms was frequent and effective. No one was hurt, but enlisted men found glee in the several times repeated sight of high brass leaping desperately for foxholes when rounds landed short.

Following the combined arms problems, division artillery conducted a course in fire control and indirect firing which was intended to increase the effectiveness of combined strength in fire power. Another phase of training, street fighting, was inaugurated with the construction of a "Nazi village" by the reconnaissance battalion. The course consisted of an approach to the village, each man taking advantage of cover and firing at suddenly exposed targets. Small charges of TNT were set off in the proximity of attacking troops, and men were trained to advance by individual dashes while covered by the guns of those behind.

Physical fitness tests were prescribed for all personnel in the spring of 1943. Officers and men grunted and groaned through 33 push-ups, a 300 yard dash, and a five mile hike with full field equipment, to be completed in 60 minutes. Obstacle courses, complete with scaling walls, rope climbs, and tunnels, were a major point of interest in the program.

During the summer months, the division continued to follow a hard training schedule. The engineers announced a course on booby traps and land mines which proved so successful that half of the division kept the other half on its toes with booby-trapped mess kits, gas masks, and everything else which lent itself to the application of firing

devices and thunderflash practice explosives. During one demonstration of technique, the engineers did so well that their commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Robert Erlenkotter, walked into a hidden explosive and received a minor leg wound. To the further delight of GI's mingled with some apprehension, General Hickey also touched off one of the booby traps and left the area with his face scratched by flying gravel.

Undersecretary of War Patterson, wearing a floppy panama hat, inspected the division on July 8. The Undersecretary, who was called "Judge", fired a number of armored force weapons, observed a Red Cross swimming and lifesaving demonstration at the post lake, and was feted at the general's dwelling house before he left.

Another aspect of modern warfare was emphasized in the attack on a fortified position, conducted on July 14. The attack opened with an aerial bombardment, followed by an artillery concentration. Infantry and engineers then advanced, surmounted barbed wire entanglements and tank traps to assault the pillboxes with flame-throwers, dynamite and grenades, all under the heavy fire of small arms. Tanks followed the doughs, blasting at their targets with withering accuracy. It was an awe-inspiring demonstration of the firepower potential of an integrated armored force combat team, and one which was to be repeated nearly act for act on the Siegfried Line of Germany, a year later. One week previous to this demonstration, the division had watched tank destroyers steal the show at another combined arms demonstration. The first team seemed to be shaping up well.

On August 8, Major General Gatehouse, of the Royal Armored Corps, arrived at Indiantown Gap. The general, who had served in the western desert under Wavell, Auchinleck and Montgomery, said that American equipment gave a commander a feeling of confidence. He didn't think much of the German "Desert Fox."



Red Cross combat swimming and lifesaving instruction went on at the post pool.



Last weeks in America. The command decides those little details of packing.



"Rommel," said the general, "time and again did the wrong thing at the right time for us."

General Gillem, returning from action in Sicily, visited his old command on the following day. In his honor a review was held at Muir Field. The general was well pleased with the noticeable progress made by his "Always Dependable" division.

On August 10, Lt. General Leslie McNair, commanding general of the Army Ground Forces, spoke to officers and non-coms after a tour of ranges and training areas. "This division," he said, "is ready to fight as soon as it gets off the boat."

At this time the 3rd was alerted for overseas service.

The division's advance party, led by Brigadier General John J. Bohn, left Indiantown Gap on August 9, and proceeded to Fort Hamilton, New York, enroute overseas. Their destination was a closely guarded secret.

Activity pending movement to the staging area at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, was feverish. Show-down inspections were a daily occurrence, hardening exercises and physical conditioning intensified. Hikes were made under full field equipment and various methods of packing and carrying the blanket roll were investigated, mulled over, and finally decided. There was a great deal of last minute policing of the "Gap," and, although the move was supposed to be top-secret, Harrisburg hummed with rumors. Wives and sweethearts mysteriously turned up to spend the last few days in Pennsylvania with their soldiers. In camp, guards redoubled their vigilance: were warned to be on the lookout for saboteurs, fire, and victory girls!

Sadly, but with shrugs of resignation, the beautifully laid out green and white barracks of Indiantown Gap were left behind. Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Division left the keystone state on August 26 and 27, their destination, Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and the overseas port of embarkation at New York.

Kilmer was an efficiently organized camp, headed by ASF officers and men who were able and willing to provide needed assistance to outgoing units. Messing was at huge central halls within each area, and the post cooks were experts at their trade.

Processing included the usual injections, talks on censorship and security, battle indoctrination films, and final physical examinations of the type: "He's warm — He's in!"

Quartermaster and ordnance inspections were routine affairs: the division had checked its weapons and equipment so often that the process was automatic.

The 3rd Armored Division remained at Kilmer for eight days, during which time the men were given 12 hour passes for a last whack at the night

spots of New York. At 8 P. M. on September 1, the "blackout" went into effect. This was the alert which preceded movement to the port, usually coming within 48 hours of the actual move. During the interim, no one was allowed off the post proper, visitors were forbidden, and no wire or telephone calls might be made. Mail went out as usual, but for the first time each address bore the censor's stamp and was made out "In Care Of Postmaster."

Early on September 4, the units moved out of Kilmer and boarded trains for New York harbor. On the pier, a few hours later, the long lines of soldiers waited patiently. Each man carried the bulk of his equipment in a barracks bag and each had his helmet numbered with white chalk.

The line moved slowly, each GI waiting until his last name was called, answered with his first, and then struggled up the gangplank into the ship.

By September 5, 1943, the division was on the high seas. Over the stern the statue of liberty grew indistinct in blue mist. GI's of the future first American "Spearhead" were, for once, speechless. They tried to make conversation, failed: just stood there by the railing and watched Liberty until she was a shadow — until she was a dream in the distance.

The Atlantic crossing was the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. Behind the great, zigzagging convoy, peaceful, complacent America faded into blue distance. Ahead was the wide, contested no-man's-land of the sea. Hitler's wolf packs were there, and his Luftwaffe raiders. Neither had been beaten into submission. The war was far from won. Fortresses and Liberators, flying out of Britain, hit their targets deep in Germany, but at a terrible cost. The Red Army ground ahead slowly after the pyrrhic victory at Stalingrad. Allied forces in Italy hammered steadily forward, but reported that progress was hindered by "extensive demolitions." Beyond the far horizon Europe was flaming. To 3rd Armored Division troops, aboard three ships, the John Erickson, the Capetown Castle, and the Shawnee, it was still "destination unknown." Later, they were to be issued booklets on behavior in Great Britain. Part of the riddle was then solved.

The convoy consisted of some two dozen ships. There were former luxury liners, and specimens from Henry Kaiser's assembly line. There were nimble little destroyers whipping back and forth, a battleship plowing steadily through the swells and, at intervals, the sight of an escorting Liberator overhead. The transports were painted grey and looked old and toil worn as they heeled periodically to change direction.

Troops aboard were fed twice daily, the long chow lines winding for hundreds of yards through ships' passageways. At first the GI's suffered from





The 3rd is all at sea — but with a purpose.



motion sickness, but gradually they found sea legs and even began to enjoy the trip. On the second day out the convoy ran into rough weather, but thereafter the ocean was gentle. Boat drills were a daily occurrence, and poker became the premier occupation of all hands aboard.

The crossing was uneventful. That is to say, no submarine or surface raider put in an appearance. Twice, during the trip, subs were "contacted" at night, and depth charges dropped. Soldiers, hearing the far-off detonations, drew their life belts close and shivered a little as they lay in triple decked bunks down in "torpedo junction", the hold.

On September 8, the ships radio announced that Italy had surrendered unconditionally to allied forces. There was a short lived celebration until GI's recalled that Nazi armies still held most of the continent and that this first victory was only another stepping stone on the long, hard road toward peace.

Although the eleven day trip was uneventful insofar as enemy action was concerned, off duty Joes found a great deal to occupy their attention. The sea itself, constantly changing in color, was an attraction. Men counted the ships of the convoy and suddenly discovered that there was one more—or

less — than had been visible the day before! There were countless discussions on the science of navigation, the seabirds that followed in mid-ocean, and open amazement to find that a number of sparrows were stowaways. At night, soldiers on guard looked into the pregnant darkness of the Atlantic and wondered at the blue-green phosphorescence which boiled out from under the bow and marked the ships' passage for hundreds of yards astern.

There was the constant reminder of peril. At dusk there would be the usual admonition over a hoarse-voiced amplifier: "Blackout is now in effect. There will be no smoking on deck. All garbage will be thrown overboard. These orders will be strictly enforced." Long afterward, in the great river crossings of the 1944 summer offensive through France, some gagster was always on hand to croak sorrowfully: "Blackout is now in effect. There will be no smoking," etc., while bullets and shells whined nearby.

All was not sweetness and light on the boats. General opinion was that the officers messed better than enlisted men. Latrines were limited and shower baths yielded salt water. Shaving in brine was agony, but everyone managed to present a neat appearance.





# SOJOURN IN OLD ENGLAND

SEPTEMBER 15, 1943 — JUNE 23, 1944

On the afternoon of September 14, the Irish coast was sighted off the starboard bow. During the afternoon the convoy hove to; the destroyers and battlewagon went their way, and the merchant vessels began to pass through the submarine nets. The John Errickson and the Capetown Castle docked at Liverpool on September 15th, and the Shawnee put in at Bristol. Troops aboard ship looked curiously down and waved at British "Tommies" on the pier; swapped oranges and cigarettes for the strange new English coins. Barrage balloons hung everywhere, and an occasional flight of Spitfires whipped across the grey, scuddy sky. England at first glance, looked threadbare. The scars of the Luftwaffe were visible on every side, and even the island's civilians looked grey and tired.

Upon disembarking, units were loaded in Britain's small "Toonerville Trolley" trams and transported across country. At every stop, small English children collected a wealth of gum and candy, oranges and C-rations. Hot tea was served by NAAFI units, for the first time to 3rd Armored Division personnel.

Most of the division elements reached their new camps in the deep night, struggled out of trucks and trudged in to find straw pallets in Nissen huts or barracks. The 102nd Cavalry Regiment had supplied quartering details which guided personnel through the blackout, prepared breakfast, and generally did their utmost to welcome the new "Invaders" of Britain. Breakfast, inevitably, included powdered eggs, a diet which was to become symbolic of the ETO.

Troops of the division were billeted for the most part in Wiltshire. The various units found themselves located in little, age-old English villages with quaint names, and odd, meandering streets. Division Headquarters went to Bruton, in Somerset. Combat Command "B", the 33rd Armored Regiment, 391st and 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalions, were

at Warminster: the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment settled in Sutton Veny; the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion at Longbridge Deverill; Combat Command "A", 45th Armored Medical Battalion, and Trains Headquarters, at Stockton House, near Codford; the 32nd Armored Regiment at Codford; Maintenance Battalion and Supply Battalion at Codford St. Mary; the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion at Fonthill Bishop; the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion at Mere, all in Wiltshire. Division Rear was at Wincanton, the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion at Frome, and the 143rd Armored Signal Company at Cucklington, in Somerset. Undoubtedly, the best-cared for units were those at Warminster, which had been a permanent camp built for the Royal Armored Corps, and provided with adequate workshops and other facilities.

There followed the process of "settling down." ETO and V Corps directives were received, sorted and digested. Within three weeks equipment was being issued, including tanks. The "Yanks" found that petrol was scarce and that their "blooming big lorries" often damaged the mouldering but precious English Architecture on either side of narrow lanes.

England offered many points of interest to the new arrivals, not the least of which was her WAAF's and ATS's. There was a dreamlike beauty in the mossy old buildings and thatched cottages, the abbeys and ancient castles, each and every one of which stood haughty in its mantle of tradition. The village pubs suddenly became loud with the extrovert voices of Americans, and the Sabbath quiet of these old places echoed with laughter and argument. There were land army girls, and WAAF's, ATS, and NAAFI — they served the worst coffee in the world. But they were all cordial and hospitable to the new arrivals. Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Division learned the Canadian Crawl, the Polly Glide, and the Okie Dokie. They learned to sing "Roll Me Over," and it was a lusty wartime ballad.



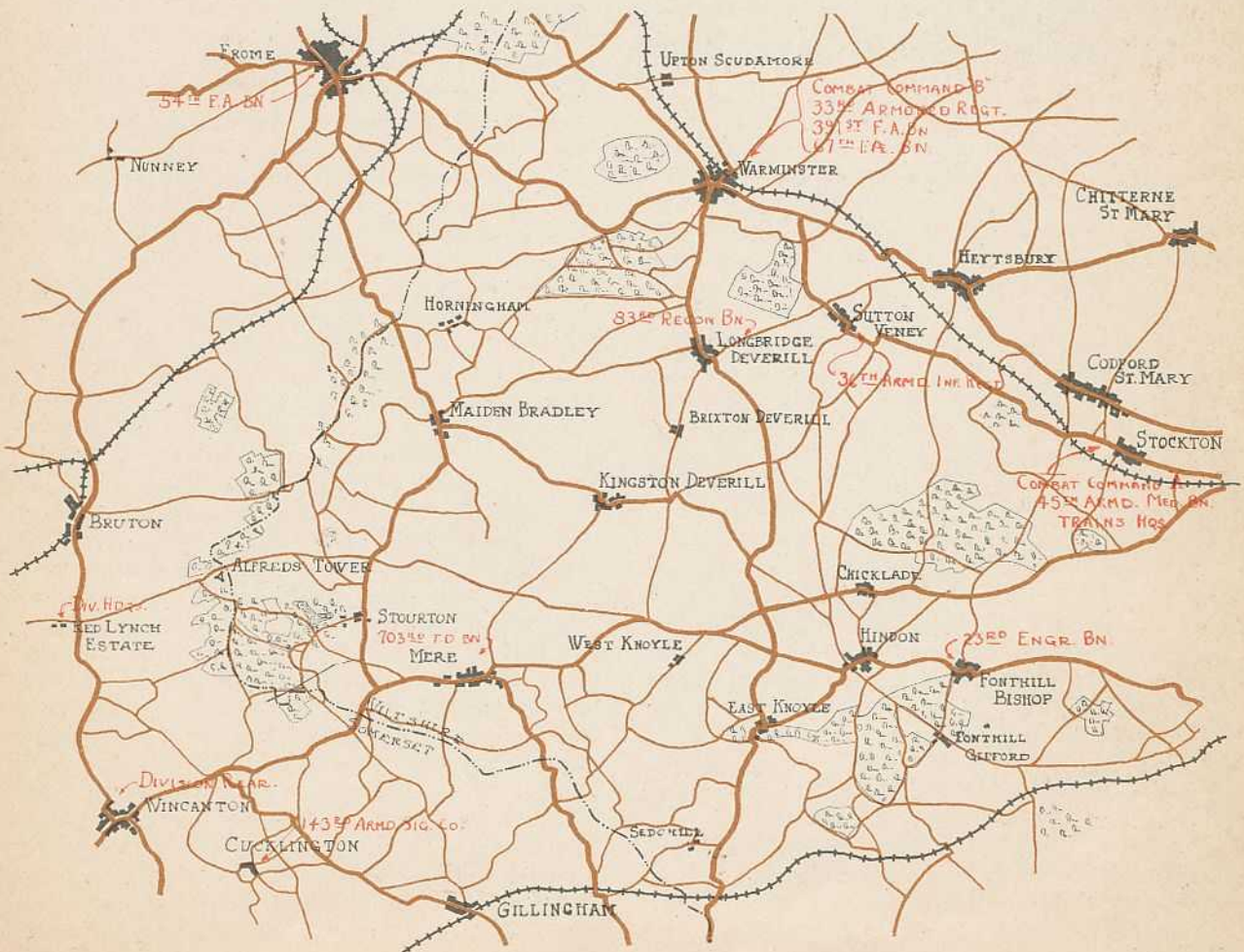
best suited to barrack rooms and marching columns, but not at all nice.

Across the downs of Britain, in late 1943, all the great armies of the western allies were gathering for the much discussed assault on Europe. Division officers went along with the 5th Canadian Armored Division to maneuvers in the area east of Andover and north to and beyond Hungerford. Throughout their nine month stay in Great Britain, hundreds of "Spearhead" soldiers visited the various British and colonial units to swap ideas and techniques. There, on the "aircraft" carrier anchored off the shores of fortress Europe," the allies learned to respect each other. They had begun to cement the ties of that first team which swept on to Normandy beaches in June of 1944.

Initially, in England, the 3rd had been attached to the V Corps. In early November, when Lt. General Omar Bradley's First Army was activated, the division was assigned to Major General Hugh Woodruff's VII Corps, later to be commanded by

Major General "Lightning Joe" Collins on the western front.

Training in England was hard and complete. Road marches, obstacle courses, maintenance, and all of the familiar army drill routines were dusted off and put into practice. There were schools which catered to various subjects such as aircraft recognition, camouflage, waterproofing, and chemical warfare. New weapons were issued and tested on the ranges. Training films, including the old boy behind the eight ball, were shown time and again. Command post exercises on the downs were not uncomfortable in the early fall, but as raw, winter weather approached they became a trial. The division slowly assimilated greater knowledge of terrain and its advantages; maneuver, and the art of shrugging off limitations of blackout, weather, and discomfort. Forty-eight hour passes were issued to the men after they had been in Britain for six weeks, and the tricolor patch began to turn up in such places as London, Bournemouth, and Bristol. Troops sweated







Jerry hit the Bank of England in Wincanton, Somerset. 3rd Armored Division soldiers aided rescue work.

← They made friends quickly in England. Here's Cpl. Ralph Steinhart with WAAF Joan Harbour.

out air raids in the English metropolis: thrilled as the searchlights caught Jerry aircraft, and then gasped at the torrent of ack-ack through which an enemy plane could fly unscathed. They saw the sights of England. They walked through Picadilly in the dim blackout. They travelled the byways of Leicester Square and saw the terrible bomb damage in London. Troops of the division watched a Ju-88 jettison its eggs and then burst into flames as a British Mosquito night fighter darted in for the kill. And they saw the dead enemy for the first time. Slowly, as a by product of all these things, men of the future "Spearhead" became aware that the war was close, that the byword in Europe was: "kill or be killed." They trained with a solemn thoroughness.

During this time the division was doing a great deal of range firing. Units practiced on Bowls Barrow, near Warminster: at the Kimmeridge anti-tank range, where sea mist alternately veiled and unveiled the targets, and at the anti-aircraft areas: St. Agnes, and Penhale, on the west coast. Minehead, on the Bristol Channel, was also visited by gun crews of the 3rd.

Field problems became the order of the day in November. The 36th Armored Infantry, "Parks' Own," went out on a six day workout. Division Headquarters made its first overnight bivouac on the coldest of early fall days. All of the other units participated, and the downs of Salisbury Plain were awakened as never before in history with the rumble

of motors. Command Post Exercises were frequent, and no amount of cold or wetness served to postpone them. Maneuvering over the chill downs, in frost or raw, driving rain, 3rd Armored Division soldiers were learning to disregard the elements in order to accomplish their primary missions.

Early in December, the 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion arrived at East Knoyle, Wiltshire, and was attached to the division. The ack-ack soldiers arrived just in time to participate in another "shooting month," with firing on the Imber battle range, at West Down, and Bowls Barrow. Again tank destroyers travelled to Minehead, and AA units visited St. Agnes and Penhale. At Minehead, the mist was nearly as bad as that of Kimmeridge. Gunners fired each time the fog was dissipated, and were often forced to wait while ships passed by on the Bristol Channel.

Training highlight of December, was a combined arms problem on the Imber range west of Chitterne, which was planned and supervised by General Hickey and the Combat Command "A" staff. In this operation a tank battalion, plus an infantry company, an artillery battery, and an engineer platoon, demonstrated "the employment of a covering force in lieu of an advance guard when contact is imminent, the occupation of attack positions, and the detailed fire plan necessary for a coordinated attack, and the employment of battalion supporting weapons in the initial stages of the attack and as security against counter attacks during reorganization." Under the guiding hand of General Hickey, the problem was extremely successful.

Christmas in Britain was properly celebrated by troops of the 3rd Armored Division. They celebrated with English beer and an occasional bottle of scotch, with parties for British children, and with roast turkey and cranberry sauce in the old tradition. Some of the men visited friends in the hospi-







Vaf



Ike found 3rd Armored Division tankers on the ball. So did Air Chief Marshal Tedder, General Montgomery, and General Watson.

Maneuvers on Britain's chill Salisbury Plain. No one kept warm.

Waterproofing tests went on in preparation for the invasion. Cold? You'll never know unless you've tried it.







English Remembrance Day ceremony at Bruton, on November 7. Colonel John A. Smith spoke to the old guard of the British empire, and laid a wreath on the church cenotaph.

table little suburban towns, or spent the evening with WAAF's or Land Army Girls, dancing.

For most of the men there was a strange pathos in this wartime Noel in a foreign land. They heard the children of Britain singing Christmas carols beneath the blacked-out windows of thatched cottages in Somerset and Wiltshire, their voices thin and clear, innocent and joyous with the age old melodies that challenge death and fear. Many of these youngsters had never known a peacetime Christmas, and yet they lifted wan faces to the stars and sang! The tankers of America pooled their rations, then: in every hamlet where the soldiers of the new world were quartered, the gum, the chocolate and the Christmas candy of America found its way to these children of war who still felt the exaltation of good will.

General Watson briefed a grim-faced staff before the movement to France.



First news of the invasion came by radio on the morning of June 6, 1944. The 3rd was still waiting for orders in England.

It was the same spirit in the old, dark varnished taverns of Britain. Scotch whiskey was almost non-existent and yet, for this day, a small amount miraculously made its appearance. The busy, blowsy barmaids of England bobbed in and out with great mugs of ale. Yank and Tommy Atkins sang the ageless Christmas carols and roared together into the ribald wartime ditties: the "Roll Me Over," and, "There'll be no promotions, this side of the oceans!"

The yellow glow of subdued lighting fell on shoulder patches of the 8th Army Desert Rats, Montgomery's finest and, across the foaming pints of ale, one might also list the elite of America's fighting men: the lifted wings of the air forces, already harrying Germany in preparation for the great, unborn invasion: the tricolor of the 3rd Armored

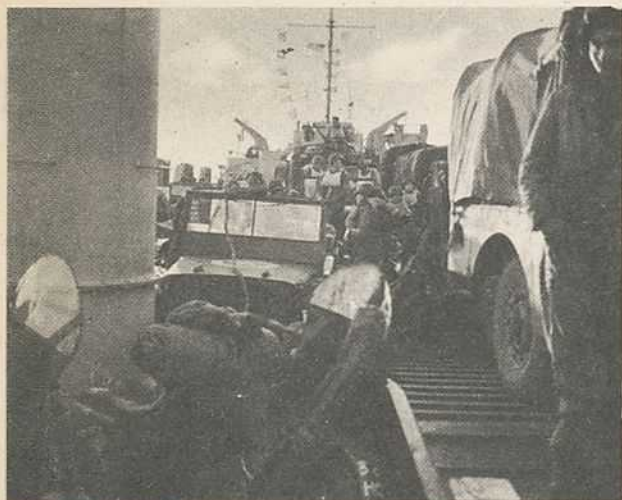
The combat loads went into all vehicles. Long belts of .30 caliber MG ammo meant trouble for Jerry.





Division, and the various shoulder insignia of proud infantry units. Shoulder to shoulder, men of the United Nations drank, and, drinking, sang the lovely old cosmopolitan carols that ally themselves with no one nation. Outside, in the blue-black night, the searchlights of Great Britain fingered a starry sky in search of Jerry raiders. There was no peace in England, but there was a great brotherhood of free men poised for the endeavor which should guarantee that peace.

The new year of 1944 saw the division nearer, both physically and in preparedness, to combat operations. Heavy air attacks on the continent, plus a slow but steady advance in Italy, boded well for future victory. It appeared, as General Eisenhower predicted, that the war might end in 1944.



Aboard the LST's there was a lot of silent reflection.

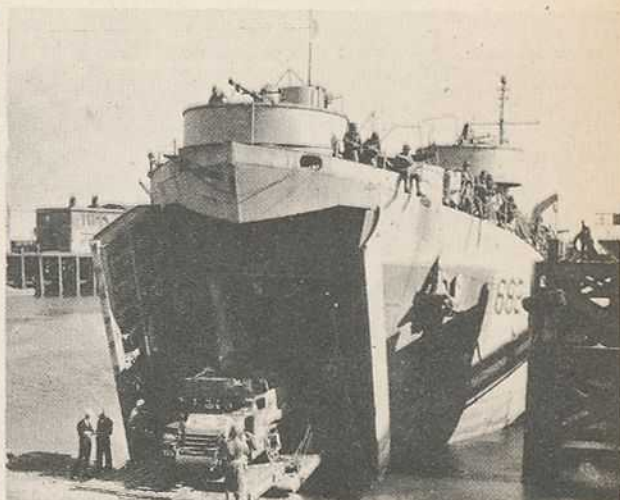
If anything, training tightened in those last few months before the assault on Europe. Maneuvers on Salisbury Plain were a weekly occurrence. The division sent teams to Weymouth on temporary duty to learn the intricacies of waterproofing vehicles for the invasion. Once again all of the various ranges heard the crash of 3rd Armored Division weapons, and there were schools in combat swimming, anti-aircraft spotting, chemical warfare, and a host of others.

General Montgomery visited the area on January 17, and mentioned that he would be leading allied forces in the first phase of the invasion. Later, Generals Eisenhower, Bradley, Air Chief Marshal Tedder, and others visited the division. The Duke of Gloucester, brother of King George VI, inspected armored force weapons on misty Salisbury Plain.

With the advent of spring, the world waited breathlessly for word of the great attack. May was all warm sunshine and dry weather. Daily, great

flights of Fortresses and Liberators smashed at the continent. The nights were a constant drum of sound as the Royal Air Force punished the enemy. German propagandists screamed alternately that there would soon be an invasion — that there would be no invasion! "Midge," one of the Axis female propagandists, entertained American troops with hit tunes while she dulcetly slipped in the barb with allusions to the terrible cost of an amphibious landing.

There was no doubt about the big show in the minds of division personnel. Once again the 3rd was on the move. In late May and early June, most units had pitched pup-tents on the downs and were waiting for word to proceed immediately to ports of embarkation. All vehicles were waterproofed, combat loaded and ready. Maps of the continent



Half-tracks of the command back into an LST for the channel crossing.

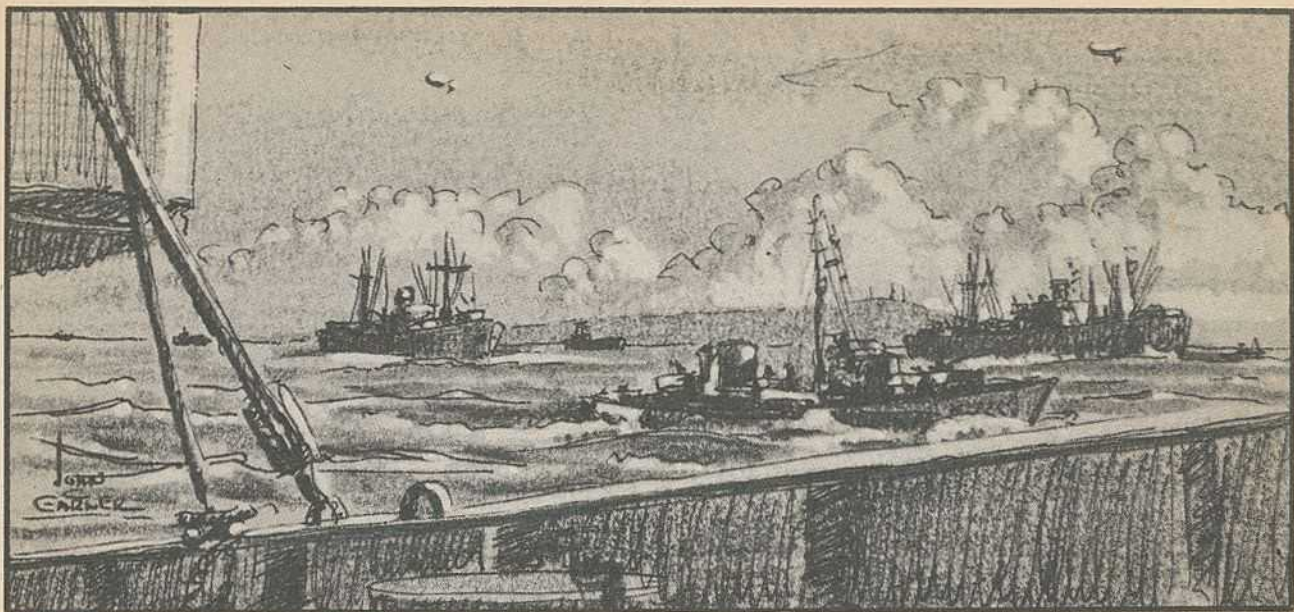
had been issued to officers and non-coms. The talk was all of D-Day and H-Hour.

Still, nothing happened. All day and all night, the great fleets of warplanes passed over. Early June was warm and sunny — "Hitler Weather," the Nazi panzer troops of 1941 had called it. Now there was expectancy in the air. Men of the 3rd chafed at the delay: they had expected to go into combat on the morning of invasion.

The first news came by radio on the morning of June 6, but it was only a belated confirmation to GIs who had lain awake all night listening to the wave after wave of aircraft passing overhead, and the muted, distant rumblings of bombardment. The big show had started, and the 3rd Armored Division still cooled its tracks on the downlands of Somerset and Wiltshire.

The delay was of short duration. Shortly afterward the units left their bivouacs and travelled to ports of embarkation at Southampton and Wey-





There wasn't much small talk aboard the ships, but there was a lot of deep thinking. Combat meant many things to many men. Some imagined it as adventure, others as plain hard work. They were all well trained — and terribly green.

mouth. Each man received D and K rations, plus PX supplies, motion sickness capsules, and vomit bags. The well waterproofed vehicles rolled aboard LST's and the channel lay ahead. It was the end of another phase. There, behind, were the green fields of England, and there, ahead, were the tall poplars of Normandy. Each man looked at his neighbor and thought—I wonder how many of us will come back.

Although separate units of the 3rd Armored Division had, for the most part, arrived at ports of embarkation on June 18 and 19, heavy channel storms delayed the crossing. It was not until the 23rd that the first elements touched French sand on Omaha White Beach, below Isigny. The 32nd and 33rd Armored Regiments, the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, and the 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion, went ashore on this date.



Omaha White Beach, below Isigny, was a panorama of power when the 3rd went ashore. Landing craft scuttled back and forth between cargo ships and shore. Barrage balloons spotted the sky, but the fighting had moved inland.



On the 24th, Division Headquarters, forward and rear echelon, Division Artillery, with the 54th, 67th, and 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalions; Combat Commands "A" and "B", and Division Trains, landed.

The main body of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment reached France on June 25, but Regimental Headquarters had been there since the 18th, thus becoming the first sizeable 3rd Armored Division unit in Normandy.

Still delayed by stormy weather, the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion arrived on June 28; the main body of the 45th Armored Medical Battalion, on July 2; Supply Battalion on July 3; the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and the Maintenance Battalion, on July 4.

On Omaha Beach, the backwash of battle, a vast graveyard of broken equipment, smashed tanks and twisted ships, lay rusting in the brine. The invasion armadas were there off shore, an unbelievable pan-

orama of power. Barrage balloons swayed in the moist air, and Thunderbolt fighter-bombers zoomed from a newly constructed air strip close to the beach. Thousands of engineers worked on the floating piers, and a steady procession of nondescript German troops, captured in the early fighting, straggled down to board outgoing transports. Past them, in the other direction, battalion after battalion of American soldiers, replacements for the infantry divisions up forward, trudged wearily ashore and went up the muddy road which led inland.

Most of the 3rd Armored Division's vehicles were able to roll off their LST's to dry land. A few, coming in on the high tide, touched down in yard-deep water, but there was no record of any swamping or like mishap.

Assigned to areas a short distance from the beach, troops spent their first days in France de-waterproofing and preparing for combat operations. The orders were already drawn up and ready.



Within hearing of enemy artillery for the first time, division troops removed waterproofing on June 23-24.



# ★ **NORMANDY!**

## First blood - in the Bocage Country of France

The initial action of division forces was in that flat, jungle-like terrain before St. Lo. Here, the lush foliage of early summer made visibility almost negligible, and the high, earthbound hedgerow partitions between each small Normandy field made Jerry defences simple and allied attack a nightmare. Artillery observation was denied the enemy, but he had carefully zeroed all crossroads and highways in the zone of American activity. The Kraut had plenty of field guns and he used them ceaselessly.

In the rough bocage country before St. Lo, the 29th Infantry Division, grimy and tired after long fighting, was alternately pushing the attack and holding against strong German counter blows. A salient had developed around the little village of Villiers Fossard, and here, at 0900, on June 29, 1944, Combat Command "A" was committed.

The fight for Villiers Fossard was not important as such, but it was a baptism of fire for 3rd Armored

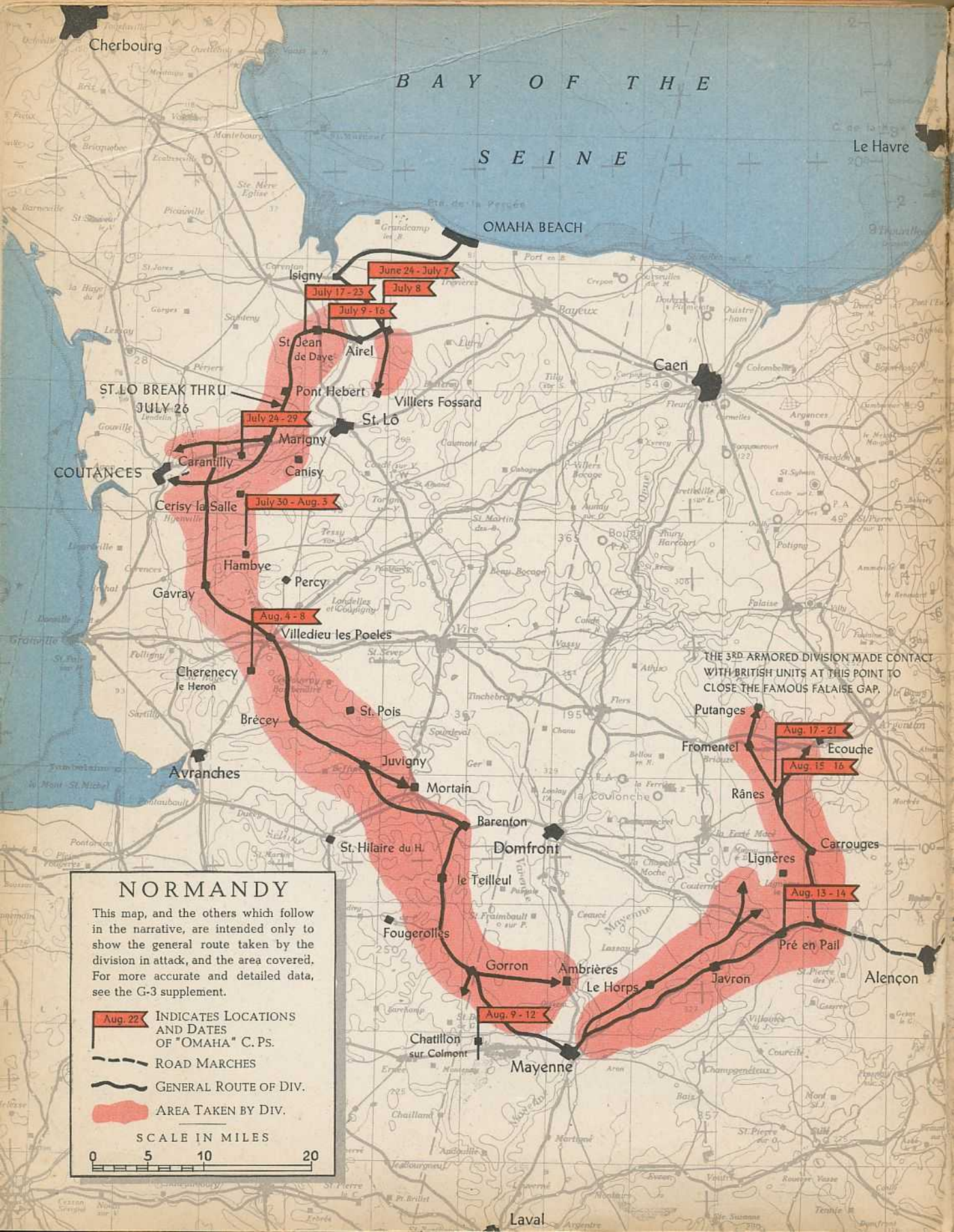
Division personnel, and therefore noteworthy. It gave these well trained men the sudden shocking plunge into action which must come to all soldiers soon or late: the introduction to combat which, no matter how terrifying, is a necessary climax to the long months of drill and instruction.

Men of the 3rd learned quickly that there is no glory in combat, that death strikes friend and foe alike, and that victory often comes at an exorbitant price. For the first time, men of the division heard that spine-chilling shriek of "incoming mail," the bell-like crash of a close hit, and the sudden, horrifying screams of stricken men before the dust and debris has settled. They saw death in its most violent form, and they smelled the sick-sweet and terrifying scent of battle: of cordite, and decomposition — the fresh, green smell of crushed shrubbery, and the pungent odor of flame.

The line soldiers of the 36th Armored Infantry,







BAY OF THE SEINE

Le Havre

OMAHA BEACH

Caen

ST. LO BREAK THRU  
JULY 26

COUTANCES

Cerisy la Salle

Gavray

Cherency le Heron

Avranches

St. Hilaire du H.

Fougerolles

Gorron

Chatillon sur Colmont

SCALE IN MILES

0 5 10 20

Isigny

St. Jean de Daye

Marigny

Canisy

Hambye

Villedieu les Poles

Brécey

Juvigny

Mortain

Barenton

le Teilleul

Mayenne

Laval

June 24 - July 7

July 17 - 23

July 8

July 9 - 16

July 24 - 29

July 30 - Aug 3

Aug. 4 - 8

Aug. 9 - 12

Aug. 13 - 14

Aug. 15 - 16

Aug. 17 - 21

THE 3RD ARMORED DIVISION MADE CONTACT WITH BRITISH UNITS AT THIS POINT TO CLOSE THE FAMOUS FALAISE GAP.

Putanges

Fromental

Rânes

Carrouges

Lignères

Pré en Pail

Javron

Le Horps

Ambrières

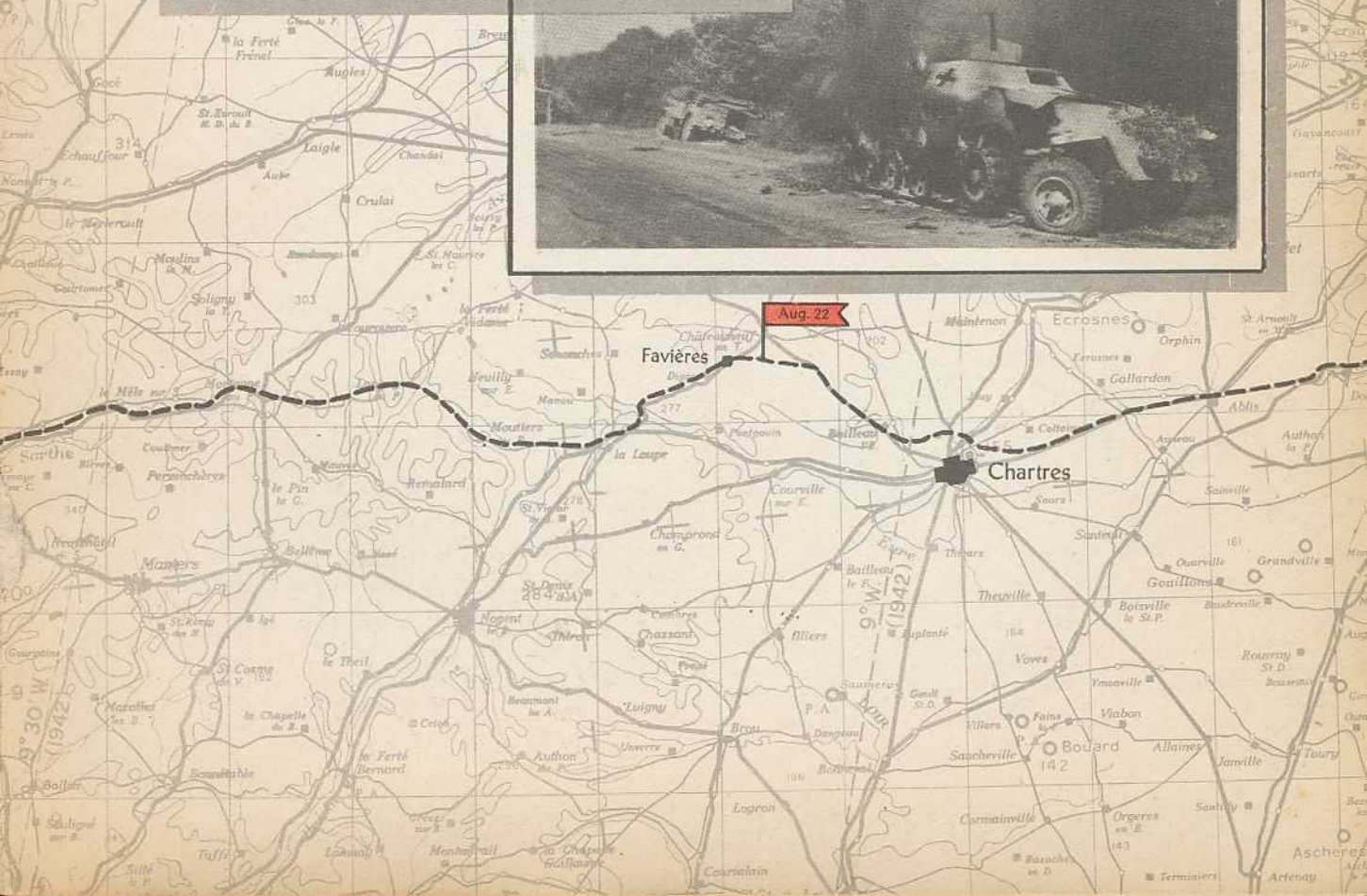
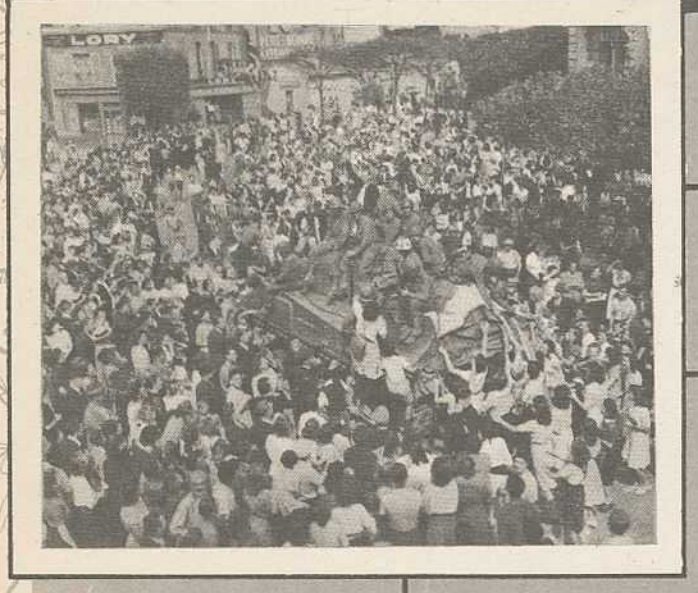
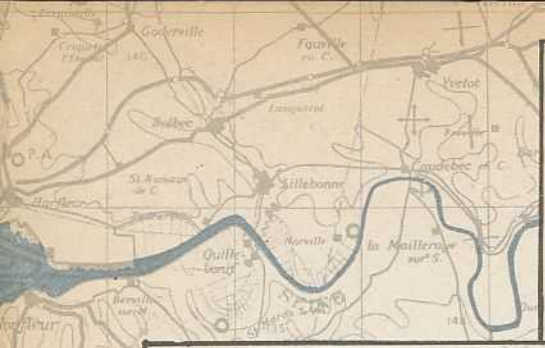
Alençon

NORMANDY

This map, and the others which follow in the narrative, are intended only to show the general route taken by the division in attack, and the area covered. For more accurate and detailed data, see the G-3 supplement.

- INDICATES LOCATIONS AND DATES OF "OMAHA" C. P.S.
- ROAD MARCHES
- GENERAL ROUTE OF DIV.
- AREA TAKEN BY DIV.









They went into battle as green kids, and came out - veterans. Some stayed there in Normandy.

of the 32nd Armored Regiment, the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, and of those other units attached to General Hickey's command, still ducked at the sound of their own shells passing overhead, but they learned fast. Lt. Colonel Nathaniel O. Whitlaw, in command of the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Armored Regiment, wrote of the action: "We seemed to be stunned by the ferocity of the German small arms and mortar fire, but we collected our wits and advanced in the face of this fire, just as we thought

And how, it was "Plenty Tough". Combat commanders Colonel Dorrance S. Roysden, and Lt. Colonel Sam Hogan, have that "front line look". They'd been through hell at Haut Vents, Pont Hébert, and Belle Lande.



that we would do, and showed little self-concern during the remainder of the battle. We pushed on to our objective like veterans. I am sure that these men will give great accounts of themselves in future battles."

The combat command, pushing out in two columns of task forces, under Colonel Truman E. Boudinot, and Colonel Graeme G. Parks, with a third force in reserve, commanded by Lt. Colonel Walter L. Abney, did take its objective, but losses were relatively high for such an action. Sgt. Lafayette Pool, later to become a "Spearhead" ace, lost his Sherman to a dug-in German bazookaman. He was one of many. Other tankers were green enough to attempt stopping for coffee while under enemy observation. Needless to say, they sustained casualties.

"Blitz Doughs" of the 36th had trouble too: they discovered that frontal attack on hedgerow positions was suicide, and they learned the hard way. There weren't enough of the newly constructed tank-dozers, and every hedge-opening seemed to be zeroed by machine gun and anti-tank fire. The doughs evolved single squad tactics which saved men and produced results in dead and captured enemy.

For all of their natural mistakes, the objective was taken and depleted units came out of action to count losses, regroup, and prepare for further combat. By this time no one doubted that the enemy could fight, and fight hard. The Kraut was a veteran and he was a good soldier. Yanks admitted this much, but they never questioned the outcome of the affair. In late June, 1944, the Normandy battle front was a precarious line from Cherbourg to Caen. On every salient the enemy threatened to break through and overwhelm allied positions. Yet, division personnel, with all respect to the slugging, deceptive ability of their enemy, expected Jerry's ultimate defeat. The men made wise cracks about

The Thunderbolts flipped this German Mark-IV on its back in a Normandy field.





spending their Christmas holidays two hedgerows the other side of St. Lo, but that was just for the sake of a laugh when all the world was wet, muddy, and filled with the siren wail of 88's. Normandy was not conducive to complacency in the early stages of the campaign. Intermittent showers, mud, and German artillery concentrations were accepted as normal.

During those few days of grace after first blood at Villiers Fossard, the division refitted, added two-bladed dozer arrangements to a percentage of its Sherman tanks, and waited for orders. They came soon enough: both combat commands were attached to XIX Corps, with the objective an attack south.

On the night of July 7, Combat Command "B", led by Brigadier General John J. Bohn, crossed the Vire River at Airel, under heavy shell fire. Division MP's remained at their posts to direct traffic over the Vire bridge in a rain of explosives. The action which began here, was a baptism of fire for CC "B". Like Combat Command "A", there were casualties then, and later, but the units under General Bohn pushed on to their objectives and even managed to batter severely one of Germany's elite panzer divisions in the process.

At Pont Hebert, the fighting was intense. The 3rd Battalion of the 33rd Armored Regiment lost all of its command tanks, including that of Lt. Colonel Sam Hogan. But there were victories too: during their first fifteen minutes of combat, a tank crew commanded by Sgt. Dean Balderson knocked out three German Mark-IV's. Balderson pulled out of a small orchard at dawn, and his gunner, Cpl. "Swede" Anderson, immediately spotted the enemy. Four Kraut tanks were in position on the road ahead, their guns pointed in the opposite direction and evidently waiting for another company of the 33rd to advance.

Anderson's first round, an HE, caught the near-

The French kids were always welcome. "And do you have a big sister, my friend?"



est Mark-IV flush on the turret, and things began to happen. The enemy tank blew up in a sudden gust of flame and black smoke! Immediately afterward the remaining Jerry vehicles were alert and moving. Excited, Anderson called for an armor piercing shell, but his loader, Pfc. Bill Wilson, threw in a second HE. This shell duplicated the first, and a second Mark-IV blew up. Wilson found an AP round for the third shot, and his gunner sent this projectile crashing through for number three. Three enemy battlewagons in less than fifteen minutes of combat! Sgt. Balderson and his crew decided that war was a soft snap. Another week of fighting convinced them that it was just the opposite.

In fact, Easy Company, attacked by Jerry infantry the night before, had sprayed the hedges, each other, and the sky in wild confusion. No one was hurt in the melee, but maintenance men, Sgt. Lewis W. Thomas, and Pvt. "Shotgun" Richards, looked rather sheepish when they discovered that they had been attacking one of their own Shermans with a .30 caliber machine gun.

The action around Haut Vents, Belle Lande, and Pont Hebert, was devoid of humor and vicious to the extreme. Heavy mortar, machine gun and shell fire assailed the troops under General Bohn. One of Colonel Dorrance S. Roysden's task forces, led by Lt. Colonel Rosewell H. King, was given the mission of taking Hill 91, or Haut Vents, on July 10. Unfortunately the force was small because of heavy losses in previous action, but regardless, King mustered six mediums and two light tanks for the attack.

The little task force took Haut Vents on the 10th, were driven back with heavy losses, and attacked again to reach the summit and hold the ground. Repeated enemy counterattacks failed to dislodge those few men who remained unscathed at

It wasn't healthy to linger at crossroads like this one between St. Jean de Daye and Le Desert. Jerry had them zeroed in.







These German panzer troopers were burned with their Panther tank in the battle for Le Desert.



The "Spearhead" team began to click. Infantry rode tanks into battle



The slogan of Nazi militarism was "Kill or be killed" This Jerry soldier lost.

the end of the fight. Here, in the face of heavy German artillery and mortar pounding, these elements of CC "B" held out for three days until finally contacted by advance patrols of the 30th Infantry Division. During that period they weathered some of the hottest action of the entire European campaign. Later, it was ascertained that CC "B" had been battling, in the Haut Vents, Belle Lande, and Pont Hebert areas, the Panzer LEHR division, which was reputed to be one of Germany's best armored units. Crack troops or no, the Panzer LEHR took a fearsome lacing from green GI's of the future "Spearhead" in this encounter.

In the meantime, Combat Command "A", under Brigadier General Hickey had made slow progress. In the area of St. Jean de Daye, men of the command fought bitter small scale actions against parachutists and SS panzer elements. CC "A" had occupied the terrain overlooking Le Desert, in which German forces were strongly entrenched. Here, a tank scare on July 11 upset division forward elements and caused some confusion. The counter-attack was thrown back after enemy paratroopers worked into division positions under a hail of automatic fire and artillery air bursts. The 9th Infantry Division, already veterans of Normandy fighting, went into action with the 3rd here at St. Jean de Daye, and promptly set an example of cool efficiency under fire.

The troops of the "Spearhead" were still exceedingly green. There was still a tendency to duck at every foreign sound, and there was yet a wide misconception of battlefield operation. There was nothing basically wrong with the division: that had been proved in the fiery hell of Villiers Fossard and Haut Vents: but, in common with every American force new to combat, the 3rd had to assimilate front-line knowledge and know-how. It had to get over the feeling that every shell was an 88, and it had to realize that no matter how much noise an automatic weapon makes, it is still so much scrap metal unless properly directed. The men of the 3rd had to learn these things, and they did. It wasn't long before the division could truly be termed veteran.

On July 16, both combat commands reverted to division control and moved into assembly areas west of St. Jean de Daye. Previously attached to XIX Corps, and for a very short period to V Corps, the 3rd was now a part of that crack assault force which it henceforth led in nearly every major drive of the First Army: the VII Corps, commanded by Major General J. Lawton Collins.

The new assembly areas were close to forward positions, but regrouping went on in spite of enemy shellfire and an occasional sweep by Jerry fighters. New equipment poured in from the floating docks at Isigny. Rations, ammunition, fuel, and other



supplies were loaded on tanks, half-tracks and trucks of the combat commands and the trains. Overhead, in the grey, scud-blown skies, Thunderbolt and Mustang fighters patrolled the air. Occasional German reconnaissance flyers whipped over too. The big show was about to begin, and the enemy was nervous.

At St Jean de Daye, and Le Desert, the 3rd participated in those poison gas scares which ran up and down the Normandy beachhead areas on July 21 and 22, and which occasioned such mad scrambling for masks at the first long drawn out shouts of GAS! Unfamiliar odors of the battlefield were voted to be the reason for these panics, but enemy instigation was also suspected.

While waiting for wet weather to lift, the area was consistently subjected to strafing and bombing attacks, none of which were very effective. Usually, about dusk, after the last allied Thunderbolt had disappeared, the first Kraut fighters would whisk out of cloud cover and race over 3rd Armored Division bivouacs. Enemy bombers droned over the positions at night, dropping flares and anti-personnel bombs while ignoring the criss-cross pattern of tracer which always seemed short.

On the morning of July 26, the clouds seemed higher than usual, and broken. Presently a sweep of Mustangs appeared over the front, and then — wave after wave of gigantic Fortress and Liberator bombers. It was H-Hour for the greatest combined air-ground operation in the history of modern warfare.

There was no mistaking the portent of those planes. This was the big push. The men of the armored regiments knew it, and the armored infantry — the artillery, the engineers, and tank destroyers of the commands. The men of the "Spearhead" gazed steadily at those vast fleets of Fortresses and Liberators, and they knew that the moment would be great in history. This was a prelude to battle such as the world had never seen. There was

an awe-inspiring, hypnotic quality about it. Ernie Pyle, the doughboy's correspondent, wrote: "The flight across the sky was slow and studied. I've never known a storm, or a machine, or any resolve of man that had about it the aura of such a ghastly relentlessness. I had the feeling that even had God appeared beseechingly before them in the sky, with palms outstretched to persuade them back, they would not have had within them the power to turn their irresistible course. — They stalked on, slowly, and with a dreadful pall of sound, as though they were seeing something at a great distance and nothing existed between. God, how we admired those men up there, and sickened for the ones who fell."

Soldiers of the 3rd Armored Division who were poised for the attack at St. Jean de Daye and Le Desert, felt that emotion, and wondered how any living thing could survive the rain of bombs. There were 1800 heavy bombardment machines, 400 mediums, and close to 700 fighter-bombers operating over a relatively small area on that fateful day in late July, 1944.

The front was moving even as the last air fleets turned for home. Up ahead, advancing over the churned and smoking earth of the target area, the 4th, 9th, and 30th Infantry Divisions drove into a disorganized enemy line along the St. Lo — Perriers road. Through a regrettable miscalculation in defining the bomb line, several companies of jump-off infantry were badly cut up by explosives intended for the enemy: but all of the doughs went forward at H-Hour, and the greatest coordinated air-ground attack in history kicked off. On the following day, Major General J. Lawton Collins committed his exploitation force, the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions, closely followed, and in many cases led, by the veteran 1st Infantry. Operation COBRA had entered its critical stage.

The great armored breakthrough out of Normandy was headline news all over the world. It was truly a turning point in history, for the allies

Major General Leroy H. Watson, CG of the 3rd Armored Division throughout much of its formative training in the United States and in England, also led the command in Normandy before he was transferred to the 12th Army Group on August 6, 1944.

General Watson was one of the original officer cadre of the 3rd, serving first as commanding officer of the 40th Armored Regiment. He was later given command of Combat Command "A", and became a Brigadier General at that time.

In August, 1942, General Watson became CG of the 3rd Armored Division while it was training in the Mojave Desert. He became a Major General on September 9, 1942.





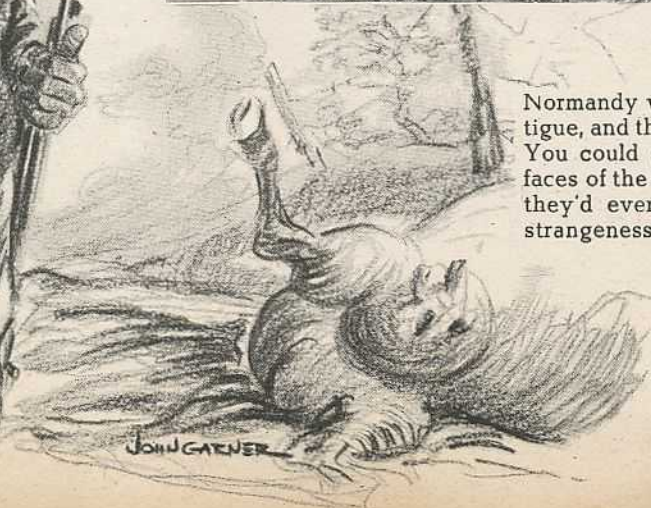
had finally wrenched the initiative from their enemies and were on the high road to victory. Of course, the men who made that history never thought of it in such a light. Later, they recalled the swift lunge of armor in strangely disjointed, nightmare flashes of fear and emotion, of scenes indelibly printed upon their minds. The big picture to them was not grand strategy: it was the sniper in the hedgerow and the smell of death, the gentle hum of German warplanes overhead in the deep night; it was the space filling crash of direct fire: the burp guns and the artillery, and sweat and dust and mortal fear, all so mixed up and jumbled that they seemed a normal tapestry in the bitter days of all out action.

The men of the 3rd Armored Division fought night and day. They slept — whenever they might grab an hour or so of rest, in slit trenches, and they kept their helmets on. The concussion ghosts of the big guns dislodged dirt which slid down into these trenches during the fitful night, and the night itself was filled with the moan and whistle of “incoming mail.” Shelled, mortared, raked with machine gun fire, and terribly fatigued by the pace of the constant assault, these men yet gave the enemy more steel than

he could send. And they attacked. They rolled forward in blinding clouds of dust, eating cold rations while moving, and never letting up the pressure.

“Spearhead” men weren’t interested in fame: they just wanted to kill the enemy and stay alive in that little sector which, for the moment, encompassed all of life and death. The stories that Americans read at their breakfast tables would have given these men a grim chuckle, and that is because it always seems so easy in print. You can use all the rhetoric in the world to describe a battle, and yet it comes nowhere near the graphic description afforded by a shell that screams suddenly and erupts in a heart-sickening crash nearby.

General Leroy H. Watson’s “Spearhead” Division went out in multiple columns of task forces CC “B” on July 26, and CC “A” on the 27th. Combat Command “B”, led by its new commander, Colonel Truman E. Boudinot, paced the attack of the famed 1st Infantry Division at Marigny, then made a right turn and drove for the high ground around Monthuchon. Heavy opposition dogged the columns, but Boudinot’s task forces slashed ahead. The 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, supporting the



Normandy was heat and dust, dragging fatigue, and the all-pervading stench of death. You could see the look of combat on the faces of the men, and you wondered whether they'd ever be able to lose that numbed strangeness . . . . .



command with fire from its 105 mm self propelled guns, fought snipers, and beat off an attack by 30 rocket-firing Focke-Wulf 190 fighters.

Northeast of Coutances, and well behind enemy lines, division GI's began to see the French people who had become refugees in this furious hour of battle. They lined the roads for miles throwing flowers and greeting their American liberators.

After taking its initial objective, the combat command bypassed a second and clattered to within sight of Coutances. Here, while tankers and infantrymen planned to go forward and take this first relatively large city, an urgent order came to turn back and aid the 1st Infantry Division in reducing a stronghold of enemy resistance.

Fortunately, Normandy was drying during the weeks of the breakthrough and exploitation: and, although the bocage country was not ideal for tank warfare, the armor stormed ahead. Those hedge-choppers, designed by division engineers, and installed by Maintenance Battalion, were an invaluable aid to close fighting — and most of the fighting was at close quarters. Tanks dueled at negligible range, and infantry fought it out with small arms and grenades. Jerry burp guns sounded as though they were in the next field, and usually they were! Almost always the combat commands had to fight their way into bivouac: then after digging foxholes and camouflaging the vehicles, there was usually a night of sporadic firing with automatic weapons and artillery. Men of the commands learned to love those deep Normandy drainage ditches and the high, earthbound hedgerows which bordered little, sunken roads. These places were a haven when German artillery poured high explosive into division positions. The enemy was not lacking in field artillery during the battle of Normandy, and his gunners were uncannily accurate.

Close quarter fighting was not reserved for the point elements alone. Near Marigny, Battery "B" of the 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalion participated in one of those free-for-all fights which seemed to be SOP in the bocage country. While firing a mission in support of Combat Command "B", the battery learned that a unit of the 4th Cavalry Squadron was bitterly engaged with enemy fanatics a few hundred yards away. The command of the battery was immediately turned over to a single non-commissioned officer and all available personnel went into the fight as infantry in order to aid the cavalymen. While five of the six gun battery continued to fire support, the sixth was employed in direct laying against the hemmed in, and soon annihilated, fanatics.

Also in this area, Captain Philip Shaw, commander of Battery "B", 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion, and two of his men calmly placed charges of TNT on the bogey wheels of a Panther

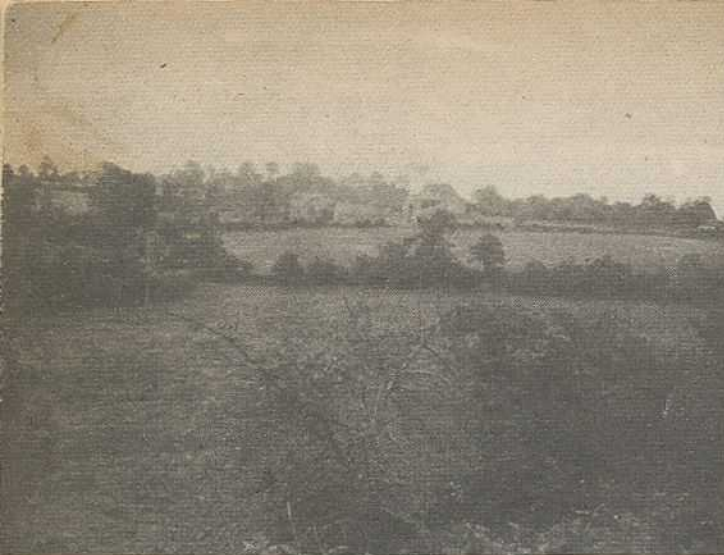


Colonel Dorrance S. Roysden led the 33rd Armored Regiment in its initial actions in Normandy.

tank they found near their position at night. Then, when the crippled Panther began to rumble into action, Shaw killed its crew by tossing grenades into the open turret. One of the Nazis attacked by an American ack-ack soldier armed with an axe, shouted "Heil Hitler," and shot himself through the head rather than surrender!

While elements of CC "B" neared Coutances, General Doyle O. Hickey's Combat Command "A" was attacking south toward Montpinchon. His task forces faced heavier opposition than had those of Colonel Boudinot, because the enemy apparently had expected such a sweep. Enemy infantry, anti-tank guns, and the usual roving Panther tanks were a chief source of worry. At Cerisy la Salle, battle raged far into the night. German troops in the town fought a foot by foot withdrawal all afternoon and were given air support by the Luftwaffe as soon as darkness settled over the area and the last P-47 had gone home to roost. The sky over Cerisy la Salle was filled with pyrotechnics that night as Service Company crews brought up their vital loads of gasoline and ammunition for the front line. One of the attacking Ju-88's received a direct hit and came careening down the dark heavens like a falling





The small Normandy fields were separated by hedgerows, but every opening was a death trap, zeroed by fanatic Nazi machine-gunners or anti-tank gun crews.



So the engineers got their heads together and came up with a plan. They told the Maintenance Battalion about it, and the maintenance men dreamed up a hedge-chopper for the Shermans.

firebrand. The occasion was a morale booster to men who had been dreading the wail and crunch of anti-personnel bombs.

The fight at Cerisy la Salle flowed into that larger operation which had to do with the taking of Montpinchon. But pressure exerted here by CC "A", together with that of other armored columns to the east and west, forced German panzer columns below Roncey. At this point, the 2nd Armored Division cut the escape gap at St. Denis le Gast, and Jerry was trapped hopelessly. American fighter bombers, finding the enemy's vehicles travelling bumper to bumper on the narrow Normandy road nets, strafed and bombed the convoys relentlessly. All along the battlefield, on July 29, a greasy black pall of smoke marked Nazi retreat and destruction. When the wholesale slaughter was over, and the Thunderbolts had finished their work, a single CC "A" battle group moved into battered Montpinchon and mopped up the last disorganized enemy resistance.

If Jerry hated our "Jabo's" because they were deadly, men of the 3rd Armored Division loved them well. These chunky little fighters seemed to be a part of the armored striking force. It was a constant source of satisfaction to see them slant down in those long, beautiful dives. You'd see the thin line of smoke which told of hammering machine guns, and then, while "Blitz Doughs" held their breath in suspense, the fly boys would release bombs and slant up into the blue again.

The Thunderbolts ruled Normandy skies in daylight, but at dusk Hitler's Luftwaffe took over, Kraut bombers rode herd on division columns from sunset to dawn and, in isolated cases, inflicted casualties by strafing and bombing attacks. Service

Company of the 32nd Armored Regiment suffered losses one evening when machine guns in an adjoining field opened up on a circling Ju-88 and disclosed the position. The German dropped a number of anti-personnel bombs, killing one man and wounding five.

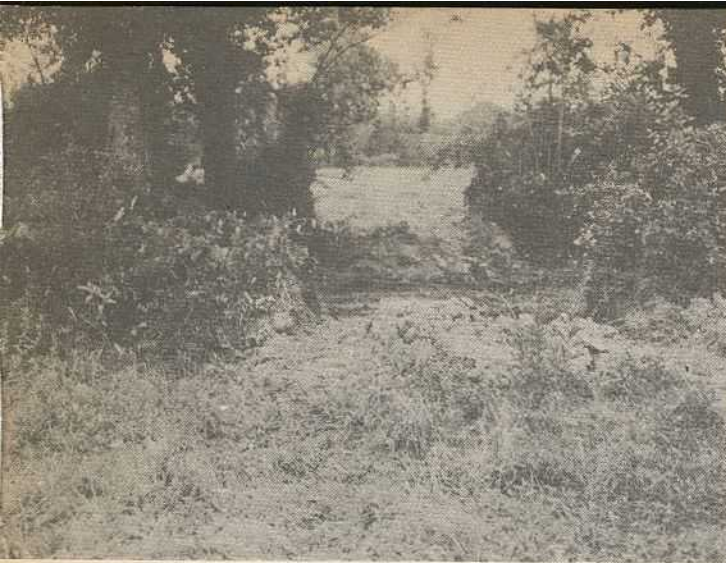
Frequently, for no sensible reason, the Kraut fliers seemed to keep division spearheads under surveillance without attempting to bomb or strafe. On the longer Normandy night drives it was not unusual to have a dozen or more enemy airplanes dropping flares at spaced intervals along the route.

In the white heat of battle, the 3rd Armored Division had begun to find itself as a great fighting force. The division was still green, still learning — but the esprit de corps was there, and a characteristic drive which, in days to come, was to be the hallmark of the "Spearhead" Division, General "Lightning Joe" Collins' cutting edge of power.

The men of the fighting commands were well trained and alert. They needed only those flaming days in Normandy to supply the need of experience. And the division had excellent leaders too: some of them were already making a name for the command in this early stage of the fighting.

The entire operation from the breakthrough to the reaching of the Mayenne River was, from an operational standpoint, a combat command show. This fact was beautifully illustrated by the action of Combat Command "A" which, on July 29, was ordered to turn south and seize a crossing of the Sienne River, at Gavray. Here, leadership asserted itself when Lt. Colonel Leander L. Doan, the tall, loose jointed Texas tanker led his assault infantrymen of the 36th across the stream on foot under fire,





The tankers punched new holes in old hedges, and of course Jerry couldn't zero them in swiftly enough to slow the attack.



The Shermans rumbled on through, and Jerry fell back, and back-until, lo and behold, he was out of Normandy entirely and the battle for northern France had begun.

to secure a bridgehead. This was the first of many such exploits which made Doan a historic commander of the 3rd Armored Division. His Task Force "X" was already assuming an aura of dash and daring in the business of all out attack.

So fast was the advance thereafter that, at Brecey, the speeding combat command caught German troops lolling under shade trees, drinking wine. This was a pleasure which tommy-gun fire and grenades quickly terminated. Brecey, however, was the scene of more vicious fighting later. Company "A" of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion found that the town had been reoccupied after the lead elements of CC "A" passed through. With their three-inch guns, the TD men thoroughly wrecked the little town and again routed its garrison.

Also in the vicinity of Brecey an anti-tank platoon of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment set off pyrotechnics when a loaded German ammunition truck ran into one of their mine fields during the night. The resultant explosion could be seen for miles.

After crossing the See River, just south of Brecey, on August 1, CC "A" arrowed for Mortain, the new objective. The task forces were now well inside enemy lines and moving swiftly. German service troops and re-forming combat elements were surprised and decimated or taken prisoner. The tanks of the 32nd Armored Regiment made spectacular gains and the roads of conquest were littered with smashed and burning vehicles of the Wehrmacht.

This Roman holiday ceased abruptly at Juvigny le Tertre and Reffuvieille. Here, task forces of Combat Command "A" fought heavy engagements with well organized Nazi units. The columns drove

through a sparkling rain of tracer bullets to reach Mortain on August 2. Strong points were established at St. Barthelemy, just north of the city, and a Romagny, to the southwest. Juvigny le Tertre was taken after a vicious fire fight and troops of CC "A" remained static in this area for two days while German units, well supported by artillery, attempted to take high ground around Juvigny. It had previously been announced that this would be a rest period but, as one soldier commented: "If this is a rest period — then I want to fight!"

A further advance was made on August 5, when Task Force "X", under Lt. Colonel Doan, set out for Le Teilleul. A smaller force joined the 2nd Armored Division at Barenton, and did not rejoin the command until August 12-13.

At Barenton, this 3rd Armored Division battle group broke up a determined German counter-attack which was launched under cover of fog at dawn on August 10. Every available machine-gun was brought forward and put into action. It was an eery, wicked battle there in the half light of morning, but after the enemy had been beaten off, a spot check showed that he had lost 65 dead, plus a number of wounded and prisoners.

On August 6, Task Force "X" set out with the objective of reaching Ambrières Le Grand, on the Mayenne River. The task force reached its objective for the day by 0830 hours. Considerable fighting was necessary to clear Ambrières Le Grand of the enemy, but the bridge was seized quickly, permitting 1st Infantry Division troops to push on across and establish a bridgehead on the east side of the Varenne River, which was west of the Mayenne. On the following day, Colonel Walter B. Richardson's



task force moved into positions around St. Mars sur Colmont. This maneuver practically completed Combat Command "A" activities west of the Mayenne River, excepting for an outposting operation at Gorrion. Troops of the command rested, refitted, and went swimming. They made friends with the local mademoiselles, and drank a great deal of calvados, that drink which was reputed to be made of "ground-up hand grenades."

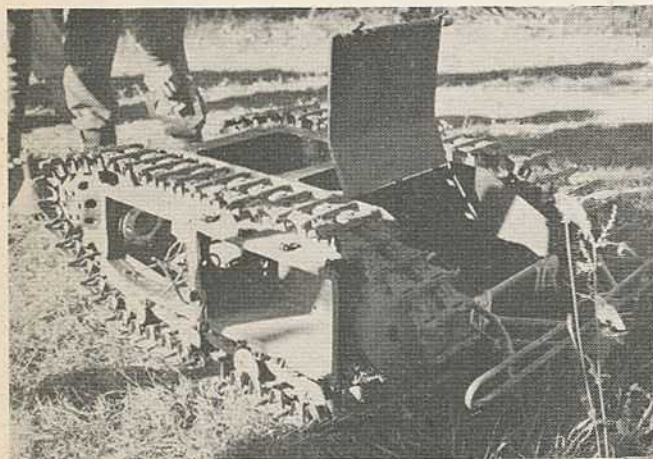
Back in the Mortain sector, CC "B" soldiers were not so fortunate.

General Boudinot's tankers and infantrymen had been attached to the 4th Infantry Division during the attack on high ground east of Villedieu les Poeles, on August 1. Ordered to cross the See River and move south of the little town of Cuves, elements of "B" were heavily engaged by crack units of the Wehrmacht. Tankers of the 33rd Armored Regiment, plus the 36th Armored Infantry "Blitz

There was no maintenance, no rest, no clubmobile, and no baths. An urgent message came crackling down the lines of communication and bone-tired tankers clambered back into the bucket seats of their steel fighting machines.

During the morning hours of August 7, the German high command in Normandy launched the great counter-attack which was intended to cut allied lines by reaching the sea at Avranches. Had this operation succeeded, the American Third Army's supply lines would have been severed and Patton's free-wheeling tankers trapped before they could begin to execute the big sweeping drives through Brittany. In a way, this was to be the first grueling test of the American ability to meet and smash a well coordinated counter attack.

The main German blow, which was chiefly armor supported by panzer grenadiers and heavy concentrations of artillery, hit the 30th Infantry Divi-



Another of Hitler's secret weapons, the midget tank, is examined by "Spearhead" soldiers. This gadget was loaded with TNT and designed to work as a sort of mobile mine. It wasn't effective.

Doughs", the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and all of the other units which made up the command, continued to batter through this resistance to reach the objective on August 4. Of the prisoners taken, many were slant eyed Mongolians from the outer fringes of Russia. These were former Red Army soldiers who had been starved into the submission of serving in the Germany army. Most of these men were perfectly willing to give information which was of benefit to the attacking Americans.

On August 6 weary of combat and in dire need of maintenance, refitting and rest, the combat command was ordered to an area near Reffuvieille. The Red Cross Clubmobile was ordered, and dirty men prepared to wash their bodies and their clothing in nearby streams. Deaf from concussion of the guns, sick of the sight and stench of battle, this promised pause was an oasis to which all personnel looked forward. Unfortunately it turned out to be a mirage.

Mechanics of the 3rd Armored Division found that Germany's Mark-V Panther tank was well armored and gunned. Tankers knew that from the beginning.



sion. The enemy managed to isolate a battalion of doughboys on a hill just east of Mortain while occupying that city. The situation was desperate enough to warrant a swift redeployment of available U. S. armor.

On August 7, therefore, Combat Command "B" was attached to the 30th Infantry Division in order to aid in repelling the serious breakthrough attempt. Extremely heavy fighting developed around Le Mesnil Adelee, Le Mesnil Tove, and the surrounding area. For five consecutive days the fighting swayed back and forth. The command was shelled, bombed, attacked by infantry and tanks. The intensity of the attack is perhaps best illustrated by a notation in the official report for August 9:

"At 1145 Task Force 1 (Colonel Dorrance S. Roysdon) was bracketed by rounds not over 100 yards apart. Expected enemy fire began falling around noon. Artillery officers estimated size from



shell fragment to be 150 mm. Lt. Colonel Rosewell King's command half-track exploded. An attempt was made to move Colonel Roysden's CP. A shell immediately struck the halftrack, wounding an officer and cutting through the side of the vehicle so that it looked like a sieve. One burst went through the radio. There was a tree burst over the Colonel's tank: then a round landed right by the front sprocket. Colonel Roysden and his staff were underneath the tank. Heavy shelling continued until 1600."

German commanders were using a number of crack panzer units in the breakthrough attempt, but although they gained ground initially, the counter attack was a failure. Troops of Combat Command "B" found that the terrain around Le Mesnil Adelee and Le Mesnil Tove was not suitable for tank warfare, but that was no revelation after a month of cracking stubborn hedgerow positions in Normandy. The command took part in the most bitter en-

Members of the FFI used German arms and ammunition against their traditional foe. They were often of great assistance to American forces in the drive.



gagements of the battle and suffered relatively heavy casualties, but General Boudinot's men held their ground against far superior numbers in counter-attack after counter-attack. An indication of this operation's violence may be gauged by the fact that Service Company of the 33rd Armored Regiment processed 41 replacement vehicles and more than 60 work orders during the short five day period of action. General Boudinot's fighting men had contributed much toward the halting of the German Avranches drive. Part of the 30th Infantry Division, to which CC "B" had been attached, later received a Distinguished Unit Citation for the battle.

By August 12, German forces had been thoroughly beaten back at Mortain and another turning point of the war in the west had been reached. Von Kluge's Seventh Army was retreating under heavy aerial attack, and the Normandy campaign appeared to be a complete allied success. The 3rd

Armored Division closed into an assembly area west of Mayenne, where supply, maintenance, and rest prepared it for the next great armored drive.

Now the men of the 3rd Armored Division were quiet soldiers, weathered and squint eyed from the acrid dust of battle. They were schooled in the subtleties of war, their bodies toughened to the sun and the rain and the constant grind of the attack. They were tough, and they knew it. Death was no stranger. Fear was still tangible, but it was honest fear — not the unreasonable panic of those first hours when a man could not distinguish between his own and the enemy's shell fire. It had been a bitter training, but now the "Spearhead" was a crack team.

Major General Maurice Rose, then a brigadier, had assumed command on August 7, relieving Major General Leroy H. Watson. Rose, a former combat command leader of the 2nd Armored Division, was



What do you do in the infantry? You hike, you hike, you hike. Even on the outskirts of Pre-en-Pail, France, when armored units were smashing ahead.

an accomplished tanker and strategist. He surveyed the division and found that it was not lacking in either training, experience or leadership.

The cry was "On to Paris," but the men of the 3rd found a more important mission for their arms. British forces, driving south from Caen, and American First Army elements, smashing in an easterly direction, had trapped a sizeable part of Field Marshal von Kluge's Seventh Army in the Argentan-Falaise pocket. The 3rd Armored Division was ordered to drive deep into this Nazi cauldron of elite units in an attempt to close the escape gap.

On August 13, the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion led division elements out of the Mayenne area on an axis of advance which touched Mayenne, Pre-en-Pail, Carrouges, Ranès, and Fromental.

General Doyle O. Hickey's Combat Command "A" was chosen to lead the attack with two parallel columns of task forces, "X", commanded by





It wasn't all a victorious march — in fact there were a lot of American Shermans like this one, burned out and destroyed.



Air-Ground cooperation was part of the story near Couptrain. The Thunderbolts and the Shermans were close companions.



Nazi sympathizers in France were unfortunate people. They lost their hair *toute de suite*.

Colorel Doan, on the south, and "Y", commanded by Colonel Richardson, on the north. Initially, these long, armored spearheads rolled forward without opposition. Crowds of cheering French civilians stood in the brilliant sunshine to throw flowers and offer cognac to dust-begrimed tankers. There was no artillery fire and the sky belonged to the veering Thunderbolts. It was hard to realize that, within hours, the entire combat command would be fighting desperately for its very existence.

At Couptrain and Javron the first opposition began to slow free-wheeling task forces. But not for long: the orders were to bypass resistance wherever possible and push to a link-up with British troops. Tanks of the 32nd Armored Regiment, closely followed by M-10 tank destroyers of the 703rd, battered swiftly ahead. With them were the "Blitz Doughs" of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, the 54th and 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalions in close support: the engineers, anti-aircraft, medics and maintenance elements, all in the same column, pushing through the dust and smoke and thunder of the attack.

Resistance became violent as the two parallel spearheads turned north at Pre-en-Pail. Carrouges, on the late afternoon of August 13, was a picture of war at its grim height. Greasy smoke hung in a pall over the town and wreckage cluttered its streets. German vehicles by the score bore mute testimony to the new effectiveness of the "Spearhead".

It was at Carrouges that the men of the 3rd first met the French 2nd Armored Division. These Free French seemed to have no idea of march discipline or coordination. They rattled down the roads at high speed, bumper to bumper or, if the whim took them, they'd stop to talk it over, blocking traffic for miles. Lt. Arthur Rutshaw, a CC "A" military police officer, exclaimed: "I saw that French column hit a crossroads at 40 miles per hour. One vehicle went straight ahead, one to the right, and another to the left. — Nobody was directing traffic!"

Along the Carrouges — Ranès road, the armor of both sides had suffered. Panther tank and Sherman alike were left on that bitter boulevard, wrecked and burning. The stench of death and flames filled the air. French dwelling houses burned sullenly and, as darkness approached, German aircraft dropped flares above the column.

To the north, Task Force "Y" battled its way beyond Couptrain. Famed tanker, Sergeant Lafayette Pool pointed the powerful column with his Sherman, **IN THE MOOD**. It was a hard, unending fight. Long after darkness had fallen over the flame pocked countryside, Colonel Richardson listened to the radio reports of the battle from Pool's vehicle. He heard the Sergeant say: "I ain't got the heart to kill 'em . . ." And then, over the airwaves came the mad rattle of the .30 caliber bow gun, and again the



fighting Sergeant's voice: "Watch them bastards run — give it to 'em, Close!"

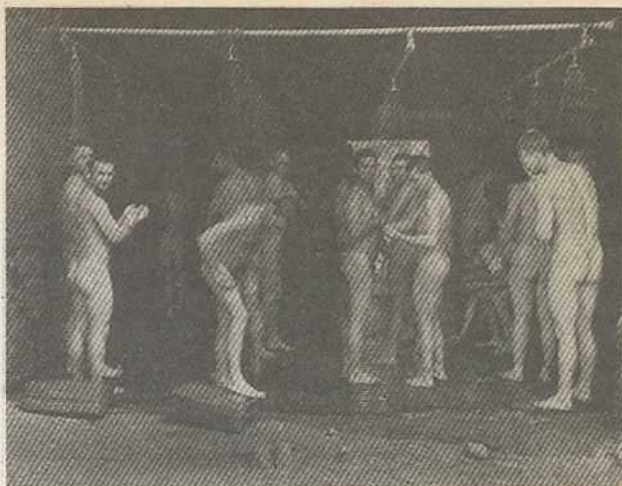
Pool's crew, little, red headed Wilbert Richards, the driver; Bert Close, his assistant; Willis Oller, who was the gunner; and Del Boggs, loader, made a crack team. That night they fought from dusk to dawn. After it was finished and the columns were pushing forward again, the ground before their position was littered with dead.

Following an oral order from Captain Cyril Andersen to "keep moving until something heavy hits you," S/Sgt. George Carver, and his crew, led Task Force "X" on the direct route to Ranès. Anti-tank guns blazed away down the narrow road and machine gun fire crackled steadily as the armored column bit deeply into enemy territory. As usual, bypassed fanatics closed in behind, so that by the time TF "X" had leaguered in small fields on the outskirts of Ranès, the force was completely surrounded by the best troops of Nazi Germany — surrounded, and cut off from outside assistance. General Hickey's troops knew this, but they were not overly surprised or alarmed.

Surrounded? Of course — the matter had become a source of pride: the 3rd was always surrounded during its long drives. GI's had begun to chuckle over the division's new watch-word: "Call Me Spearhead," and they expected to be surrounded even as they expected to break out again and go smashing forward to lead the First Army on its next sweep.

Enemy aircraft dropped flares overhead and scores of fires sent a ruddy glow mounting into the dark sky as tanks and supporting vehicles of the command rolled into temporary bivouac. There wasn't much sleep that night but vehicles were camouflaged, slit trenches dug and weapons checked. A steady whirr and crash of artillery added to the din of machine guns. The night was alive with motors, and men of the 3rd systematically prepared to attack at dawn.

August 14, 1944, saw some of the heaviest fighting of the Normandy campaign in the Argentan-Falaise struggle. Elite German SS units were well dug in and prepared to defend when the task forces hopped off at daylight. Colonel Richardson's TF "Y", attempting a juncture with "X" at Ranès, hit a stone wall of resistance around Joue Du Bois, bypassed the town, and were halfway to Ranès by dark. Closer to the disputed ground, Task Force "X" was not only unable to mount an attack, but had all it could do to beat off repeated counter-blows by crack elements of the 1st and 9th SS Panzer Divisions. Once again all the men of the combat command, including staff officers and cooks, fought a close quarter battle against a fanatic enemy. Jerry used heavy concentrations of artillery and assault gun fire on defensive positions, and his infiltrating



Out of the line for a short rest, division troops found portable shower bath fixtures a popular feature.



There was always time to stop and talk with a mademoiselle, even when the armored columns were driving hard. It's a habit soldiers acquire.



The Maquis liked nothing better than a guard stint on Jerry troops. Of course sometimes the Maquis had to be guarded too, or they'd be likely to take the foe for a short ride and no return ticket.





The people of the liberated towns didn't appear to be especially hungry, but when German artillery horses were shot down, Frenchmen gathered to cut steaks from the carcasses.



Character study of Germany's Mark-IV tank, an efficient armored vehicle that had seen much service in World War II.



Frenchmen made a picnic out of the Seine crossing. They came to watch and to cheer the advancing spearheads of the first Americans.



teams of infantry were extremely effective. General Hickey's CP, located a scant field behind point tanks, was under continuous sniper and machine gun fire. Company "A", of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, maintaining road blocks at a road and rail junction, came under heavy attack but managed to knock out three tanks and hold the accompanying panzer grenadiers at bay.

A vicious battle raged throughout the entire day in this vicinity. Mobile artillery of the 54th and 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalions silenced a number of German batteries and pounded strongpoints mercilessly: but still the enemy held fast and inflicted heavy casualties for every foot of ground he yielded.

At dusk on August 14, the combat command was still isolated. Medical aid men and surgeons of the units labored without rest and cursed the fates which denied them passage to the rear for casualties. Soldiers were dying because transportation to proper

hospital facilities was impossible: and yet under these terrible conditions the medics saved lives. Tankers and front line infantry are loud in their praises of these brave soldiers who disregarded flame and hot steel to bring out casualties. It was not surprising that men of the medical aid section, 32nd Armored Regiment, received a Distinguished Unit Citation as a direct result of their heroic work on this, and following days, at Ranés—Fromentel.

The fortunes of war seemed evenly balanced on August 14. Overhead, the Thunderbolts and Lightnings of air support strafed and bombed the nearby enemy. One of the unfortunate incidents of war occurred when a P-47, attempting to attack German forces one field ahead of American tanks, accidentally dropped a bomb short. Several GI's were wounded seriously and one killed outright. Another bomb fell within fifty yards of General Hickey's command post, also injuring a number of soldiers. Faulty release mechanisms on the airplanes were believed



It was the same in all of the French towns. There were the hastily tailored flags, the crowds, and the joy of liberation.



to be the chief reason for these occurrences.

While CC "A" fought bitterly to hold its ground, the 3rd Battalion of the 33rd Armored Regiment had swung a powerful left hook toward Ranés, and Division Reserve proceeded to attack Joue de Bois. Combat Command "B" blasted into La Motte Fouquet and continued to move up against heavy resistance. During the day, "B" captured more than 1,000 prisoners, and smashed 16 tanks. General Hickey's men, still surrounded, were nevertheless gaining a mastery of the situation. Enemy shell fire was lessening under continuous pounding by division artillery, and every infantry counter attack was beaten back with heavy losses. Prisoner cages were bulging with beaten Nazis, and the dead lay everywhere.

Even beaten, the German soldier at Ranés — Fromentel was good. He was a first class fighting man and troops of the division respected his prowess as much as they hated his guts. At dawn on August 15, an SS combat patrol worked its way into positions of the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion and captured a popular and very fine TD officer, plus two of his security men and two engineer soldiers. With the exception of one engineer, who escaped, all of these men were later found shot to death. Such occurrences did not engender any love of sportsmanship or pity between opposing American and German troops.

Again the new day saw heavy fighting. Task Force "X" plunged ahead and made slow progress toward the objective, Fromentel. Enemy tanks, hidden in caves, caught the column and almost immediately destroyed four Shermans, including the command vehicle of Company "G", in which Captain Cyril Andersen lost a leg. The attack did not progress very far.

Meanwhile, the rest of the division had been punching its way through bitter resistance and, by nightfall, had burst through and was grouped in the vicinity of Ranés. More hard fighting lay ahead, but at least communication lines to the rear were swept clean of Jerry battle groups.

At dawn on August 16, the "Spearhead" launched a coordinated attack toward Fromentel. Roads were, for the most part, untenable, and so the task forces used bulldozers and travelled across country. Sergeant William Alberti, a great tankerman of the 32nd, rode the blade of a dozer throughout the attack, seeking a path for his driver and firing a tommy-gun at German infantry all the way.

Jerry assault guns and artillery contested every inch of the route. "Screaming meemies" howled into

division forward positions and the whiplash slam of 88's broke through a constant fabric of small arms fire.

On August 17, elements of Combat Command "A" had reached Fromentel from the east while CC "B" was still pinned down by heavy fire on the southwest of town. After the area had been practically cleared, CC "A" was driven out by American P-38 fighter-bombers which dropped their bombs too close for comfort: but Hickey's men came back to take the town again from the few enemy units still remaining. Once again Lightnings bombed the command, and "Spearhead" soldiers began to duck for foxholes whenever they saw the twin-boom fighters approaching.

The battle of the Argentan-Falaise gap was nearly over, but it had not yet spent its fury entirely. On August 17, a mass of German armor, estimated at 1,200 vehicles, passing across the front of the division, received deadly artillery fire and direct attack from the air. Mopping-up operations continued in the area, but it was not until the next day that Fromentel and the high ground north of it were finally secured. On the afternoon of August 18, the "Spearhead" Division represented by tanker Sergeant Donald Ekdahl, of the 33rd Armored Regiment, met advance elements of British armor on the road near Putanges.

It had been a bitter, fluctuating battle but individual performances were faultless. Tank commanders had drawn straws to determine which would lead the attack, and battle was often joined at ranges of 75 to 100 yards. One tank destroyer engaged and destroyed two Panther tanks simultaneously at the negligible range of 25 yards. Two shots from the American's 3-inch gun broke the thick frontal armor of the two Mark V's. The TD commander, Cpl. Joseph Juno, was himself killed by exploding ammunition when he dismounted from his M-10 to aid the enemy wounded.

Men of the 3rd Armored Division, resting and repairing their broken equipment, knew that they had faced the best of Germany's fighting forces, and that they had won by a slim margin. They didn't know, or particularly care, that Argentan — Falaise would be a shining name in history. However in the summing up, later, many competent military observers agreed that this action was the true battle for France. After Field Marshal von Kluge's elite elements were cut to bits here, it is certain that the Wehrmacht never again attempted to stand and slug it out with allied forces west of the Siegfried line.



# ★ **NORTHERN** **FRANCE**

The swift campaign which followed Argentan-Falaise marked the utter rout of the disorganized remnants of a once great German army. Never, in the nightmare dash from the Seine River to the Siegfried Line, was the enemy able to marshal his forces for a decisive counter-attack: he was constantly on the defensive, without proper communication or supply, battered by air power and ground action, harried by Maquis in France and members of the Armee Blanche in Belgium. There was a quality of madness about the whole debacle of Germany's forces in the west, something which was not easily explained. Isolated garrisons fought as viciously as before, but the central planning and coordination which must go into a decisive action were missing. In the last months of the 1944 summer offensive, it looked very much as though Adolf Hitler's Third Reich might be forced into surrender long before American and British units reached the Rhine. That was the avowed opinion of allied soldiers on the western front, and German prisoners

were of the same mind, often stating that it couldn't last for another week.

Among GI's of the "Spearhead" Division, the nightmare drive through northern France and Belgium seemed the beginning of the end. Their days merged in one long stream of fatigue and weariness in the endless pursuit. They followed the white road all day long with their eyes streaming from sun and wind and dust. At night they drove in total blackout, often with no better guide than ordinary road maps of the give-away type—into territory where the only certainty was the dubious knowledge that the enemy might, or might not, be at any given point. The strange realization of this was only overcome by accumulated, groaning fatigue, and the sureness that Jerry was on the run. By Normandy standards action was light, but there were still plenty of vicious small actions and an occasional show like that at Mons where the 3rd Armored and First Infantry Divisions combined to trap and massacre a German corps. Of course, to



**JULY 25, to SEPT. 14, 1944**





## THE SPEARHEAD'S MEDICS

Up in the line of battle, where every man's soul was bared to the eye of his neighbor, the muddy Joes who made the world's headlines were fond of their medical aid men. It was a mutual liking, born of blood and flaming action across the face of battered Europe. When the first American paratroopers cascaded down dark skies to the fields of Normandy, the medics were with them. The tanks that blasted through that bitter line at Perriers-St. Lo, in the great breakthrough, carried armored infantry - and medics.

It was the same story in every campaign. Whenever the line flamed into crashing action, the soldiers of the red cross, without arms of any kind, advanced shoulder to shoulder with GI-Joes of America. If there's raw gallantry in the bayonet charge of infantry or the hell-for-leather dash of tanks, what can we say of these men who travelled into the same hell of fire and

flying steel without protection of any kind saving the often disregarded red cross arm band and helmet marking? The 45th Armored Medical Battalion was part of the 3rd Armored Division. In addition, each line company of the armor, the infantry and the other arms and services, had medical sections of their own. Of these brave men, many were killed in action. Others were wounded, but not one shirked duty or failed to respond promptly in the awful clutch of mobile warfare. The Joes of the red cross dispensed life in the middle of death and destruction. It wasn't fashionable to make wise cracks about "pillrollers" up where the slugs were flying. You blessed them instead.

a man in action, there is little difference — the burp guns are equally deadly in an insignificant fight or a pivotal struggle for world power. The short communique which mentions patrol action and "minimum losses" may not be startling news, but human death is there just the same.

The 3rd Armored Division mopped up at Fromental and rested for two days. Then, on August 22, a long road march was begun to reach assembly positions west of the Seine River, below Paris. By August 24, the "Spearhead" coiled in readiness for its next operation. In the same general area, the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions prepared for battle. This trio: the 3rd Armored, the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions, worked so efficiently together in the lightning campaign of northern France and Belgium, that they were henceforth called the "First Team of the First Army."

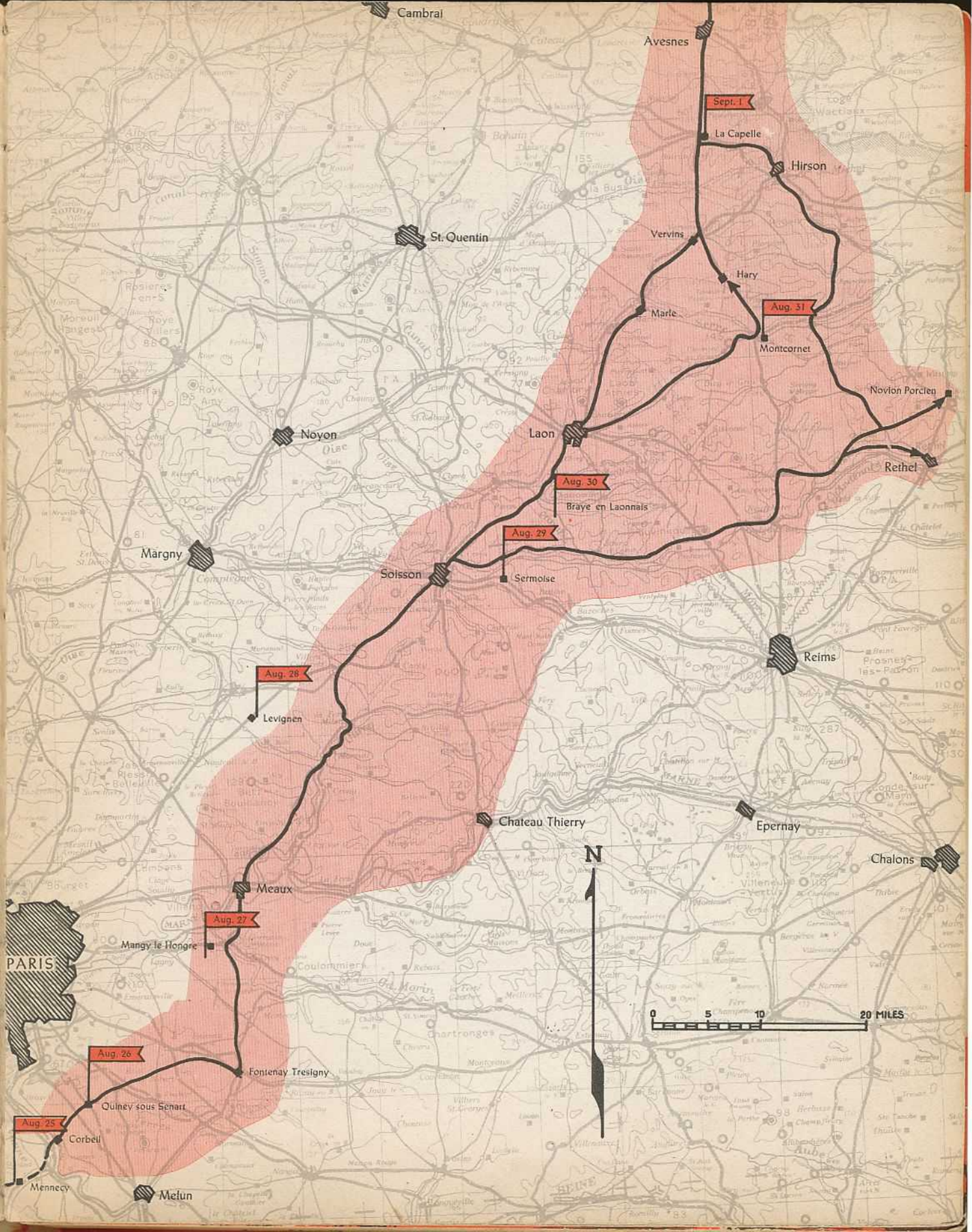
The Seine crossing began on the night of August 25 when division units poured across a bridge built by XX Corps engineers at Tilly, south of Corbeil. The division's own 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion built a 540 foot span during the night and, at dawn on August 26, it was put into use. This was the first serious combat bridge building attempt of the engineers under Lt. Colonel Lawrence G.

Foster. A complete success, it was the first of many to be constructed during the long months of battle ahead.

Resistance was encountered almost immediately after combat commands had branched out into multiple spearheads. Reconnaissance Company of the 33rd Armored Regiment, which had led units of CC "B" across the Seine, were ambushed at first light on August 26. The company had reached a forward position at 0230 and, after posting guards, coiled into a tight leaguer among the trees of a little grove. At dawn the men of the command awoke to an inferno of horror: they had been discovered by an enemy tank force and were under heavy direct fire. Shivered trees crashed about the parked reconnaissance vehicles, and AP shells cracked through the wood. Several men were hit before they had fully awakened. One was cut completely in halves by a screaming projectile. A second gazed numbly at his hand which had been shot off at the wrist. One recon vehicle after another was hit and set ablaze.

There was momentary panic until Captain John H. Haldeman, the commanding officer, restored a semblance of order. He directed the mounting of several machine guns and prepared a hasty defence.









Jerry's wicked 88mm dual purpose anti-aircraft — anti-tank gun.



The enemy left many of these heavy personnel carriers along the road of retreat. They were often used as prime movers for the 88mm guns.

A motorcyclist was immediately dispatched to the rear, but his machine hit a ditch and toppled while enemy fire crackled overhead. The men who lay in that grove of death then felt that all hope had vanished. The enemy, however, seemed reluctant to close and finish the action as he should have done.

For four hours, from 7 in the morning until 11, the company remained pinned down. Then, American artillery began to land in the German position and shortly a platoon of Sherman tanks arrived to rout the enemy.

Combat Command Hickey initially led the advance, with CC "B" on the left. After crossing the river, the command moved to the vicinity of Chausse en Brie in two columns, driving through sporadic resistance offered by rear guard infantry elements. On the following day, August 27, the speeding tanks passed through Coulommiers and crossed the Marne River at La Ferte sous Jouarre, halting for the night just north of the historic Marne.

On the personal request of Major General J. Lawton Collins, the division sent a small detachment to Chateau Thierry. There was consequently some small discussion as to who entered the city first, but a study of the record would indicate that elements of the 3rd Armored Division and the 7th Armored Division entered almost simultaneously. However, Captain Theodore Black, and Lt. Thomas S. Noble, division photo detachment commander, zoomed past advancing 7th Armored Division vehicles on the outskirts and reached the public square in the center of Chateau Thierry before any other American troops or vehicles. Captain Black received a signed statement from the Mayor, reading: "Second taking of Chateau Thierry by the Americans; all our gratitude." Unlike the first "taking," there was no resistance. Captain Black traded the local resistance leader a Schmeiser burp gun for a Luger, smiled

benignly on a furious staff officer of General Patton's outmaneuvered XX Corps, and returned to the "Spearhead" Division very well pleased.

By mid-afternoon of the 27th, Combat Command "B" had advanced beyond the Marne and, in an enveloping maneuver from the west, captured Meaux, furthest point of the German advance in World War I. Great names of the great war were increasingly noted on the situation maps as both combat commands arrowed for their objectives: respectively, Pont D'Arcy, and Soissons.

The enemy seemed to be completely disorganized. All "Spearhead" troops were engaged in taking prisoners and cutting down surprised Germans who were encountered in the little towns. At dawn on August 28, a Jerry column even attempted to drive through the center of the Division Forward Echelon bivouac. After a short, but one-sided battle, the enemy lost two 88 mm guns, three 20 mm weapons, four trucks and one motorcycle, two weapons carriers, 10 dead and 70 prisoners of war. Forward Echelon casualties were one officer dead and three enlisted men wounded.

Driving at high speed through scattered resistance, the division also reached Braisne and Soissons on August 28. By a strange quirk of circumstance, troops of both combat commands nailed railway trains of the German army at approximately the same time. "B" Battery, of the 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion, opened the engagement when one of its vehicles, commanded by Sgt. Hollis Butler, spotted the first train in Braisne at dusk. Butler and his crew promptly opened up with their quadruple .50 caliber anti-aircraft guns. The engine's boiler blew up in a cloud of dense, white vapor, and suddenly German tracer cut streaks of light around the American column. Bullets screamed and ricocheted in all directions, and black-uniformed SS Panzer troopers went scrambling aboard a tank



which stood on one of the train's flat cars.

Anti-aircraft gunner, John DeGrasse touched the foot pedal firing mechanism of his 37 mm gun, and livid flame leaped at the enemy tank. The light ack-ack shells bounced off like so many flaming golf balls!

The guns of both sides yammered wildly. Then, suddenly, German resistance was broken, and the SS came out with their hands up. One train, 21 flat cars, 9 passenger coaches, the baggage and equipment of a German panzer company: a staff car and a tank, plus 70 prisoners, were taken as a result of Sergeant Butler's alertness and the smooth teamwork of his crew.

Late in the night, a second train was destroyed by the 32nd Armored Regiment of Combat Command "A", this one carrying four of the latest Mark VI Tiger tanks. After a short but furious fire fight, the train was halted and the tanks either destroyed or captured.

Braisne, on the night of August 28, was a luridly painted town. Both trains burned at the station, and a nearby church tower flamed high in the air. German reconnaissance aircraft roared low over the convoy and dropped flares, but there was no bombing recorded.

At approximately the same time, a third train was destroyed at Soissons by elements of General Boudinot's speeding combat command, this one a freight carrier.

On August 29 the crossings of the Aisne River were secured intact, but one of the bridges was suspected of being damaged. To ascertain the accuracy of this report, General Maurice Rose went himself to check. For this, and for other acts of personal disregard for danger in action, the general was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Both combat commands branched out and seized high ground to the northeast of the river, and CC "B" liberated Laon as well. Troops of the 3rd

The roads were cluttered with smashed and smoldering German transport.

Armored Division found that, fortunately for them, the extensive steel and concrete fortifications north of Soissons, were unmanned. The enemy was still in headlong flight.

At the Aisne River crossing of Combat Command "A", after an order had been received to deepen the bridgehead then existing, Major Stanley Hidalgo instructed MP Lieutenant Arthur Rutshaw to mark the task force route forward, but failed to tell him to travel behind combat troops. Lt. Rutshaw thereupon gathered his MP's and travelled from Borg to Corbeny, a distance of 14 miles, marking the route ahead of fighting elements!

After travelling a considerable distance without seeing any American vehicles, the MP's began to inquire. One woman said: "You're the first Americans I've seen in ten years." Rutshaw's knees were knocking by this time, but he went on to mark the route the rest of the way.

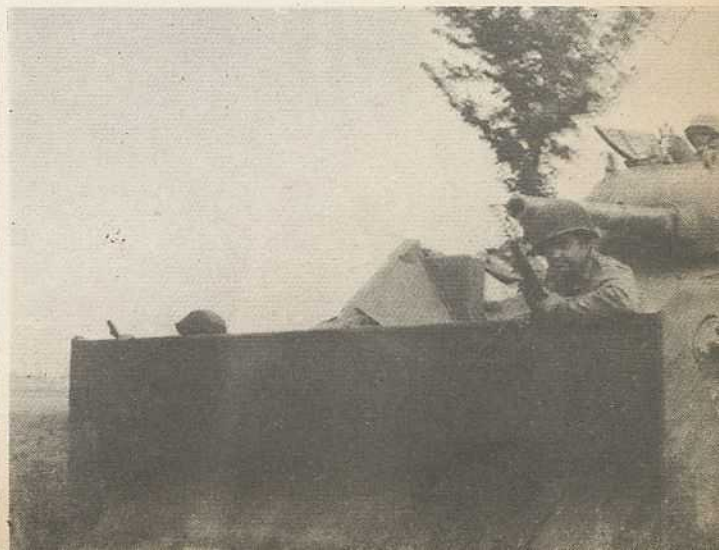
Before infantry units had arrived to relieve the "Spearhead" Division on its bridgehead line, orders came down to strike for Sedan and Charleville.

Again the multiple columns of task forces rumbled out of bivouac and hit a thin crust of resistance which had built up during the brief halt. After blasting a path through these rear-guard elements, exceptionally fast time was made. By 1300, the five spearheading columns had encountered some resistance, but were still smashing ahead. At this time a new order arrived at Forward Echelon which called for a ninety degree change in direction, from due east to north! The new objective was Mons, Belgium, and routes of advance led through Hirson and Vervins.

The speeding combat commands were immediately notified by radio and, at 1430 hours, the entire division had turned on its axis and was again attacking.

This feat is considered to be one of the most spectacular ever accomplished by the 3rd Armored

"Spearhead" task forces made their own roads. Here's one of the tank-dozers which proved so valuable throughout the campaign.







Task force GI's were powder burned and dusty, but that didn't matter to the girls of Belgium. The civilian population went wild with joy as "Spearhead" tanks and infantry rumbled ahead.

Division. At the time the command was given, some of the elements were already 30 miles into the initial drive: yet by voice and radio order, the entire complex plan was shelved, and the new order put into operation in little more than one hour.

A six pronged drive was launched toward Mons on September 1. Battling moderate resistance all the way, Combat Command "B" had reached a position west of Avesnes by nightfall. Combat Command "Reserve" was at Hirson, and CC "A" coiled in the town of Avesnes. As usual, fanatic groups of enemy units closed in behind these front fighting spearheads and supplies came only after sharp fighting along the way. Liaison officers and their drivers were also in trouble during the entire operation. There was no way to tell whether enemy elements had cut the column, except by running the gantlet with a peep and a prayer. The liaison men did the job, although many of them failed to return from these trips.

The enemy was still disorganized, but he was capable of fighting a hard delaying action. In little strong points which consisted of a few tanks and infantry, the Germans persisted in trying to slow division elements. They didn't succeed very well, and air power smashed them when the combat commands were forced to bypass.

General Doyle O. Hickey's Combat Command "A" crossed the Belgian border at 1610 hours on September 2, after passing through Maubeuge. Wildly shouting crowds of Belgians screamed greetings to the first Americans to enter their country in World War II. The objective, which was high ground west of Mons, was reached late in the afternoon and all elements of the "Spearhead" Division had closed in that city of bitter memory by dark. The accomplishment was unfortunate for Nazi Germany.

The second great battle for Mons was not anticipated by either the Wehrmacht or the American First Army, and yet it probably decided the outcome of future battles more profoundly than had any previous action, with the exception of Mortain and Argentan-Falaise, in which the 3rd Armored Division had been engaged. Briefly, an estimated 30,000 German troops, attempting a mass retreat to the fortifications of the Siegfried Line, were met at Mons by the 3rd, cut to pieces, and further mauled by the following 1st Infantry Division. Their organization shattered and without proper communication, this huge force blundered into the road blocks of General Rose's armor during the early morning hours of September 3. The debacle that followed was complete and, as a result, the Siegfried Line never received its full complement of defending troops.

The "Spearhead" Division alone captured nearly 10,000 enemy soldiers at Mons, and killed many more. The 1st Infantry Division, supporting the armor, captured 17,000 after the 3rd had moved forward again upon the order of Major General Collins. Probably never before in the history of warfare has there been so swift a destruction of such a large force. This entire German corps, a part of the Seventh Army, dwindled to nothing in approxi-

Happy! You bet they were happy after four years of Nazi occupation.





mately three days!

At Mons, as at Fromental, there was no such thing as "rear echelon" in the 3rd Armored Division. Headquarters, trains and supply troops fought heavy actions alongside the combat infantry, the tanks, tank-destroyers and the artillery of the command. There were no non-combatants.

American air reconnaissance first observed the approaching enemy columns and Thunderbolts promptly went to work with bombs and strafing attack. The German convoy, which appeared to be miles in length, headed straight for Mons and the shortest way back to the Siegfried Line. Instead, it ran into the road blocks of the 3rd and there foundered in blood and destruction such as few German armies had seen before.

The chaos was complete. A platoon of tank-destroyers, commanded by Captain Bill Smith, destroyed 20 vehicles in one six hour period. His gunners, Cpl. Victor Borek, and Cpl. Frank Karpinski, sent round after round of high explosive and 3-inch armor piercing shells through the successive German vehicles. Infantrymen and engineers herded the enemy in droves, committed them to PW pens if they were willing to surrender, or mowed them down ruthlessly if they chose to fight.

There was no front line at Mons. The smoke and crash of battle was everywhere. A wire crew

of the 143rd Armored Signal Company ambushed and destroyed a German half-track. The section, led by Cpl. Francisco Bolla, used their communications system to good advantage. T/5 John E. Kelley spotted the Jerry vehicle first, but it had already passed his line of fire. Grabbing a phone, Kelley called the next post and shouted: "German half-track loaded with Krauts heading your way!"

"Okay," came the reply — "chalk him up."

The German troops opened up with all arms as they neared the second wire outpost, but Pvt. Leonard Ethridge and Pvt. Stanley R. Presgrave fired the careening half-track with their .50 caliber ground mount. Few of the enemy escaped.

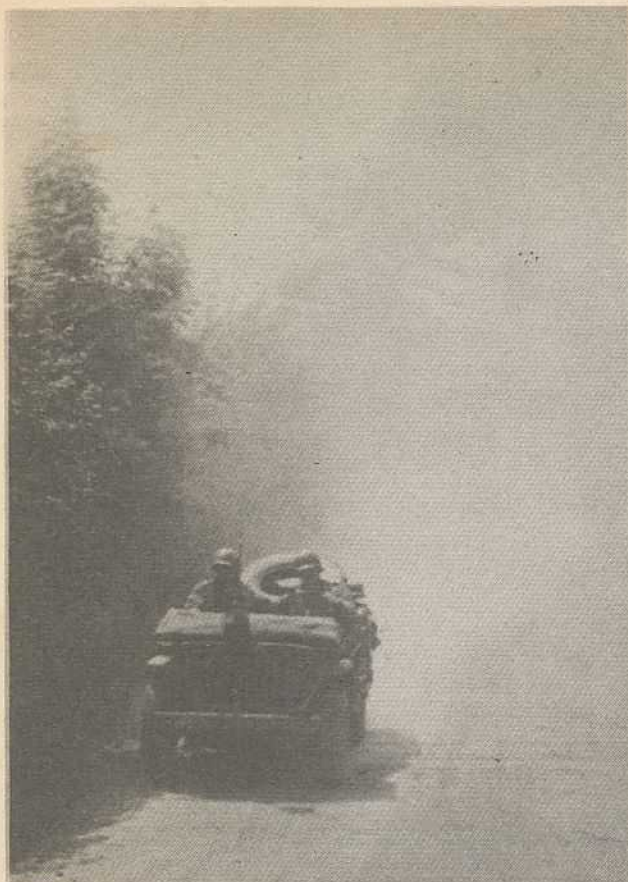
Many more of the signal company's men were with the Division's Forward Echelon and Headquarters Company at Mons, when the group earned a Distinguished Unit Citation for its considerable part in the victory. The ostensibly "rear echelon" troops (and they were never rear echelon in the "Spearhead" Division) cut to pieces a German attack which threatened to overwhelm them.

As though drawn to the city by a fatal fascination, German troops kept pouring in to 3rd Armored Division road blocks. Tanks and tank-destroyers enjoyed a brief field day, the crews firing their big guns until the tubes smoked. 1st Lieutenant Vernon Dingley and Sergeant Tony Bocchino

Not much opposition on the hot plains of northern France, but division Joes weren't taking any chances. They had confidence in the big .50 caliber machine gun.



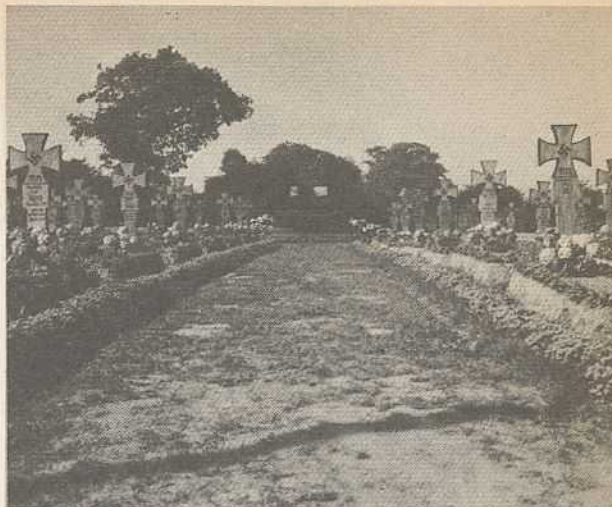




Peeps were kings of the high road, and the low road too. You lived in the dust, breathed it, ate it with the C-rations - and you liked it. Dust was lots better than mud.

brought their big Sherman, ELIMINATOR, into a short battle which saw the destruction of five 170mm artillery pieces, one 88mm dual purpose gun, and 125 motorized and horse drawn vehicles. Artillerymen blasted the confused columns with direct fire from their 105mm self propelled guns.

Prisoners came in thousands at Mons and three German general officers were captured. Lt. General Rudiger von Heyking, of the 6th Luftwaffe Field Division, said that he had been completely surprised by our forces. Heyking had been erroneously advised that there was a 15 mile escape gap south of Mons. Major General Hubertus von Aulock, brother of the "Madman of St. Malo," was taken with his whole staff by Captain Walter I. Berlin of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment. Von Aulock had been commander of the Kampfgruppe which was supposed to defend Paris. General Karl Wahle, and his artillery commander, a Colonel Lueken, was captured on the 4th of September. Wahle at one time had been garrison commander of the city of Hamburg. These, and thousands of their men crowded into a POW enclosure located in and around an old sugar refinery in Mons. Their very



Very neat and workmanlike was the cemetery of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Goetz von Berlichsen Division, at Hambye.

number constituted a serious problem for the division's provost marshal, Major Charles H. Kapes. With prisoners still pouring in by the hundreds, and close to 4,000 already confined, Kapes, and a force which consisted of 16 division MP's and 27 doughboys from the 1st Infantry Division, waged a pitched battle against attacking German soldiers. The major and his 47 men managed to hold off the frenzied attack and, after it was over, they found that they had captured 300 more of the befuddled supermen!

Mons was not only confusing to the Germans, it was something beyond reason to men of the 3rd. Many Jerry soldiers came in and surrendered willingly enough, but there were others, like the group of paratroopers who attempted to blast through a 36th Armored Infantry road block to rescue their general officers. After a short, sharp fight they were all killed, or wounded and captured. And, at Mons, a CC "A" MP, directing traffic at night, calmly motioned a Mark-V Panther tank into an American bivouac area. The Kraut continued on in and surrendered!

By noon of September 4, the situation had become partially stabilized. There were still thousands of prisoners to be taken, but the 1st Infantry Division was systematically rounding them up. Road nets around the city were choked with wrecked and burning vehicles of the Wehrmacht, and the dead were so numerous that graves registration crews shook their heads sadly in contemplation of the job they faced. The Spearhead Division had suffered relatively light casualties.

Major General "Lightning Joe" Collins, believing that the time was ripe for further advance, ordered the 3rd Armored Division forward again. Namur was the new objective. Flushed with the Mons victory, the division moved east in four





GIs of the command, and French civilians, inspect the remains of a Nazi horse drawn supply train knocked out by division units.

columns of task forces, Combat Command "A" on the left, and General Boudinot's CC "B" on the right. Cheering Belgians urged the armor forward. There was sun and dust and victory in the air. The war seemed practically over.

However it was not time for rejoicing. The hills of Belgium were replacing stubble fields and wide plains country: Little, picturesque towns nestled at the bottoms of deep gorges, and the precipitous hills soared far above. Such terrain might be easily defended. The tankers of the 3rd proceeded swiftly, but with new caution. Somewhere the German could be expected to make a last-ditch stand. Was it here?

Evidently not: a task force commanded by Lt. Colonel Herbert Mills reached Namur on September 4, taking a route south of Jemeppe. The rest of CC "B" advanced further south, meeting some resistance all the way. Bridges over the Meuse and Sambre Rivers had been blown.

In some places the pursuit was fast becoming a triumphal march. Wildly cheering multitudes of Belgians mobbed the columns. General Hickey had allotted his combat command 45 minutes to traverse Charleroi. The passage actually came to that—plus two hours, because of the milling, celebrating thousands of civilians.

One bridge had been discovered intact at Namur. Now, troops of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion threw another across the Meuse and, at dawn, both spans were ready for division traffic.

A task force commanded by Lt. Colonel Rosewell King was detached to aid the 9th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Dinant. The rest of CC "B" crossed the Meuse while elements of Combat Command "A" found themselves fighting a sharp battle to get through Namur.



Sgt. Chester A. Dahlymeyer ponders the inscription on the Aisne-Marne monument: "Time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

Members of the Belgian Armee Blanche had asserted that the bridges at Huy were still intact, so General Rose ordered one task force of CC "B" to spearhead far in the lead of other units and seize the crossings. Although sharp fighting broke out to the east of Namur, the task force broke through and captured two undamaged spans at Huy. The rest of the division immediately drove for the city, "A" on the north side of the Meuse, and "B" on the south. By nightfall, both assault commands had reached their objectives. Behind the leading elements of "B", Task Force Hogan began to experience stiff resistance from the usual bypassed infantry and anti-tank gun positions.

Increased opposition indicated that the German defenders were preparing a defensive line along the river. General Rose, striking swiftly, upset the plan. While Hickey's CC "A" battered forward in a bold frontal assault on Liege, Boudinot's tankers swung right in a wide, circling maneuver over high ground. Rumbling forward irresistibly against harassing fire and small groups of enemy defenders, CC "B" reached a position on the southeast side of Liege by sunset. The command was still fighting



and taking prisoners by the hundreds, but it appeared that the swift maneuver was a success.

In the meantime, Combat Command "A", in frontal attack on the city, faced heavier defences and was momentarily halted by a number of heavy, dual purpose anti-aircraft guns on the outskirts. Concentrated and extremely accurate fire by the 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion destroyed these guns in a dramatic duel, and General Hickey sent patrols probing forward.

The flanking movement accomplished by CC "B" had evidently taken the enemy completely by surprise. Elements of General Boudinot's command had crossed the Meuse on a bridge south of the city and were in position to observe all permanent defence installations. In fact, when enemy defenders awoke to the fact that they had again been out-guessed by the 3rd Armored Division, their guns were pointed in the wrong direction. General Rose accompanied the circling force and must have derived keen satisfaction from its obvious success.

Although the situation now appeared to be well under control, there were the usual tragedies of the small actions. Outside the city, elements of the 32nd Armored Regiment, the 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, and the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, had mopped up and gone into a leaguer for the night. The area appeared to be well secured and men were allowed the luxury of showers in a nearby factory building. Unbeknownst to the "Spearhead" command, however, a group of bypassed enemy soldiers were hiding on the brushy slopes of a huge slag pile nearby. One of these men decided to snipe at American troops. His one and

only victim was a tank-destroyer ace, whom crewmates found lying halfway to the shower point, his soap and towel still in his hand and his pockets rifled. He had been shot through the head.

Throughout the entire combat command the tank buster had a reputation for cool bravery and skill. If he had been killed in flaming action, his friends would have shrugged their shoulders in the manner of frontline GI's who have borne so much sorrow that additional pain is just so much weariness. They felt: if a soldier must die, then it should be in action, going forward. This death—to be killed by a skulking sniper behind the lines, was revolting. Lt. Colonel John K. Boles immediately asked that the tank-destroyers be allowed to comb the slag pile personally in an effort to avenge their crewmate. However, long before Boles had been advised of the affair, tankers, artillerists and TD troopers were all in action. The snipers were very shortly rounded up.

Again, as so often happened when German defenders found themselves outmaneuvered by the powerful drive of the 3rd Armored Division, there was a mad scramble by the enemy to get out of town. On the night of September 7, General Konrad Heinrich, commander of the 89th German Infantry Division, was killed as he attempted to motor through a roadblock in a civilian car. His body lay by the Belgian roadside like that of any other Kraut soldier, and passing citizens of Liege spat upon it.

Division forces immediately mopped up the metropolitan area and combat engineers of Colonel Foster's command constructed 510 feet of treadway

Laon looked like this to the liberators of the city. Combat Command "B" was there first.



Men of the French FFI guard a German convoy that never got back to the fatherland.



bridge across the Meuse under cover of darkness. General Bock von Wolfingen, a German military government official, was captured on the 8th, falling prey to a Combat Command "B" road block which alone accounted for 35 enemy vehicles in two days.

Liege was practically undamaged, and the civilian population went wild with joy as "Spearhead" tanks rumbled over the wide, cobblestoned avenues. Once again cognac, champagne, and pretty girls overwhelmed the fatigued but happy troops of America. There were kisses and flowers and gifts of all kinds — even ice cream.

Tanker Lloyd Rinker received a package of the cool delicacy and promptly set it down on the hot transmission of his tank. Later, by the time he remembered — what with cheering crowds, squealing girls, and all — the ice cream sandwiches were rather the worse for wear.

Although the German army seemed to be paralyzed, there was no halting to celebrate in Liege. The big "Spearhead" Division arrowed for Verviers and it became apparent that the Siegfried Line wasn't too far ahead. General Boudinot's CC "B" set out at 1100 hours on September 9 and, for the first time in days, met organized and heavy resistance. Engineers worked during the night hours to build a bridge across the Eauspa River.

Meanwhile, General Hickey's armored striking force moved to the east side of the Meuse and, in spite of sharp opposition, advanced quickly to the high ground north of Dison. Air reconnaissance revealed enemy escape columns stretching from Louveigne to Limbourg, and the Thunderbolts im-

mediately went to work strafing and bombing vehicular traffic. By nightfall, leading elements of the 33rd Armored Regiment were consolidating their positions in Pepinster.

Operation in the narrow Belgian valleys was not especially appreciated by division soldiers who recalled the accuracy of German anti-tank gunners throughout the long campaign. However, aside from short, quickly terminated struggles, the Belgian sweep had been surprisingly easy. Now, Combat Command "A" reached Limbourg, and CC "B" went on to Theux, battling sporadic resistance and clearing many felled trees, which were used as road blocks, from the right of way. General Boudinot's tankers rolled into Verviers on the same day and the entire division joined them there.

Verviers was a pleasant textile town where a large minority of the people spoke English. Again celebrating Belgians threatened to slow the drive.

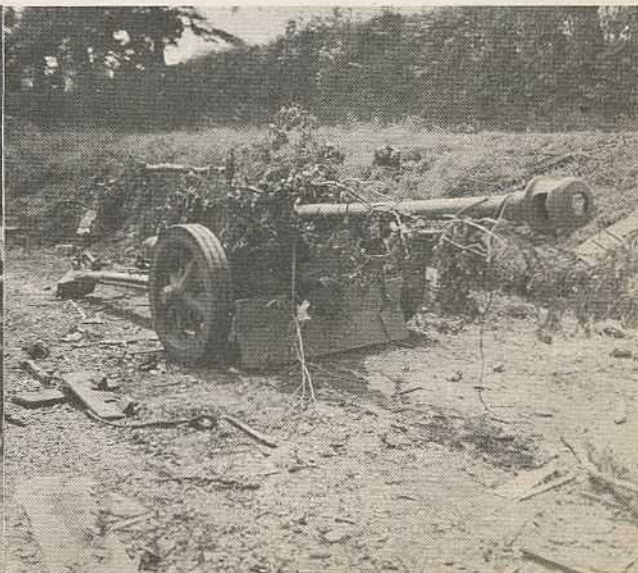
At Verviers, one of the amusing sidelights of war brought chuckles from men who were almost too tired to smile. An American P-47 fighter plane was shot down over the city. The pilot chuted to safety, but his aircraft roared down out of control and crashed heavily into a dwelling house. Bob Reuben, a newspaperman who was accompanying the division, and who habitually wore a fleece lined flying jacket, strolled into the house by way of a side door, in order to ascertain the damage. When he emerged again, by the front entrance, the amazed war correspondent found a frantic throng gathered to scream greetings to the lucky "pilot."

Grimly, the men of the command noted that town names were losing their Belgian origin. Eupen

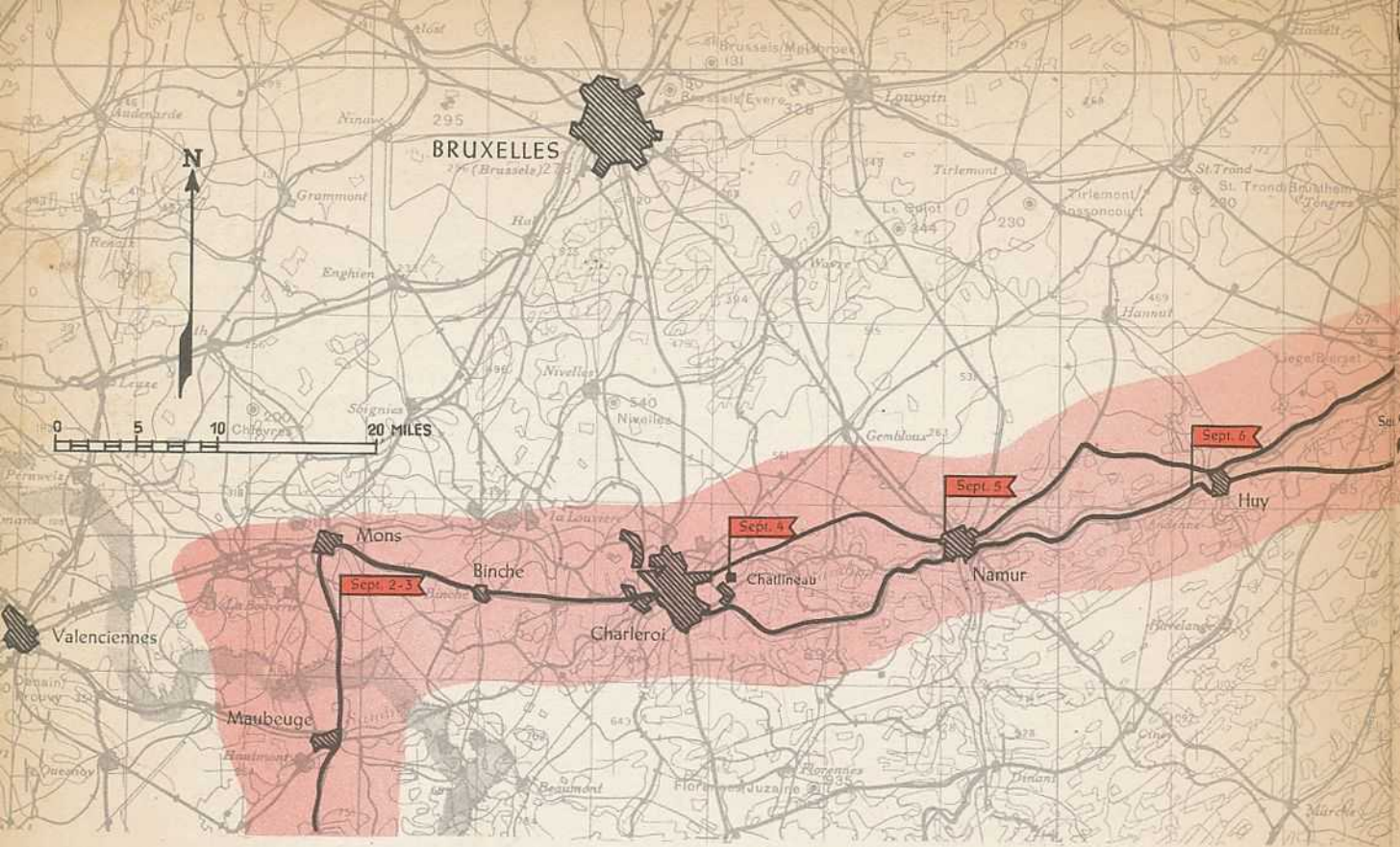
A collaborator is taken into custody by resistance forces at Namur.



Big poison to task force tanks. The German anti-tank guns were well made and accurate.

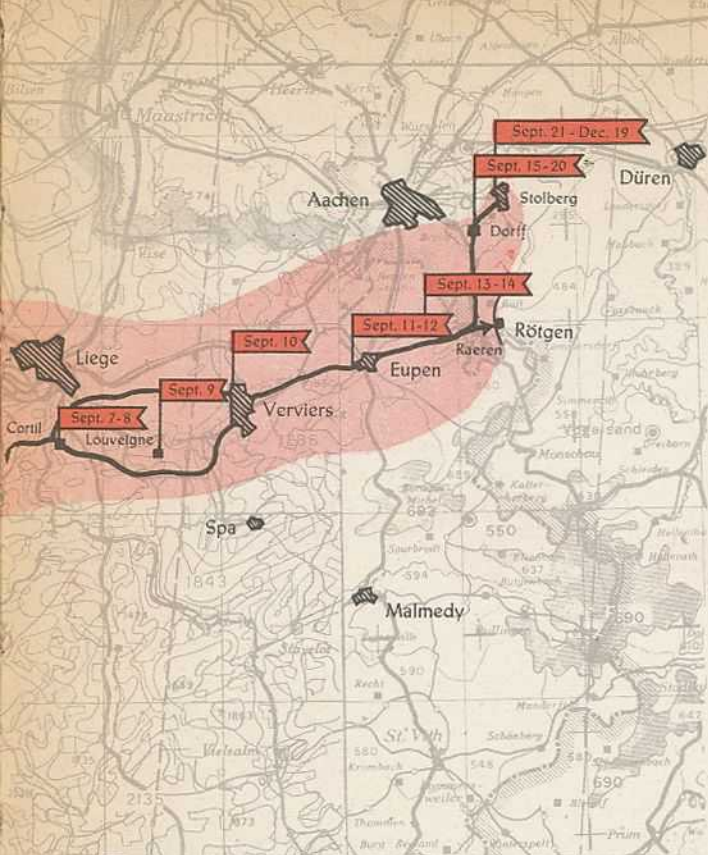






Near Mayenne, France, these GI's took a short holiday from war in order to help load wheat.

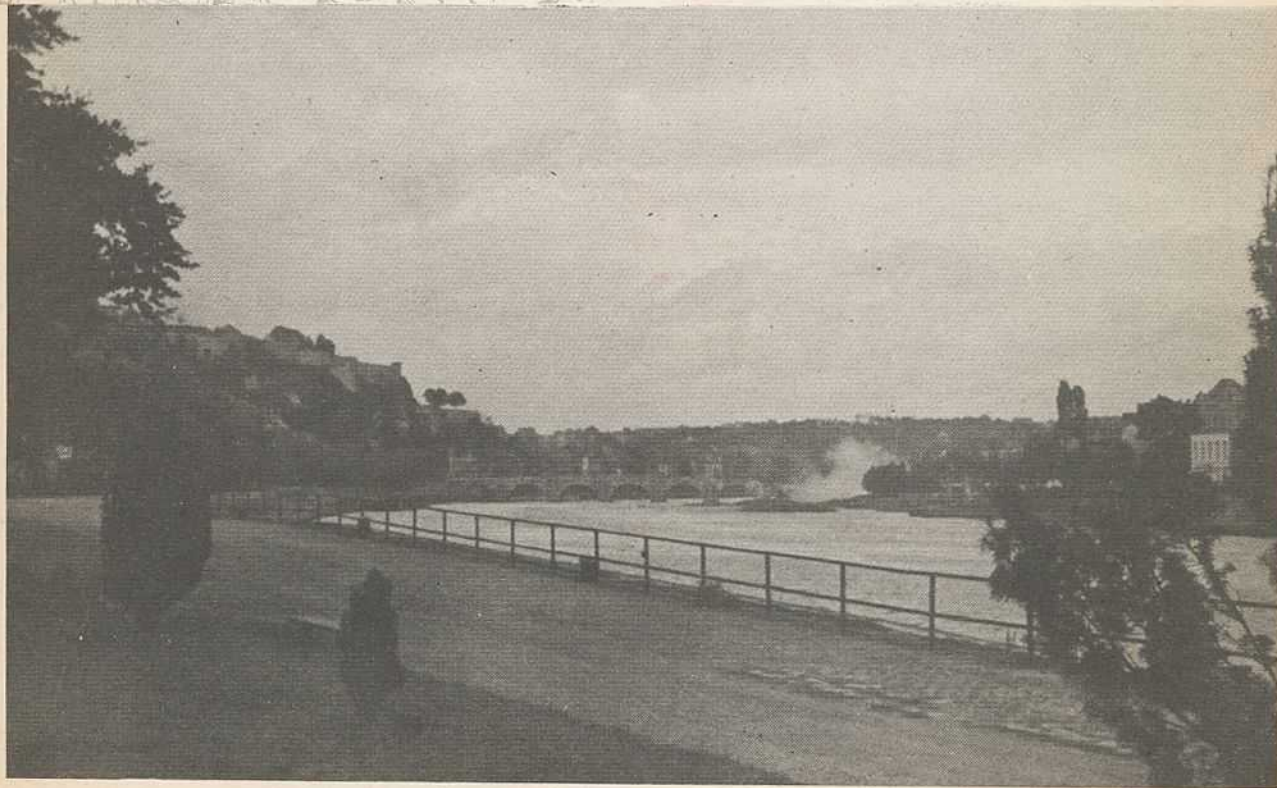




fell to Combat Command "B" on the 11th and was occupied by the infantry. Combat Command "A" advanced through Lohirville and Welkenraedt against constant opposition. The enemy was now using every device to halt or slow rampaging "Spearhead" tanks and infantrymen. In spite of air cover and a screen of 83rd Armored Reconnaissance vehicles in front of the heavy columns, serious resistance was encountered all the way.

There was no longer any evidence of V-for-Victory signs, nor flowers and "Vive la Amerique" declarations. Eupen was theoretically Belgian, but it was a sullen, paradoxical town. A few Belgian flags hung from the windows: in others trailed the white banner of surrender. Street signs conflicted in French and Germany wording.

This was border country, a place of conflicting emotions, bitter hatred—and suspense. Snipers appeared and were systematically hunted down. The artillery pounded in quickening tempo. There were few civilians on the streets to watch American armor clatter by, but behind the drawn curtains many a sympathizer of the Third Reich must have watched—with terror, and some wonder at this manifestation of overwhelming power aimed unerringly at the Siegfried Line.



At Namur, Belgium, German shellfire lands near a contested bridge.



Combat Command "B" had taken the city by 1600 hours on September 11th. Numerous road blocks and blown bridges had delayed the force, but division engineers made proper use of their portable treadways and the mission had been accomplished with relatively small loss of life.

The gates of Germany loomed before the "Spearhead" Division. Weary men, spent after the long pursuit across northern France and Belgium,

readied their played-out fighting vehicles for the assault which the world had long awaited. Deep into the night of September 11-12, 1944, the combat commanders strained their red-rimmed eyes over operations maps. Dirty and ragged, their nerves screaming from lack of sleep and constant concussion of the guns, General Courtney Hodges's first Americans shrugged their shoulders wearily — and prepared to hit that line hard.

"The army would be better off," said Pvt. Ed 'Father Dooligan' Dowling proudly, "if there were no non-coms or officers at all — like our crew." He gestured grandly about the circle: there were Pvt. Walter Stockowski, Pvt. Victor Doe, Pvt. Tom Escamilla, Pvt. 'Wee Willie' Willis, and T/5 Otto Reicharbt.

"What about T 5 Reicharbt?" the war correspondent asked.

"Do you call him a no-com?" Dowling roared, "him that is our driver and should by all rights be busted back to a civilian?"

Otto chuckled at this sally. The war correspondent wanted to hear about an action at Mons.

"Say that the army let us down," Dowling exclaimed sadly. "Three times we asked for help, and three times did those scissorbills forget to send us help."

"So?"

"So we had to kill off all the Krauts ourselves! Here was our little 57 mm gun sitting in the valley on a road block. Here was a million Jerries trying to bust through our lines and get back to Hitler. First they sent an armored half-track . . . ."

"The half-track wasn't the worst of it," 'Wee Willie' interrupted. "Just as we'd started a good argument about nothing in particular, Escamilla sings out 'More Jerries coming!' And we all got back to our guns."

"They came right over the skyline," Reicharbt said, "in single file as though they were on parade. That fooled us for a minute. I remember Doe saying, 'Those guys must be prisoners of war on the way back to the collecting point.'"

Dowling was puzzled. He put his glasses on the column. "Prisoners, me eye!" he yelled. "They're carrying machine guns!"

The 57mm gun went into immediate action, Stockowski and Doe pouring high explosive shells into the marching troops. 'Wee Willie' Willis flopped down behind his fifty, and 'Father Dooligan' zeroed the air-cooled .30 caliber machine gun.

"They were like a bunch of ducks," Dowling exclaimed. "The dumb bastards kept marching forward while we mowed them down. Finally they scattered and began to work us over with small arms. More troops came over the hill and we thought they'd flank us. That's when we sent back for help."

"There wasn't any help," Doe said, "The whole 'Spearhead' Division was up against the same situation. So we just kept pouring it into those Krauts. Willis burned up 600 rounds of .50 caliber ammunition and 'Father Dooligan' put 1300 through the .30. I don't think I'll tell you how many shells we used in the 57 — the supply officer would have kittens!"

"But you stopped the attack, didn't you?" the war correspondent said.

"Sure we stopped it," Dowling agreed. "We got a half-track and more than 250 Kraut troops."

"Without any help," 'Wee Willie' added.

"Without any help at all, at all," echoed 'Father Dooligan', and that turned out to be a good thing too — for had they sent us some goofy officer or non-com we'd all have been killed! But anyway," he chuckled, "tell em that the army let us down. And be sure to mention that there isn't a non-com in the crew. Get away Reicharbt, you model-T disgrace to our purity!"



# ★ RHINELAND *Phase One*

Now General Maurice Rose sent reconnaissance jabbing forward to determine the best routes to the Siegfried Line, to probe enemy strength, and to seek crossings through the dragon's teeth, those jagged symbols of Nazi Germany.

Task Force Lovelady, of Combat Command "B", led by units of Reconnaissance Company, 33rd Armored Regiment, went first, but progress was slow because of numerous road blocks which had to be cleared by engineers with bulldozers.

Resistance increased steadily as the task force neared German territory but, at 1451 hours, the first reconnaissance vehicles, closely followed by the main body of Colonel Lovelady's force, rolled across the border into the town of Roetgen. Several machine gun nests were mopped up and an enemy staff car destroyed. The infantry, tanks and tank-destroyers went on through, and the first German town to fall to an invader since the wars of Napoleon had been taken. That night the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion occupied Roetgen and secured its approaches.

In the meantime, the division's other patrol actions had been hindered by terrain and enemy opposition. On the evening of September 12-13,

both combat commands prepared for the all-out assault.

Under cover of darkness, Hickey's crack Task Force "X", commanded by Lt. Colonel L. L. Doan, assembled in the Aachen-Eynatten wood. The plan was simple; the first waves of infantry, supported by direct tank-destroyer fire, were to secure high ground just beyond the dragon's teeth. Immediately following this part of the operation, men of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion would move forward and breach the obstacle line with high explosive charges. The tanks, which were usually considered point of the "Spearhead", would then go on into Germany behind the "Queen of Battles" and the engineers.

The attack began at 0800 hours when "Blitz Doughs" of the 1st Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment moved forward as planned. Under a covering barrage fired by division artillery, mortars, assault guns and the tank-destroyers, Company "C" first hurdled the dragon's teeth and advanced through a murderous hail of small arms fire. Division artillery threw concentration after concentration ahead of the advancing infantry, but enemy mortar bursts began to crump viciously among these



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assault forces and the first wave faltered.

Rallying, these doughboys and engineers went on to take a number of pillbox positions and machine gun nests. Behind them, M-10 tank-destroyers sent long lances of direct fire at stubborn fortifications. The battle swayed in hot, fearful suspense.

Colonel Lawrence G. Foster's engineers, working frantically to attach explosives to the dragon's teeth, were raked with fire from machine guns and mortars. Still they persevered, and finally blew a path through the obstacles.

In the meantime, Colonel Doan had made a startling discovery — a ready made opening in the line! Evidently this path had been constructed by local farmers, and the retreating Wehrmacht had not found time to block it sufficiently. Into this breach Doan sent a flail tank, or "Scorpion," one of those Shermans which were fitted with a whirling chain mechanism to detonate mines.

The flail rumbled forward, reached the wicked array of dragon's teeth and, by an odd quirk of chance, was stopped cold — not by enemy fire, but because one of the huge chain flails had become entangled in the "teeth" of the Siegfried Line. Behind the "Scorpion" an armored division waited to smash into Germany. Before it, crack troops of Hitler's Wehrmacht noted the situation and poured small arms and mortar fire into the breach.

This action suddenly became one of those pivotal points in battle upon which hang the success or failure of an entire mission. Up ahead the "Blitz Doughs" were hanging on to their conquered ground by a prayer and an eyelash. They'd taken a number of pillboxes, but others sprayed a withering cross fire along the entire ridge. One concrete fort, which had been blasted by direct tank destroyer fire, still spewed lead each time an infantryman moved. When called upon to surrender, the German defenders shouted: "Go to hell — we'll fight it out!" It was an admirable attitude, but one that did not last. Soon afterward the 12 man bunker crew filed out, half blinded and dazed from the concussion of heavy shells hitting their retreat.

But all this had not yet happened, and in those long, terrible moments when the flail seemed to spell doom to the entire operation, five men were suddenly very important people. They were, Sergeant Sverry "Weegie" Dahl, and his crew in the "Scorpion;" Gunner Technician Charles Hughes, Technician Milt Jeffery, Pvt. Orrin Madden, and Pvt. James L. Ferguson. The world has never heard of their part in the following action, but men of the "Spearhead" watched it with bated breath on that day in September, 1944.

These men never hesitated. Under intense small arms fire and mortar bursts, all five piled out of their stranded vehicle and proceeded to disentangle the flails from the dragon's teeth. Two medium tanks,

in tandem, then pulled the machine clear. Ducking back under the protective armor, Dahl and his crew again rumbled forward through the gap. American tanks followed them into the first line of Germany's west wall.

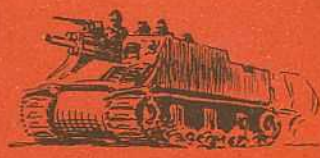
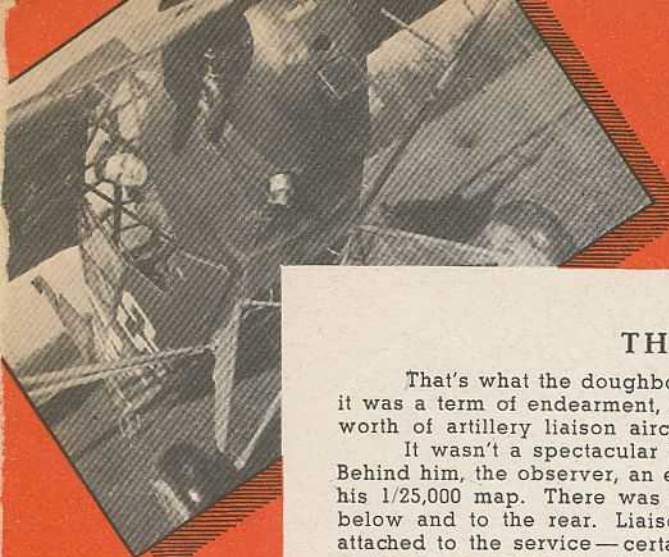
Twenty tanks of the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Armored Regiment, began cruising the area of fortification south of Verscheid. A number of 88mm dual purpose guns and pillboxes were knocked out, but casualties mounted alarmingly. Captain Louis F. Plummer, commanding the "Blitz Doughs" was wounded and evacuated. Lt. Colonel William R. Orr then assumed command of the battalion. It was his first day in action, and Orr later stated that he never expected to see another dawn.

Meanwhile, the tanks were dueling with enemy armor and 88's. One by one the American Shermans were hit and set ablaze. At dusk on that bitter day, Colonel Doan, his lean face set in a scowl of worry, dismounted and travelled from one to another of his remaining vehicles, giving instructions and attempting to bolster morale. He was there all night, on the drive to Nutheim, shouting hoarse-voiced directions and disregarding the constant rain of death. At one time, Doan could see seven of his tanks blazing among the pillboxes. There was a steady flickering of guns along the skyline, and a meshing crackle of small arms to accentuate the curving whistle and crash of shells.

The first platoon of reinforcing tanks arrived as darkness began to hide the German countryside. Doughs and tankers went on together in the flame-bitten darkness with division artillery firing heavy support over their heads. By 2300 hours a halt was made to reorganize. The various elements coiled, and infantry outposted the area. At midnight, on September 13, General Hickey's big combat command had bored deep into Siegfried defenses and it appeared certain that there was nothing Jerry could do about it.

General Truman E. Boudinot's tankers and supporting arms had also engaged in a vicious struggle during the day. His two task forces, one under Lt. Colonel William B. Lovelady, and the other commanded by Lt. Colonel Rosewell H. King, had been delayed by craters, steel cables stretched across the road, iron gates, and mines as well as heavy defensive fires. Both task forces drove forward, however, Lovelady's men advancing in the general direction of Rott over a good road initially, and King's troops in the direction of Kornelimunster. Combat Command "B" engineers were also called upon to work under heavy fire in order to place demolitions and to remove mines along the route. At dusk Lovelady's task force had reached a creek near Vicht, and coiled to await night bridging operations by the engineers. Colonel King attempted a frontal assault on Schmidthof, but his infantry and tanks, although





## THE SPEARHEAD'S STUKAS!

That's what the doughboys and tankers of the 3rd Armored Division called them. Actually it was a term of endearment, because the men of the "Spearhead" knew and appreciated the worth of artillery liaison aircraft over the blazing front line.

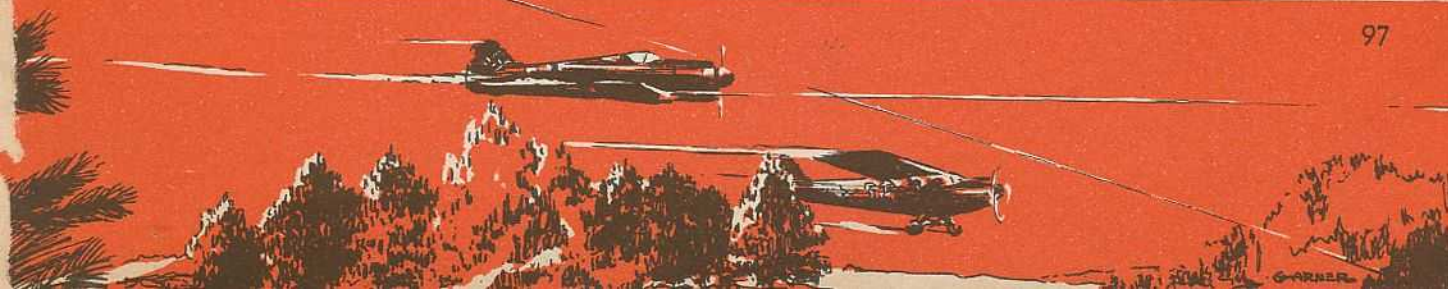
It wasn't a spectacular job. The pilot sat up front and attended to the business of flying. Behind him, the observer, an experienced artilleryman, studied the ground and compared it with his 1/25,000 map. There was constant radio communication with Division Artillery, somewhere below and to the rear. Liaison pilots and observers were workmen. There was little glory attached to the service—certainly none of the glitter and dash of pursuit or the Jove-like power of heavy bombardment. They didn't go home after completing a certain number of missions. Instead, they flew right out of one campaign and into another. Except for the complete adoration of ground forces, who had seen Cub observers direct withering counter-battery on enemy big guns, the reward was small.

Surveillance of scheduled shoots and the registration of counter-battery was the aerial observer's bread and butter, but quite often he was called upon to direct close support fire. In the bocage country of Normandy, where high ground was at a premium of blood, the Cubs were a God-send. Their appearance over the battle zone was a matter of vast satisfaction to allied ground troops and a constant source of irritation to the enemy. German soldiers knew that the cost of poor camouflage discipline was always detection by the Cubs and a subsequent rain of American high explosives. There was nothing that Jerry could do about it: when he counter-attacked the American line, the flying observers brought down a barrage of hot steel. When he attempted to knock Fortresses and Liberators out of formation, ever-present Cubs put the finger on one flak position after another—and "the finger" meant an immediate counter-battery. Sometimes the enemy was goaded to a boiling rage and then he sent over a flight of precious fighters to neutralize the irritation. A Luftwaffe pilot who bailed out of a smashed Me-109 over Hastenrath, Germany, admitted that his mission had been to strafe the landing strips of liaison aircraft. That day, seventeen enemy fighters were shot down by anti-aircraft while attempting to carry out like sorties.

There was plenty of danger in artillery flying. Flak and small arms was part of it: enemy planes were big poison. When a Focke-Wulf 190 popped out of the clouds or zoomed from the deck in a vicious attack, your Cub pilot might only rely on a minimum of evasive action to keep his dog-tags together. In comparison with a fighter, light plane speed was a joke. There was no armor plate to deflect machine-gun slugs and cannon fire, no high speed to elude attack. Yet, in spite of all the occupational hazards, few of the numerous front-line liaison teams were knocked out of the sky. Cub pilots were probably more respectful of their own artillery arching through the air on the way to enemy positions than they were of flak or Nazi fighters. Captain Francis P. Farrel, Division Air Officer, and a famous "Spearhead" pilot, was killed in action when his L-4 was destroyed by an American shell over Stolberg, Germany. Lt. Thomas Turner, a red-headed veteran of Africa and Sicily, as well as the western European campaign, barely escaped a like fate when a 105mm projectile passed completely through the stabilizer and rudder of his aircraft without detonating! These were the unfortunate accidents of war which were almost impossible to prevent under combat conditions.

There was no blemish of temperament about the little L-4 Cubs. They paced the attacking spearheads day after day. Whenever the armor coiled, the small planes landed to refuel with regular gasoline before resuming aerial reconnaissance. The work was done from altitudes of 2,000 to 3,000 feet over the lines, but a low ceiling often forced the tiny machines much lower. Regardless of the weather, if there was any visibility at all, the Cubs went up.

Each artillery battalion of the "Spearhead" Division, along with the headquarters commanded by Colonel Frederic J. Brown, operated a pair of these small, but indispensable airplanes. They kept a constant vigil on the front line, and there was very little "incoming mail" when the "Stukas" were flying.







White flags were hanging in the windows at Eupen, but there was shellfire and sniping all the same.

Captain Francis P. Farrel, Division Artillery Air Officer, was one of the "Spearhead" Division's finest Cub pilots. He was killed in action over Stolberg, Germany, when an artillery shell struck his plane in flight.

well supported by artillery, were stopped after small gains. Fortifications, heavy concentrations of mortar and small arms fire, plus well dug-in and camouflaged anti-tank guns, were too much for the battle depleted task force. However, both Lovelady's and King's men were well into Siegfried defenses.

Both combat commands drove forward again on September 14. CC "A" toward Brand, south of Aachen, where it coiled under heavy lashing by enemy mortars and artillery, and CC "B" to the outskirts of Breinig, encountering more road blocks and fixed fortifications. General Boudinot's tankers crossed the second line of Siegfried defenses on September 15, in spite of heavy resistance, and Hickey's men also continued the drive on through, even though losses thinned their potential strength. Many of the "Spearhead" Division's crack soldiers were lost at the Siegfried Line, either to death or wounds. S/Sgt. Lafayette Pool, one of the greatest, was evacuated with a serious leg injury after his tank had been hit while breaching the second line of defenses. Lt. Colonel Walter B. Richardson saw Pool knocked out of action and gritted his teeth at the sight. Richardson was a commander who felt deeply the tragedy of war and who was yet one of the 3rd Armored Division's most capable combat commanders.

During the following days, all of which were a nightmare of whistling shells and heavy mortar fire, men of the 3rd continued to mop up the area they had taken. Combat Command "Reserve" went into action here while the other two commands paused for breath.

By September 23, half of Stolberg had been taken, but the city was still full of machine gun fire and the scream of shells. General Maurice Rose, always anxious to be with frontline elements, moved his CP to the Prym House, which overlooked Stol-

berg and was within small arms range of the enemy lines. For some reason, probably because the enemy never expected an American general and his staff to be so near the front, the CP was never demolished by shell fire or aerial bombardment, although it received samples of both.

Slowly, the big division ground to a halt in the Stolberg-Mausbach-Breinig area. Elements of the 1st Infantry Division took over part of the wide sector, and the "Spearhead" began to regroup and take stock of losses which were severe. That 18-day dash from the Seine to the Siegfried had been successful and very spectacular, but it had cost a great deal in men and machinery. There were scarcely 100 tanks of the original 400 left in proper operating condition. Supply had begun to lag in spite of the heroic effort of those troops who made trips of more than 200 miles in order to bring up vital ammunition, fuel and rations. Much of this supply, in fact, was still funneling through the floating piers in Normandy beach areas, and it was nothing short of a miracle that the armies had been able to drive so far without a great port on the continent of Europe.

Now, the entire First Army had reached Germany's borders, but the "Spearhead" and the 1st Infantry Divisions were out on the point of a salient, and it was impossible for them to advance further until their flanks were secure. Therefore, the battle of attrition, which was hoped to be of short duration, began. Although men of the striking forces still believed that the war was practically over, there was still eight months of furious combat to be concluded before VE Day.

There was no magic formula or employment of secret weapons in this first breaching of the Siegfried Line. It was done by one armored division supported by attached infantry and artillery, but without air support. There was tactical surprise in the



victory, but much of it could be ascribed to plain Yankee guts and know-how. One could go into the tactical plan and see how the entire operation had been the result of well-integrated teamwork. There was first the "Queen of Battles," the men of the infantry who take so great a part in every victory by force of arms. And there were the engineers, the heroic technicians of combat who must solve their problems of demolition or construction under the heaviest of defensive fire.

There were the tanks and tank-destroyers, the pin-point accuracy of division artillery, and the non-conforming, but highly successful blasting of pillboxes by direct 155mm gunfire. These different branches of service, all working together as one vast team, took their losses and bored in to complete the job.

Actually, the battle for the Siegfried Line had begun at Mons, Belgium, on September 3, when the 3rd Armored Division and the 1st Infantry destroyed that German corps which was retreating to take up positions in Westwall fortifications. As a result of that historic engagement, Germany was forced to supplement her first line forces with a number of very poorly trained elements. On September 19, for example, a prisoner of war was taken who asserted that he was 63 years old and had been a non-com in 1914. The prisoner, an infantryman captured in the fierce house-to-house fighting which took place in the factory district of Stolberg, said that he had been in the army for only three weeks and was told that his duties would be confined to guarding the "numerous" American prisoners of war taken by the Wehrmacht. Instead of which, he griped, he had been given a rifle and sent to the front.

There were numbers of such ancient warriors in

the daily POW line-up, plus a percentage who were terribly young. Several declared that they had been sent to clean up block houses and defense points prior to their occupation by fresh troops. The promised reinforcements never arrived, and the raggle-taggle army of boys and old men suddenly found themselves in a desperate battle for which they had never been trained.

There were even a few reports of women in the pillboxes. American troops flushed a number of these females who had been living with soldiers in frontline bunkers. Whether the "blitz maedels" ever actually took part in fighting is a point for discussion. GI's of the "Spearhead" didn't much care. They promptly labeled these characters "Pill-box Annie's" and sent them to the rear for interrogation along with the other sad-sack prisoners.

Battered, and finally at a standstill, the 3rd Armored Division had wound up one of the most amazing armored force operations in the history of warfare. Eighteen days from the Seine to the Siegfried! And now, in a last, climactic surge of strength, the division had smashed completely through that legendary westwall into the confines of greater Germany. Then, like an athlete who has breached the tape of victory and stands exhausted, the "Spearhead" paused. Vehicles were demanding maintenance. Men were haggard with fatigue. It was a long road they travelled and the far horizon was still befogged with smoke of battle.

Stolberg was a divided city, half in German hands, half occupied by the 3rd Armored Division. There was a constant exchange of shellfire here, and fall rains had begun to change the front into a quagmire. Big guns of division artillery, buzz-bombs, "incoming mail," and air raids kept troops from sleeping too soundly at night.

War correspondents of the world's press travelled with the 3rd Armored Division during its great drives. This was at Eupen, just before the assault on the Siegfried Line

James Cassady, of NBC, recorded the sound of battle on the 3rd Armored Division front.







Men of Division Artillery man a forward observation post in the Forward Echelon at Stolberg.



Medics worked under shellfire in the Rhineland and set up receiving stations close to the front.

For the most part, Combat Command "A" was stationed in Breinig. General Boudinot's CC "B" was between Breinig and Kornelimunster, and Division Rear Echelon at Raeren. Colonel Robert L. Howze, Jr., commander of CC "R", maintained a headquarters near forward echelon, on the outskirts of Stolberg. All of the other small towns in the area, such as Busbach, Schutzheid, and Mausbach, were also occupied by division troops and shelled periodically. The road from Busbach to Stolberg was a bowling alley for German 88's, and that from Breinig to Stolberg could not be considered much better.

While the stalemate continued and supply built up behind the lines, a bitter series of patrol actions went on in and about the demolished houses which constituted a sort of modern no-man's-land on this new western front.

From a world viewpoint, patrol clashes were merely a line in the daily communique, but to GI-Joe and his German counterpart, the men who kept the deadly rendezvous, it was primitive battle at its horrific height of strangle-hold and knife. These actions were seldom of great importance but they helped to round out the G-2 intelligence picture of enemy activity and were therefore necessary. Sometimes they were extremely successful and again, as in the case of Sergeant Archie Dustin, the report contained the sort of grim irony which made operations officers chuckle over the papers which told of mission not accomplished.

Dustin went out on a gusty October evening. He and five of his men intended to capture one German soldier and bring him back for interrogation. That was their intention, and they came pretty close to succeeding.

Entering the German half of the city of Stolberg at dusk, Dustin and his smudge-faced crew pro-

ceeded to work through alleyways and backyard flower gardens until they had passed several Jerry outposts. Well within enemy lines they entered a partially demolished building and began a ticklish job of playing cat and mouse with the Wehrmacht.

Presently a German patrol entered the house opposite. Other groups walked by on the sidewalk, their hob-nails echoing in the night; but they were always in great enough strength to resist capture. The Yanks were suddenly in a tough spot themselves. Dawn was on the way, and soon the hunters would be the hunted. They needed lots of luck—and they got it too, with a load of high explosives.

American artillery began to rip and tear into Stolberg. Two German soldiers, who had been clumping down the road, bolted in opposite directions. One darted in beside Dustin and stopped short with his eyes goggling as six M-1 rifles swung menacingly.

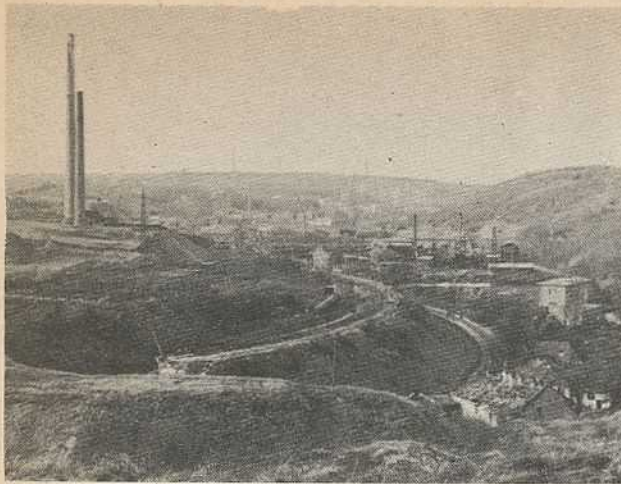
The trip back to American lines was even more hazardous than had been the penetration to enemy territory. Dawn was beginning to light the landscape and Jerry, as usual, was celebrating the return of day with a lot of automatic fire. Every machine gun in the world seemed to be searching for the little patrol.

The prisoner was submissive: in fact he usually beat the Yanks to the ground whenever shell or mortar fire landed nearby. Dustin was beginning to congratulate himself on a job well done. However, as the patrol passed through its own forward listening posts, a particularly wicked concentration of mortar landed nearby. Upon regaining his feet, Dustin found that the prisoner seemed unwilling to continue. Scared to a blue funk, he thought.

"Tell him," Dustin said to Pvt. John Weiner, "to get his butt off that ground and come along."

"Can't do it," Weiner said grimly, "he's dead!"





Stolberg, city of bitter memory. Half of it belonged to Jerry, and half to the Yanks of the "Spearhead".

A splinter of German steel had killed the prisoner. Sergeant Dustin walked back to his CP in the sordid grey dawn. He had to report that the mission was not accomplished.

Of course there were many successful patrols. Sergeant Bob Wallace, another member of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, went out one night and brought back a burly Kraut whom he had bested in hand to hand combat. And, to top all patrol actions, there was the affair "Geitz."

Lieutenant William D. Hill led that one and, in the misty darkness beyond American outpost lines, the lieutenant and his squad leader, Sergeant Phillip Sullivan, suddenly discovered that their getaway man had disappeared. They held a whispered conversation. The man's name was Geitz.

"He's probably just out of place," Hill whispered, "Try calling him, but don't make it too loud."  
"GEITZ!" Sullivan cried, in a stage whisper.

A clump of bushes to the left front rustled slightly, and a distinctly teutonic voice declared, "Ja, hier! Was is los?"

The recon patrol lost no time in performing that strategic maneuver known as getting the hell out of there! Geitz was back at the CP: he'd been lost early in the game and returned to his own lines. Geitz number two probably died a hero's death when his machine gun nest was mortared on the following morning. On the other hand, he may be still wondering who called him that night, and why!

Shellfire was the bane of existence at Stolberg and in the surrounding towns. German guns located in the Duren area constantly lobbed projectiles of various sizes into "Spearhead" positions. There were a number of casualties and a greater percentage of near misses. Reconnaissance Company of the 32nd Armored Regiment probably caught more shells than any other outfit on the line. For some



Even the engineers looked glum at Stolberg. It was slightly damp.

reason Jerry seemed to have the unfortunate recon troops zeroed in no matter where they moved.

The narrow escape department blossomed with strange tales at Stolberg and vicinity. A 170mm projectile whirled in to hit a house occupied by CC "A" guards at Schutzheid. The shell was a dud but it managed to smash through the roof and two floors of the billet, finally coming to rest up against the blanketed form of Pvt. Louis Navarro, who was sleeping peacefully at the time. Also at Schutzheid, Pvt. Jake Cox grumbled because he had to go out in the rain to gas his vehicle.

"I wish," he griped, "that the damned thing would blow up."

Presto! A German shell arrived on the truck, setting it ablaze from radiator cap to tailboard.

"I'm a ruined man," said Cox, as he climbed out from under the table, "There was a package of cigarettes in the glove compartment!"

The grim humor of the front line manifested itself in many ways. When a shrapnel splinter imbedded itself in the wall just above Lt. Junius Layson's head, the young officer couldn't resist pasting a sign in the window of his billets. It said: ACHTUNG! ACHTUNG! GERMAN SHELLS WILL DETOUR IMMEDIATELY!

Because brushes with death were so frequent, a certain nonchalant fatalism came to the veterans. Lt. Colonel Paul G. Fowler and Major Robert E. Chaney were peacefully eating breakfast one morning, when "incoming mail" shattered the windows.

"Pass the salt, please," said Chaney calmly.

"Sorry," said Colonel Fowler, "but a bit of shrapnel has just smashed the shaker."

A nervous orderly brought more salt. Major Chaney eyed the frightened man as he placed the new salt cellar in the center of the table. "Now," he said, "I'll give you five to one that they can't





The men of "C" Company, 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, demonstrate obstacle breaching technique on the Siegfried Line after the fighting has moved on into Germany. First the section moves forward to place TNT against the separate dragons teeth in the area to be blown. After demolition has been accomplished a tank-dozer smooths the way and - there you are: another hole in the famous west wall.



do it again!"

Aside from shell fire, nocturnal air raids and patrol actions, the front was quiet. 3rd Armored Division Military Government, formerly called Civil Affairs, was extremely busy working out the problems of occupation. Being the first unit of its kind to operate in Germany, there were no precedents upon which to base decisions. Lt. Colonel William E. Dahl and his men probably set the pattern for future dealings with German civilians in the soon to be occupied Reich. It was a good example. The Germans were tired of war and, in the main, peaceful and cooperative, although a little astonished and dismayed at the non-fraternization policy.

Not that there wasn't fraternization! A percentage of "Spearhead" soldiers openly violated the ruling and took their court martials as a matter of fact when they were caught at it. In Stolberg it was said that an artillery concentration was often welcomed. GI's who ducked into the nearest doorway for safety were often found to have picked a house which contained beaucoup frauleins!

During this period of relative calm at Stolberg, Major General J. Lawton Collins's VII Corps was building up for the attack on Aachen. Men of the 3rd Armored Division took a small part in this action, but it was a memorable one.

A task force commanded by Lt. Colonel Sam Hogan was attached to the veteran 1st Infantry Division and committed in the western reaches of the city. The "Spearhead" units seized strategic Loueberg Hill on October 19, while working with the 26th Infantry. There was moderate resistance and heavy mortar fire, but Hogan's men found the mud their worst enemy. The sticky clay fogged tanks and half-tracks while German troops sprayed a deadly concentration of fire from well concealed strong points.

One Sherman, commanded by T/4 Dries Franken, actually sunk into a shell hole until the crew could not see out of their periscopes. "This is the first time," said their platoon leader, Lt. Harland Austin, "that I've seen a bunch of tankers jump into a fox-hole without getting out of their tank!"

The defenders of the key city of Aachen fought until the last bottle! When elements of the 3rd Armored Division, fighting with infantrymen of the BIG RED ONE, captured the last strongpoint, they found a great deal of ammunition and plenty of empty flasks. In this connection, Colonel Hogan probably made the greatest error of the campaign when he captured seven German half-tracks and then sent them to the rear without conducting a detailed examination. Soldiers of the 1st Infantry found the vehicles crammed with drinks—and they weren't soft! Hogan, a Texan, was reputed to know the difference in drinks and to appreciate it.

Colonel Hogan was luckier, at that, than the 1st Sergeant of "H" Company, 33rd Armored Regiment, who took time out to examine a Jerry half-track during the last hours of the Loueberg Hill fight. One of "H" Company's tanks saw movement, fired at the already knocked out German vehicle and managed to blow it up in their top-kick's face! Muttering imprecations, as only a 1st Sergeant can, that worthy walked off with two cases of cognac salvaged from the wreck. A few moments later he was strafed by an FW-190 which added insult to injury by smashing the remaining bottles of liquor!

By mid-November, the 3rd Armored Division had recuperated after the long summer offensive, and waited for corps orders to attack. Intelligence channels had discovered that the 47th German infantry division was preparing to replace the harried and weary 12th, then on the line. It was an opportune time for an American offensive.

In November the entire battle zone was wet. Heavy mist and fall rains kept sweeping dismally across the still-green fields of the Rhineland. It was doughboy weather, mean and muddy. Even the air force kept its head down and the sky belonged to Jerry's rumbling buzz bombs. Thoughtfully, tankers watched road surfaces degenerate into sticky ribbons of mud. There was no bottom, not even on high ground.

The inclement weather broke momentarily on November 16. Under a shifting, scud-blown sky the men of Combat Command "B" loaded up and waited for orders to move out. This was to be a strike for the troublesome Hamich-Hastenrath ridge which barred the way to the Roer River and the plain of Cologne. There wasn't much talk that day: the combat commanders scowled and chewed their lips. The men waited impassively but they knew very well what the attack would mean. They knew all about the way of a Sherman in soft ground. On this front the enemy had been digging in for two solid months. The Kraut was a good professional soldier and he had plenty of dual purpose 88's—each of which was capable of holing a medium tank from frontal drive to exhaust. The odds were not especially reassuring.

Preparation for the breakthrough began at 1115 hours when 1,300 Fortresses and Liberators of the 8th Air Force hit the area Eschweiler-Langerwehe. The bombing was not nearly as spectacular as that in Normandy, but troops could see the long, grey smoke markers drifting where the bombers had passed, and they could hear the surging thunder of explosives up ahead.

The attack jumped off at 1300 as Division Artillery hammered targets to the direct front and rockets cut flaming arcs in the air. The tank tracks spun hard, gripped, and sheets of water flew to right and left. No dust this time.





Major General Maurice Rose at the Prym House in Stolberg. His CP was within small arms range of the German lines.

At Stolberg, the leaders of the first team gathered to plan their attack.

Within 24 minutes of H-hour Lt. Colonel William B. Lovelady's task force had reached its first objective in Kottenich. Initially it appeared that resistance might be less than had been expected, but then Task Force Mills ran into a cleverly concealed minefield and a vicious covering fire by mortars, artillery and small arms.

A dirty, disheartening struggle developed for Hastenrath and Scherpenseel. The route was deep in mud, water and debris. Underneath this surface scum lay the Teller and Riegel mines that could, and did, blow peeps into masses of tangled wreckage, or rip tracks and bogey wheels off the Sherman tanks.

Mills found his task force battling desperately to survive. Maintenance Company of the 33rd Armored Regiment sent its men into the flaming attack in order to retrieve crippled fighting vehicles. Back at Mausbach, the mechanics of the command worked night and day in order to return these machines to the line where they were so urgently needed. Yard by yard the task forces ground ahead, finally taking both towns after a bitter give and take slugging match. On November 18 Colonel Mills was killed in action and Colonel John C. Welborn assumed command of the depleted force.

In spite of heavy casualties action showed that General Rose's division had not lost any of its driving ability. The objectives had been reached and secured regardless of mud and mines and a well prepared defense. The action of the tankers and infantry had been superb, but the badge of courage was not awarded to them alone. For extraordinary heroism the medical aid section of the 2nd Battalion, 33rd Armored Regiment, was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation. These soldiers of the red cross had brushed aside the concern of veteran "Blitz Doughs" in order to set up a forward receiving

station in the midst of the battle. Their work saved lives and earned the gratitude and administration of front line tankers and doughs.

By November 21, CC "B" had been pinched out of the new offensive at Hastenrath and Scherpenseel. However, a new drive began almost immediately and, while General Boudinot's troops rested, Task Force Richardson, of Combat Command "A" went into action in an attempt to take high ground between Langerwehe and Frenz.

Now the routes of advance had begun to resemble those terrible salients of World War I. The territory beyond Eschweiler had been heavily shelled by American artillery, periodically bombed, and now torn by tank fire. Small towns were masses of wreckage and every field was pocked with new craters. Buildings and dwelling houses leaned in lop-sided surrender, torn by American steel, and dead cows lay in stifflegged postures reminiscent of Normandy.

Mud and mines were still the order of the day as Task Force Richardson began to throw a steel arm around the outskirts of Weisweiler. Recent rains had swollen every marsh and stream in the battle area and high ground was soaked so thoroughly that attacking armor wallowed hull-deep in the clinging stuff. There was no opportunity for maneuver and Colonel Richardson watched in agony as his Shermans bogged down and were set aflame by accurate German anti-tank fire. Smoke screens were used to some advantage in this push, but the combination of mud, mines and well dug-in defenses seemed to nullify every theory of armored attack. Even at night the command knew little rest. While bivouaced at Nothburg, preparatory to jumping off, a dam on the Inde River was blown by German defenders, flooding the task force positions to a depth of nearly five feet in some particulars.



Crews were forced out of basements and had much of their equipment soaked. Later, near Weisweiler, while German searchlight batteries cast an eerie artificial moonlight over the area, Luftwaffe squadrons scattered anti-personnel and high explosive bombs among the "Spearhead" vehicles. There were few casualties among the men, but peeps and command cars were riddled with fragments.

In spite of the raw cold and unfavorable weather conditions, Richardson maintained his steady but costly advance. Engineer units removed hundreds of mines along the way: one crew under Lt. Edmund Socha lifting more than 1,000 of the big tank-killers in a three day period. While tanks continued to bog down, the 2nd Battalion of the 47th Infantry, attached, went forward to take the objective. For the most part, this last phase of action was an infantry show supported by tank and tank-destroyer fire. The played-out, frustrated elements of the task force returned to division control in the vicinity of Busbach. It had been a cold, miserable and bloody struggle.

In the last stages of the push to the Roer, a little river which was troublesome because its levels could be so efficiently controlled, Combat Command "Reserve," led by Colonel Robert H. Howze, Jr., jumped off on December 10. Once again the combination of mud and mines and anti-tank guns nearly spelled ruin for attacking units. The enemy continued to defend with fanatical determination and, although Division Artillery paved the way with concentrated barrages, the German exacted a heavy price for every yard of ground he yielded. Two task forces, however, one led by Lt. Colonel Matthew W. Kane, and the other by Lt. Colonel Sam Hogan, supported by a battalion of the attached 60th Infantry, continued to advance. Kane's force took Echz after a sharp battle, and Task Force

Hogan drove into Geich and Obergeich. The combat command then went on to clear Hoven, on the banks of the Roer, slugging out a close decision over tanks, anti-tank guns and the ever-present infantry.

During this action at Obergeich, doughboys and tankers of the 3rd Armored Division witnessed one of those incidents which tend to become legend in wartime. It had to do with a pair of soldiers who displayed that sort of nonchallant bravery which is usually encountered only in motion picture accounts of battle.

The two gallant doughs, like so many of those men who become legends of war, disappeared almost immediately into anonymity. Nobody knew who they were; even their descriptions became a subject for debate. However, all accounts agreed that the enlisted man carried a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle), and the officer—a walking stick. The lieutenant, it was said, was killed in action on the day following his greatest moment, but even that information is shrouded in doubt.

The facts of the matter remain.

Division tanks were attacking Obergeich, the little town which lay to the east of Langerwehe on the road to Duren. The axis of advance led along one of Germany's main rail lines. In the mud-bound terrain tanks and armored cars proceeded slowly, bogging down frequently and receiving heavy anti-tank, artillery, and small arms fire. Leading the armor were two small figures. The first was a GI carrying a BAR and a seemingly inexhaustible supply of grenades. The second was a lieutenant, strolling along with no weapon at all except his cane. With it the officer pointed out machine gun nests and other strong points for the following tankers to attack.

Neither of these doughboys attempted to duck the constant rain of heavy German mortar and shell

The presidential election was a topic of interest on the western front.

Combat engineers survey the terrain at Weisweiler, Germany, as they prepare supports for a bridge.





fire. They walked upright, the dough spraying every position with his BAR and tossing grenades to right and left. About him terrified Jerries rose from their slit trenches and walked forward to surrender.

The lieutenant, ambling a few paces behind, appeared unaware of danger. He pointed with his absurd little walking stick, and went on. Together, the two small figures led the armored column into the town of Obergeich, which was subsequently captured by the tanks, and there they disappeared, promptly to become another brave legend of the western front.

During the period of vicious attrition on this sector, VII Corps had set up a rest camp in Verviers, Belgium, which was visited by many of the division's personnel. Passes to the Belgian towns and to Paris were also issued. It seemed as if the war would remain locked in a bitter stalemate until spring. Men of the combat commands performed ever-necessary maintenance on their fighting vehicles, washed clothing, and made billets more comfortable. Division engineers repaired and kept operating the Stolberg water system, and crews of local citizenry labored on the muddy roads. Up in Busbach, Lt. Arthur Rutshaw of the military police had organized an efficient police department. His German staff arrived punctually each morning, snapped to stiff attention and received their orders. During

this period the only excitement was occasioned by small, miserable attacks for limited objectives, by air raids and robot bombs. Division artillery had moved up and the night was no longer a steady series of rippling, crashing explosions. Robots sputtered and rumbled overhead night and day until troops began to manufacture weird tales about "chimney details." It was necessary, the solemn GI's stated, to have a man on every roof. His duty? To refuel buzz bombs and bend the chimneys to allow the robots to pass on over the Stolberg-Breinig-Busbach area!

By mid-December division troops had begun to prepare for the Christmas holidays. Trees were selected and, in many billets, were set up and decorated for the celebration. Although positions were still under occasional bombardment by long range weapons, the front had been pushed forward until this was the exception rather than the rule. Even the roads were beginning to look relatively clear of mud, water and rubble. It looked like a peaceful Christmas for the "Spearhead" Division. And then, of course, one week before holiday, electrifying news came clamoring over the lines of communication. The great counter-attack had begun. St. Nicholas, with a considerable assist by General von Rundstedt, had presented a bitter gift to the allied high command.





# ★ ARDENNES

December 16, 1944!

The front suddenly erupted in an action that shocked the allied world, German General Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, who was generally accepted as the Reich's most able military leader, had gambled his remaining western reserves in a bold stroke which was designed to smash completely through allied lines of communication and supply feeding the Anglo-American armies. The great counter-offensive swept into the Ardennes under cover of swirling fog and and rain, broke through a thin American line and began to exploit initial gains. That Jerry was capable of such an attack was quite generally conceded. First Army Intelligence knew that the Sixth SS and the Fifth Panzer Armies had been out of the line preparing for an offensive. The questions remaining were these: how much strength might the enemy muster, and where would the blow fall? Now the 3rd Armored Division and other units of the First and Third Armies were to have the answers delivered in hot steel and were to experience the full fury of a Nazi force which held, for a horribly swaying moment in history,

the initiative of battle.

The "Spearhead" Division picked up its tracks in a hurry and roared out of the Stolberg area. Combat Command "A" went first, on December 18, to the V Corps sector in the vicinity of Eupen. Here, General Doyle O. Hickey's men engaged in a series of short actions against German paratroopers who had been dropped in the woods near the Eupen-Malmedy road. The command remained in V Corps reserve until December 21, when it was reattached to the division in the Grandmenil area.

In the meantime, Combat Command "B" rolled out of bivouac to aid in the defense of Verviers. It looked like a pleasant assignment, but appearances were deceiving. There was no time for recreation—there was no time for anything but flaming, total war. This was the supreme effort of Nazi Germany and the world knew that if Adolf Hitler's legions failed in the last great counter-offensive now under way, they also forfeited the one chance of victory which might still remain. It was suddenly all or nothing—take no prisoners—kill or be killed! That was the creed, and that was



DEC. 16, 1944 to JAN 25, 1945



the aim of this black-garbed tidal wave of fanatic SS troopers sweeping into Belgium. It explained the murdered Americans in the snow at Malmedy, and the civilians—old people and children shot down at Parfondry. It was an indication that the rule book had been destroyed along with every human instinct and, as never before, it disclosed the Nazi theory in a white light of truth.

The snow covered hills of the Ardennes echoed to crashing gunfire as elements of CC "B" were committed on the LaGleize-Stavelot sector. Here, teamed with elements of the 30th Infantry Division, General Boudinot's soldiers bored in to meet the enemy's crack 1st SS LEIBSTANDARTE ADOLF HITLER Panzer Division. A hard, swaying battle developed between the two expert and well direct-



Natural camouflage in the high Ardennes.

Back at Stolberg, on December 19, there was a flurry of excitement as British fighter squadrons took over the area formerly patrolled by American P-47's. There were few identification experts among units then on the line and heavy ack-ack met the English pilots on their initial sweeps. It is recorded that no plane of Britain was shot down that day, but certainly Anglo-American relations must have been strained to a fine point before the mistake was rectified.

While German civilians lined the streets, more division units loaded up and clattered back toward Belgium. The situation was confused and rumors from various points of contact were lurid and garbled. Overhead, robot bombs by the hundred pursued their somehow inhuman course across cloudy



Captain Hollis L. Towne examines a Sherman knock-out by an 88 mm shell which first went through the corners of two buildings.

ed fighting machines, but slowly—and for the first time in the new winter offensive—German units gave ground. Task Force Lovelady, pounding south from Pont de Lorraine, destroyed an enemy convoy on the road and went on to set up road blocks at Trois Pons and Grand Coe. Later, at Parfondry, after bitter fighting, the task force was hemmed in for a time and attacked from all sides.

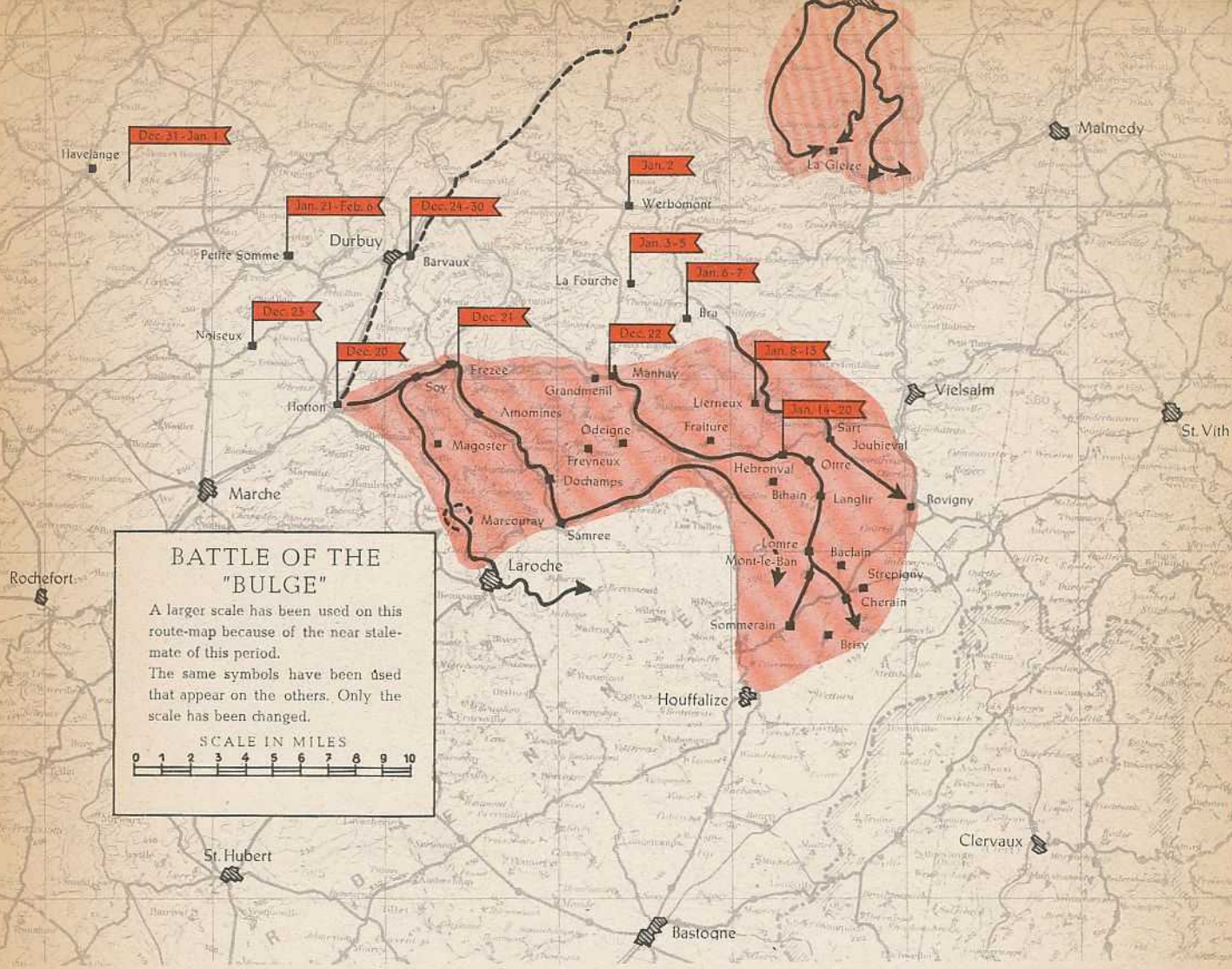
Battling the same determined resistance, battle groups under Major Kenneth T. McGeorge and Captain John W. Jordan punched their way to the outskirts of La Gleize by December 24. Here they inflicted heavy damage on the enemy and took the town. Twenty-six tanks were destroyed by CC "B" in this action alone, and German dead sprawled everywhere in the ditches. The command, having accomplished its first "Bulge" mission successfully, closed into an assembly area near Spa, Belgium, on Christmas day. The rest of the division was not nearly so lucky.

skies. Liege and Antwerp, along with other cities along the supply lines, were pounded. And, for the first time in months, the Luftwaffe swung over to the offensive in some strength, using new jet fighter-bombers to supplement the older, but still very effective, Messerschmitt and Focke-Wulf airplanes. Allied vehicular convoys were strafed and bombed everywhere on the swiftly moving front.

At this time the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion was detached and sent to the extreme right flank of the "Bulge." Here, in the high Schnee Eifel Mountains, they were attached to the 1st Infantry Division and immediately committed to action. The tank-busters were later to fight beside the 82nd Airborne Division before rejoining their parent organization just prior to the beginning of the January push at Manhay-Snamont.

Information was still at a complete minimum. Operations maps showed only the vague, general zones of contact. There were none of the fine



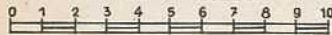


### BATTLE OF THE "BULGE"

A larger scale has been used on this route-map because of the near stalemate of this period.

The same symbols have been used that appear on the others. Only the scale has been changed.

SCALE IN MILES



situation reports which had come to be accepted as normal. No one knew for certain just where Jerry was or how far he might go. The front was fluid and it was dangerous to move without a heavy armored escort. Morale was still high in spite of this. There was a general confidence among the men. They thought, naively: "It was a good try, but the Krauts have lost." Actually they hadn't lost at all, for the peak of the fighting had yet to be reached and up to this point von Rundstedt's spearheads had not even been checked.

On December 19, the remainder of the 3rd Armored Division, which now consisted only of Forward Echelon, a small Combat Command "Reserve," and the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, began a swift march to the Hotton-Manhay area, a spot which almost immediately saw some of the heaviest fighting of the entire campaign.

The trip from Stolberg was a nightmare of muddy roads, bitter cold, and heavy fog which so limited visibility that drivers found themselves edging off the road at every turn. Trees and cement

guard rails loomed out of the murk within inches of careening vehicles, and trucks became mired on the shoulders with disconcerting regularity. On these occasions the column halted until the road-blocking vehicles were either winched back or pushed to one side and left for the following maintenance crews to handle.

Added to the fog and the pitch black night were hundreds of Jerry buzz bombs which seemed to bore through the tree tops along the route. Several of the robots crashed near vehicles of the command, one landing less than 100 yards from General Rose's peep. The blast threw his aide, Major Robert Bellinger out of the vehicle, but the general was unhurt.

The movement from Stolberg began at dusk on the 19th, but it was not until the following morning that all elements closed in assembly areas near Manhay. Wet and muddy, weary with fatigue induced by the nerve-wracking all night journey, men of the commands waited for the inevitable order to establish contact with von Rundstedt's legions.

With Combat Command "A" still attached to



the V Corps in the vicinity of Eupen, and "B" fighting a hard battle at La Gleize, General Rose found himself facing a particularly difficult situation. His orders were to secure the road from Manhay to Houffalize, a well nigh impossible task to accomplish with one rather small combat command. However, the situation was also serious and demanded immediate action. The general decided to attack!

The division area at this time might be described as an arc of 15 miles, cut by more than 30 roads and trails. Under these conditions, and with the meager forces at his command, it appeared unlikely that General Rose's tactics could prove much more than a delaying action. However, it was necessary to act at once.

Winter had locked the white Belgian hills in a tight embrace as Task Force Kane rumbled down the main highway in a bold frontal movement. Lt. Colonel William R. Orr's force pointed for Erezee, Amonines, Dochamps and Samree — names which very soon became synonymous with heavy winter combat. Lt. Colonel Sam Hogan led his troopers along a secondary road which paralleled the Orthe River. All three of the task forces were small and totally inadequate for the task they had set, but the confident attack in itself held a measure of bluff which worked well enough to blunt the German spearheads and hold them at bay.

Orr's columns met heavy artillery fire and tanks on the outskirts of Samree, but his men thrust boldly past the opposition and set up a road block on the vital La Roche-Vielsam road. Heavy fighting immediately developed in the area.

Hogan's force, also small, advanced rapidly in an effort to seize the crossings of the Orthe River between Gouvy and Houffalize, but was beaten

back by a stone-wall defense and was thereupon forced to pull into the little town of Beffe. Manuever and constant fighting soon depleted both gasoline and ammunition, so Hogan set up a strong perimeter of defense based on high ground at Marcouray. The Nazi tide of conquest rolled around this little spot of resistance and, within hours, the small "Spearhead" group was completely surrounded and facing annihilation. A German commander, sensing this situation, promptly sent an ultimatum to the trapped Americans. Sam Hogan chuckled. "If you want this town," he said softly, "come right in and take it." The Kraut tried, but after several abortive efforts he contented himself with siege tactics.

By sunset on December 20, Kane's force had also met determined resistance and was engaged in a hot fight just west of Malempre.

Thus far General Rose's tactics had been dangerous but quite successful. He had succeeded in screening the early assembly and plans of the First Army's crack VII Corps which, as the enemy very well knew, was usually spearheaded by the 3rd Armored Division. Nazi forces, flushed with victory marches, were nonplussed to find themselves brought up short against the well remembered 3rd. One captured German growled: "I thought you bastards were on the Roer. How the hell do you move so fast...?"

At any rate the bold action of General Rose's elements in this sector puzzled the enemy and gained precious time for allied defenses then forming up. Rundstedt's combat commands hesitated to bypass such veteran forces of resistance, and yet better judgement demanded that the so-far rapid advance be continued. The panzer spearheads attempted a sort of compromise. In so doing they isolated

Bad news for von Rundstedt — on the way.



The tanks were dressed up in white camouflage paint.





Hogan at Marcouray and battered both Orr and Kane, but it was a hollow victory as later events showed.

For one thing, more reinforcements were beginning to pour into General Rose's command. On December 21, Combat Command "A" moved into assembly areas near Grandmenil and Task Force "X" was ordered to cut the Marche-Bastogne road. Colonel Orr's elements were given new units and were able to move forward and take Amonines on December 22. On the 23rd, the division was further strengthened by an attached combat team and other elements of infantry, artillery, and paratroops. Task Force Richardson went into battle, taking over a hotly contested road block which had been held by Kane's command near Manhay.

With the attachment of more units, General Rose now had under his command a force which approximated corps strength. In addition to organic elements of the division there were two complete regimental combat teams, two battalions of paratroopers, two companies of 4.2 mortars, four battalions of artillery, and two tank-destroyer battalions. The "Spearhead" Division's usually attached 703rd TD Battalion was still fighting a vicious action with 1st Infantry units up on the right flank of the "Bulge."

The situation was still far from being under control. On the contrary, the tempo of action increased steadily and no one seemed able to guess the probable outcome of events. At Hotton, where Division Headquarters Company, the 143rd Armored Signal Company, and Company "E" of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, plus personnel of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, had been detached, a reinforced company of German infantry and tanks came very close to overrunning the de-

fenses.

At 0730 hours on December 21, a short mortar preparation fell into the town and immediately afterward Nazi troops and tanks began to move in. The defenders had only a few bazookas, machine guns, and one Sherman tank, but they managed to repel the first infiltration of panzer grenadiers in vicious street fighting. Captain William L. Rodman, of Headquarters Company, and Captain John L. Wilson, of the Signal Company, distinguished themselves in this engagement.

German tanks smashed into the outskirts of Hotton, but concentrated fire from headquarters, signal and engineer personnel, plus the punch of the one Sherman tank, drove them out again. By noon the town was quiet, but six engineer bridge trucks and several other vehicles had been knocked out. The enemy had suffered the loss of three tanks, one of which he abandoned in the best of condition.

Combat Command "Reserve" immediately attempted to move to the assistance of this small force at Hotton but was unable to get through an enemy road block at Soy. However, a platoon each of tanks from "G" Company of the 32nd Armored Regiment and "C" Company of the 33rd Armored Regiment, plus "B" Company of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, managed to reach the town. Under the command of Major Jack Fickesson, executive officer of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, a defensive line was set up and held.

German forces continued to attack on December 24. In order to stabilize the line, Combat Command Howze was ordered to advance while Task Force Richardson removed its road block. Somehow, eight enemy tanks and supporting infantry managed to get behind this force in the town of Manhay. The road block, commanded by Major Olin Brewster,

Hotel De La Paix, in Hotton, Belgium, was a never to be forgotten spot.



Pvt. Robert H. Miller and Pvt. Jake Cox celebrated Christmas with 10-in-1 rations.





was trapped. Caught by direct fire from both sides of the route, Brewster quickly lost two of his light tanks. He destroyed the remaining vehicles and came out on foot with his men.

Task Force Hogan, still surrounded at Marcouray, was running out of medical supplies as well as gasoline and ammunition. The 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion attempted to shoot bandages and plasma in to the besieged area, but the effort failed. Parachuted materiel also fell into enemy hands. The task force, now called "Hogan's 400," was hammered with German guns of all calibers, hopelessly surrounded, and at last given up as lost. Finally General Rose contacted Colonel Hogan by radio and ordered all vehicles and equipment destroyed.

The work was done very quietly so that the enemy might not suspect, and then — on Christmas night, the weary, beat up GI's who had given and taken so much punishment — proceeded to infiltrate back to American lines through enemy siege forces.

There was no peace on earth for the "400." Behind them were the wrecks of their fuelless vehicles, the wounded, and the medics who volunteered to stay. Ahead — the long hills, the German Army, and a desperate gamble for life. The "400," faces blackened, stumbled back to safety through the snowy hills of Belgium. Hogan, the lean Texas tanker who drove through the first Belgian offensive with a flag of the lone star state flying from his command vehicle, came in last — grinning to hide the hurt and the memory of those dead and wounded men he had to leave behind in Marcouray.

Only once was the column halted on the way out. An alert German sentry challenged the advance patrol. S/Sgt. Lee B. Porter, a communications man and an all-around fighter of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, slipped quietly forward and, before the guard could challenge again, Porter had reached him with a bayonet.

After 14 hours of stealthy marching by compass and the stars, Hogan's men contacted friendly infantry. Their amazing story was flashed around the world in a matter of hours.

For the 3rd Armored Division a climax of bitter fighting seemed to be reached on Christmas eve. At Amonines, both flanks of Colonel Orr's battle group were open and there was nothing to the rear. He was deployed on a three mile front. Jerry troops, flushed by victory in the so-far successful winter offensive, were determined to smash through and rub out the irritating spot of opposition which had held them for three days.

It was a beautiful night of clear, crisp cold, but to the men of Orr's command there was no spirit of Christmas as wave after wave of frenzied German soldiers attempted to overwhelm them. Cooks,

drivers, and maintenance men went into the line. Tankers who had lost their Shermans in the furious fighting, went up to dig foxholes and wait with the "Blitz Doughs." Every available man, every straggler, every clerk and rear echelon Joe was there that night with a rifle or a machine gun in his hands. Still the defending force was woefully small.

The enemy tried a frontal assault with tanks, and suffered heavily. He tried tanks and infantry combined: that didn't work. He came back screaming mad in an infantry envelopment — and was slaughtered in hundreds by the grim defenders. Supported by mortars, artillery, and rocket fire, the German attack surged forward twelve separate times — and twelve times it went reeling back in confusion leaving mounds of dead on the new snow.

When the final Jerry attack failed and the salient quieted to an occasional harassing round from enemy artillery, Colonel Orr found that he had been sweating profusely in spite of the bitter cold. "If they'd have had three more riflemen," he said, "they'd probably have overrun our positions."

That was Amonines on Christmas eve, 1944.

It was that way all along the 3rd Armored Division front. During the Christmas holidays von Rundstedt's panzer armies seemed to balance precariously on a wave which could mean victory or defeat. Both sides suffered heavy casualties and the battle reached an all-time peak of fury. It was the moment of crisis and Jerry lost.

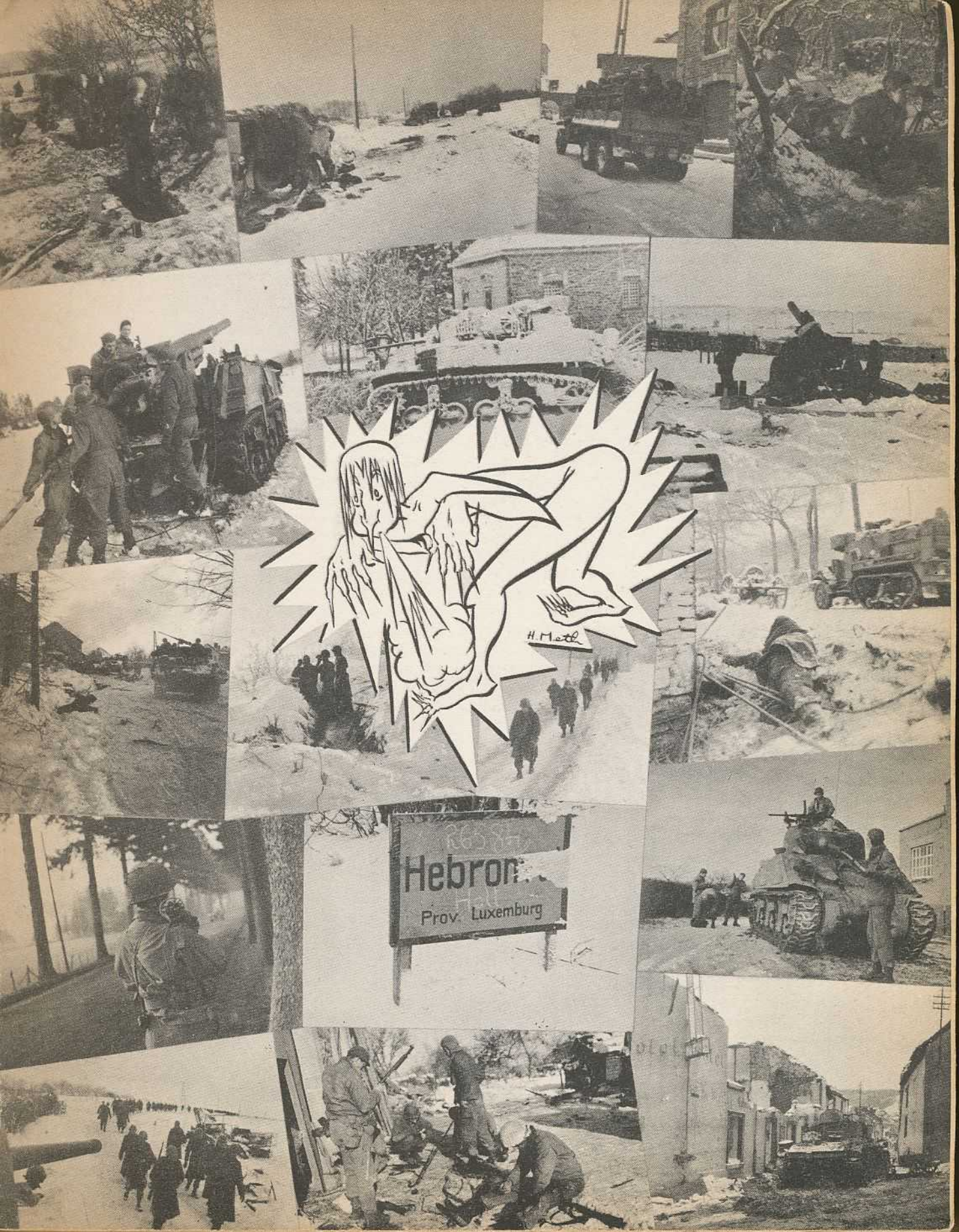
On December 26, Task Force Kane was withdrawn under cover of heavy fog. The line now appeared to be secure and there was a general feeling of relief. Somehow soldiers knew that the greatest peril had been averted and that Rundstedt's ambitious gamble had failed. Miles of barbed wire entanglements and thousands of anti-tank mines protected the division front at this time.

Combat Command "B" relieved Colonel Howze's weary reserve forces on the 27th, and defenses were further improved with this infusion of relatively fresh elements.

There was little excitement until December 28, when a green infantry division was committed in General Doyle O. Hickey's sector in and around Sadzot, Belgium. The new doughboy outfit dug in with one flank anchored on Task Force Orr's positions near Amonines. The other flank was somewhere out in the blue wilderness — and only God knew where! As a result, communications were completely snarled and snafu location reports submitted. General Hickey puffed on his pipe until the sparks flew.

Finally, after a confused action had developed at midnight on December 27, the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which was located north of Sadzot, discovered enemy units in that town, despite reports to the contrary.





Hebron  
Prov. Luxemburg



General Hickey immediately sent an attached parachute battalion south to protect the gun positions. Task Force Richardson was moved to Briscot as a precautionary measure. Sporadic fighting broke out and continued all night. It was ascertained that two companies of panzer grenadiers, supported by tanks, had attacked the town.

Early on the following morning an American attack, led by Colonel Richardson's force, contacted the remainder of this panzer grenadier regiment and destroyed it after a sharp battle in which two light tanks were lost.

On the morning of December 30, the 3rd Armored Division was pulled out of the line to rest and refit in the area, Ouffet-Occquier. There was a short breathing space in which to take stock of the operation concluded and to prepare for a new offensive.

The victory had been too close for comfort. Order of Battle exerts declared that the 3rd Armored Division had tangled tracks with some of the best units of Nazi Germany. They were: the 2nd SS DAS REICH Panzer Division, in the Manhay-Grandmenil sector; the 1st SS LEIBSTANDARDE ADOLF HITLER Panzer Division, at La Gleize; and the 12th SS HITLER JUGEND Panzer Division in the Samree-Dochamps area. The Manhay north-south road was the boundary between the Sixth SS Panzer Army on the east and the Fifth Panzer Army on the west. Their avowed intentions, as explained by captured documents, were a powerful drive to Liege, and then a sweep to Antwerp coordinated with a curving thrust to take Aachen. There was more than bluff behind the Nazi propaganda threats to present this latter city to Adolf Hitler as a Christmas present. They came awfully close. In the final analysis, it was only because divisions like the 3rd Armored fought to the last cartridge and the last drop of blood and gasoline

that Jerry ground to a halt in flame and death and destruction.

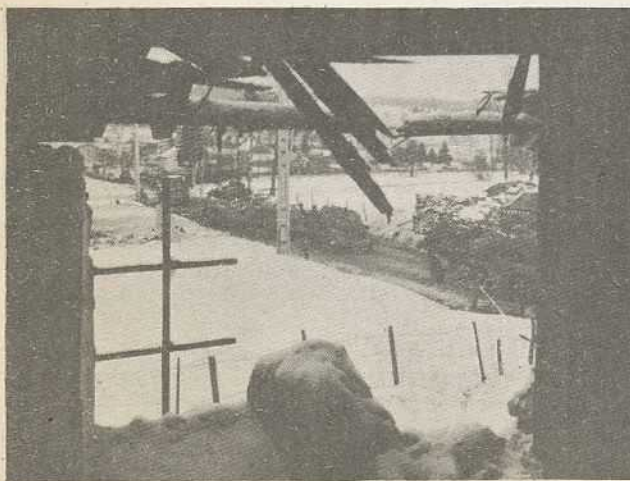
Now, the mauled and newly refitted "Spearhead" rolled forward to line of battle again. Reinforcements laced the ranks but the division was still not up to strength in either manpower or weapons. The 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion had been relieved from its attachment to the 1st Infantry and the 82nd Airborne Divisions, and was once again under General Rose's control. Hogan's "400" were also back with a score to settle. It was bitterly cold and snow covered the ground as combat commands formed up on a line roughly, Manhay-Snamont.

Shades of Valley Forge, but it was cold! A bitter wind whipped over the white Belgian hills and tankers found that their steel battle-wagons were so many mechanized ice boxes. Trench foot and frostbite became occupational diseases as the combat commands jumped off on January 3 in an opening attack to deflate von Rundstedt's salient. The objective of the First Army was a junction with Third Army forces at Houffalize.

Difficult terrain, the worst weather a Belgian winter had to offer, and the best of remaining German troops faced the multiple spearhead columns of General Hickey and General Boudinot as they went into line of battle. Four task forces advanced abreast in the new offensive, and the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was echeloned to the rear.

These were the "bitter battles of the Bulge." The enemy was determined to hold his ground and the First Army was just as intent on pushing through to close the escape gap. The shattered, well remembered towns of Malempre, Floret, Jevigne, Baneaux, Lancival, Xhout-si-Ploux, La Vaux, and Lierneux, bore mute testimony to the fury of the fighting. Heavy shellfire had ripped the zone of attack until no building remained untouched. Trees were splint-

The columns went into Langlier, Belgium, under heavy artillery fire.



The doughs were comfortable in a 40 and 8 boxcar.





ered across the roads, and the snow was pocked with the sooty blossoms left by shell and mortar bursts.

The combat commands drove forward in bitter, crisping cold. There was an icy, paralyzing mist over the entire battle front, a cloud of fine, driving snow that left every tree silvered and weighted with the clinging stuff. All of the roads glazed to slippery ribbons, and tank tracks skidded alarmingly on the shoulders. Snowdrifts covered extensive fields of anti-tank mines and hard ground made foxhole construction a nightmare when shells were falling. Men came out of the line with frozen feet, were treated at aid stations and trudged back up to fight again. The Ardennes looked like a Christmas card, but appearances were again deceptive. It was agony all the way. Even the surcease of pain offered to wounded men by morphine injections was often denied because the syrettes froze. Medical aid men learned to tuck the syrettes into their armpits to prevent freezing. The blood plasma, which saved so many lives, was carried under the hoods of medical corps peeps. Here, motor warmth kept the necessary distilled water from becoming blocks of ice.

The ceaseless wind, the snow and icy roads made work especially difficult for Signal wire teams. Sliding tanks cut the vital lines of communication and drifting snow covered the breaks. Ice formed on overheads, causing them to snap. The wire men worked day and night at their task and often ended by stringing entire new circuits to replace those destroyed by the elements.

After six days of heavy combat, the division had marched 11 hard-won kilometers. Lierneux fell to Combat Command "A" after an artillery duel and a clash of infantry and tanks. Here, the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion began to pass through other division elements in order to screen further advances. At Lierneux, Pfc. John D. Poff, a survivor of "Hogan's 400" at Marcouray, cradled a .30 caliber machine gun in his arms and charged a machine gun nest of the enemy. The four Krauts attending that position quickly lost all interest. There were a lot of good friends listed as missing at Marcouray. Jerry had to foot the bill.

Lierneux was the site of a famed Belgian institution for the mentally ill. This, however, did not deter German forces from thoroughly booby trapping the area. Personnel of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion carefully deloused each building to be occupied by the division and, although land mines still wrecked an occasional peep or tank, the majority of them were discovered and either blown up or stacked neatly for later disposal.

Although most of the buildings in Lierneux had been struck repeatedly by high explosive shells most of them were made liveable by a generous boarding up of shattered windows and by the installation of field stoves. Naturally, there were not enough of the



Doughboys of the 83rd Infantry Division thumbed a ride on "Spearhead" tanks. This is the Manhay road, a place of bitter fighting in the Ardennes campaign.

stoves to go around and therefore a greater majority of the fighting men either "requisitioned" civilian models—or shivered themselves to sleep each night. Typical was the case of Sgt. Frank Miller and Pvt. Alexander Lapinski, a couple of CC "A" liaison men. They had a stove which was taken from the wreckage of a Belgian town along the route, but no stovepipe. Miller, a former reconnaissance man, scouted around and discovered that a nearby headquarters not only had a stove but a long length of pipe as well—and the pipe extended out through a hole bored in the boarded up window of their billet. At dusk, Miller and Lapinski stalked the prize. Minutes later they had detached it and were well on the way toward a comfortable evening. The headquarters men pawed at their streaming eyes and wondered where all the smoke was coming from!

The 45th Armored Medical Battalion established a rest center at Lierneux which catered to combat fatigue and minor wounds. Although enemy shells still howled down to burst in the area, the center offered a temporary surcease of suffering to men whose bodies and nerves were strained to a breaking point by the constant grind of the attack.

There were old "acquaintances" ahead of the "Spearhead" Division during the bitter battles. The 12th Volksgrenadier Division, which had taken such





Interrogation at Bra, Belgium, on the eve of the January push.

a hammering on the Roer, once again felt the punch of the 3rd. For all practical purposes the 12th, and the 560th Volksgrenadier Divisions were destroyed. Units of the 326th Volksgrenadier Division were then noted along the front line along with scattered elements of the 9th SS, and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions. The advance was slow but steady. By January 20 another ten kilometers of ground had changed hands. More names were engraved upon the memories of 3rd Armored Division soldiers: Fraiture, and Verleumont, Grant Sart, Provedreoux, Otre, and Hebronval. They were smashed and cluttered places, with dead men in the snowy ditches. There was constant shellfire and infantry clashes. No summer soldiers in the line of battle here.

On January 11, troops of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion had passed through division elements east of Pisserotte. Their mission was to take a road junction two kilometers north of Mont-le-Ban and to deny the use of a nearby bridge to the enemy. The reconnaissance men had reached their objective by 1430 hours, but found that they were under the direct observation of German artillery. Task force tanks were advised to remain behind until dusk and then to come up and secure the bridge and road junction. In the meantime the recon troopers directed Division Artillery on enemy positions and outposted the area.

At dawn the attack was resumed, with "Able" Company leading. Instead of the obvious route through Mont-le-Ban, Colonel Yeomans, an old football player, mapped an end-sweep. The task force rolled swiftly to the right of town through wooded country. It was a soft spot in the German line. The "Spearhead" task force shook loose and bowled ahead. By 1330 hours, Colonel Yeomans' lead elements had taken under fire the vital Houfalize-St. Vith road where it joined with the Mont-le-Ban highway, and his tank-destroyers were blasting German armor off secondary roads beyond the main artery. Back at Division Headquarters, in Hebronval, the news of this sweep was received with immense satisfaction. The enemy was more surprised than he had been in weeks.

In the meantime, task forces under Colonels Kane and Hogan battered into Mont-le-Ban. Task Force Lovelady took Lomre in a coordinated tank attack and, on the following day, Colonel John C. Welborn's men entered Baclain.

All of these towns saw heavy fighting. Enemy anti-tank guns, artillery and armor often seemed to present an impenetrable wall of defense. It was only through superior leadership and the plain, everyday guts of the attacking soldiers, that progress was made at all. It became apparent that Sherman tanks were no match for the big German Panther and Tiger machines when the outcome depended upon armor or gun performance. The Jerry's high velocity 75mm and, of course, his famous 88 mm weapons, consistently outperformed the 75 mm and 76mm rifles on allied vehicles. Dug in properly, a heavy German tank was a formidable adversary — and most of them were very well dug-in and camouflaged during the last phases of the Bulge campaign.

However, at this time the 3rd Armored Division continued to take its losses stoically and just as stubbornly ground ahead. Every little town became a place of memory where comrades had been killed or seriously wounded. At Lomre, the headquarters of Combat Command "B" received a heavy shelling when a nearby haybarn was set afire. One high explosive projectile whirled into a room occupied by the staff and miraculously killed only two out of the dozen or more men present. Trench foot, frozen toes, battle fatigue — these were the hallmarks of the Ardennes battlefield. Replacements arrived and yet the fighting units were always under strength. The new men seemed terribly young, and veterans scowled to see them come up front with the chalked markings of a POE still upon their helmets. They were healthy, clean kids, rather confused and wondering what the war was really like. They'd know soon enough, the old men thought. Within a few short days they'd know the horrible fatigue of the front-line doughboy, the dragging step and the glazed eyes that see only the enemy. They went up into the line



and they came out for a breather—some of them: and they went back again. By that time they walked like mechanical creatures and they didn't look human at all. Like the rest of the "Spearhead" soldiers they were dirty, burdened, frostbitten, and tired to the marrow of their bones. Yet they kept attacking day and night, taking their losses, driving Jerry back and back until he had to break. It was a terrible thing to see and yet there was something of greatness in it too. In spite of cold and fear and sudden death, these civilian soldiers went on to smash the professional fighting men of Germany. But there was too much sorrow. Too much blood on the snow.

A typical example of the sort of action which became commonplace on the Ardennes battlefield, was that of the combat engineers at Petit Langlir. Here the retreating enemy had blown a small bridge in order to slow the attack. If the "Spearhead" division planned to hold its initiative, the bridge had to be repaired immediately. Enemy forces were aware of the situation and consequently they pounded the area with high explosives.

A platoon of the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, commanded by Lt. Clarence C. Buckley and S/Sgt. Lloyd Jacobs, was called upon to do the job.

In complete darkness, a squad led by Sgt. Richard Searcy and Cpl. Claude Looney, cleared the rubble littered approaches of land mines. It was heart-breaking work there in the mud and snow. German guns maintained a constant harrassing fire and, worse, an American infantry unit, somehow mistaking the engineer crew for an enemy patrol, opened up on it with small arms. This mistake was soon rectified and the work went on.

A second squad, led by St. Ralph Wiley and Cpl. Henry Ferarro, arrived to install the new bridge approaches. The men worked frantically, feeling each timber into place and diving to the ground when Jerry's artillery whistled nearby.

The last squad, led by Sgt. Hugo Mach and Cpl. James Tretter, installed the finished 24-foot bridge. Under continuous bombardment by German guns they backed a big engineer truck into position, systematically laid the treadway and secured it in place. Three members of Mach's squad were wounded and evacuated during the operation, but the mission was accomplished. At dawn, attacking armor of the 3rd Armored Division rolled over the little bridge and on to a new objective. The daily communique never mentioned small articles such as this, and yet their importance was great. Without fanfare or glory these engineer Joes worked long hours under enemy bombardment at night, wading in icy, hip-deep water. The world applauded the spectacular slash of tanks, but their success was due in direct proportion to the work of the combat engineers in many cases.



Medics pass a statue honoring Belgian war heroes of World War I, in Lierneux.

The towns of Sterpigny and Cherain are bitter memories to men of the 3rd Armored Division. Here, on January 15, part of Colonel John C. Welborn's task force was cut off and its light tanks destroyed by a Mark-V Panther tank. The Panther then absorbed three rounds from one of Welborn's Shermans and proceeded to set the American vehicle ablaze.

Cherain was initially attacked by Task Force Lovelady, which also lost heavily in tanks to the German defenders and their carefully emplaced anti-tank guns. The town finally fell to Lt. Colonel Hogan's infantry elements, "I" Company of the 36th, but not before its ownership had changed several times.

The road which touched Cherain had to be cut and, come hell or AT guns, snow or ice, the 3rd Armored Division intended to do the job. Lt. Glen M. Alford led one company in an attack. He had eight tanks, or, as the saying goes—first there were eight . . . .

Alford's company had barely moved out when a German Mark IV was sighted and knocked out. Immediately afterward, Lt. Sheldon C. Picard observed a column of self-propelled 88mm artillery pieces and directed successfully artillery fire on it. The mission had begun well, but the fortunes of war turned suddenly hostile.

Alford's tank hit a mine and was immobilized.



He was unhurt. A wicked cross fire caught two more of the force. That left five.

Desperately trying to hold the vital road, Jerry threw everything in his anti-tank book at the advancing armor. Lt. Picard's tank was knocked out along with another of the force. And now there were three!

Sgt. Maurice L. Humphries assumed command and resolutely continued to drive forward. German fire lanced out from flanks and direct front. The enemy was well dug in and camouflaged.

"Can't see a damned thing," muttered Cpl. Octaviano Carrion, "excepting for one Heinie, and I blew him right out of his hole."

The ambush was nearly complete. An armor piercing round crashed through Carrion's tank. Hot metal splashed the gunner's face. Humphries, searching wildly for a target, spotted a Mark V. His gunner, Cpl. Leslie Underwood, bounced five rounds off the heavy enemy vehicle. The Panther's return fire sent one round through the turret, another into the final drive. It was bail out or die!

As Humphries went over the side he noted bitterly that all of his small command had been stopped. Sgt. Bill Burton's Sherman had all hatches open and that meant only one thing—a hit.

German fire had increased its tempo. Mortars and machine guns added to the din. Several "Spearhead" tankers were badly hurt but those who had escaped injury led them to safety in a ditch nearby.

Now, flushed with victory, the enemy closed in. Machine gun and rifle fire rattled off the broken tanks. Friendly artillery crashed into the advancing infantry but, drunk with success, the Kraut came on.

Underwood, lying in a ditch beside his tank, saw an American shellburst almost cover one Nazi. A second German threw the wounded man over his shoulder and still came staggering forward!

Most of the 3rd Armored Division men had

made good their escape, but slight chance was offered to Underwood, Humphries, Carrion, and several others. Humphries managed to crawl out of sight. Underwood played dead: he lay in the snow, face downward. A mortar shell landed close enough to burn his jacket, but he never moved. Presently a group of Germans approached. One grabbed the "Spearhead" tanker by the collar and shook him. "Kaput," said the German finally, and moved away. A second Kraut kicked the American's ribs but awakened no response. They left him there, then, lying in the snow.

Four hours later, after the sun had set, Underwood slowly began his tedious trip back to the lines. He passed close to a pair of German sentries and later painfully crawled the length of a shallow ditch while machine gun fire raked the area.

Cpl. Calvin Wickware, Humphries, and Carrion, were also making their way back at this time. The four men swam a deep stream, pausing now and then as broken ice tinkled loudly in the night and German machine guns searched for the sound. Humphries added even greater gallantry to his exploit by carrying a wounded infantryman across the stream and by personally applying first aid.

Back at the command post, before a leaping fire, the men of the ill fated task force stood about in Long Johns discussing their adventure. The next morning they went back into new tanks and moved out once again. There was another objective to be taken, and there was no time for rest.

As the "Spearhead" Division battered south of Cherain on January 16, German vehicles, attempting to pull out of the rapidly closing Bulge pocket, streamed across the 3rd Armored Division's direct front. Slipping and sliding on the icy pavements, these columns were taken under fire by artillery of the 67th Armored Field, the 83rd Armored Field, and the 183rd Armored Field Artillery Battalions.

Chapel at Hebronval, near division C. P.



Under heavy artillery fire, the Shermans move through Lomre.





Thirteen of a total 25 enemy tanks observed were destroyed by the concentration of high explosives laid down by Colonel Frederic J. Brown's command. It was a highly satisfactory sight to the tired and half-frozen Yanks on this arctic line of battle.

Mopping up continued in many of the small towns, and the process was often a pitched battle rather than a simple operation. Retigny, Renglez, and Brisy, were some of the final objectives taken before division elements moved northwest to reach rest areas in the Barvaux-Ouffet-Durbuy area.

During the campaign, known facetiously and with some reason as "the bitter battle for billets in the Belgian Bulge," the 3rd Armored Division had added greatly to its reputation as the spearhead of the First Army. It had suffered greatly too, and had operated the hottest sectors of the Ardennes. General Rose's fighting men defended many of the most important routes of advance in the early stages of von Rundstedt's drive. And, as usual, the division was in at the kill, doing a full part to pinch off and eliminate the salient. Men of the "Spearhead," the real victors of the campaign, came out of action with weariness steeped in their bones and pain in their quiet eyes. They felt an abiding hate for the enemy. There were no summer soldiers now, not even among the newest recruits.

While refitting went on in the new area, a certain sense of relief replaced the tense, frontline attitude of doughs and tankers. There was a new feeling in the air. Even though springtime hesitated to declare itself, the snow began to melt. There were only a few robot bombs overhead, and the Luftwaffe had again retired before the advance of the Thunderbolts and Mustangs.

Spearhead troops looked back on the Ardennes as they would review a bad dream. They'd always remember the biting cold, the snow and the ice. They'd dream sometimes of the night marches and

the racketing buzz bombs, the war against parachutists and espionage agents dressed in GI uniforms. And, of course, there were the good things to recall — like the sky-filling fleets of Fortresses and Liberators passing overhead to bomb the enemy on December 24 and 25 when the hour of peril was greatest. Those American airplanes, shining like bits of tinsel in the high, blue arch of the sky, were a promise and a token of that great power which still guaranteed victory, in a moment when final peace seemed a mirage in the far, far distance.

The campaign actually sobered those soldiers who had come to believe that the German army had long since shot its bolt and was done. They noted, squint-eyed, the new Jerry jet fighters, and they had seen too often the result when a Sherman and a Panther tank slugged it out muzzle to muzzle. Unless it could catch the enemy at a disadvantage, the Sherman usually lost and was left wrecked and burning. Skill in maneuver was the Yank stock in trade. They won by superior tactics, and there was no doubt in American minds about the quality of enemy equipment: it was good.

It seemed that a cloud of misery had been dissipated as the 3rd Armored Division rolled out of the Ardennes conflict. The snow slowly disappeared and the grass was green again. There was a great deal of hard work in refitting, but there were also movies in the evening and a chance to relax without wearing a steel helmet. New tanks, better guns, and the latest equipment were issued. One day the inevitable order came down. The 3rd was moving up. It was Germany again.

The "Spearhead" Division rumbled out of Belgium on a misty, wet day in early February. The roads were deep in mud, but ice and snow had disappeared and spring was definitely on the way. The new assembly area was familiar terrain: tanks and half-tracks clattered back into the pill-box dott-

This was an accidental fire at Lomre. The smoke drew heavy German shellfire which killed and wounded several "Spearhead" soldiers.

Signal Corps cameraman Harold Roberts was wounded at Lomre while filming 3rd Armored Division action.



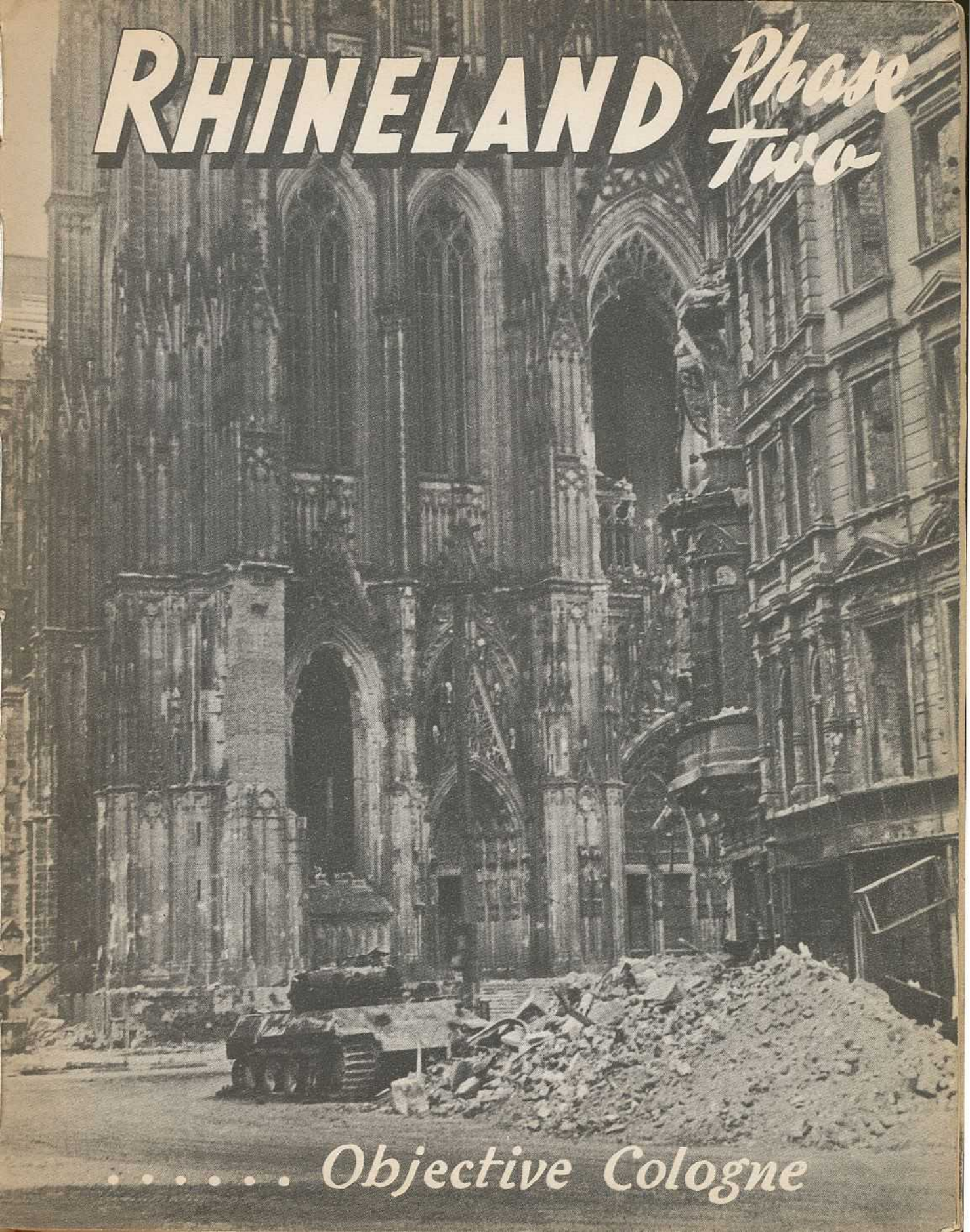




..... Now the Ardennes was just another battle star. Even the bitterness of that terrible campaign, the cold, the pain, and the horrible weariness of unending combat flowed together and was fused in one vast, foggy recollection. It was like an arctic nightmare in which only the most jagged edges of pain might be recalled .....



# **RHINELAND** *Phase Two*



..... *Objective Cologne*



ed hills of Stolberg and Breinig, into the shattered towns of bitter memory. At full strength, rested and ready, the 3rd tensed for the H-Hour of combat. This time it was to be a smash across the Roer and a powerful offensive to reach the Rhine. General Courtney Hodges expected his First Army to destroy much of the German's potential power strength in the campaign about to begin.

In the meantime, melting snow and a heavy rainfall had swollen the Roer River. German engineers further aggravated the situation by opening floodgates. The muddy torrent was as effective a barrier as the old Siegfried Line. There was nothing to do but wait for a lowering of the stream levels. Artillery and air preparation went on, and the 104th and 8th Infantry Divisions jockeyed for their positions. These doughs were to cross the river first.

On February 23, the doughboy assault teams jumped off and crossed the still swollen river. By the 25th all crossings had been secured and Duren was cleared. Elements of the 3rd Armored Division were alerted for movement and orders came down to combat commanders.

In the misty half-light of dawn on February 26, the First Army's big steel cutting edge moved out. In multiple columns, Combat Command "A" on the right, and Combat Command "B" on the left, the "Spearhead" Division crossed the Roer behind Major General Terry Allen's "Timberwolves," shook loose, and began to drive!

Here was no Ardennes of ice and bitter snow, of impossible conditions and a bow to enemy initiative. This was it—the old, pounding, smashing pursuit, the fortified towns, each with its main streets barricaded, vehicles overturned and buildings smoldering in ruin. German dead lay by the roadside among the pagan effects of their falling empire: the swastika flags, the official papers of Nazi government, and the litter of cross-marked personal belongings, brownshirt uniforms and cheap splendor that marked the Reich in its most arrogant days.

Before the early sunset on February 26, Task Force "X" had captured Blatzheim and penetrated Bergenhausen despite heavy and accurate anti-tank fire. Task Force Kane and the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, commanded by leather-lunged, irascible Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans, had cleared Manheim. General Boudinot's Task Force Welborn was doing as well: it reached the outskirts of Elsdorf while Task Force Lovelady followed swiftly. Combat Command "Reserve" was still held in abeyance slightly to the rear.

On February 27, the dusty, speeding tankers of Task Force "X" blasted into Kerpen on the Erft Canal. Now the division was less than nine miles from Cologne. Task Force Kane had reached Sindorf against anti-tank, artillery, and small arms resistance. Mine fields slowed the attacking armor

but did not halt the push in any respect.

In Sindorf, Lt. Richard J. Robertson and his men surmounted a heap of obstacles to accomplish their mission.

Robertson had been ordered to establish a road block at a vital crossing near the town. Originally, the plan called for medium tanks and infantry to shove on through the particular area, but somehow there was difficulty. The doughs were pinned down and the Shermans were late because of muddy terrain. Robertson, and his featherweight force of light tanks, went on.

It was anything but easy. A tank-roller, used for the clearing of mine fields, was hit by high velocity fire and destroyed. A tank-destroyer, trailing the column, unaccountably hit a mine. Anti-tank and small arms fire mounted in intensity. Artillery blanketed the area. Sgt. Andrew J. Narolis, commanding an armored car, received head wounds when a shell burst beside his vehicle. The plucky non-com attended to a wounded infantryman before seeking aid for his own hurts.

After furious fighting to the position, Robertson's light tanks set up the desired road block and outposted the area. In spite of heavy enemy action, the small group held.

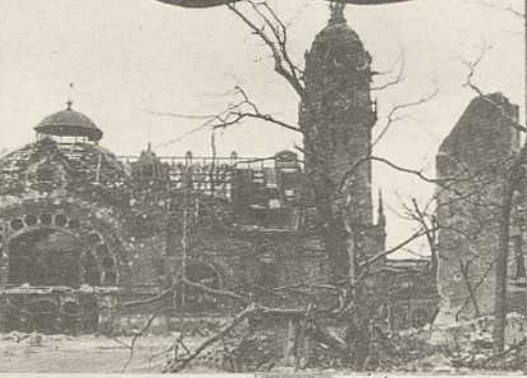
The first American shells fell into the western suburbs of Cologne on this date. They were fired by the 991st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, an attached unit of the "Spearhead" Division. Gunners of the 991st dropped a number of 155 mm projectiles into the city from the extreme range of 26,100 yards, thus adding another "first" to an already brilliant record.

Now, with the Erft Canal constituting the last barrier before Cologne, Major General Rose committed his reserve force. Combat Command "Howze" rolled forward in two task forces, one led by Lt. Colonel Walter B. Richardson, and the other by Lt. Colonel Hogan, both Texans and long-time rivals. In order to speed them forward, General Rose promised a case of scotch to the first task force commander across the vital water barrier.

By 2130 on February 27, the men of Task Force Hogan had crossed the Canal at Glesch, using a partially destroyed foot bridge. At Paffendorf, Richardson's men waded and clambered over a second twisted span. Although Colonel Hogan reached the east bank of the key canal first, it was Richardson who put in the first bridge and later had the first tanks rolling on to the plain before Cologne. The fate of the scotch is not recorded, but it is doubted that either commander would have found time to enjoy it during the drive.

Pushing relentlessly, men of Task Force Lovelady met the Reich's much publicized "Volkssturm" in Berrendorf. Five hundred of the town's civilians had gathered in a little Roman Catholic church to







await the coming of the Americans. With them were 87 members of the German "People's Army." With invasion at their doorstep, these reluctant warriors had chosen to wait in the place of worship rather than draw arms at the local Nazi headquarters and fight it out with the invaders. The Volkssturm was not impressive. These last-ditch soldiers taken at Berrendorf were just tired old men with deadly fear in their eyes. Their attitude indicated the state of German morale. They knew that no defense could stop the drive to the Rhine. The extensive earth-works and trench systems which had been steadily constructed during the past five months had proved little obstacle to the tanks and infantrymen of the 3rd Armored Division—chiefly because the "Spearhead" attack was swift and enemy troops had no opportunity to properly man their fortifications.

GI's made another startling discovery at Berrendorf. They found a triple suicide. They were just an average German family, a middle aged man, his wife, and their twenty-year-old daughter. They lived in a good home on the main street of town, and they had a little dog, a sort of mongrel dachshund. The old man was thin and mustachioed. His wife was very heavy in the German way of the hausfrau—and Elizabeth, the daughter, was just another of those plump, slacked and sweated frauleins who looked coyly at passing Americans and were willing to be nice for a bar of chocolate.

Only Elizabeth wasn't making with the coy glances any more—because she was dead. So were her parents. So was the small, dubious dachshund. They all lay together on the straw, each with a cord fastened tightly around his neck. They'd done a good, efficient job of it too. The bodies lay where they had been cut down. The severed ropes dangled grotesquely from a rafter. There was a table. There were a couple of notes.

Elizabeth's note was to a certain Gefreiter—how she ever expected it to be delivered was not immediately explained. The note merely reminisced—"and how nice it was when you used to come and visit," mentioning the tragedy only in a closing "hope you will not hate us for what we have decided to do." The other note was brief and to the point. Its gist was that "we cannot live in shame any longer."

The three had taken their own lives. Germany had asked for war—now it rolled through the streets of her small towns. Here was a tragedy, and yet it was a direct boomerang to these people who had applauded death and destruction for the rest of Europe. American guns had not totally destroyed Berrendorf. In fact this house was undamaged; yet three corpses lay on the straw in this dim barn. Outside, American armor thundered toward the front.

American troops, familiar with death by gunfire, gazed silently at the ropes which had provided a way

out for these three. There was something akin to wonder on the GI faces. They couldn't understand such philosophy.

Death, of course, no longer had a deep meaning to these soldiers. It was part and parcel of the job and they had become accustomed to the sight and the stench of the battlefields. Each of the small fortified towns was a shambles by the time the 3rd Armored Division had passed through. The defenders lay where they had fallen among tangled equipment and debris of a vain stand.

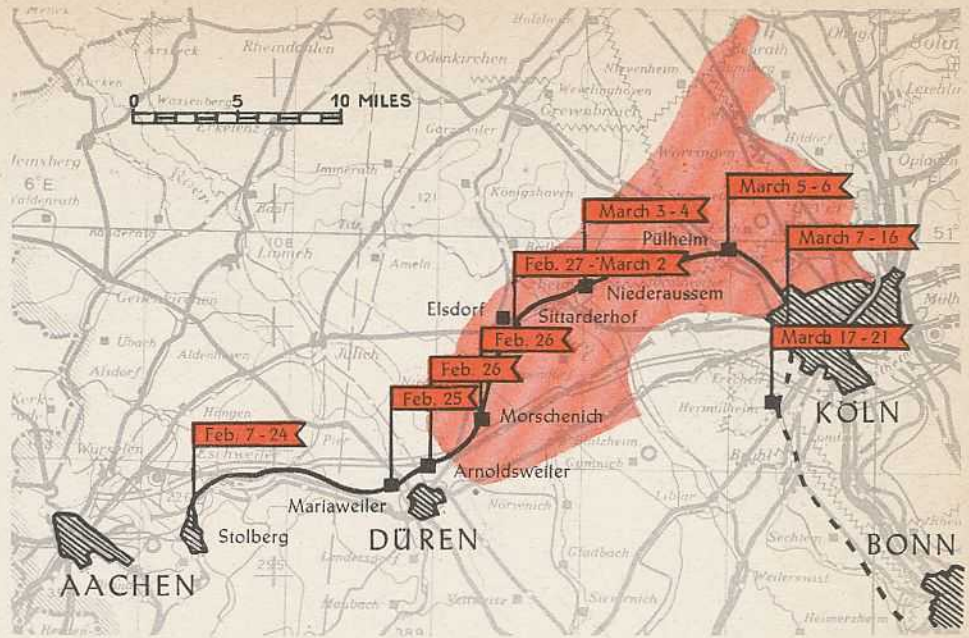
The bridgehead over the Erft was expanded considerably on February 28, and enough armor was brought into the area to repel a coordinated infantry-tank counter-attack. The 3rd regrouped and made plans for the forthcoming assault on Cologne. Heavy mortar and artillery concentrations harassed bridgehead forces, but Division Artillery traded blow for blow with enemy guns. Jerry was nervous and as soon as dusk arrived he began to do something about the "Spearhead" threat. Scores of German airplanes appeared over division positions in an attempt to silence Colonel Brown's artillery. All night long the Luftwaffe whipped over the area, dropping bombs and dodging the ack-ack thrown up by the 486th Armored Anti-Aircraft Battalion and other First Army units. It was a trying night for men of the commands. There was the constant hum of aircraft, each individual machine sounding as though it was missing on two cylinders. Then there'd be the cery, rising whistle of the bombs and, if they were close, the unbelievably loud crash and slide of broken masonry. Gunners of the 67th Armored Field Artillery Battalion suffered losses, but several of the German planes were knocked down and the artillery never flagged.

The 325th Regiment of the 99th Infantry Division, and the 4th Cavalry Group were attached at this time. Bergheim and Kenton fell to the 395th Regimental Combat Team, and the enemy lost those hills, east of the Erft, from which he had been observing, and shelling, American bridging operations.

The push for Cologne began on March 2 when reconnaissance elements cleared an area northwest of Niederaussem and Task Force Richardson pounded into the town. Later, a remarkable incident was recorded in Niederaussem when Division Forward Echelon moved in on the heels of assault elements. A German high explosive shell landed outside the CP and a fragment whirled through the open window. When Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat and his G-3 section examined the damage they found that the one tiny piece of red hot metal had pierced the exact center of the division's new objective on the operations map! Also at Niederaussem, war correspondents had merely to look out of the window at division Forward Echelon headquarters and they could see the battle progressing less than 1,000 yards



Cologne, before the war, was known as the "Queen City of the Rhine." Now, after five years of air-raids and a final pasting by ground troops, she appears anything but a queen. Photo presented to the division by General Terry Allen's famous Timberwolves of the 104th infantry division.







**SIGHT SEERS  
KEEP OUT !**  
Beyond this point you  
draw fire on our  
**FIGHTING MEN**  
HE RISKS HIS LIFE  
24 HOURS A DAY  
**DO YOU ??**



ENTERING  
**COLOGNE**  
THIRD ARMY  
DIVISION

**ACHTUNG!**  
Drähtleitung nicht berühren  
**LEBENSGEFAHR!**





away. They agreed that General Rose preferred the front line to a more healthy place somewhere in the rear.

By March 3, the "Spearhead" was poised less than four miles from the outskirts of Cologne. Task Force "X" of General Doyle O. Hickey's CC "A", had taken Fliesteden along with many prisoners.

There was heavy fighting in each of the towns which guarded approaches to the big city. At Busdorf, men of Colonel Kane's command knocked out several self-propelled guns. A pitched battle developed at Stommeln, but the determined tankers and infantrymen of task forces under Colonels Richardson, Lovelady, and Hogan, beat their way through a defense which included armor, anti-tank guns, and mines. The assault forces continued to batter ahead; aided by the ever-present Thunderbolts of 12th TAC.

Colonel Prentice E. Yeoman's 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion received the order it had been waiting for on the evening of March 3. The light tanks, tank-destroyers and armored cars of the battle group moved out under cover of darkness and pushed swiftly ahead. The way led over flat lands between little, shell battered towns. In this night operation, the 83rd's doughboys led, slogging along in well spaced double columns. Behind them the tanks and tank-destroyers followed cautiously. A battery of rocket launchers was active to the right front and once "Screaming Meemies" fell close to the column. The men hugged the ground and sweated it out for dragging moments. There was little cover, but the threatening shells fell short. The column moved on.

At Roggendorf, the recon troopers found a well dug-in defense protecting ferry sites, so the lightly armored but swift elements of the "Spearhead" turned north toward Hackhausen. Here they captured a battery of 105 mm guns, still hitched to prime movers, and a huge munitions dump of the Wehrmacht.

After taking Hackhausen, the next mission involved a direct patrol action to the Rhine. Lt. Charles E. Coates and a specially chosen trio: Lt. Lawrence E. Grey, S/Sgt. Paul H. Julian, and Sgt. Aaron Muller, set out immediately. They travelled light with faces blackened.

It was a dark, miserable morning, black as pitch. A cold wind was blowing from the north and the men shivered constantly. Still they remained alert and once hugged the ground as a group of enemy soldiers passed nearby.

Travelling cross-country, Coates and his men finally came upon a road which they recognized from map study of the area. It paralleled the river. There was a scattering of traffic and a few Jerry infantrymen nearby, their voices carrying in the early morning air.

Presently the patrol moved across the road. There below them was the mud and the swift current of Germany's sacred Rhine. It was 0420 hours on the morning of March 4, 1945, and these four men of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion were the first Americans of the First Army to reach the last great water barrier protecting Hitler's Third Reich.

After securing Hackhausen, Colonel Yeoman's elements joined the troops of Colonel Lovelady in an attack on Worringen and Roggendorf. By twilight of March 4; both towns had been taken. The 4th Cavalry Group mopped up further to the northwest of Hackhausen. Now the bulk of the "Spearhead" was ready to slam a steel wedge into the heart of Cologne.

At 0710 hours on March 5, 1945, Colonel Leander L. Doan's crack Task Force "X" entered Cologne through the northwest suburbs and was soon fighting through the Binkendorf area. These tankers and infantrymen, engineers, artillerymen and personnel of all the other arms and services which made up the team of the "Spearhead" were the first Americans to enter the big city.

There was furious tank and anti-tank warfare as the American elements pushed toward the center of their objective. Under a smoke screen, the tanks clattered forward with infantry riding on their decks. Sixteen dual purpose 88 mm anti-aircraft guns were overrun at the airport by Task Force Lovelady.

In Cologne, the largest of Hitler's cities to fall to an American or a British attack, Combat Command "B" faced greatest resistance when it attempted to reach the river front. Here, ferries were busily engaged in removing beaten troops from the west to the east bank of the Rhine. In spite of a stubborn, dogged delaying action, Task Force Welborn took a number of towns on the outskirts and moved into the city a short while after CC "A" had reported entry.

Heavy fighting continued during March 5, with Jerry forces using dual purpose anti-aircraft guns, panzerfausts and small arms. Lt. Hugh U. McBirney, leading a platoon of Shermans, battled anti-tank defenses and dodged the big rocket explosives all day. There were plenty of snipers in the wreckage of the city. Sgt. John Burleson observed one and his gunner, Cpl. Hubert Foster, fired once with the tank's 76 mm gun.

"Get him?" Burleson asked tersely.

"Don't know," Foster said, "but he was standing behind that wall—and now there ain't no wall!"

It was like that all the way. Cologne, pounded by allied bombers and shell fire, was a sniper's paradise. Each Kraut had to be separately located and dug out of the ruins.

On March 6, as 3rd Armored Division elements



probed closer to the river, the enemy blew the great Hohenzollern Bridge. It was the last hour of Nazi controlled Cologne. Armored infantry, shorn of armor in combat, went plodding in two well spaced lines down the battered streets. Behind them rolled the tanks. On this last day of resistance, American forces were taking no chances. The team was clicking. Engineers searched for mines and were thankful to find none. Rubble and broken glass crunched beneath the feet of the infantry.

An unnatural silence had settled over the great metropolis. Sporadic mortar fire still crumped loudly in the stillness, and a few snipers kept tumbling out of the high-piled ruins. German resistance had grown spotty toward the last but there was still an occasional whirr of artillery and a heavy blast as the enemy's big 380 mm guns attempted to lay down harassing fire. 1st Sgt. Lamar McCrary, a famous "Spearhead" doughboy, advised a group of war correspondents to "get your steel helmets on if you want to live." McCrary wasn't inferring that German defensive fire was heavy; he merely found that garrison caps resembled the headgear worn by defending Krauts. McCrary's troops had been fighting steadily for days. When they sighted the enemy it was only for a brief moment. They were quick on the trigger and very accurate. There just wasn't time to consider a strange uniform.

The armored infantry, supported by tanks, cleared the area about Cologne's famous Dom cathedral and reached the Rhine on March 6. General Boudinot's elements also reached the river, clearing a factory district which was defended by last-ditch resistance. A sullen plume of black smoke hung over the great Hohenzollern Bridge, but it appeared that Cologne was swiftly passing into the limbo of "rear echelon." There was, however, a final, convulsive struggle to be decided before the city was secure.

A pair of army photographers, T/3 Leon Rosenman, and T/4 James Bates, shooting motion pictures of a Panther tank they believed to be knocked out, were shocked when the big enemy vehicle suddenly turned to open fire on an American Sherman. The Sherman was hit and three Yanks, possibly the last to die in the attack on this great Rhineland city, were killed.

One of the division's new M-26 Pershing tanks accepted the challenge and fired on the Mark V almost immediately. After a swift exchange of armor-piercing rounds, the Nazi panzerwagon burst into flames and burned fiercely in the very shadow of the cathedral. The cameramen got it all—a sequence of battle which ranks high among great war pictures.

By March 7, Cologne was completely cleared by the spearheading 3rd Armored Division, and by the 104th and 8th Infantry Divisions. It was a dead city, a place of rubble which represented five years

of aerial bombardment and final invasion by ground forces. Although it had taken ground action to apply the coup de grace, tankers needed no argument to convince them of the importance of air power. The evidence was there to see. Cologne was not a pretty place. The rail marshalling yards were total ruin. Factories, for the most part, had returned to the dust. Public utilities were a joke and the highways were mountainous with rubble. Even the old cathedral was painfully damaged: shrapnel marks scored its frescoed walls; the stained glass windows were gone, and one wing lay in tangled wreckage.

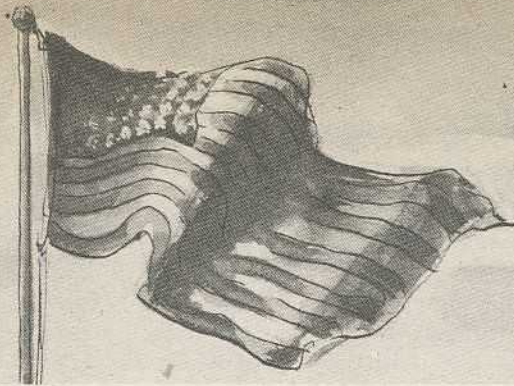
Cologne was a perfect specimen for the study of air-ground cooperation. Here was a great German city which, by location and facilities, was a natural nerve center of Nazi communications with the rest of western Europe. Through its rail yards shuttled the troops of Rommel and von Rundstedt for the defense of Normandy: the war materiel, the tanks, the guns and equipment of the Wehrmacht. This was the funnel through which much of Germany's power spilled into Belgium and France. It was an important place, a thriving metropolis of neat, concentric streets and roaring industry. Cologne had been a seat of German culture and religion, a focal point of power and, at the last, a bastion of defense for the Third Reich.

The great Nippes marshalling yards, through which elements of Task Force Welborn advanced, bore the heavy mark of the USAAF and the RAF. Roundhouses and repair buildings were masses of tangled wreckage. Hundreds of freight cars and oil tankers rusted in silence on the broken sidings. There were scores of bomb craters and occasional duds, upended sections of track and powdered ruin everywhere.

Major William J. Derner, inspecting the yards, estimated that 800 cars were undamaged and might be put to use immediately by the allies. As many more were destroyed. Two carloads of 80mm mortar ammunition, which could be used by American forces, were left behind. There was one complete load of 75 mm anti-tank gun tubes, the German loss of which was a great satisfaction to Colonel Welborn's tankers. Ammunition of all kinds, including a carload of heavy 24 centimeter stuff, lots of engineer equipment, including a salt water diving suit, and eight carloads of ordnance spare parts, were lost to the German war effort.

Although the railroads of the big Rhineland city appeared to be completely given over to the military, strange cargoes alternated with the explosives, medical equipment, and army salvage. There was, for instance, a load of Cologne water and another freighter packed solidly with horse meat. Tankers debated the aromatic merits of the ten-day-old horse flesh against the toilet water—so often used by German troops—and couldn't reach any agreement.





COLOGNE: March 11, 1945 — The American flag went up over this battered city on the Rhine today. At a ceremony attended by officers and men of the First Army's crack VII Corps, the 3rd Armored, 104th and 8th Infantry Divisions, Major General J. Lawton Collins officially raised the Stars and Stripes on a flagstaff at Cologne's well-kept sportsplatz.

The General addressed representative officers and men of his assault corps. He reviewed the history of their combat actions from the victory at Cherbourg and the great defensive fight at Mortain, to the taking of Namur and Liege, the Siegfried crossings, the successful storming of Aachen, and now the swift drive to Cologne and the Rhine.

"At this time," the General said, "we pause to remember those men who gave their lives so that we might be here." — —

And the General continued to speak, but somehow you found yourself looking at his audience. Here were the spearhead tankers of Major General Maurice Rose's 3rd Armored Division, their faces carefully scrubbed and their uniforms clean for the occasion. They'd been powder burned and deaf with concussion not so long ago. And there were Major General Terry Allen's "Timberwolves," sitting at strained attention. They were the very Joes who had come bowling through this sportsplatz, shooting from the hip with M-1's and BAR's. Beside them, wearing the golden arrow of the 8th

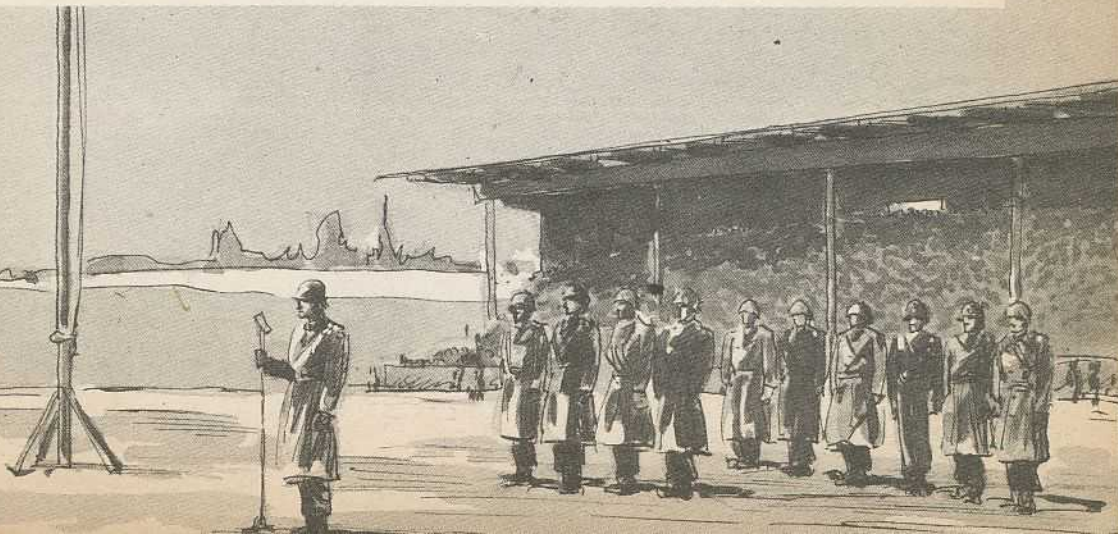
Infantry, other soldiers who had taken a large part in the victory held their breaths to hear General Collins speak. Some of them still wore bandages. The nets were on their helmets. Their rifles were slung.

Overhead, a flight of P-47's wheeled in the grey sky. The always incredibly beautiful American flag fluttered higher — finally strained free in the wet wind of Germany.

The band struck up the Star Spangled Banner and there was a gust of sound as all of these fighting men rose to the salute. They saluted the flag and the band sang out, and then the band whispered to silence. And there was silence.

It was all over. The flag had been raised. The ceremony was done. The men who filed out of these stands would be forever proud to tell of the day General Collins raised the American flag in Cologne. Some of them might even forget a very important detail.

The flag was raised in Cologne because the men who attended this celebration came blasting down the plains of western Germany: in the sweat and the dust and the fear of battle, with the Thunderbolts overhead, the tanks and guns to left and right. They came shooting and they took this city and they held it. Then — the men of the VII Corps, the 3rd Armored Division, the 104th Infantry Division, and the 8th Infantry Division, cleaned up and sat at attention to watch the official raising of the American flag on the Rhine.





Personal belongings, coal, sugar beets, and other like items, filled more cars. Russian slave laborers, Poles, and a smattering of Frenchmen who had been held captive by the German government, systematically looted cars and stations. American MP's restored order with some difficulty.

On March 8, "Spearhead" troops liberated inmates of the notorious Staats Gefangt Prison which housed political enemies of the Third Reich. Eighty-five miserable human beings, some of them so weak that they were unable to move, and others who had been hiding in the inner recesses of the building, were all that remained of an original 800. The others had either expired in the prison or had been evacuated east of the Rhine.

In addition to suffering from malnutrition, many of the inmates of Staats Gefangt had contracted typhus. American authorities moved the ill to a military hospital and fed the others preparatory to repatriating them.

There was a strange letdown after the flaming excitement of combat. Cologne was quiet. An occasional artillery shell came lobbing across the river and mortars still erupted in evil crumps of sound, but "incoming mail" was light. "Spearhead" personnel cleaned up, performed maintenance on their vehicles and prepared for the next drive—the offensive which almost certainly meant the end of the war in the west. There was plenty of Cognac and Champagne in the city and no one suffered for lack of drink.

Rumors immediately began to ricochet through

Cologne. There was some speculation on the further action of the 3rd Armored Division. One remarkable story declared that the "Spearhead" was scheduled to halt at Cologne. The yarn was either accepted as accurate, or laughed to scorn. Most of the tankers and infantrymen, much as they hated combat, would have felt left out of the party if the division was indeed pulled out of action. These men had been the first team of the First Army since Normandy. They were the first through the West-wall, the first to take and hold a German town. The 3rd had a reputation.

When Major General J. Lawton Collins later presented Division Headquarters Company and Forward Echelon a Distinguished Unit Citation for heroism in action, he said: "Since the St. Lo days I have commanded a great many divisions. All of them were fine, but a few were great—and this is one of the great divisions."

Down at Remagen, the 9th Armored Division had concluded another brilliant operation by seizing the Ludendorff Bridge across the Rhine, on March 7. Now First Army elements were engaged in defending the vital span against suicide attacks by the Luftwaffe and in expanding the bridgehead. Presently the 3rd Armored Division received new orders. The combat commands moved out, Combat Command "Howze" first, on March 20, and the remainder of the division on the 23rd. The "Spearhead" crossed Germany's sacred river by way of a ponton bridge at Honnef. The last rat race was about to begin.



# ★ CENTRAL EUROPE

Up ahead, the BIG RED ONE, America's justly famous 1st Infantry Division, and the 104th Infantry, were engaged in widening the bridgehead. Close to the Rhine, the "Spearhead" coiled and waited. GI's fished in the "sacred" river, paddled kayaks and even, like Pfc. John Rooney, of Detroit, went swimming.

On March 24 the orders came down through combat command channels. The 3rd was moving out at dawn in full scale attack! This was the beginning of the big push. There was victory in the air and it was contagious. The American First, Third and Ninth Armies were already across the Rhine. So were Field Marshal Montgomery's forces. Now General Courtney Hodges was preparing a haymaker to the heart of Germany, a drive to isolate the Ruhr. The battering ram he chose for this stupendous task was Major General

J. Lawton Collins' VII Corps and again, as so often in the past, the 3rd Armored Division was scheduled to lead the attack.

At 0400 hours on March 25 the combat commands were rumbling out of bivouac. They went out along the dawn-dim roads in multiple columns of spearheads, 32nd and 33rd Armored Regiment tanks leading, squat and black in the gloom, with blue flame spitting from their exhausts. Tank-destroyers of the 703rd TD Battalion followed, clacking rapidly over the cobbles, their long 90mm guns perfectly balanced in heavy steel turrets. Armored infantrymen of the 36th, the "Blitz Doughs," rode in personnel half-tracks. Later they'd hit the ground and take to shank's mare in combat.

There were the combat engineers of the 23rd, light reconnaissance units of the 83rd, mobile artillery, signal men, medics, maintenance, supply — all



MAR. 25, to MAY 11, 1945



the complex and highly maneuverable elements that make up a modern armored division. Upon this morning there was no waiting, no wondering, and no rumors. There was plenty of hard work, though.

The dawn of March 25 was clamorous with motor sound. On a wide front the steel fingers reached tentatively forward, two columns to the right, under Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey; two to the left, under Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot. It was an almost overpowering spectacle to watch and, although you knew that there is no glamor in war, somehow the thunder of powerful engines and the clatter of tracks, the wide grins and genial curses, the guns weaving gently on their balanced mounts, brought a decided thrill. You

of the 33rd Armored Regiment lost three tanks to a cleverly concealed mine field and then sweated out a heavy artillery barrage. Sgt. Nick Mashlonic, commanding one of the new M-26 Pershings, proved its worth by knocking out a German Tiger and a self-propelled gun. The fighting became a vicious give and take slug-fest.

Meanwhile, legendary Task Force "X" cracked through the German main line of resistance. The route of advance was strewn with glass mines, which might not be detected by ordinary methods, and defensive positions were well dug in. Nevertheless, Doan and his troops penetrated the first hard crust of enemy frontline elements and seized the town of Asbach. Continuing through a constant hail



The „Spearhead“ began its swift drive out of the Remagen bridge-head area at dawn on March 25, 1945.



These two German tank-destroyers were abandoned by their crews near Oberpleis.

could loath war and its by-products, but you knew that so long as you lived you'd always remember, with a little shiver of pride, the morning when the "Spearhead" moved out to make history in a drive that isolated Germany's great industrial Ruhr.

There was a bright half moon on the horizon as the initial attack got under way. Grimy infantrymen of the 1st and 104th Infantry Divisions gazed at the armor passing through their positions. These doughs had paved the way. They were dark faced with fatigue, sweat stained, and their eyes showed white in the gloom.

Task forces commanded by Colonel L. L. Doan and Lt. Colonel Matthew W. Kane rolled to the right of the attack zone. To the left, General Boudinot's elements, one commanded by Colonel John C. Welborn, and the other by Lt. Colonel William B. Lovelady, forged rapidly ahead. The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion tailed the left column of CC "B", acting as a flank guard.

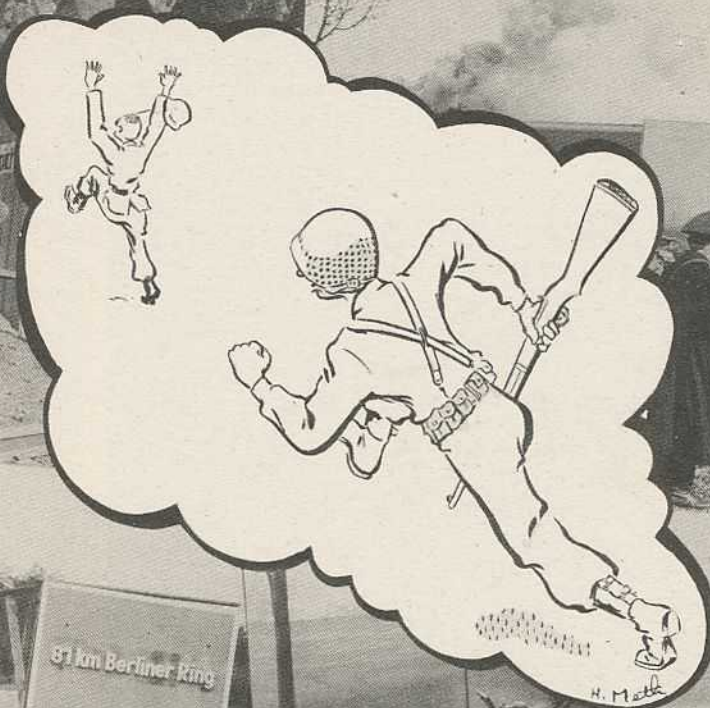
Almost immediately the "Spearhead" battle groups ran into heavy opposition. "B" Company

of shellfire, small arms and anti-tank defenses, the CC "A" task force took Schonesberg and crossed the Mehr River. One German airfield, bypassed in the push, was littered with the hulks of destroyed aircraft and parts.

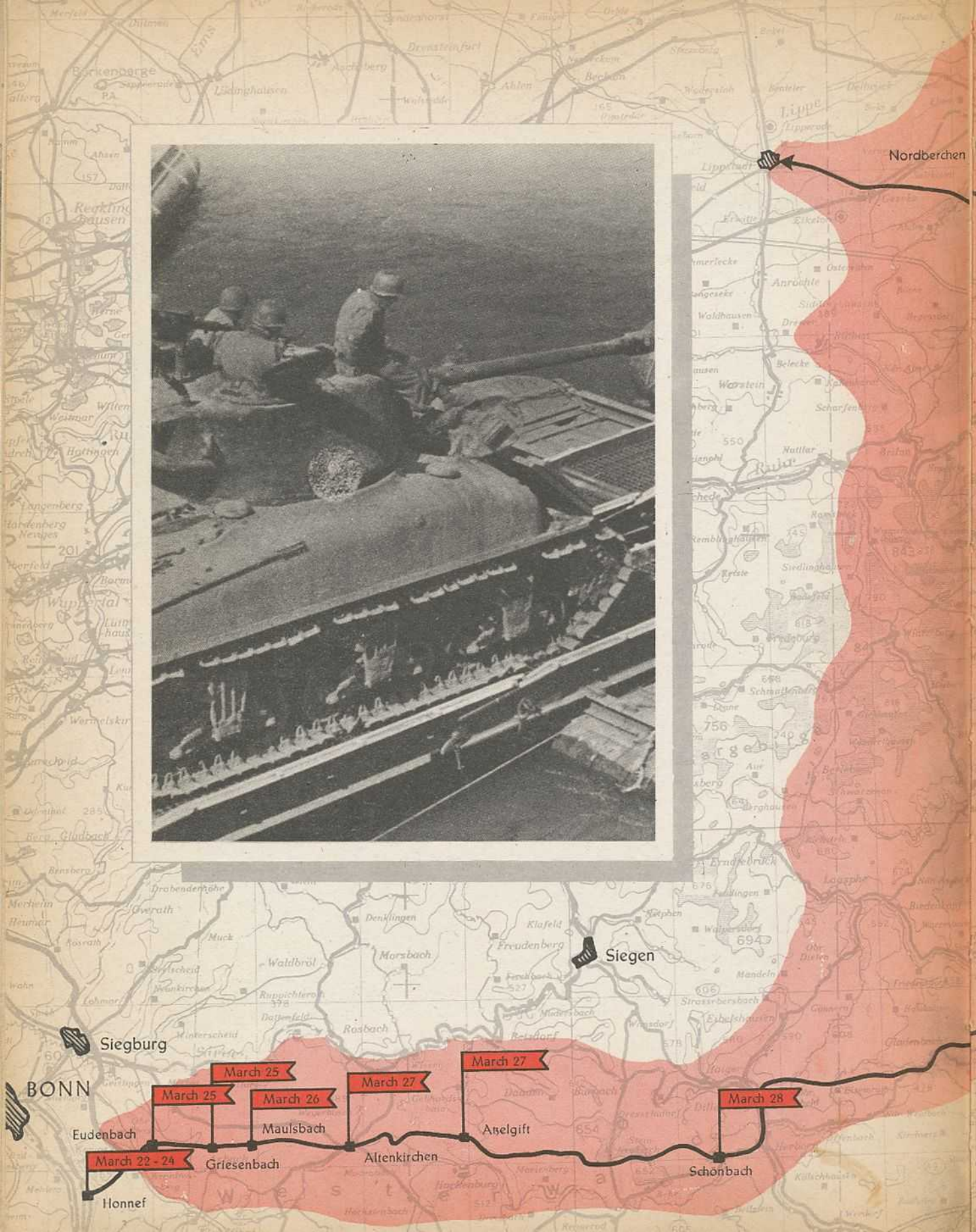
There wasn't much spectacular action on the first day of the new offensive, but the 3rd Armored Division gained 12 miles of ground. It was a slugging match all the way, with each side throwing haymakers. To the left of Doan, Task Force Kane battered ahead to take Krumscheid and Puscheid. Further to the left, Combat Command "B" met heaviest resistance. In a grinding offensive, General Boudinot's men took Wallroth, Oberscheid, and Fuscheid. By the end of the day Fiersbach had fallen. Armor was still moving ahead stubbornly into the thick of the fight and there was no letup of action.

The first day of combat had been a war of attrition. The 3rd was facing elite elements in Nazi General von Manteuffel's Fifth Panzer Army. The 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division, the 9th and 11th

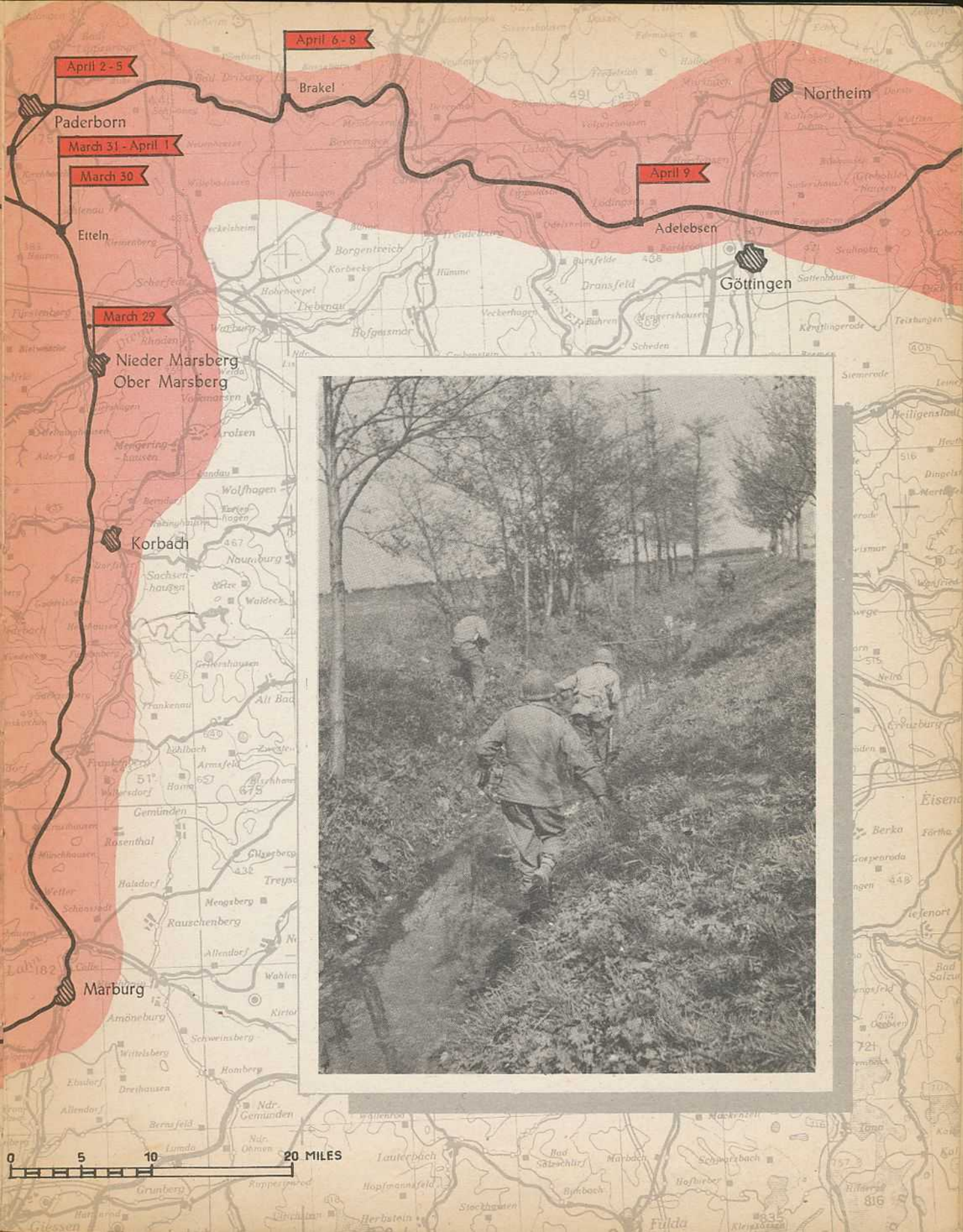












April 2-5

April 6-8

March 31 - April 1

March 30

April 9

March 29

Paderborn

Brakel

Northheim

Etteln

Adelebsen

Göttingen

Nieder Marsberg  
Ober Marsberg

Korbach

Marburg

0 5 10 20 MILES









Panzer Divisions, and parts of the 130th Panzer LEHR Division, the 340th and 363rd Volksgrenadier Divisions had all been thoroughly identified during the initial attack. Still, the "Spearhead" had advanced.

South of Germany's Sieg River line, von Manueff's Fifth Panzer Army continued to take a fearsome mauling on March 26. In a ceaseless round-the-clock attack, the tankers of Major General Maurice Rose's crack command drove forward. At 1700 hours, elements of the division had swept past Altenkirchen (later taken by Task Force Richardson, of Combat Command "Reserve"). The task forces overran supply dumps, took hundreds of German prisoners, and smashed German armor to smoking



The Nazi defended here, but not for long. The "Spearhead" ground on through.

junk.

On this sector, the German defenders were fighting a hard delaying action, but there was no sign of disintegration. The enemy withdrew town by town, using a vicious barrage of artillery, mortars, rockets and anti-tank projectiles to screen the movement. The only indication of a possible weakening was seen in the fact that most of the mines were set in hasty fields rather than in deliberate concentrations. More of the wicked little glass personnel explosives and the dreaded Riegel mines claimed victims.

Elements of Combat Command "A" made substantial gains in spite of these defenses. On the left flank, Combat Command "B" still inched ahead as the enemy fought vigorously to repel any threat to his Sieg River line, which ran roughly parallel to the 3rd Armored Division flank. Colonel Lovelady's men received heavy tank and anti-tank fire from high wooded ground on either side of the route, and all over the front German defenders began to expend artillery on the vast scale of Normandy actions

in 1944. Task Force Welborn, also receiving direct fire from both flanks, was the most desperately beset of all division spearheads. Welborn accepted his losses and ground forward. Thunderbolt air support worked over the blazing front line and the fighting was extremely hard.

All day long the advance was maintained against heavy resistance. Tankers gazed at the lofty, rolling and wooded hills of the Hohe Venn and shook their heads in wonder. If this area had been made the location of a defensive belt approaching the magnitude of the Siegfried Line, it would have been close to impenetrable. Instead, the enemy seemed to have no fixed line. He fought with the same fanatic ability, but it was a rear guard action and nothing else.



The prisoners of war came in by the hundreds every day. They were searched for weapons, interrogated, and sent to the rear.

The weather was warm and sunny: it was reminiscent of France in early August, 1944.

At Division Forward Echelon, in the late afternoon of March 26, a group of war correspondents clustered about the situation maps. The 3rd was making history. The place was Maulsbach and the town ahead was yet to be taken. To the north, perhaps one kilometer away, two ammunition trucks were hit which high explosive shells and burned with periodic spouts of pyrotechnics. At dusk an enemy gun, which was probably self-propelled, threw six shells which landed close to, or on, the CP building. One corner of the house was chipped and shell fragments pierced the general's caravan. One man was lightly wounded and everyone "played the walls" while the projectiles screamed in. War correspondents "Bunny" Austin, of Australia, Tom Henry, of the Washington Star, and Iris Carpenter, who represented both British and American newspapers, sweated it out with the rest.

On March 27 electrifying news came back over the battle nets. Task Force "X" had broken into



the clear and was smashing through town after town! Kane, and his dusty, triumphant tankers were advancing as swiftly. Across the hills of Germany there was acrid dust in the air and the multiple sound of many motors. Along the churned dirt roads of this fluid battleground the Wehrmacht's last reserves were strewn like a child's pile of jackstraws. Mobile 88's and their prime movers burned sullenly where the "Spearhead" had passed. French, Belgian, and Russian slave laborers, freed of bondage by this swift wave of allied power, trudged happily to the rear, shouting and waving to their Yankee liberators. For the first time since the end of the great 1944 summer offensive, this show looked like the beginning of the last rat race in Europe.

For the 3rd Armored Division, this launching out into the blue after two days and nights of hard battle with the bulk of Germany's western panzer forces, it was an occasion to warrant celebration. The tankers and the infantry hadn't time for that, of course, but their spirits soared with the old sensation of relentless pursuit. You don't move fast when you're getting shot to pieces!

All around, it was the sort of day for which the "Spearhead" was designed. It was movement and fire, broken communications and pockets of resistance to be mopped up. It was the longed for all out action which left liaison officers in a rough spot trying to maintain those vital lines of communication. There was expectancy in the air, and victory too. It was something like the breakthrough in Normandy, the same dust in the air—billowing clouds of it, pungent and stinging, laced with the stink of burning Nazi vehicles. There was wreckage and there was death, but the men of this big steel striking force were riding a wave of enthusiasm. There were the proud questions: "We're away out in front now, aren't we?" And there were the wrecked

German Panther tanks beside the road, the forever stilled Kraut artillery pieces, and the SP guns, one of which was labeled: "This don't work. Spearhead caught it. Too bad!"

Talk about pride of organization! These men, from their general down to the guy who loaded K-rations on a supply truck, were all of the same opinion—they belonged to the first team. This was the big bowl game and there wasn't a shadow of a doubt as to who'd take home the goal posts.

As usual in "Spearhead" campaigning, there were no non-combatants. General Rose himself engaged the enemy with his pistol on a lonely stretch of road near Rehe. The Jerries had flushed from the roadside into a nearby cemetery when the general, with his driver, T/5 Glen Shaunce, and his aide, Major Robert Bellinger, happened along.

A second peep, carrying Colonel Frederic J. Brown, and his driver, Pfc. A. C. Brazeal, zoomed into the engagement. With tommy-guns and pistols the five men attacked an estimated 15 German troops. By the time an armored car and two motorcycles arrived, 12 of the enemy had surrendered. One of the cyclists, Cpl. James Omand, said that the sight of General Rose herding prisoners with his .45 was something to talk about. The general was noted for his immaculate clothing, mirror-shined boots and precise military manner in any situation.

Task Force "X", striking boldly, took Herborn on the Dill River, then secured a bridgehead on the far side. Colonel Doan's men had been driving steadily for 72 hours without rest or maintenance. Now the task force halted for a few hours.

The people of Herborn were amazed. They had been told that the Americans were meeting defeat on the Rhine and here, many miles from the "sacred" river, they woke to find the streets crowded with those cocktail drinking, night-clubbing, jitter-bugg-



The roads were often blocked with wrecked and burning vehicles of the Wehrmacht. A bulldozer cleared the right of way.

German prisoners go to work carrying their own wounded.





Combat Command „B“ halted construction on these V-1 robots at Nordhausen.



German prisoners were weary and perplexed. The fuhrer never told them there'd be days like this.



German adults are gloomy, but the kids are delighted at the sight of this „Spearhead“ peep.





All fire arms, nazi flags and swords owned by civilians were destroyed.



Prisoners came in such large numbers that the boys changed the markings and used captured vehicles to transport them.

ing, degenerate Yankees whom their beloved führer had so scornfully dismissed as incapable of waging total war.

Three German soldiers who had been caught by the rapid sweep of armor, tried manfully to surrender. The townspeople watched these three go up to a busy Sergeant of Engineers, snap to attention and raise their hands.

"Kamerad!" they said.

"Beat it, you lousy bastards," snarled the busy Sergeant of Engineers.

Dejected, the trio wandered over to a tank, the crew of which was resting on the green grass, eating K-rations. Again they snapped to attention, raised their hands and chorused: "Kamerad!"

"Get the hell out of here, you Krauts," growled the tank commander, a lean rebel from Virginia. "We ain't a-bout to feed you!"

Towns where the people refused to surrender were demolished by the "Spearhead" artillery.



Slowly, the confused "supermen" walked about the streets of Herborn trying to surrender to small groups of soldiers who were busy making minor repairs on their spearhead vehicles. Finally, T/5 Charles "Sandy" Sanders, a trumpet player of the 32nd Armored Regiment band, directed the reluctant warriors to a 3rd Armored Division MP—who kept them sitting on a sidewalk curbing while he directed traffic and waited for a POW collecting point to be established.

Meanwhile, Combat Command "B", which had met greatest resistance in the drive thus far, went into reserve. Colonel Robert L. Howze's Combat Command "Reserve" pushed on to Dillenburg and secured crossings over the river there.

Somewhat rested, men of General Boudinot's command passed through CC "A" elements on March 28 and resumed the attack. Striking deep

Thousands of forced laborers were freed by the rapid drive. It was a long but happy road back.







At Eisleben, the flying columns recaptured allied prisoners of war. These are a British tanker and a New Zealand soldier.



After a night in the open, these „supermen“ were cold. They were part of 3,000 captured in a couple of days during the drive.

into German territory now, the armor was supported by doughboys of the 104th Infantry Division.

Light opposition faced the rampaging tanks and the battle seemed to have developed into a race to the east with German forces retreating roughly parallel to the 3rd Armored Division's swift advance. Task Force Lovelady, with Task Force Welborn echeloned to the rear, seized the important town of Marburg, a one time rabid center of Nazidom. As the course of the attack suddenly veered northeast, the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion surged to the front and began to drive hard. By nightfall, Colonel Yeomans' forces had secured Bottenhorn and Holyhausen.

The prisoner toll on this fourth day of breath-taking action, was high. Colonel Yeomans, calling Division Forward Echelon by radio, said: "We have so many prisoners we don't know what to do with

them all!" Everyone was taking Krauts again. Lt. Robert W. Knollenberger, an infantry liaison officer, captured four German towns and 25 prisoners of war, single handed. In one town, the lieutenant found civilians lining the streets as he approached — holding out P-38 and Luger pistols, butt first.

Although a rapid and continuous flow of Germans into POW pens, and a high loss of equipment suffered by the retreating enemy indicated disintegration, frontline officers found the Nazi delaying actions well organized and without sign of chaos. Small pockets of resistance were still taking pot shots at liaison men who were forced to trade back and forth between Forward Echelon and Rear, and once again Supply men were finding it difficult to keep up with and supply the spearheading elements. Several were killed or wounded while engaged in this perilous occupation. Lt. Colonel Jack A. Boulger,

German civilians watch General Rose's CP set up shop deep in Germany.



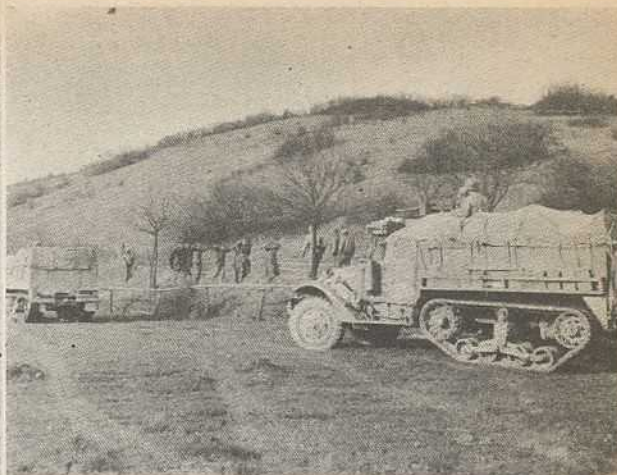
Lt. Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion led the „Spearhead“ in its most magnificent drive, 90 miles in one day, mostly across country.







German prisoners learn about KP on the other side of the lines.



All along the route there were groups of Krauts on the bitter road back.

Division G-1, travelling from the general's forward CP to the main CP, was captured on the 27th and was not liberated for several weeks.

Prisoners kept pouring into division cages all day long. Spot estimates soared to the 3,000 mark and many more could not be processed due to the rapidity of the advance and the lack of transportation to the rear. Major Charles H. Kapes and his MP detachment sweated out the prisoners and wondered how on earth they'd ever managed to corral the befuddled "supermen."

The enemy was still withdrawing parallel to the 3rd Armored Division either to shun the inevitable pocket or—and it was a thought in everybody's mind—to head off attacking units before the encirclement was complete. The Nazi could see the handwriting on the wall now. There was no doubt that the First and Ninth Armies were to attempt a linkup which would slip a steel wall around the great industrial Ruhr. GI's of the command, who remembered Argentan-Falaise, were grim-visaged when the new orders came down from headquarters. The "Spearhead" was swinging north to cross the "T" at Paderborn. It was a large order.

The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was already rocketing out to lead the way. In this rapid advance the route lay almost entirely overland. Towns which were thought to contain roadblocks were bypassed. The orders were to get through and around enemy resistance and to reach the objective—fast.

March 29 was a day for the historians to remember, and it all belonged to the 3rd Armored Division. Mengerlinghausen, Obermarsburg, and Drilon were taken in quick succession. Few, if any of the small towns were damaged by the armed fist of total war. This indeed was a different circumstance from the Remagen bridgehead area where nearly every village

had either been bombed or shelled, and often both.

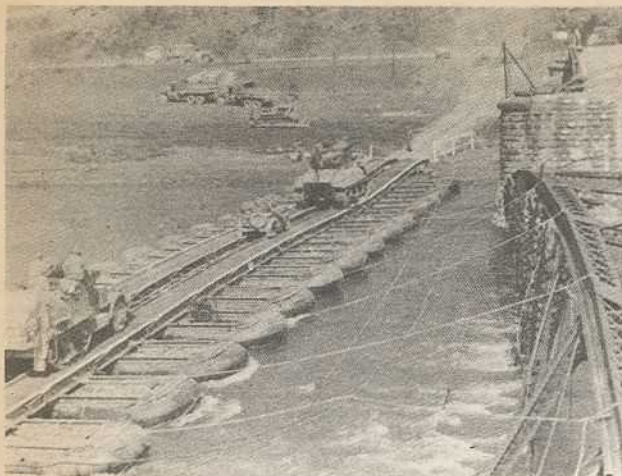
The day was overcast and air support was noticeable missing. However, there was no need for it. The enemy flank had been turned and there was nothing he could do about the slashing attack. Thousands of slave laborers limped back along the dusty road to freedom and everywhere along the routes of advance were grey-green columns of Jerry soldiers marching in bitter defeat.

For Major General Maurice Rose, this was a proud, triumphant achievement. His 3rd Armored "Spearhead" Division was accomplishing the greatest one-day advance in the history of mobile warfare, more than 90 miles, cross country, from Marburg to the vicinity of Niedermarsburg. For all practical purposes the startling sweep had sealed the doom of the entire industrial Ruhr, plus German Army Group "B" under Field Marshal Model.

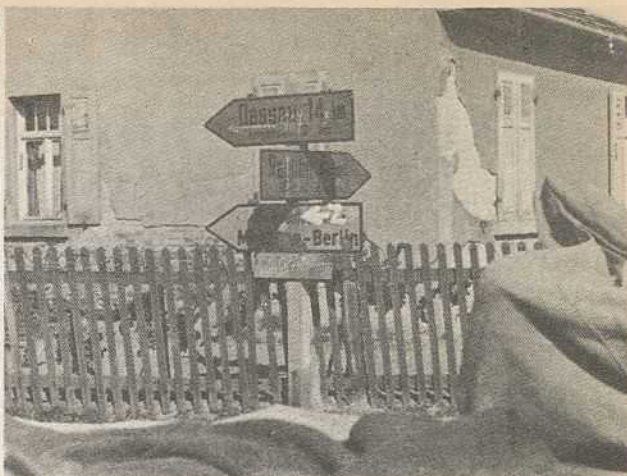
On March 30, however, resistance stiffened. Crack elements of the SS Panzer Replacement and Training Center and the SS Reconnaissance Training Regiment stationed at the Sennelager camp north of Paderborn, came out to put their Nazi Blitzkrieg theory into practice against the powerful spearhead of the first Americans. Armed with small arms, bazookas, Tiger tanks, and a new tank-destroyer which mounted a 128mm gun, this group was no mean opposition.

Tankers of the combat commands immediately began to face heavy concentrations of bazooka men armed with Germany's deadly, but unwieldy Panzerfaust or tank killer. The Panzerfaust was considered, even by the enemy, to be a suicide weapon. Using them, however, were the Reich's nearest thing to a do-or-die fighting outfit, the SS Totenkopf, or Death's-Head SS. These black uniformed elite fought well, but 3rd Armored Division assault elements continued a steady advance, cleaning out





The Weser River was just another stream "Spearhead" tanks rolled across without any serious trouble.



The roadside signposts showed that the 3rd was hitting pay dirt.

strong points along the way.

Although the push never slackened, March 30 was a black day for the 3rd Armored Division. It was a day that would be remembered as long as the men of the old "Spearhead" lived to tell the tale.

First there was Kirchborchen—the troops called it "Bazooka-town," and for a very good reason. Kirchborchen lay only six miles from Paderborn, on the right flank of the division's advance. In order to protect the flank this town had to be secured. Task Force Richardson went in to do the job.

Richardson's assault forces reached the outskirts of Kirchborchen at approximately 1400 hours after fighting scattered enemy resistance all the way. "G" Company, of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, supported by tanks of the 32nd Armored Regiment, crossed a small stream and gained access to the first few houses in the town. From that moment on, German defenders began to use the big Panzerfaust bazookas on a scale never before encountered by members of the "Spearhead" Division.

The town was fortified and defended by more than 200 Hitler Jugend and SS men who sent the heavy rocket explosives from every conceivable angle—from attic windows, cellar hideouts and piles of rubble. They used the weapon for direct fire on tanks and as indirect artillery after being driven back by the dogged attack of Richardson's men. Along with the panzerfausts, defending Germans were well equipped with automatic weapons and 20mm flak pieces.

After reaching the first three houses which were held by "Blitz Doughs" of "G" Company, Captain Jack P. Libby led Company "I" in a bid to clear the rest of the town. Moving out in a hail of automatic fire and shrapnel, the men took refuge in a stone quarry. After holding this position for a short period, Captain Libby decided to rush the company

across open ground to a spot which afforded better cover. The doughs attacked without a moment of hesitation, but a withering blaze of fire met them. Men fell along the whole front and finally remnants of the company were forced to pull back to their original jump-off positions. Parts of two squads, consisting of fifteen men under S/Sgt. Glenn E. King, and S/Sgt. William C. Miller, reached the first house beyond the open ground. Beating off fanatic SS bazooka teams, the men waited for darkness and help.

As soon as it was dark, the rest of the company moved up and took position in the first houses and in foxholes left by the SS. It was a great relief to find King, Miller, and the other men still holding their ground.

After a brief rest period, the company moved out again, well supported by Shermans of the 32nd. Nearby buildings were burning furiously from shell and mortar bursts and the night was a continuous crash and rattle of combat. Two tanks were knocked out by the bazookas in that night of horror, but the entire town was cleared by dawn. Jerry still held high ground on either side of the contested village, though, and as daylight came on, heavy sniper fire made movement almost impossible. The wounded had been evacuated under cover of darkness.

Several counter-attacks were beaten off during the morning, but during the afternoon a pair of Panther tanks re-entered Kirchborchen and rumbled toward doughboy positions. Captain Libby grinned wryly at his men and commented: "Well boys, maybe we'll be in the same camp together."

The two Panthers, however, were knocked out on the brink of success. Tank-destroyers of the 703rd TD Battalion had them covered and only waited for an opportune moment to touch off their 90mm guns.



It had been a hard, grinding battle, but now Kirchborchen was secure. Kirchborchen? Not to the men who took and held it. This village would be forever known to them as "Bazooka-town."

Meanwhile, on March 30, the advance had been maintained by other elements of the division, Task Force Welborn battered dug-in infantry and tanks in the area north of Etteln. At approximately 1800 hours, his column was cut by marauding Panther and Tiger tanks. It was not a serious breach but, in the vicious, confused action which followed, the famous commanding general of the "Spearhead" Division was killed in action. It was a hard blow to men of the 3rd and a tragedy which was mourned throughout the allied world.

The general met his death on the evening of a great triumph. After an irresistible drive of more than 100 miles, his tankers were approaching the outskirts of the key city Paderborn and the citadel of German armored force. Task Force Welborn was

General Rose asking for a second task force, under Colonel Doan, to close the gap and to expedite the action. This was the "Spearhead" leader's last order. Minutes later he and his party observed enemy tanks approaching from the rear. There was no alternative: it had to be a headlong dash, cross country, in an effort to reach the comparative safety of Colonel Welborn's task force.

Under a hail of bright tracer which stitched the gathering darkness in rapid darts of flame, the small group raced forward and cut sharply to the right. In the half-light, German infantry made full use of flares. The vehicles were sharply outlined silhouettes and machine gun bullets seemed to be going through and all around them. One of the motorcyclists was forced to abandon his machine. He climbed aboard the armored car and the procession went on.

Upon reaching the road down which Welborn's force had passed, the general's party knew a moment of relief and then, looming out of the darkness came



still moving ahead and the early conclusion of his drive meant that the enemy's industrial Ruhr had been almost completely encircled. The entire course of the war might now balance upon the success of other allied forces driving to a swift junction with the First Army spearhead.

The general's party, which consisted of three peeps, two motorcycles, and an armored car, was following Welborn's group at dusk when the column was cut by intense small arms fire from the woods on either side of the narrow dirt road. General Rose, cradling a tommy-gun in his arms, hit the ditch with his driver, T/5 Shaunce, and his aide, Major Robert Bellinger. Up ahead, one of Welborn's tanks was destroyed by a lance of direct fire, and a peep was also hit and reduced to smoking junk.

To the rear, division officers, unaware of the general's predicament, attempted to contact him by radio. The road-bound column was known to be cut and Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., Chief of Staff, was worried. The Colonel knew that his fears were not unfounded when he received a message from

a huge enemy tank.

There was no turning back. Colonel Brown and Shaunce both clipped the second of the lumbering vehicles but managed to squeeze through. The third Panther swivelled sideways in the road. Colonel Brown shot through a narrowing gap, hit the tank and tore the front fender off his peep. Shaunce, desperately attempting the impossible, came to a jarring halt, pinned by the mass of German armor on one side and a tree on the other. A German tanker shouted a stream of guttural commands and levelled a machine pistol.

It was impossible to tell exactly what happened next. General Rose, Major Bellinger and T/5 Shaunce stood before the Nazi tank. There was a fog of unreality about the whole situation. The enemy soldier was undoubtedly frightened, and probably trigger-happy. Perhaps he thought that General Rose was attempting to reach for a pistol.

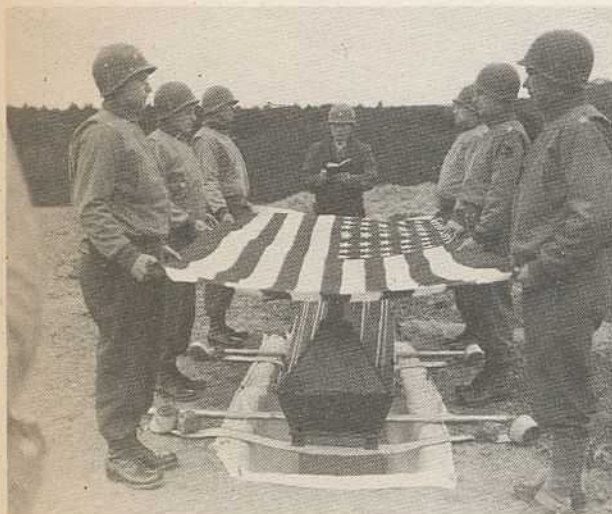
It was dark there in the narrow road. Clouds obscured the moon. Shaunce saw the enemy tank commander as a dim silhouette. He saw the man



unaccountably scream a final word, swing the burp gun and fire! There was an agonizing moment when the ripping sound of the weapon, the spout of flame and the sight of General Rose falling forward were all fused together like a nightmare. And then Shaunce yelled and ran. So did Major Bellinger.

In this way the great commander of the "Spearhead" Division came to his death. He fell at the head of his men, away up front where general officers, according to popular belief, are not supposed to be. The world mourned his passing. His troops scowled at the news and drove forward as he would have wished them to do.

For the most part, the rest of the general's party escaped. Major Bellinger spent four nights and days behind enemy lines before he was liberated, and T/5 Shaunce also had a nightmare of narrow escapes



Last rites before burial are read by chaplain Maurer for Major General Maurice Rose at cemetery near Ittenbach, Germany.

topped by final rescue by elements of Task Force "X". Lt. Colonel Wesley A. Sweat, Division G-3, who had commanded the armored car, and several of his men were taken prisoner. A month later, Sweat was liberated by British forces at Stalag XI-B, in Fallingbommel, Germany.

Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey, pipe smoking, aggressive, long-time leader of Combat Command "A", immediately assumed command of the division. The men had perfect faith in Hickey. They proved their allegiance by driving steadily forward.

Bitterly, men of Task Force "X", now commanded by Lt. Colonel John K. Boles, Jr., a dynamic, boy-faced veteran of tank warfare, cleared the road-block which had cut Welborn's column, and then went on to take Haxtergrund.

At Paderborn, the 3rd Armored Division was striking at the "Fort Knox of Germany." Here the

Reich's panzer elements were trained for battle and it was these school troops, many of them officer candidates, who came out to fight the American spearhead with tanks, tank-destroyers, and the big bazookas which seemed to be Germany's last, potent weapon of defense. The school troops of Paderborn fought well, but the grindstone of battle was wearing Germany thin.

German soldiers and civilians alike were stunned by the swift approach of American armor. Under the Nazi imbued of the Death's-Head SS, young Germans who had trained at Paderborn, died on the grounds of their military camp. Hitler may not have known it, but a majority of his troops, taken on the western front at this time, were fully aware of the fact that the jig was up. The POW enclosures were bursting with disillusioned "supermen." In small fields adjacent to almost every small town along the route they were standing, just waiting, looking beat-up and numb after the flame of battle. Small groups continued to ambush liaison men and messengers along the winding roads but frequently the enemy came marching out in company strength, waving white flags and looking for some one to officially put them behind barbed wire.

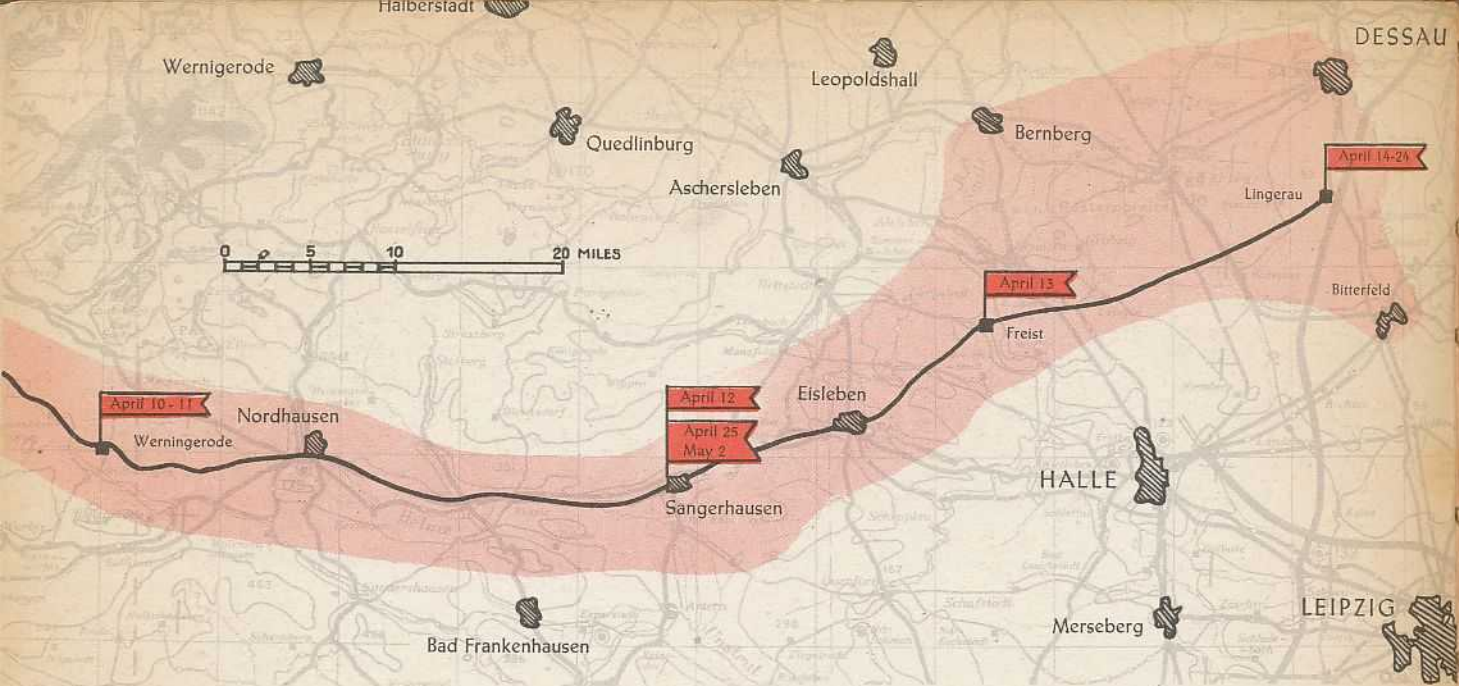
In clearing the Paderborn area, Lt. Colonel William R. Orr's 1st Battalion of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment alone captured 136 cannon, ten of which were active. Company "C", commanded by Lt. Robert J. Cook, was first on the city's airfield. The company was immediately pinned down by fire from two 88mm and eight 20mm flak weapons which Jerry had converted to ground use. Division tanks and other heavy weapons were brought up to take care of these defenses.

On April 1, the "Spearhead" Division had accomplished one of the great drives of World War II, but the satisfaction of that victory was soured by the news of General Rose's death. There was no slacking off in the 3rd.

Task Force Kane was detached from the rest of the "Spearhead" and sent on a swift drive to the west. Overrunning sharp oppositions, these battle groups met elements of the 2nd Armored "Hell on Wheels" Division at Lippstadt. The 2nd had come across the flat, north German plain while the 3rd was making its two-way thrust, first to Herborn and Marburg from the Remagen bridgehead, and then north in a brilliant crossing of the "T" to seal off the Ruhr. More than 376,000 enemy soldiers were hopelessly enmeshed by that historic drive. Significantly, the First United States Army announced that the mass encirclement would henceforth be known as the "Rose Pocket" in honor of the great general who was killed in action leading the first Americans to a decisive victory over Germany.

There was always one more river. This time it was the Weser, deep in central Germany. The war





was winding up in a furious series of hard battles and confused situations.

After mopping up in the Lippstadt-Paderborn area, the two veteran combat commands jumped off on April 5. The opposition still consisted of remnants from the SS training center at Paderborn, plus a conglomeration of various units. Although this type of resistance was not comparable with that received earlier in the war a certain desperation and fanaticism produced bitterly contested local actions. In addition, the enemy still had a number of tanks and the new 128 mm tank-destroyers left with which to fight.

By April 7, though, the "Spearhead" Division had reached its new objective to find every bridge

blown. The Kraut, still tingling after his stupendous snafu at Remagen, was now blasting each and every span which might aid the invader. It was late in the game for such tactics.

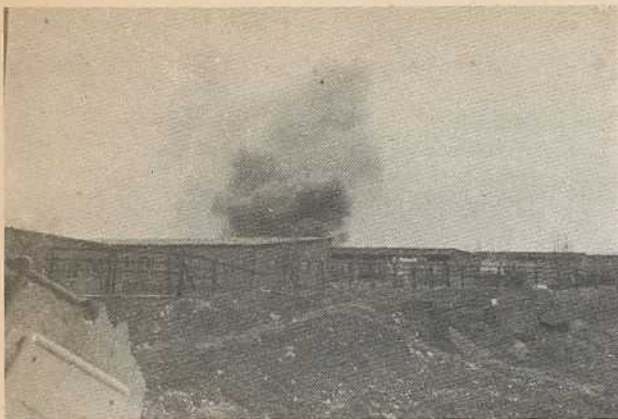
At the Weser, increasing resistance slowed advance elements, but the division prepared to hurdle the stream immediately. On April 9, crossings were made under moderate fire and the combat commands branched out. Twenty-two towns were taken before sunset and the task forces continued to advance.

On April 10 tanks and infantry roared ahead, overrunning rear guard elements and dueling with occasional Panther tanks. A platoon of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, led by Lt. Duane Doherty, cleared a V-2 assembly plant at Kleinbodungen, and found a number of the huge rockets, complete except for war heads, lying on the jigs where they had been constructed. A nearby railway line had been totally destroyed by aerial bombardment, but the V-2 factory was practically undamaged.

Polish labor conscripts cheer men of the Third Armored as they roll thru Nieder Marburg.







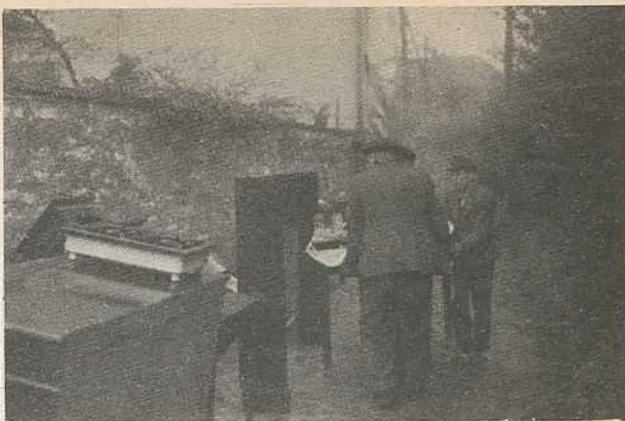
Tankers fire ammunition dump at Paderborn, Germany. The first shell has just landed.

After taking a number of prisoners, one of Doherty's men discovered an underground shaft in the assembly plant. A later examination proved that he had uncovered one of the Nazi's infamous underground installations. Reconnaissance soldiers were amazed to find that the tunnels ran more than 640 meters beneath the surface and then radiated off through several kilometers of sandstone and clay formations. Although no machinery was set up in the tunnels, all available space was crammed with various types of high explosives. There was an efficient elevator in which to descend into the subterranean cavern, a well wired electrical system, and a small gauge railway which reached every part of the installation.

Driving for Nordhausen, Task Force Welborn rolled into a vicious battle for the town of Espchenrode. As the column approached the large valley in which the action took place, a number of enemy infantrymen were noted, but bypassed. However, upon entering the town, heavy small arms fire and bazooka attacks began to halt leading elements. A deadly house to house action developed, with Company "F" of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment leading the initial attack.

The day was clear and quite warm. Visibility was unlimited, and General Boudinot directed the action from a point on the road approximately 1,000 yards from Espchenrode. Down on the floor of the valley an enemy column made frantic efforts to disperse, take cover, or get beyond the range of Division Artillery, which was now hammering it unmercifully. Piper Club artillery observation planes hovered over the combat area and presently the ground-support Thunderbolts began to slant down to strafe and bomb.

In the town, which was now under attack by tanks and infantry, a fierce fire fight raged for approximately three hours. Many of the enemy defenders could not be routed from buildings even



Civilians of Paderborn work to save some of their household goods.

though their retreats were riddled with high explosive and armor piercing tank rounds. There was an intense volume of small arms and bazooka fire.

The entire enemy force in the town of Espchenrode was killed, wounded, or captured. It consisted of six companies of first class troops led by SS officers and supported by a few tanks and artillery pieces. Task Force Welborn mopped up and moved on again at dusk.

Although the taking of Nordhausen did not constitute the heaviest fighting of April 11, that city

GI examines tail fin of V-2 bomb in underground factory in Nordhausen Germany.





will live forever in the memories of 3rd Armored Division soldiers as a place of horror. The Americans couldn't believe their eyes. It is all very well to read of a Maidenek, but no written word can properly convey the atmosphere of such a charnel house, the unbearable stench of decomposing bodies, the sight of live human beings, starved to pallid skeletons, lying cheek by jowl with the ten-day dead.

Two task forces of Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot's Combat Command "B" drove into Nordhausen practically together. They were the assault elements of Colonel John C. Welborn and Lt. Colonel William B. Lovelady. General Boudinot himself was among the first to enter the compound of Nordhausen's slave extermination camp, the former Caserne Boelcke. What he saw will go down in history as one of the greatest outrages against humanity in the entire war of German disregard for the rights and dignities of man.

Camp Nordhausen had been bombed by allied airplanes, but it was not bomb damage which so sickened the general and his troops as they viewed the remains of the Nazi institution. Hundreds of corpses lay sprawled over the acres of the big compound. More hundreds filled the great barracks. They lay in contorted heaps, half stripped, mouths gaping in the dirt and straw: or, they were piled naked, like cordwood, in the corners and under the stairways.

Everywhere among the dead were the living — emaciated, ragged shapes whose fever-bright eyes waited passively for the release of death. Over all the area clung the terrible odor of decomposition and, like a dirge of forlorn hope, the combined cries of these unfortunates rose and fell in weak undulations. It was a fabric of moans and whimpers, of delirium and outright madness. Here and there a single shape tottered about, walking slowly, like a man dreaming.

There was no hope for many of the prisoners in this place. Major Martin L. Sherman, a medical officer, estimated that although the army's medical facilities would be immediately put to use there was little chance of more than half the patients surviving. They were so far gone in the depths of starvation that death was a matter of hours. A number of those who had not starved had been shot by SS troopers when they attempted to run for cover during the air bombardment. They were, in a way, lucky.

The highly efficient German herrenvolk who caused the situation at Nordhausen and Dora, which was a place several kilometers to the north, were acting out a clearly defined program. These prisoners were political enemies of the Third Reich, German as well as other European nationals. They were men like Peter Hahn, a German communist, who had been a constant inmate of his country's

concentration camps for eight years; like Pole Leitner, a Hungarian electrician, who was dying from the ravages of tuberculosis. They were fourteen year old boys and aged men. They were members of the French Intelligence, Belgians, Poles, Russians — a very babel of tongues and nations, all dying together in the filth and dirt of their own dysentery.

Guarded by SS troops who delighted in beating the prisoners, these men had slept in three-decker wooden bunks, three men in each tier. Now every other man was a sunken corpse and, often as not, his neighbor in the same bed still lived and had the strength to move his eyes, slowly and wonderingly.

This was according to plan. The prisoners had worked — had dragged themselves to labor on V-1 and V-2 assembly lines although they were starving on a diet of four ounces of black bread and a small amount of thin soup each day. They worked because the SS had a cure for slackers or alleged saboteurs. At Dora they hanged 32 men one day and forced the entire garrison to watch. The prisoners then hauled their comrades to German cremation ovens.

The ovens were a very important fixture at Dora. The bodies came in by truckloads, stripped of all clothing, and were dumped on the ground. When crematoriums were full a pyre was constructed outside: first a tier of bodies, then a layer of dry wood: more bodies, and kerosene. They burned well enough for the SS and it didn't matter to them if a few bones were left. In fact, the SS wasn't at all partial: when one of their own men died, he too was shovelled into the oven.

The camp at Dora was elaborate. While Nordhausen was merely a barracks area from which the men were marched to work each morning at 4 A. M., Dora was a factory in itself. There were two parallel tunnels driven into the side of a hill there for a distance of almost two miles. Numbers of crossing tunnels and two separate levels were packed solidly with precision machinery. Here, the slave labor turned out quantities of V-1 and V-2 weapons, many of which were intact when CC "B" elements arrived to halt production. Robot bombs were an old story to "Spearhead" troops, but the more unfamiliar V-2 was of interest. They found the weapon to be shaped like a huge cigar with fins, 50 feet long. It had a huge, mushroom shaped engine and an electrician's nightmare of wiring. V-3, according to prisoners, was also undergoing experiments at Dora, but few of the political prisoners were assigned to its development. Those who were put on V-3 manufacture, according to eye-witness accounts, were segregated and finally murdered to preserve the secret of that which they had seen.

The arrival of American troops was miraculous to the half-crazed and starved slave laborers. At





## Nordhausen - Hell-Hole

..... You'd never forget the look in their eyes. It was almost enough to make up for all the weary days and the fear and the hell of battle. They were so thankful to the liberators, and they looked at the Yanks with that special gaze reserved for deities .....







More of the foolhardy Hitler Yugend find their dreams collapsing.

A league of nations of forced laborers head for home.  
Freed by the Third Armored drive.

German tank-destroyer meets "Spearhead" tank. Alles kaput for Jerry!

Hostile machine gun fire downed this yank.

Hitler said: "Give me five years and you will not recognize Germany again." He was right.

Dora, hysterically happy men attempted to lift Lt. Herbert Gontard to their shoulders. Although the lieutenant was a slim young man, the weakened laborers couldn't lift him.

Nordhausen and Dora were efficient in a characteristic Nazi way, but to the shocked eyes of American fighting men, the camps were the most complete condemnation of Hitlerism yet exposed. The tankers of the 3rd were in a savage mood as

they went on to the final battles.

While Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey, chewing savagely on his pipe, surveyed the gagging horror of Nordhausen, his old elite Combat Command "A" took Herzburg, reducing a strong road block in the process. Combat Command "Reserve" also battered ahead.

Advance elements crashed through Sangerhausen on April 12, and by the following day had reached the Saale River. Here again all bridges were thoroughly blown. The ground flattened perceptively as the "Spearhead" Division left the choppy, wooded Harz Mountains to the left rear.

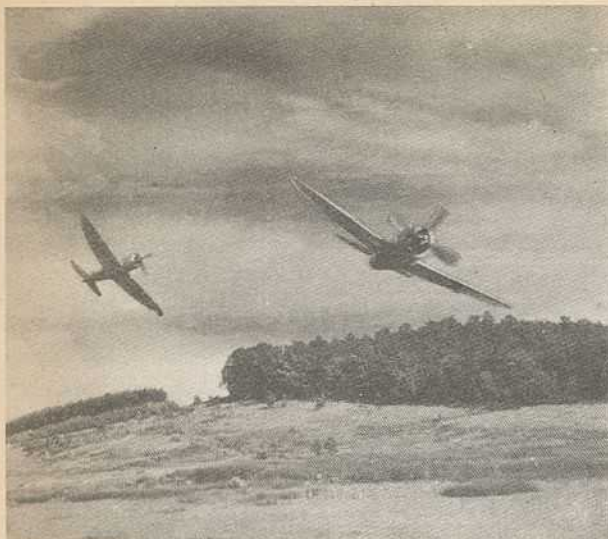
Eisleben was declared an open city as the flying spearheads neared it, but on the outskirts, at Polleben, a British prisoner of war camp was overrun and some 430 Englishmen liberated. It had been a long wait for the Britons, some of whom had been prisoners since the debacle of Dunkirk, the Norwegian campaign, Africa and Crete.

To the long confined British, Yank super-abundance of equipment was a dreamed-of miracle. Said one Captain in amazement: "You chaps have enough materiel in this convoy to reach Berlin!"

It was a great day for the erstwhile prisoners. Traditionally reserved English officers and enlisted men broke down and cheered as the battle group formations thundered through town. An airborne infantry major summed it up: "We knew you were coming, but when that first Sherman tank rolled over the hill I was so happy I cried."

Division elements crossed the Saale on two bridges built by Colonel Foster's combat engineers on the night of April 13-14. In spite of increasing opposition, the tanks and infantry of Task Force Welborn lanced straight out into the blue. They





The "Jabo" (P. 47) The GI's loved 'em. The Germans cursed 'em.

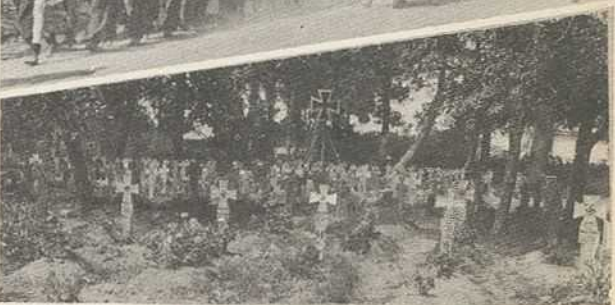
reached the Mulde River, south of Dessau on that day, and the last, furious battles began.

Still sensitive on the subject of bridges, German engineers left a demolished span across the Mulde where Welborn's weary troopers halted on April 15. Infantry of the force immediately crossed and established a bridgehead.

All along the front resistance stiffened. Violent fighting broke out as the "Spearhead" met three new battle formations. They were the Scharnhorst, Potsdam, and von Hutten Volksgrenadier Divisions, all of which had been formed about Easter time of officer candidates, naval personnel and veteran frontline soldiers. These were the Reich's last-ditch reserves and they were excellent troops, every one as well versed in battle techniques as the elite SS commandos whom von Rundstedt had gambled away in the Belgian winter campaign.

At this time General Hickey's task forces were holding down a struggling 40 mile front with many bypassed towns to the rear of the armored spearheads. It was very nearly an impossible task. Each small village had become a fortress of resistance which fanatic enemy groups defended to the death. Supply lines were constantly cut and liaison men were forced to travel in armored columns or chance a dangerous route through country which was still teeming with Kraut pockets of platoon or company strength. Close to Quellendorf, a CC "A" wire crew was ambushed while attending lines of communication. Two of the men were killed and another wounded. In the same general vicinity, Major William J. Derner, Division Ordnance Officer, was captured by German troops. He was later liberated as the war came to an end.

Thousands of slave laborers, displaced persons,



Some were sullen, but more told all they knew.

Crack troops of the Scharnhorst and Von Hutten divisions were taken with the rest.

Uniformed Hitler Jugend were rounded up in the Dessau area. They carried daggers but no firearms.

Those who were captured were saved from this. They knew they were lucky.

and allied prisoners of war were liberated in the region. They cluttered the roads and, in many cases, pillaged the countryside. At Hinsdorf, Lt. Herbert Gontard and T/Sgt. Robert Cresswell, attempted to restore order when some 1,000 of the DP's were observed to be on the verge of riot. Serious dissension had not yet broken out, but certain of the slave laborers were raiding civilian homes and shops in search of food. Gontard and Cresswell,



although they were the only American soldiers in the town, pressed two German bakeries into service and managed to provide bread for the hungry DP's. Later, Lt. Gontard attempted to drive into a nearby town in order to requisition more foodstuffs. He was wounded and captured by Nazi elements and was not liberated until the war was over.

The same situation prevailed everywhere on the thin 3rd Armored Division front. Without infantry support, the spearhead elements were forced to shuttle back and forth over the flat countryside, jabbing and parrying enemy attacks. Fortunately the division had sufficient mobility to strike at each German effort before it could build up into a serious threat.

On the Mulde bridgehead, Welborn's infantry and engineers sweated out heavy mortar and shell-fire. Tree bursts riddled the pontoons and, although several attempts were made to span the river, none



German medical vehicles left behind at Lixfeld, Germany.

were successful. Each time there was a lull in the artillery, the weary, sweat stained engineers came out of their foxholes and tried again. Without a doubt they would have ultimately bridged the Mulde, but an army order cancelled the operation on April 17. It was a new lease on life to the men who had engaged in that bitter, last minute action. In their minds was always the horrible fear of death during the last days of the war.

Meanwhile, Task Force Lovelady cleared out the last enemy resistance in Raguhn, west of the stream which bisected the town, and Richardson's men entered Bernberg, thus closing an escape gap for the more than 80,000 enemy troops still bottled up in the Harz Mountains.

During the early morning hours of April 17, the enemy staged one of those fanatic commando attacks which had become SOP in the last convulsive days of the Third Reich. An estimated force of 150 enemy infantrymen, in an exceptionally well planned and coordinated operation, attacked and overran Colonel

Lovelady's command post at Thurland. The Kraut commandos arrived on their objective just prior to dawn and, evidently guided by civilian information, turned their big panzerfaust bazookas on every house which was used to billet American troops.

A day of heavy and confused fighting developed. Elements of Lt. Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans' 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion were ordered to retake the town. "D" Company, commanded by Captain Herbert Zimmerman, moved out at 0800 hours, well supported by tanks and Division Artillery. The approach was without incident.

Thurland lay in a small natural hollow on the flat plain. The little German village looked peaceful and picturesque in the early morning sunlight, its red tiled roofs contrasting against surrounding green countryside. There was no smoke in the sky, nothing to indicate that a pitched battle was about to begin.



A German fraulein has loaded her personal goods and wonders what comes next.

As "D" Company reached the outskirts, it was met by a withering hail of small arms and panzerfaust fire. There was no doubt that the defenders planned to hold their ground. "D" Company moved back and called for artillery.

Colonel Fredric J. Brown's elements immediately threw concentrations of high explosive into the town. Billowing clouds of dust and smoke rolled up into the blue sky and presently the village was





Another river – another bridge to build. It seemed there was always one more.

burning in a number of places.

Reconnaissance soldiers moved in again late in the afternoon. Few buildings remained standing and the defenders were undoubtedly shaken. Still, they were determined to hold. American equipment had been taken by the Kraut in the night attack, and now it was used against the men of the 83rd. Targets were therefore confusing and positive identification almost impossible. A long and difficult battle developed, with the recon troopers fighting one captured Sherman tank, M-20 armored cars, and other U. S. ordnance, as well as the Jerry weapons.

Finally, Thurland was again in American hands. There were many "Spearhead" soldiers who would never forget the action. It would be remembered for the fanatical determination of those foolhardy young Germans who remained dead and dying at the end of the bitter day, and for the effectiveness of American equipment seen from a new angle by the men of "D" Company. For some reason this was one of the towns Jerry wanted and was willing to defend to the death.

Bobbau-Steinfurth, which was called "Bobby-Sox" by the attacking elements of Task Force Richardson, was another of the far-flung villages which saw heavy action. Richardson's tankers

met a determined counter-blow as they moved into the town. The attack was crushed with an artillery concentration and Thunderbolt air support. Eight enemy tanks were destroyed. Later, Task Force Richardson beat off another counter-attack and did not succeed in completely mopping up the town until April 19.

The preliminaries were winding up now, and the assault on Dessau began to take shape in operations offices at Division Forward. There was still bitter fighting everywhere on the far-flung front. At Zchepkau, on April 18, famed Lt. Colonel Prentice E. Yeomans was killed in action while leading his battle group into the attack. Wolfen, Greppin and Bitterfeld were also towns to remember. They were the scenes of intense fighting and were not entirely cleared of resistance until the 20th. At Wolfen, Pvt. A. R. Crutcher and a number of his platoon members carried German panzerfaust bazookas into the attack. Although the enemy weapon had its certain drawbacks, it was deadly in close quarter fighting.

In the vicinity of the Agfa photographic film factory in Wolfen, Crutcher's unit, "D" Company, of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, was ordered to clear a strip of field and woodland which was stubbornly defended by SS and Hitler Jugend



troops.

A small house among the trees seemed to be a center of the enemy defense line, so Crutcher carefully aimed his panzerfaust and fired. The rear wall of the building collapsed in a heap of dust and rubble. There was no further resistance.

To the Texans of the 3rd Armored Division, April 21 was a significant date for the opening assault on Dessau. It was San Jacinto day. Moving up for the final drive, troops of the "Spearhead" Division were high strung and nervous. They had been fighting almost continuously for the past two months, and this entry into Dessau was almost certain to mean the end of 3rd Armored Division campaigning. Already Russian shells were falling beyond the Elbe, and thousands of German troops were surrendering all along the line. The last days of the war in the west were not pleasant.

On April 21, Task Force Welborn attacked Dessau from the south. Colonel Boles, leading Task Force "X" spearheaded through Alten to enter the city. The men of Colonel Richardson's command battled heavy resistance in Jessnitz, while Task Force Hogan took Kleinkuhnau and Grosskuhnau, encountering road blocks, small arms fire, artillery and mortar concentrations.

The battle for Dessau developed into a furious house to house melee. Crack German officer candidates and non-commissioned officers from the Rosslau-Dessau army school of combat engineering, were thrown into the battle. The elaborate "Panzer-sperre" road blocks and other obstacles constructed by these men indicated that they were of the highest quality. In addition to being well trained engineers, these school troops were expert riflemen. Colonel Orr, attacking from the southwest, found that his "Blitz Doughs" were facing an enemy whose every soldier might be considered a sharpshooter.

Blown Autobahn bridge over the Mulde river. The 3rd fought furiously for it.



In spite of a resistance born of desperation, much of Dessau was cleared by 1800 hours on April 21. However, there was still heavy fighting ahead. "D" Company of the 32nd Armored Regiment, working with attached infantry, encountered a well defended position on the north outskirts of the city on April 22. The enemy was well dug in and protected by wire barricades and other obstacles. Mine fields were expertly covered with small arms fire, mortars, and by panzerfaust teams. Bitter fighting went on until 2400 hours that day, but tanks and supporting infantry were unable to advance.

At 0600 hours on April 23rd, the 2nd Platoon of "D" Company, led by Lt. Lewis Lively, and one platoon of the attached infantry, reconnoitered to the east in preparation for an encircling movement. The enemy wasn't fooled: he was ready with small arms, artillery, and a smoke screen.

Lively changed his tactics. Deploying his platoon in line, he ordered tank commanders to open up with all guns and move forward! It was a simple frontal attack and yet the American fire power was so great that German defenders were thrown into a panic. Twenty-five yards from the first Nazi fire trenches, Kraut soldiers began to surrender. They came limping through the mist and smoke of battle, waving handkerchiefs and other bits of white material. The attack went on through the second line of resistance and reached the Mulde River, one of the "Spearhead" Division's final objectives.

Dessau provided a last flurry of resistance on April 22 and 23. On the following day all of the city was cleared and Combat Command "A" went on to mop up the last of the Rosslau-Dessau engineer school troop garrison. At Division Forward Echelon, in Lingenau, a barrage of high explosive shells hit the CP area. A barn which housed the engineer kitchen was hit and set afire and several

Infantry hugs the shelter of an embankment as they wait the signal to attack.







There were "victory-smiles" on every face from top brass to the tankers when the end came. General Hickey reads the telegram telling of the German surrender. Corp. Calvin Wickware of Wetumka, Oklahoma gives out with his broadest grin.

men were seriously burned. It was a grim farewell to combat.

By April 25 the 9th Infantry Division had relieved all "Spearhead" elements on the now stable front. It was like a dream come true to those men of the old 3rd who still remained unscathed.

Weary tankers, red eyed and grimy, tooled their big Shermans back over the roads of conquest. The "Blitz Doughs," sprawling in personnel half-tracks, still had weariness steeped in their bones and the frontline look in tired, red-rimmed eyes; but they were happy. It was a wonderful feeling, for—no matter how the words are twisted, a combat soldier has only three things to look forward to: a wound, death, or cessation of hostilities. There had been times when the first two were alternatives, and the last—a dream in the dim future.

At long last Germany was broken. There could be no mistake: this was the end. Thirteen days later, VE was officially proclaimed, but by that time the news was anti-climax.

The "Spearhead" went back on April 25, 1945—back until the artillery was just a whisper in the distance, and then there was no artillery at all. There was just the warm sun, the green meadows of springtime, and peace. South of the Harz Mountains, in Sangerhausen, the men of the division were billeted in civilian dwelling houses. Here they rested and tried to forget the sound of "incoming mail," and the necessity for digging foxholes. There were still a few isolated incidents—wire cutting, and the like, but for the most part German ex-soldiers and civilians were quiet and well behaved. Up in the Harz Mountains, bypassed pockets of enemy resistance were laying down their arms and surrendering en masse. Sgt. Glen Davison, on a deer hunting trip in the foothills, came back with seven of the erst-

while "supermen" sitting on his peep. His were among the last prisoners taken by the 3rd Armored Division in World War II. The total came to something over 76,000, and did not include the thousands which the "Spearhead" had helped to encircle in the Rose Pocket and the Harz Mountains.

Immediately after VE Day, which did not call for any spectacular celebration at Sangerhausen, high point veterans of the 3rd began to leave the division for America and eventual discharge. It was the beginning of an exodus which reached its peak after the Japanese surrender in August. In four short months the old outfit, the original 3rd Armored Division which had come up the long, dusty road from Omaha Beach and St. Jean de Daye, through France and Belgium and Germany, through the flaming towns and the best defenses of a fanatic enemy, was gone. And yet, in a way it still remained—for the record of a great fighting force never dims with time or the circumstance of change. That record will always remain a bright thread of valor and service woven into the history of America's First Army in World War II. The "Spearhead" Division was a part of that great machine from beginning to end, from Normandy to central Germany, and in all the well remembered spots of swaying, death-locked combat in between. Proudly it led Lt. General J. Lawton Collins' crack VII Corps in most of the First Army offensives across Europe. The 3rd Armored Division remembered St. Lo-Perriers, and the Normandy breakthrough. Its tanks bolstered the line at Mortain, and then went on to help close the Argentan-Falaise gap. Mons, that ancient city of battle, knew the "Spearhead" well. Namur, Liege, and the Siegfried Line became symbols of sacrifice and victory. The terrible Ardennes: Cologne, Altenkirchen, Paderborn, Nord-



## TEAM MATES

From Stolberg thru the final drive the 104th infantry division and the Third Armored division worked as a team. There was a mutual respect.

At Sangerhausen Col. Laham, representing the famous Timberwolves, presents a route - map painting to team - mates of the Third.



hausen, and Dessau! They were flaming memories of total war and every one was shadowed by deep-hearted sorrow for those who fell along the way. That was the "Spearhead."

The men of the old division were veterans, and therefore they were quickly redeployed, sent back to the United States and, except for those who chose the regular army for a career, immediately discharged. They packed their uniforms in moth-balls,

shrugged off the war-necessary slough of regimentation, and slipped into the longed-for status of everyday American citizens. They hadn't ever wanted to go to war, and yet—in the crackling hell of armored battle, they had become the spearhead of General Courtney Hodges' famous First Army. It wasn't rhetoric that made "Spearhead In The West:" it was leadership and ability and cold steel—with GI-Joe away out front and riding to win.

— THE END —

## THE DIVISION IS INACTIVATED

In a formal ceremony in the caserne in Aalen, Germany at noon on Friday, November 9, 1945, Major General Robert W. Grow cased the Division's standards and reported to Major General Withers A. Burress, commander of VI Corps, that the Division and its component units were inactivated effective 10 November 1945 in accordance with instructions contained in General Orders No. 632, Headquarters Seventh Army/Western Military District, dated 25 October 1945.

About one hundred men and officers participated in the solemn final ceremony conducted in a drizzling rain. The group included four officers from the original officer cadre of the Division: Lt. Col. Andrew Barr, Chief of Staff, Lt. Col. Jack A. Boulger, G-1; Lt. Col. Wesley A. Sweat, G-3; and Major Charles H. Kapes, Provost Marshal. The positions indicated were those held at the date of inactivation.





### *Nor any word*

*God raise them high, that in the mold and clay,  
As black and mouldered sheaves, repose this while;  
That were in life all-wild, high hued and gay,  
Within their vein and stem; which now lie vile  
In death. Make we the proper quittance, then -  
Build we aloft some shape in stone: some pride,  
To seat remembrance in the thoughts of men,  
And honor these who poured out youth - who died.*

*There is no measure, no device of hand,  
For us who live where sun can kiss our eyes;  
Nor aught of any voice for all who stand  
Beholden to these few; except that lies  
Within the reaches of our hearts, unheard,  
And will abide no name, nor any word.*

*Alan Burr*



# FOR THE RECORD

Letter written by Lt. General J. Lawton Collins, CG, VII Corps to Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey, CG, 3rd Armored Division, on the occasion of the "Spearhead" Division's release from the crack VII Corps

## HEADQUARTERS VII CORPS OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

21 May 1945

Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey  
3rd Armored Division, APO 253,  
United States Army.

Dear General Hickey:

With the relief of the 3rd Armored Division from the VII Corps, I wish to express again, in writing, to you and to the officers and men of your splendid division, my appreciation for the great contribution made by the 3rd Armored Division to the success of the VII Corps in its operations in Germany, particularly during the closing phases of the war.

Following the severe fighting in the Ardennes, in which the 3rd Armored had played a great part first in checking and then expelling von Rundstedt's forces from the "Bulge," the division was shifted back to its old battle ground, Stolberg, and prepared for the crossing of the Roer River. As soon as the 8th and 104th Infantry Divisions had established a bridgehead over the Roer, the 3rd Armored was placed in action on the morning of 26 February to spearhead the attack of the corps on Cologne. With characteristic dash and vigor, the division broke through the initial resistance and raced eastward. In two days it had forced the difficult crossing of the Erft River and swung across the northern end of the formidable Vorgebirge, whose hill masses, pitted with a succession of open lignite mines and studded with slag heaps, made maneuver very difficult. The key road and communications center of Stommeln was seized to sever the enemy forces in the northern part of the Cologne plain between the Erft and the Rhine. Pressing the attack to the northeast, elements of the division reached the Rhine River in the vicinity of Worringen on 4 March, and in an irresistible drive were the first troops to enter Cologne on 5 March. Within two days all enemy resistance within the division sector, both in the city and on the plain to the north, had been eliminated.

After a brief interlude along the west bank of the Rhine, the division moved across the river into the expanding Remagen Bridgehead, prepared to launch the last great offensive in the west. On 25 March, the division attacked east again through the 1st and 104th Infantry Divisions, brushing aside the initial resistance and pressing forward through the hilly and wooded area of the watershed between the Sieg and Wied Rivers. Although enemy resistance was sharp and unrelenting and the terrain continued to be difficult, the division seized Altenkirchen and quickly forced a crossing of the Dill River in the vicinity of Herborn, and then captured Marburg, cutting enemy communications in the Lahn River valley.

Then began one of the most important and dramatic maneuvers of the entire campaign in Europe, the envelopment of the vital Ruhr industrial area. Commencing on 29 March, the "Spearhead" Division in an unprecedented drive advanced ninety road miles to the north in one 24-hour period, the greatest advance by any division against opposition in the entire war. As it neared its objective, Paderborn, the division became heavily engaged and fought its way through fanatic resistance of enemy troops from the SS Panzer Replacement Training Center. Continuing onward, while repelling counter-attacks from all sides, the division captured Paderborn on 1 April. On this same day, Task Force Kane advanced to the west and made contact with elements of the 2nd Armored Division at Lippstadt, thereby cutting off the enemy troops in the Ruhr. In eight days the division had made a spectacular advance of almost two hundred miles and had swung the hammer that forged more than half of the ring around the 300,000 enemy troops encircled in the Ruhr Pocket. The speed, dash, and daring of the commanders and men of all ranks made this operation a model military classic.

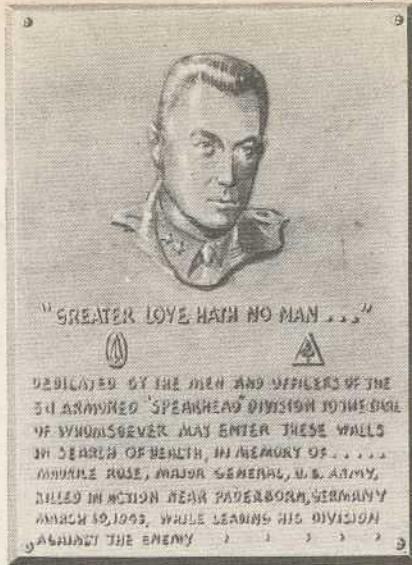
Unfortunately, we had a terrible price to pay for this victory in the death of one the greatest of all division commanders, your gallant leader, Major General Maurice Rose, who was killed in action 30 March at the head of one of his task forces near Paderborn.

The envelopment of the Ruhr spelled the doom of Germany, but some stiff fighting had to be done before a link-up could be made with the Russian forces advancing from the east. Crossing the Weser River in the vicinity of Odelsheim, on 5 April, the 3rd Armored Division resumed its relentless pursuit of the disintegrating German forces with another stirring enveloping maneuver, this time around the Harz Mountains. The key towns of Duderstadt, Nordhausen and Sangerhausen fell in rapid succession as the division drove to the northeast on Dessau. Despite stiffening resistance and enemy counter-attacks with fresh troops, Kothen was captured, and on 23 April the city of Dessau on the Elbe was cleared of the last German resistance west of the Mulde River.

It is with great regret that VII Corps bids adieu to its spearhead division. Since the days of the St. Lo—Marigny breakthrough, your division has led most of the great offensives of this corps—in the pursuit across France and Belgium; at Mons, Namur, Liege, and through the Siegfried Line and into Germany; in the Ardennes Counteroffensive; in the drive from the Roer to the Rhine; and in the last great envelopments of the Ruhr and the Harz Mountains. The division's splendid performance in each operation is a lasting tribute to the leadership and devotion to duty of the officers and men of your command. The wonderful fighting spirit, the dash and daring of the "Spearhead" Division has carried all before it. The VII Corps is proud of the 3rd Armored Division and its great accomplishments. The entire staff and corps troops join me in wishing you all the very best of luck.

Sincerely yours,  
J. LAWTON COLLINS,  
Lieutenant General, U. S. Army.





General Rose Memorial Hospital Association

700 Broadway

Phone TAbor 5397

Denver 3, Colorado **SEP 7 1945**

Received of Colonel John A. Smith Jr.  
and First Sergeant J. O. Atherton the  
sum of

\$30,000.00

representing the combined contributions  
of the officers and men of the Third  
Armored Division to the General Rose  
Memorial Hospital.

*Ben M. Blumberg*  
Secretary



# OUR THIRD ARMORED DIVISION

WORDS AND MUSIC BY  
P. F. C. CHESTER F. KOWALEC  
Co. "I", 33<sup>rd</sup> ARM'D REG.

Marziale

The piano introduction consists of two systems of music. The first system has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The second system has a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a common time signature (C). The music is in a major key with one flat (B-flat major) and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

The vocal entry is marked "Recitative" and is written on a single treble clef staff. The lyrics are "A - mer - i - ca ! A - mer - i - cal We". The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff with a common time signature (C). The music is in a major key with one flat (B-flat major) and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

The vocal line continues with the lyrics "have a sto - ry to tell you a - bout our proud Di - vi - sion; What". The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff with a common time signature (C). The music is in a major key with one flat (B-flat major) and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

The vocal line concludes with the lyrics "it a - chiev'd, what we a - chiev'd with good su - per - vi - sion." The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff with a common time signature (C). The music is in a major key with one flat (B-flat major) and features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.



# Marcia

OUR THIRD AR-MOR'D DI - VI-SION, From First

AR-my, Se-venth Corps, Won the ti-tle "Call Me Spear-head" When we

broke thru at St. Lo; We first broke thru France, First thru Bel-gium, First to

break the Sieg-fried Line. The Jer-ries will long, Long re-mem - ber us, for we



ne-ver was-ted time.

1. OUR THIRD AR-MOR'D DI-  
2. THITD AR-MOR'D DI-

VI-SION, It is well known by it's name  
VI-SION, Be-deck'd with hon-ors rare, "Call Me Spearhead" on a  
Where-e-ver call of duty

mis-sion that fought on the road to fame. You can hear the roar of the  
bee-kons you can bet we'll be right there; Once can a tan-ker al-ways a

mo-tors As our Spear-head tanks roll by; *Meno mosso*  
tan-ker, We'll up-hold the legend of our corps, The brave men we lost are a  
And the cost that was paid by the



1. Marcia

hea - vy cost, we sa - lute those men on High!  
strong and brave we'll re - mem - ber e - ver

OUR

2.

rall.

more! And the cost that was paid by the strong and brave We'll re -

- mem - ber e - ver

more!



REPRINT DEC. 3, 1944

**YANK**  
THE ARMY WEEKLY



**Laced together by replacements, the outfit had come a long way since the surf of Normandy, and now, under a German moon, the corporal still wanted to attack.**

### BY SGT. FRANK WOOLNER

Germany—There was moonlight. The air was cold and fresh, and it reminded you of winter time at home. There was the same curved bowl of blue-green sky, the same stars winking frostily. The ground crunched pleasantly under your feet, and the apple trees which covered this little clearing might have been growing in old New England. You walked in memory at this moment, almost expecting to jump a woodcock in the half light. The clear cold was soothing after the raw weather, but it linked a bitter chain of circumstances which added up to the soldier's ever-present pang of loneliness.

This wasn't New England. On the horizon was a steady flickering, like heat lightning, only it was cold-white, and the thunder came jumping back in spasmodic crumps of sound. You looked more closely through the little orchard now, and you could see the backdrop of war. Tank destroyers crouched in the gloom, low-slung silhouettes with impossibly long guns jutting from their angular turrets. Even as you watched the big steel machines, they opened fire, first one and then another, in a succession of ear-splitting blasts. The rippling spout of white flame seemed to imprint itself on your eyes after it had been dissipated to drifting smoke. Your ears sang with the reverberations of the big 90mm guns; and the loneliness suddenly was

gone—the present had reasserted itself.

This was Germany in the winter of 1944, and here was a platoon of a Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached to the 3rd Armored Division. There was a guy sitting here on the trunk of an apple tree which had been toppled by enemy fire. His name was Cpl. George Harland, and his home was in Housatonic, Massachusetts. George had evidently been lost in nostalgia, too, because he said, "Nice night for fox hunting, isn't it?"

And because you used to hunt foxes on nights like these, over the same choppy hills of New England, you slipped into a perfect understanding with this guy who was a gunner of a deadly war machine.

"Anything doing?" you asked, sitting down on the apple log.

"Not much. We're firing indirect and reaching out pretty far. That last serenade registered at nearly maximum range. There hasn't been much incoming mail. Got a few rounds from a Jerry railway gun last night, but I think the Thunderbolts got him."

Harland is an easy going Joe. His blue eyes are gentle and he speaks slowly, without using profanity. He doesn't talk about the scores of German vehicles he has blasted into rust-colored junk, or about the Mark-V that nearly left him at Fromental forever. Veterans don't boast about these things. They say mildly, "Nothing much doing," but if you sit around and, bat the breeze, high adventure inadvertently creeps into the conversation. Steel and fire and death are the hallmarks of the armored forces, but the tankers and tank destroyers of our Army like to forget that. They'd rather talk about football back in '39, or what the Dodgers are doing—or how foxhounds might run a red fox on a night when moonlight etches run-down apple trees with silver. In a way this is as it should be. The tired guys who man our weapons are fighting for such privileges.





# "The Spearhead's" TDs

Here, beyond the Siegfried Line, these big tank destroyers were dropping shells up to maximum range from their reeking muzzles. In one twelve-hour period a platoon of the weapons had fired 480 rounds. They were M-36s equipped with a 90mm gun—four to a platoon, fast and maneuverable, each packing a wallop sufficient to sieve the heaviest tank in the world.

Jerry had reason to dislike these TDs. Led by a 27-year-old Lt. Colonel, Wilbur E. Showalter, of Kingman, Kansas, the battalion had harried Jerry across France and Belgium, wrecking his armor and self-propelled guns at ranges of anything from 25 yards to sight distance. They'd waylaid the panzers time and again, ambushed German motorized columns, played havoc with the enemy at countless road blocks from Perriers to Aachen. Now, when the American drive paused temporarily, to bring up supplies and to straighten the line before launching that all-out attack which would mean "Germany Kaput," these identical tank destroyers dropped back and supported the artillery as though they had been just waiting for this moment. It was hard on Jerry, but it wasn't news. Tank destroyers have always been a bitter pill for supermen to swallow.

This battalion came ashore in Normandy with the 3rd Armored Division, and went into action at St. Jean de Daye, France, in time to help smash a German counter-attack which was designed to reach the sea at Isigny. The 3rd became famous as an outfit that helped to spearhead the entire United States First Army forces from the breakthrough sector of Perriers-St. Lo to the Siegfried Line, making the most spectacular advance of the western campaign in an 18-day dash from the Seine to the German border. The Tank Destroyer Battalion was there in the dust and grime of that long attack. It shared the 3rd Armored Division's well-earned soubriquet: "The Spearhead."

A tank destroyer is a big vehicle. It looks like an underslung, angular tank, and it weighs 32 tons on the prowl. If you haven't studied your silhouettes, well, you might take it for a German panzerwagon. The gun is exceptionally long; and there, in fact, is the explanation of so much weight on a relatively thin-skinned vehicle—that wicked shooting iron and the counter-balance which allows smooth tracking.

The TD is not a tank. It has an open turret and a thin skin, in comparison to the hide of a Sherman or Mark-V. Fast, and extremely maneuverable, the M-36 can outslug any tank in the world, but in a duel with armor it would fare very badly. This sounds like a contradictory statement, but it isn't. While the heavy 90mm weapon of the TD will destroy anything on wheels or tracks, it must do so from a concealed position or suffer the consequences of a hit which would certainly pierce its inadequate armor. The motto of Tank-Destroyer Command is: "Seek-Strike-Destroy." Officers of this new branch of the Service add: "But never duel!"

TDs stalk their game like the black panther, which is their shoulder flash, and direct fire against enemy armor is the primary mission of these bulky looking but deceptively fast vehicles. They are, however, versatile, and may be used in other capacities.

Continued on next page





## The "Spearheads" TDs

Continued from page 165

Here in this little orchard, under a pale winter moon, the men who helped to bring the blitz back to Germany were practising one of those secondary roles,—that of indirect fire in support of field artillery. After the hectic, never-ending attack across France and Belgium, it was tame pursuit.

The billowing, acrid dust of France was in the nostrils of these men. Imprinted on their souls were the night marches and the slashing, triple-pronged attacks where tank and tank destroyer slugged it out at negligible range. They'd strewn the rust-colored carcasses of Hitler's panzer armies all along the road from Normandy to the Siegfried Line. They'd dueled with enemy armor in violation of every principle set down by tank destroyer command—because it was necessary, and because many things were done that way in order to further the rapid drive at all costs.

Naturally, there were casualties. One does not engage and defeat the Wehrmacht's elite without paying a price. They'd killed the enemy, and the enemy had struck back savagely even as he died. These campaign-toughened TD troopers remembered their dead. You can see that memory in the face of a seasoned soldier. It is in his mind, in his tired eyes. You can easily note the transition in such a man from a relatively soft spirit of competition to quiet hate. A veteran knows no wave of sympathy as the bullet strikes home or the shell smashes a vehicle and its occupants to blood and tangled metal. It's kill or be killed. Death to the enemy, and elation as he falls.

There were things you couldn't forget. Like the dead in the ditches of Normandy, or the flaming action at Ranee and Fromental. Here, while British forces drove south to clamp shut the Argentan-Falaise pocket, 3rd Armored Division troops cut to the very center of the Nazi elite elements under von Kluge. The TDs fought gun to gun with heavily armored panzers. A Sergeant Commander named Juno met two of these wickedly efficient enemy vehicles at a bend in the road—smashed them both into smoking junk before they could lay on his thin-skinned destroyer. Then, when the wounded enemy soldiers cried for help, Juno left the safety of his destroyer to aid them. He was killed immediately in the explosion of burning ammunition.

It was the law of speed and hot steel in France. It was running vehicles beyond all the applied principles of maintenance, whipping them forward and praying that they would hold up under the strain. They held. The engineering wizardry of Detroit made that hell-for-leather drive possible, and its very speed insured success. German forces were caught off balance and their storied organization disrupted completely. At Mons, in Belgium, an estimated 40,000 Wehrmacht troops were killed or made prisoner by the American 3rd Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions. One platoon of tank-destroyers, on road-block in that ancient city of battle, destroyed twenty German vehicles in a six-hour period. Sgt. Muriel F. Lehman, of Marissa, Ill., accounted for most of them, he and Sgt. Arthur Parnell, of Boston, Massachusetts, with their respective crews.

Mons may well have been the beginning of Germany's modern twilight of the gods. The thousands of troops killed and captured here had been counted upon to hold the Siegfried Line. They met the American "Spearhead" instead; part of them blundered into the tank destroyers of Lehman's platoon. There was a vicious battle in the narrow streets. Tank destroyer guns sent bolts of livid flame lashing into armored half-tracks and dual purpose anti-aircraft guns. Cpl. Frank

Karpinski of Scranton, Pa., leaned on his panoramic sight and destroyed two vehicles with one projectile. A column of flame, mushrooming out of the dark target, disclosed the German crewmen twisting and struggling in the fire like puppets on strings.

When dismounted German troops fired from a building nearby, Cpl. Jack Moriarity, of Arlington, Mass., set the place aflame with his 50 caliber gun. When the score was totted up it revealed the fact that Hitler had lost twenty armored vehicles, plus crews, and an undisclosed number of dismounted troops to one platoon of tank-destroyers. There were no TD casualties.

A German officer, wounded in the action, told Sgt. Lehman, "You Americans don't know how to fight. All you want to do is slaughter us!"

"You're damned right," Lehman growled, "I learned the trade from your panzers in Normandy."

It was hard to become excited over indirect firing after the sort of action this group had been through. Although German artillery registered frequently on their positions, it wasn't hot, flashing action of the "Spearhead" in attack. Men ducked into their foxholes now, and cursed the artillery, but they came out again soon and laughed at the inaccuracy of the Jerry gunners. It wasn't like that at Fromental, in France.

There was no laughter at all in Fromental, but there was plenty of blood and sorrow. There was a little 2nd Lieutenant there, named Richard Ferchaud, from Baton Rouge, La. They remembered him all right. Because the tank destroyer men were all older than the little Lieutenant, they called him "Junior." After he led them in action they changed the name; it became "Little Blood and Guts." Ferchaud challenged a Mark-V at Fromental and lost a TD in the action. He lost part of his jaw, too, and went to the rear gamely trying to persuade a medic to release him. He was all right, he said. The men say that he certainly was all right!

The Mark-V is still at Fromental, incidentally; it is rusty and blackened, with a big ragged hole in its four-inch frontal armor.

There were lots of things like that. Men and events you'd never forget if you lived for the duration plus eternity. The "Spearhead!" Burning towns in the summer darkness. Road blocks, and Jerries trailing back with their hands behind their heads. Dead Jerries, like green wax in Madame Tussaud's chamber of horrors. And our own dead. The big guy with the tattoo marking on his neck; it said "Cut on the dotted line." A sniper killed him at Liege. The men of his crew hunted down that sniper—a very unlucky superman.

The tank destroyers had come a long way since the surf of Normandy had baptized their spinning wheels and tracks. New replacements laced the outfit together, but a majority of the old men remained. They were, you thought, all like Harland, more or less.

Harland still sat on the apple log, frowning when the whiplash concussion of the 90's interrupted his speech. He said again: "Nothing much doing," and added, "I wish we'd attack and get it over with."

His platoon had just finished winging 480 big 90mm shells on the way to disrupt German communication lines, but he didn't think that was very spectacular.

You walked away presently, through the little orchard of apple trees, back to the road and a waiting Jeep. Your feet crunched deep in the frosty ground, and the moon was so bright that it cast a shadow before you. The big guns of war flickered and thundered, but it was mostly in the distance and, like George Harland, your thoughts again slipped into the groove of nostalgia. Perhaps he was right. It would be fine to get going—to get it over with and to go home.

What a night to run a pack of Walkers on a big dog fox.



# Uncle Sam Beckoned



—and you came! Maybe you didn't want to but you did. Then it wasn't long before you weren't Mr. John Doe anymore, but Pvt. John Doe. One balmy day you had received that letter that starts: "Greetings" and you went down to take a physical—with your fingers crossed. It wasn't very tough. If you could SEE the "Doc" at five paces, and were WARM, then you were in, or at least on your way to an induction center.

What a send-off the gang gave you. Were they celebrating the fact that you were going or that they weren't? You wondered about it. Anyway you bid your best girl goodbye and boarded a bus headed for the great unknown.

On arriving at the "center" the first thing they made you do was strip down to one step past your unmentionables. Then you got a real physical. When those boys were thru with you they knew your very thoughts for the last ten years and whether your great-grandmother had freckles or not.

You passed, and they led you outside with the others. One of those fellows in the brown suits lined you all up, made you wave your right arm and mumble, after him, a lot of words that ended with, "I do"! Then your troubles began in earnest.

You learned which was your right foot and that for some reason you were to always use it before you did the left one. You learned to wave your right arm at anybody who had any of that brass stuff on their shoulders, but not the guys with stripes on their arms.

They made you answer questions by the dozens to see if you had an I. Q. What ever that is. Doctors appeared on the scene again and they put so many shots into your arms that you felt like a pin-cushion. It would be SOME bug that could live in you after all that stuff they pumped in.

You were a soldier now so you must look the part. You were issued every item of clothing from undies to neckties and if they fit you they took 'em back. They hung like a tent, and there were forty-seven tags on each piece. As the weeks passed you worked and ate and slept. Worked, took ten-minute breaks, ate and slept. Then you saw the reason for the oversize clothes. They fit you now! Rather—you fit them. Unc was making a man of you.

Life—army life—went on. Drill, K. P., guard duty and marching. You learned a lot of things. How to peel potatoes, how to shine shoes, and you learned how to make a bed that would have your mother green with envy. You worked and you dreamed. Dreamed of your girl, the next furlough, the duration over and you dreamed of PFC stripes.

Weeks became months and you learned to beat— You take it from there, "You've had it"!









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**Rose's Death Is Great Loss To U.S. Forces**  
Maj. Gen. Was One Of Greatest Leaders On Western Front  
By HAL BOYLE  
With the Third Armored in Germany, April 10, 1945. No death of an American battle commander along the Western Front has been

insulting leader stepped forward.  
Disregard for Danger  
"This is a demonstration for bringing me to the barabara from my hands before he could himself."  
Rose's subordinates never convince him that he had been leading an

**3D ARMORED AND INFANTRY DIVISION LEADERS INTO**

**Trip Back From Front Is Dange**  
Tank Forces Leave Many Nazis Behind—So Trucks Must Travel in Convoys.  
By W. C. HEINZ.  
Special Correspondent of The New York Sun.  
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**German Capt**  
The Third Armored Division, which the first to slice across the hour peninsula, also was the first American units to crack thru the Siegfried line, it announced today. The United States 9th Infantry Division, which the first to slice across the hour peninsula, also was the first American units to crack thru the Siegfried line, it announced today. The United States 9th Infantry Division, which the first to slice across the hour peninsula, also was the first American units to crack thru the Siegfried line, it announced today.

# News

**10,000 NAZIS FACE TRAP IN THE RUHR**  
Third Armored Division Reaches Paderborn in Hodges Sweep North—British Veer Toward Big Ports.

**Underground Nest of Death Only V-2 Assembly Factory Seized Without A Fight**  
G. K. ROSENFIELD  
and Stripes Staff Writer  
R DOKA, near Salza, Ger- April 13 (Delayed)—An underground factory and assembly plant in Germany, which was captured without a fight by a task force of the 3rd Armored Div. SS and most of the 22,000 forced laborers, was captured after a week ago after the capture of the town.

With the First Army in Germany, April 5.—The tanks and the armored vehicles were coiled in the wind swept field on top of the ridge and the major said he was happy to be right there, and that he was glad he didn't have to go back the ninety miles to the headquarters of the corps.  
When you hook up with a spearheading armored outfit like the Third Armored Division you travel for days and most of the time you are cut off from the rest of the world. Then, if you are a correspondent, you finally decide that you have gone far enough, and you have to get back to find out if the war is supposed to be over and who is winning babies in Hollywood and so they tell

**Truman Pauses To Review 3rd Armored**  
WITH THE 3D ARMORED DIVISION.—President Harry S. Truman took time off from the Potsdam Conference recently to pay a visit to the 3d Armored Division. Both armored fighters and the president were apparently satisfied.  
The President, on a short leave from the Big Three meeting in Berlin during the absence of Prime Minister Winston Churchill, reviewed the men of the veteran 3d Armored Division and the 84th Infantry Division, after flying from Berlin to Frankfurt.  
The President and his party, which included Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, arrived at 8:30 a. m., where they were greeted by the division commander, Col. Robert H. Eisenhower, who expected the guard of honor. General Eisenhower, stayed in the background day, did not accompany President on the review. In he chatted with Lt. Gen. V. H. Haislip, commander of the Seventh Army, who arrived shortly before the review.

**Combat Spotlight**  
Col. **LL DOAN**  
3rd Armored Div.  
J. S. 1st Rolls to Meet Russian Armies May Join Tomorrow  
Expected East of Elbe; American Forces From Leipzig, 115 From Berlin; Gains 40 Miles in D  
For 1 Link  
U.S. TANK DIVISION HEROIC

March 30 (A. P.).—The American First and Third Armored Divisions drove powerfully forward today toward the northeast of the Ruhr that would seal off any's greatest and last large arsenal and up enemy troops among its ravaged factories and blackouts hid new advances, but Supreme Headquarters said officially that the drives were well on every sector.  
The heads of the First Army reached Paderborn and drove on with virtually no opposition. The drive now has carried more than 125 miles in reports from leading elements were running eight and a half hours behind actual advance.  
Gen. Maurice Rose's Third Armored Division led the drive from the Roer River to the J drive was conducted after V-E day and was just completed.  
EISENHOWER SENDS HOSPITAL MISSION  
First word of the tankmen's contributions came to the General when the late general's chief of staff, Col. John A. Smith, Jr., Col. J. O. Attraction of Manhattan, Colo., flew from Germany to the working of a plaque to be placed in the Denver hospital.  
On their arrival in Washington, Col. Smith called the General Rose headquarters at 700 Broadway, and informed Maurice B. Blumberg, president, and Ben M. Blumberg, secretary, of the Mission of their mission.  
MONEY WILL BE

**Third Armored Division Raises \$30,000 for Rose Hospital**  
By ROBERT S. GAMZEY  
The General Rose Memorial Hospital Campaign fund shared over the \$770,000 mark this week with the announcement that the officers and men of General Rose's Third Armored Division in occupied Germany had raised \$30,000 for the memorial to their fallen leader.  
The dramatic revelation of the mass contribution by the late general's own men was expected to stimulate giving from all parts of the country to the shrine in the highest ranking Jewish hero of the war.  
The third armored's hospital drive was conducted after V-E day and was just completed.  
EISENHOWER SENDS HOSPITAL MISSION  
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MONEY WILL BE

**GENERAL ROSE**  
The third armored division will be officially presented. Colonel Smith told that the \$30,000

**PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER**  
Major Haynes W. Dugan, in addition to his other duties as Assistant G-2, was the 3rd Armored Division's Public Relations Officer. He and his staff turned out reams of news copy for general release to the American press and the various army publications of World War II. Visiting war correspondents felt at ease with Dugan, who was an excellent newspaperman in his own right. He escorted them into frontline areas and supplied many of the leads which later became headline news.  
An original cadre-man of the 3rd Armored Division, Major Haynes W. Dugan probably knew more of its history and background than any other soldier on the western front.





# TEXAS



REPRINT  
FROM  
**YANK**  
THE  
ARMY WEEKLY

BY  
SGT  
FRANK  
WOOLNER

**BEYOND THE SIEGFRIED LINE IN GERMANY**—Here in the mud and wind of approaching autumn, in a town which is clamorous with the crump of enemy mortars and the sigh of our own shells passing overhead, elements of an elite American unit, the 3rd Armored "Spearhead" Division, were poised, waiting for the word which would send them slashing into greater Germany. In the new attack, tankers of this big striking force would have one regret: that S/Sgt. Lafayette G. Pool, lanky, one-time golden glove champion, from Sinton, Texas, could not be there to lead the assault.

In an armored division which earned the name "Spearhead" the hard way, battling through France and Belgium, Pool distinguished himself for all time. When he was wounded, recently, his commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Walter B. Richardson, of Beaumont, Texas, said: "Pool is the tanker of tankers; he can never be replaced in this regiment." The Colonel had good reason to make such a statement.

During the great armored drives of the American First Army across Europe in the summer offensive of 1944, S/Sgt. Pool led his task force in 21 full scale attacks! He is definitely credited with 258 enemy vehicles destroyed, 250 German prisoners of war taken, and over 1,000 dead before the guns of his Sherman tank, **IN THE MOOD.**

On a windy hill in the Siegfried Line, recently, Pool cheated death again but, in the action he was wounded and so sent back to convalesce. His record, however, stands. He is America's first ace of tankers. He is a soldier's soldier. I heard Pool's story from a man of the old crew, a man who had been there when the final shell struck his tank. In an anvil clash of sound, a pungent, dark explosion laced with sparks, Jerry finally broke up the team of American kids who had harried him across a continent. It was a lucky shot for Jerry.

We were sitting around in the wet darkness, battling the breeze as all GIs do in moments of relaxation, and listening to Jerry's mortar fire pumch the ground. A thin spatter of rain beat on the tarp over our heads. It was doughboy weather, mean and muddy. The big medium tank crouched in the muck, its long 76mm gun peering around the corner, daring Jerry to come on.

This was a road block of the 3rd Armored Division. There was a screen of armored infantry out in front—brave men in wet foxholes. The doughs were old hands at this game—you couldn't see them and, excepting by accident, you couldn't hit them: they were too well dug in for that. But let Jerry attack and they'd be there all right, savoring the terrible exultation of the soldier who has suffered much and who hates the guts of his enemy.

The doughs were a first line of resistance. Road

blocking tanks, like this one, were a second. An armored attack here would be suicide for the enemy. Jerry knew it. He kept his panzers in leash and waited nervously. He lashed out with mortar and artillery, but he kept his head down too. Normandy, France and Belgium had taught the Kraut a lesson. Guys from Fifth Avenue to the Loop and west to Sunset Boulevard had punched the arrogance off his face. The "Spearhead" had burned him and smashed him and ground him into the dust halfway across a continent. Now, like a condemned murderer, Jerry waited.

Our armor waited too, but it was a different kind of waiting: it was maintenance and supplies piling up. It was the collection of gasoline and ammunition—all the stuff which would decide for all time whether Jerry was a superman and the Yanks, military idiots. Our armor waited like a boxer who impatiently flexes his muscles a moment before the bell.

There was one man on guard in the road-blocking tank: the rest of the crew sat around under the tarpaulin drinking hot nescafe, and cursing each other amiably. It was dark, but you could see the guard in the turret, raincoat buttoned tight. He looked statue-like until he moved, slowly, like a mechanical man, to gaze carefully into the murky distance.

Cpl. Wilbert "Red" Richards, a pint-sized GI from Cumberland, Maryland, rubbed his eyes and wondered irritably "when the hell we're going to start moving."

Pfc. Bert Close, a thin, studious young man from Portland, Oregon, grinned and said: "Eisenhower's waiting for old Pool to get back. Can't spearhead without Pool."

We'd heard a lot about Pool. In the armored forces there aren't many aces because everything works as a team. It's infantry-tank-artillery-airplane, and everyone slugging shoulder to shoulder with the next guy.

"How about this guy, Pool?" we asked. "Was he finally killed?"

"Killed!" shouted three voices in unison. "There ain't a Jerry shell in the world that could kill Pool or any of his crew. The best those squareheads could do was to wound him in the leg. He'll be back, and then God help the panzers!"

"What was he like?" we inquired.

The redhead, Richards, sat up and squinted his eyes. He passed a hand through his flaming red hair and scratched his scalp reflectively. "I was Pool's driver," he said, "and I guess I knew him as well as anybody in the regiment. He was a tall, skinny guy with a bent schnozzle. He got that in the golden gloves.

"Know what he used to call me? Baby! Imagine that! But he knew I could drive that old tank. He used to sit up there in the turret—you could tell Pool anywhere by the way he sat up there, more out than in! He rode that tank like a Texas bronc. Well, he used to sit up there and give us orders through the intercom phone just as cool and calm as though the big show were a maneuver. All Pool wanted was to get out ahead of the other tanks so he could kill more jerries.

"You know we had three tanks. Lost the first at La Forge, when a bazooka round hit us. The second got straddled with bombs at Fromental. Pool just got to hating the Germans a little more, if that could be possible.

"Of course the crew's all broken up now. Pool went back with that leg wound, and so did Oller. Boggs' eyes were irritated by dust, and he's in a rest camp. That leaves Close and me. We don't get no res' at all, do we Bert?"

Faint skylight flickered on Close's glasses. He said, dryly: "Ten minutes after Red left Pool's tank he was driving another one up front. The Colonel said: 'Richards, you want to go back?' That dope said: 'No Sir, Give me and Close another tank to drive.' The Colonel did just that. I was assistant driver—what could I do?"



# TANKER

You could see that Close hadn't wanted to do anything.

I think Pool would've gone back himself if the medics hadn't held him down," Richards chuckled. "He hated Germans, and he thought that he could lick 'em all. The guys used to draw straws to see who'd lead the spearhead. Pool would have none of that. He'd just say, 'Ah'm leadin' this time,' in his old Texas drawl—and stand there, grinning, while we cussed him out.

"But we'd go along just the same. By God, I think we were more scared of Pool than of Jerry!"

"Remember," he turned to Close, forgetting us entirely in the way of men who have waded through hell together, "Remember the day...."

So we just sat back in the wet darkness, with the rain on the tarp and the mortar fire for background, and listened.

When the division—it was the "Bayou Blitz" then—was activated at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, back in 1941, Pool, a skinny kid from Texas, was right there in ranks. He came from the old 40th Armored Regiment, medium tanks, which was famed for its cadres, and he was a rugged Joe. He was over six feet tall, wiry, with the sloping shoulders of a boxer and a twisted nose to remind him of the golden gloves. There was the beginnings of a legend about Pool even then. He'd won the sectional 165 pound crown at New Orleans, Louisiana, that year, but turned down an offer to go on to Chicago and the national final golden gloves tournament. The reason? Pool was a tanker first and a boxer second: his outfit had just been allotted a few of the latest medium tanks!

In action, as in the ring, Pool punched hard and accurately. He hated German theory and believed that he could beat the Wehrmacht, gun to gun, and man for man. He wanted the tough assignments. He asked for the dubious honor of leading those powerful armored attacks which knifed through the Nazi legions during our summer offensive.

Pool's crew was ideal for the task. Besides Richards and Close, there was Cpl. Willis Oller, of Morrisonville, Illinois, gunner, and T/5 Del Boggs, of Lancaster, Ohio, the loader. Boggs fought with a special fury: he'd had a brother killed in the war. Oller, gunner of IN THE MOOD, is alleged to have seen all of Normandy, France, Belgium, and the Siegfried Line through the sights of his gun! He was very quick and alert. Richards recalled a night when the spearhead had driven deep into German lines from Origny, in France. It had become quite dark when the order finally came to halt and coil. Pool opened his mouth to say—"Driver, halt," but found himself looking at a big Jerry dual purpose AA gun in the gloom ahead. He said: "Gunner, fire! And Oller, with his eye perpetually pressed into the sight, squarely holed the enemy weapon before its crew could recognize the American tank.

Night actions were commonplace to the crew of IN THE MOOD. At Colombrier, in France, Pool's leading tank almost collided with a Jerry Mark-V Panther, pride of the Wehrmacht. The Panther fired twice, and missed. Pool's single projectile tore the turret off the big German vehicle. Again, at Couptrain, the armored column reached its daily objective deep in the night. Besieged on all sides, unable to send help forward, Colonel Richardson listened to the radio report of the battle from Pool's vehicle. He heard the Sergeant say joyously: "I ain't got the heart to kill 'em...." And then, over the airwaves came the mad rattle of the .30 caliber bow gun. And again the fighting Sergeant's voice "Watch them bastards run. Give it to 'em, Close!" Surrounded by dismantled enemy troops, Pool and his crew fought steadily until morning brought reinforcements.

The amazing score compiled by the Texas tanker and his gang is fully authenticated. At Namur, Belgium, they knocked out a record twenty-four hour bag of one self-

propelled sturmgeschutz gun and fifteen other enemy vehicles. It was great stuff for Pool. He was proving to himself, and to the world, that the American soldier is more than a match for Hitler's "supermen."

Again, at Dison, in Belgium, as the spearhead neared the great city of Liege, Pool distinguished himself. Acting as platoon leader, he characteristically decided to use one tank, his own, to clean out an annoying pocket of resistance on the left flank of the route they were travelling. After finding and destroying six armored infantry vehicles, Pool discovered that the head of his column had been fired upon by a German Panther tank. Hurriedly he gave orders to his driver to regain the column. Upon arriving at the scene of action he immediately observed the enemy tank, gave a single estimate of range to Oller. The gunner fired one armor-piercing projectile at 1,500 yards to destroy the Panther. The column went forward again, Pool at his accustomed place in the lead.

Although Lafe Pool lost two tanks to enemy action, he remained as nerveless as a mechanical man. The crew drew added confidence from his bearing under fire and as a result they worked beautifully together. From the day of the great breakthrough in Normandy, they had smashed the Wehrmacht before them, burned its vehicles, decimated its troops. These men seemed impervious to German shells. Twenty-one times they had led the irresistible drive of the American armor and remained unscathed in this most hazardous task of total war. Now, after crossing France and Belgium, smashing the famous outer fortifications of the Siegfried Line, and taking part in the action which resulted in the capture of the first German town to fall to U.S. forces, Pool and his crew turned their faces toward greater Germany and the last round.

The town was Munsterbusch, south of Aachen. Desperately, as the westwall crumbled into ruin, Panther tanks of the Reich came out to duel with Shermans of the 3rd Armored "Spearhead" Division.

Pool's tank, strangely enough, was working as flank guard of the task force that day. Watchers, including his Colonel, who also rode in a tank, saw the bright lance-shaft of German tracer hit the turret of IN THE MOOD.

The big Sherman faltered. Inside, Pool said calmly, "Back up, Baby." And, as Richards backed the tank slowly, the second shell hit them well forward.

To Close, Oller, Boggs and Richards, there was only the space-filling, bell-sound of the hit, the acid stench of powder and the shower of sparks. They didn't know that Pool had been thrown clear, his leg bleeding profusely from a splinter wound. Richards continued to back the tank, carrying out his last order from the Sergeant.

Colonel Richardson saw the IN THE MOOD slowly reach a cut bank, tilt, and with the agonizing slowness of a nightmare, topple almost upside down.

At that moment Oller felt the hot blood on his legs and knew that he had been wounded. Richards, Boggs, and Close were unhurt. All four men crawled out of their tank. Medical aid men had already reached Pool, now two of them came forward to attend to Oller.

Pool cursed the Germans bitterly as the aid men bandaged his wound. As they placed him on a litter he twisted suddenly and said: "Somebody take care of my tank."

Exit, for the time being, Lafe Pool, ace of American tankers. He thought he could beat Jerry. He did. He proved it so often that the record is an almost unbelievable document of total victory. In the arena of armored warfare, S/Sgt. Lafayette Pool, golden glover from Sinton, Texas, bowed out at a climactic moment. From the beaches of Normandy to the dragons teeth of the Siegfried Line, he had been the point of the "Spearhead."



# The 3 $\Delta$ Has Visitors



James Cagney, Hollywood moving picture star, visited the division in England. He was put to work at KP. (It says here.)

President Harry S. Truman took time off from the Potsdam conference to inspect the "Spearhead" Division. Here he is with Brigadier General Doyle O. Hickey, and General Eisenhower.



Ingrid Bergman signed autographs at Darmstadt. She was a smash hit to men of the 3rd.



General "Ike," complete with his famous smile, M-1, is welcomed to the division CP at Stolberg, Germany, by famed Major General Maurice Rose.

At Camp Polk, Louisiana, in 1942, Thomas E. Dewey, then of the United Service Organization, visited the 3rd Armored Division. Here he's shown with General Alvan C. Gillem, first CG of the "Spearhead."



In Great Britain, just prior to the invasion, the Duke of Gloucester, brother of King George VI, inspected the division. Here, Colonel—later Brigadier General Truman E. Boudinot, and Brigadier General John J. Bohn, are with the Duke.



At Stolberg, Germany, Admiral Richard E. Byrd, on a special mission for President Franklin D. Roosevelt, conferred with Major General Rose.





Martha Tilton charmed "Spearheaders" at Darmstadt, Germany. She was a vocalist with the Jack Benny USO show.

In England, General Omar Bradley and General Jacob L. Devers, made a quick trip through division areas.



Joe Louis, the American "Brown Bomber," put on an exhibition at Wincanton, England, shortly before the big day of invasion.



At Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, Assistant Secretary of War, Robert L. Patterson, watched range firing. With him: Colonel John A. Smith, Jr., Major General Leroy Watson, Lt. Col. Lawrence G. Foster.



Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery addressed 3rd Armored Division troops in England.



In Normandy, moving picture star Edward G. Robinson entertained troops within artillery range of the German lines.



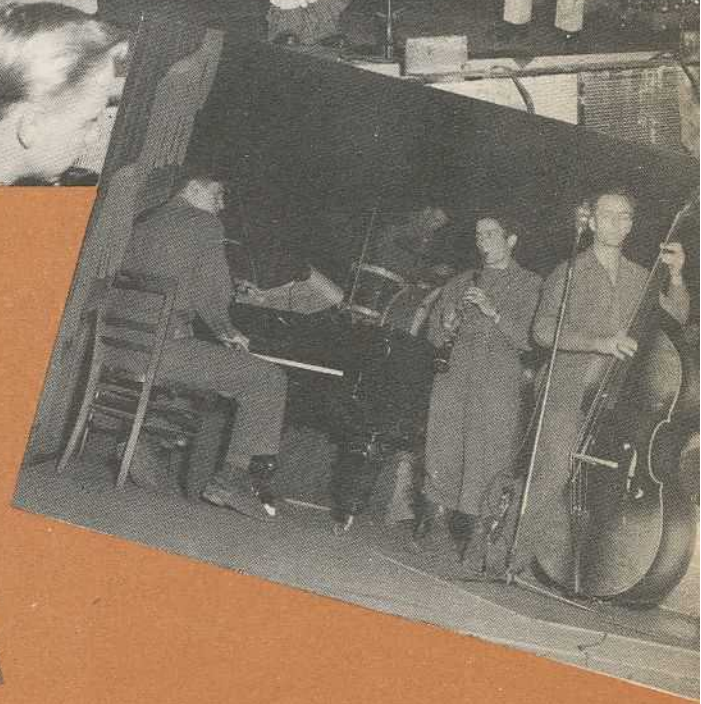
Governor of Louisiana, Sam Jones, enjoyed driving a peep at Camp Polk, Louisiana. General Gillem looks on.



# Fun too!



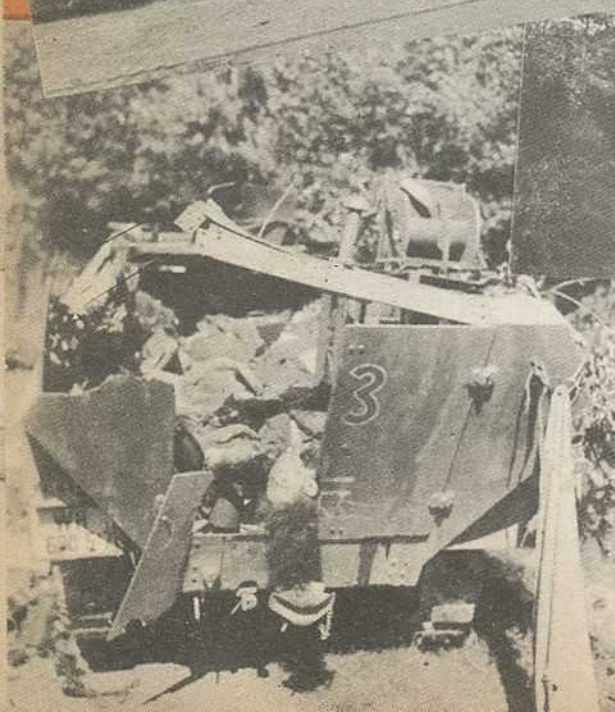




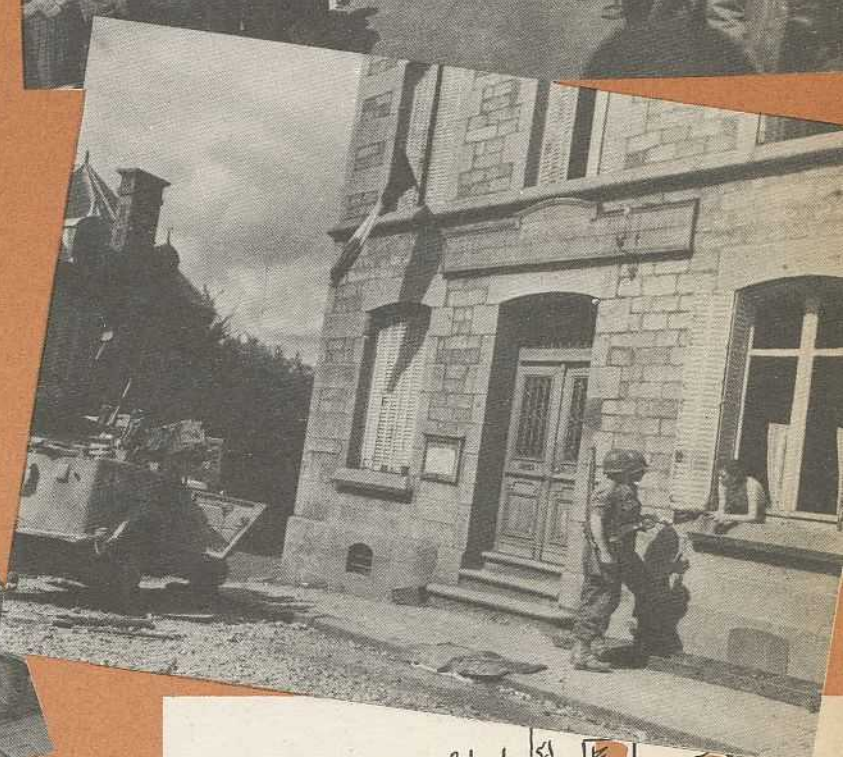
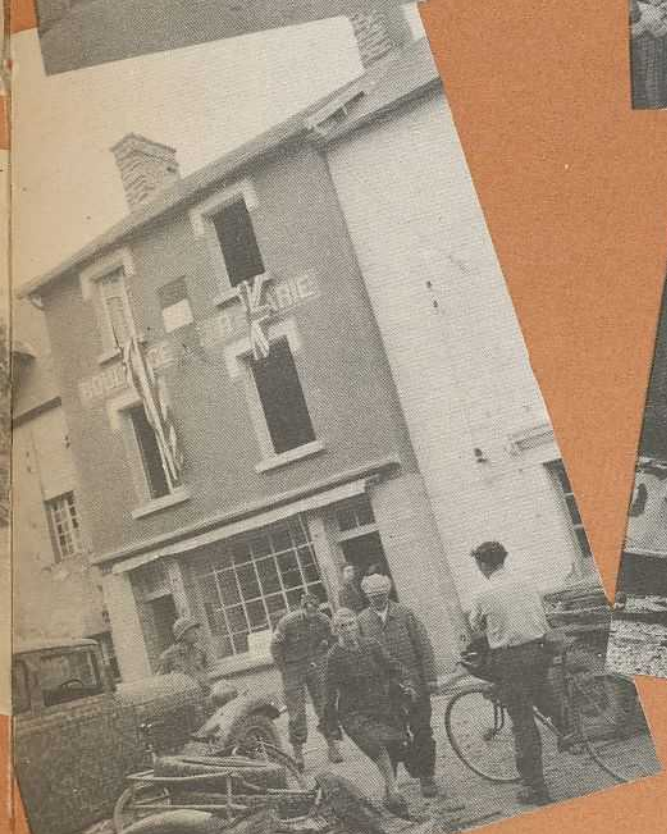




# FRANCE



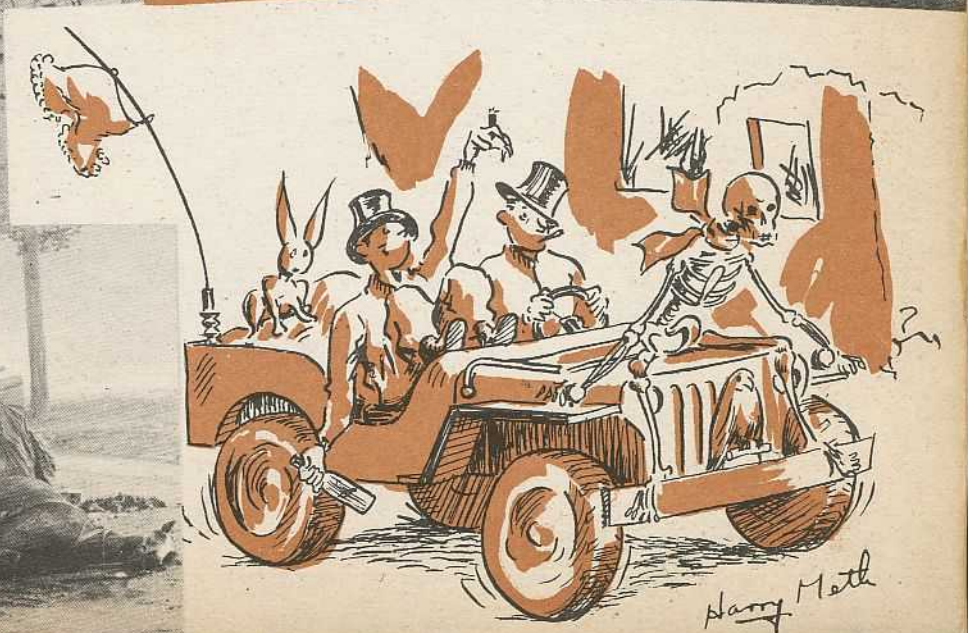
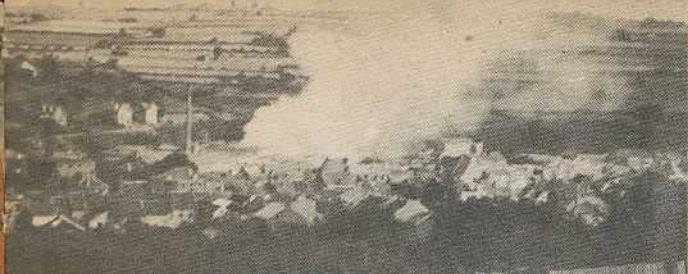






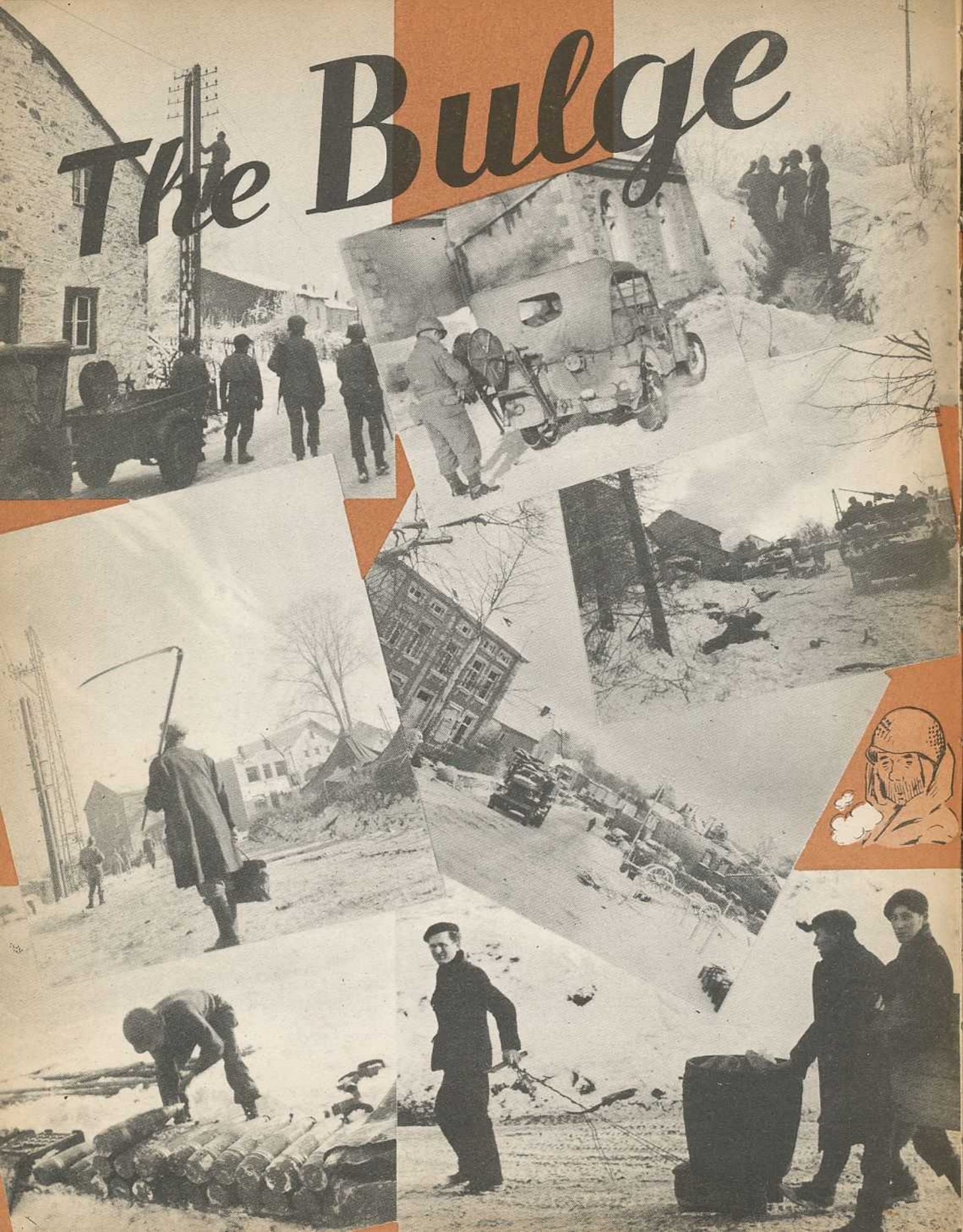




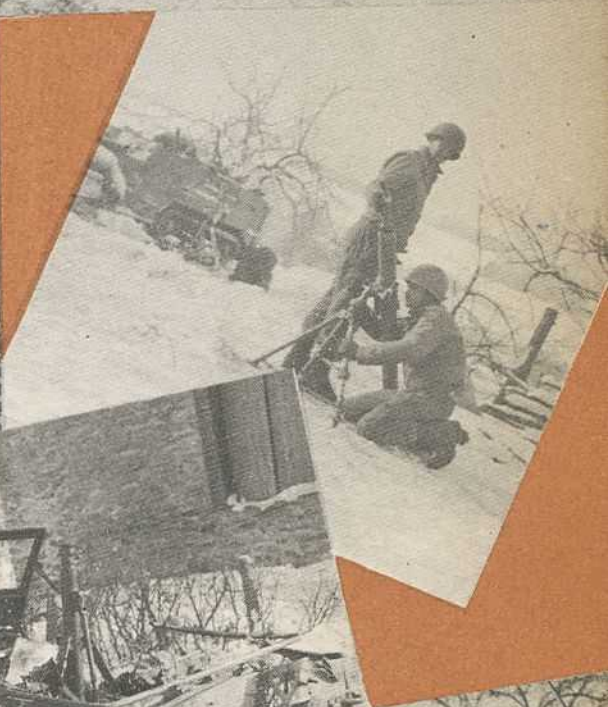




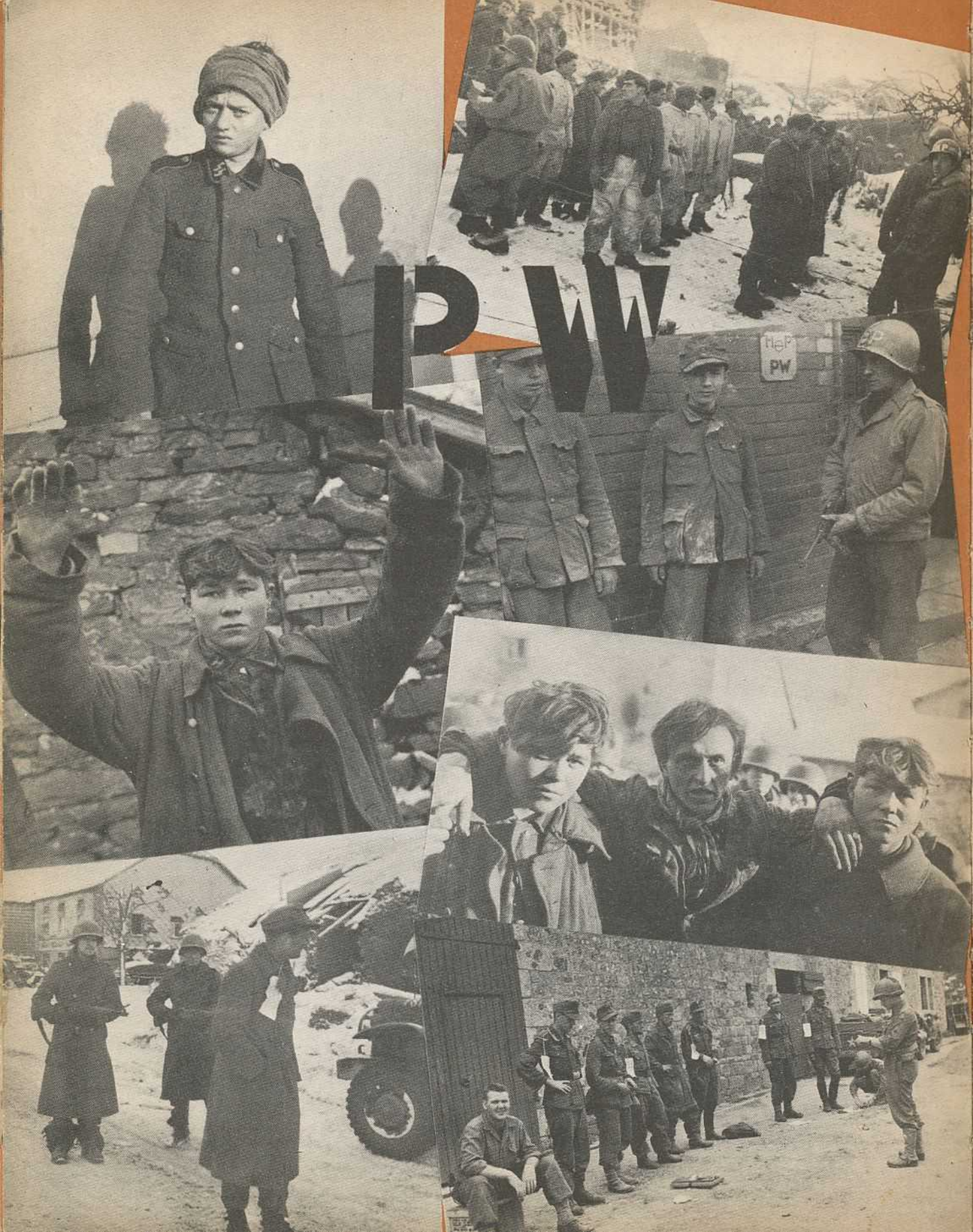
# The Bulge







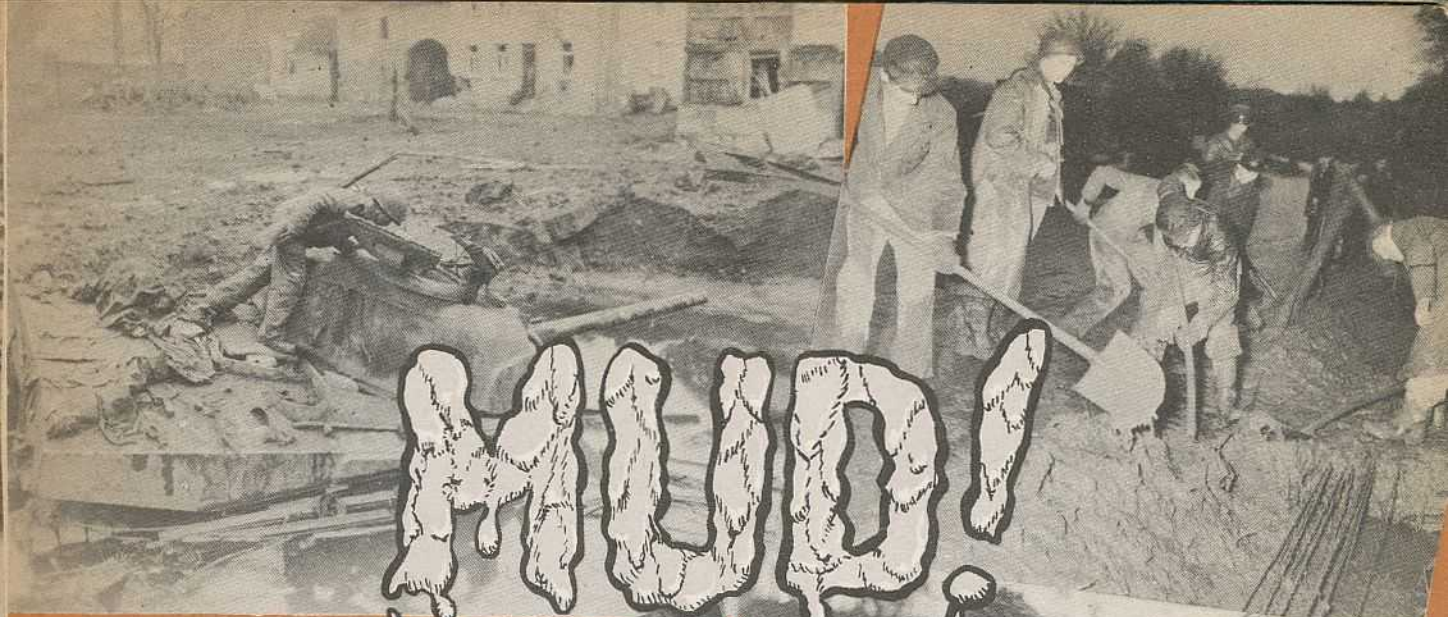




# POW







WUO!



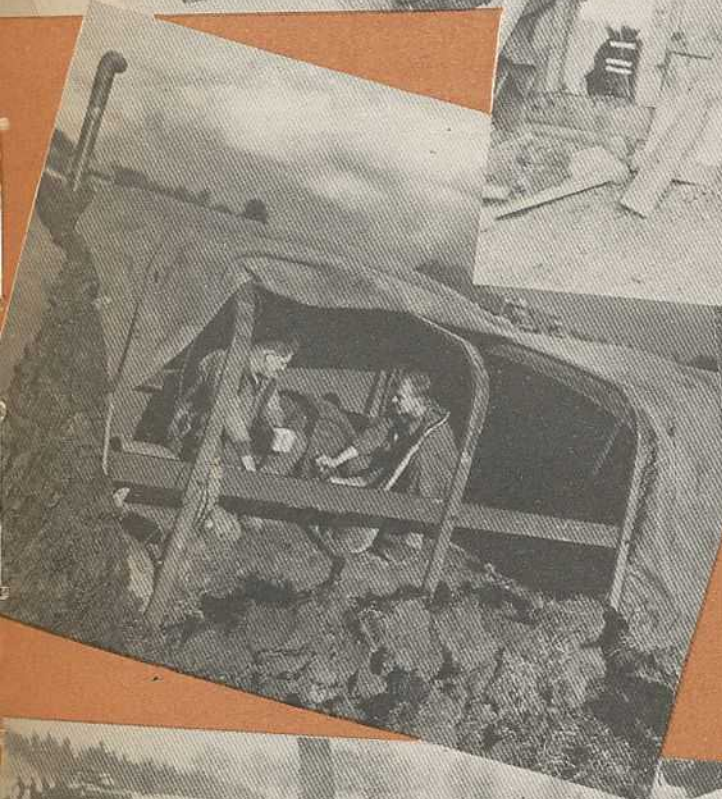


# Fox Holes

## DELUXE

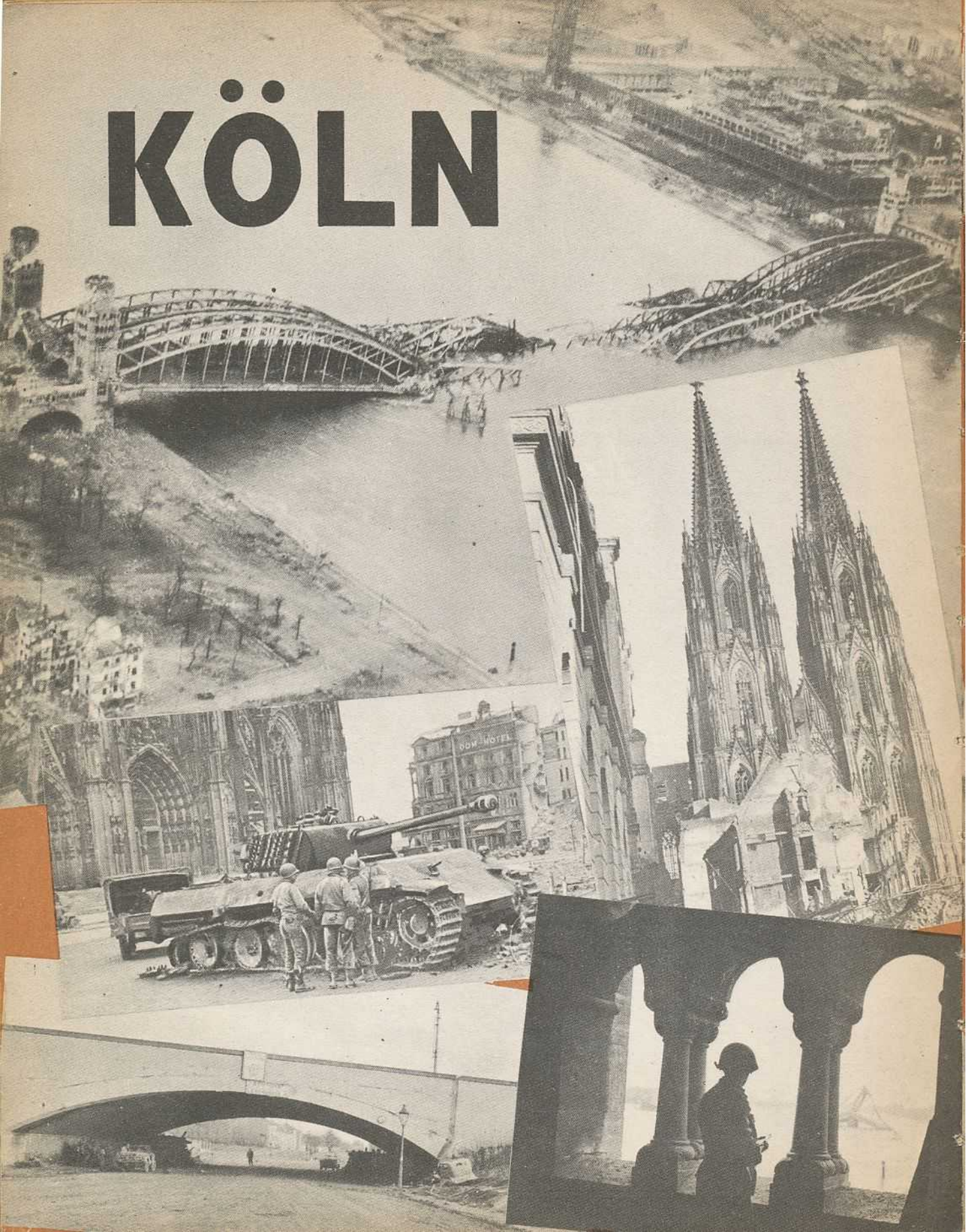




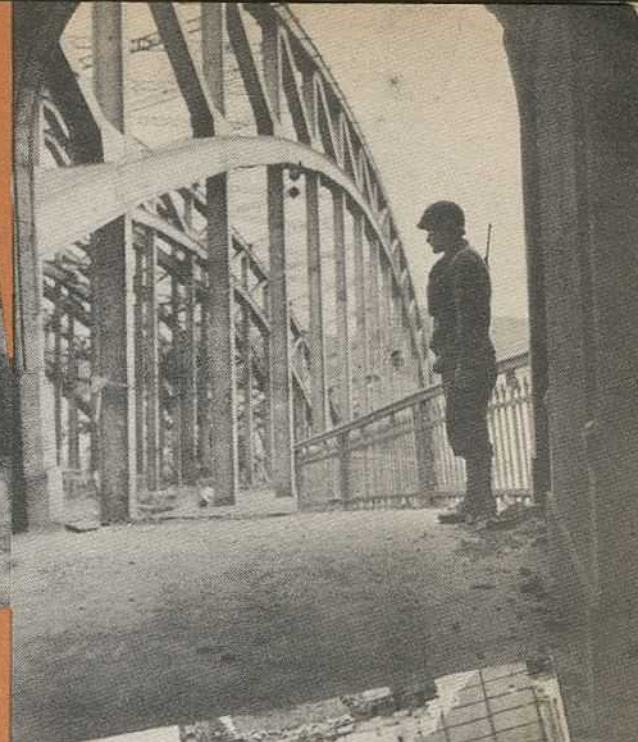
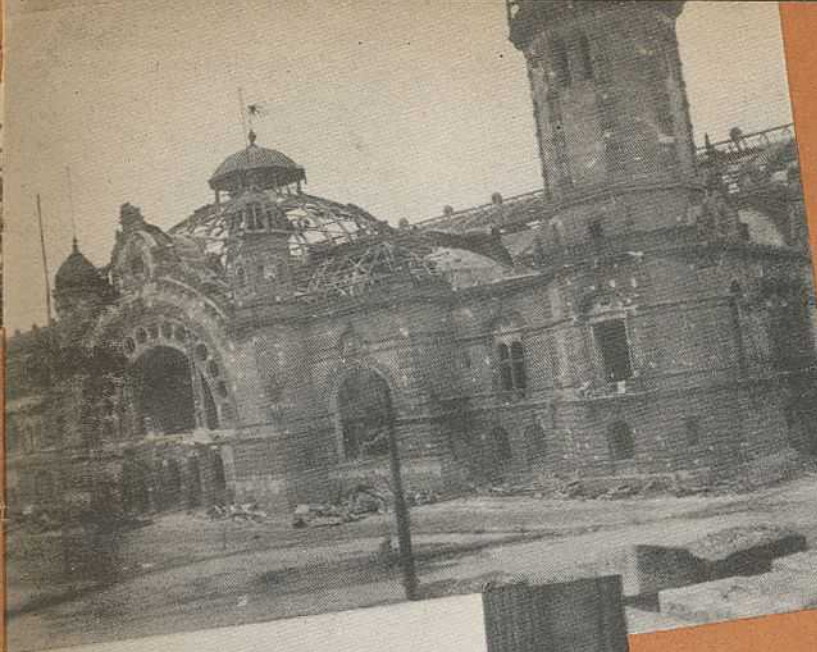




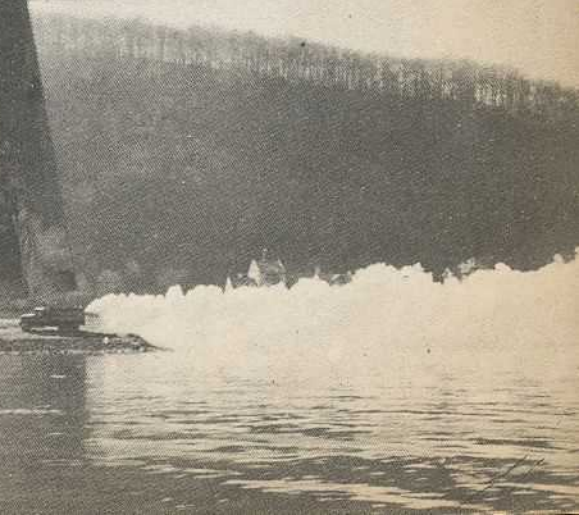
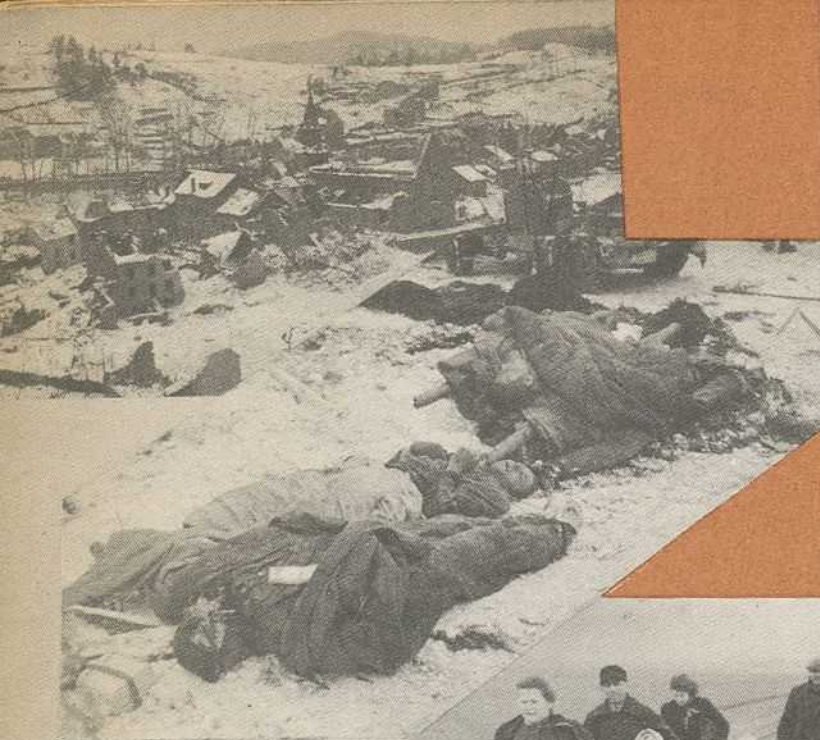
# KÖLN







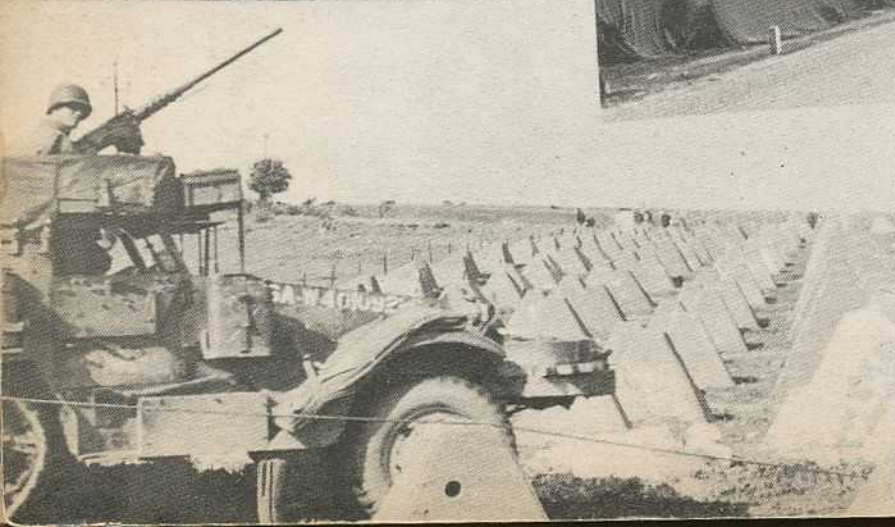


















# Paris Pass



## Remember

—the "City of Light"? You came in by way of the "Gare du Nord" and found yourself in the center of the most unusual city you had ever been in. You expected a lot in the way of fun and excitement here. You were not disappointed! Whether you came for wine, women, song or scenery you got it in huge doses.

Remember "les Femmes"? Who could forget them! The shop girls, the girl you "just happened to meet" on the Metro, the one who showed you the way to the "Rainbow Club," and last (but not least) the "Zig-Zig" gals! After months in mud and battle you KNEW they were the most beautiful in the world.

One reason you came in was to get away from the army for a few days. Well, you didn't do it. It seemed like there were a million GI's in town. Especially around the Rainbow Red Cross club that you made your headquarters.

There was the sidewalk-cafe. Ten to a block. You sat there with your drink, rested your weary dogs and ogled the passing gals.

The gendarmes, who were dressed like a doorman at the Waldorf and who took twenty minutes to tell you the way to the next corner.

And the bicycles— Seemed like everybody rode 'em! The stuff they could carry on one of the darned things. That bicycle-taxi was the deal though. You paid a small fortune to take your girl riding in one of them and got the thrill of your life. She had to hold on to something and you were nearest. Wheee!

Remember those long loaves of bread that everybody was taking somewhere. Boy, what a "hot-dog" one would make!

That first cigarette-butt you tossed away. How the people dove for it, and you almost had to quell a riot.

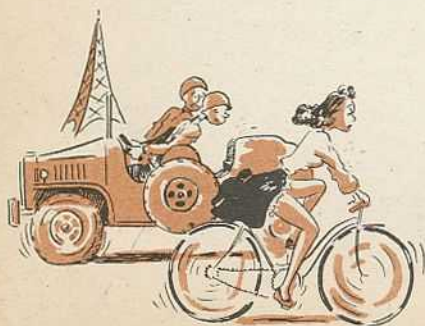
You bought some "fealthy peekchures" (for a buddy of course) and ten to one you found out later that the top one wasn't so bad but the rest— well, they were shots of statues or the like.

You went to the Folies-Bergeres (if you could get a ticket!), to the "Lido" or Moulin Rouge. And there was always Pigalle, the Broadway of Paris. We called it "Pig-alley." That GI night-club out there wasn't half bad, and a guy paid four bucks for his champagne instead of ten.—And the floor show. One didn't get his money's worth because the gals "took it off" before a fellow had a chance to request it at the top of his lungs, like we do here in America.

Or maybe you were the literary type. You just came in to take in the culture. Well, there was plenty of that too. We all saw the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, with its grave of the Unknown Soldier, and Notre-Dame, and we all promenaded up the Champs Elysees— No! No! The lady said that you pronounce it "Shawn-zay-lee-zay"!

If you were interested in Art you had to hurry to take in even a small part of what there was to be seen. You saw the art-galleries such as the "Rodin" and the "Louvre." Or you took trips to the studios of famous painters thru the Red Cross.

We saw the Conciergerie, Les Invalides, Place de l'Opera, le Madaline, Montmartre, the Pantheon. Place de la Concorde, Place Vendome, the Rue de la Paix, and the beautiful white Sacre Coeur on its hill top. Of course you remember them. They were all part of a "PARIS PASS"!





# SPEARHEAD HISTORY

## G-3 SUPPLEMENT

OFFICIAL RECORD OF COMBAT

Major Murray H. Fowler, Information and Education Officer of the 3rd Armored Division, authored the accurate and comprehensive G-3 supplement which completes this volume of SPEARHEAD IN THE WEST.

A veteran of long service with the division, Major Fowler was formerly attached to Combat Command "A". His work speaks for itself.

THIRD ARMORED DIVISION



# FOREWORD

This account is designed to provide a unified outline of the operations of the 3rd Armored Division that will be of assistance in studying the accumulated mass of official documents that tell the whole story.

In itself, it takes the form of a brief, factual narrative of the combat history of the division. It is hoped that such a report will be of interest and value, especially to members of the division.

The source of most of the material in this outline is the official records such as periodic and after-action reports. Some of the more detailed action accounts, such as Col. Doan's battle at the Siegfried Line, are condensed from reports based on interviews and prepared by First Army Information and Historical Section.

It is not within the scope of an outline to capture in its short paragraphs all the drama, the confusion, and tension of the battles it describes. Such details are the business of the professional historian. Here they will have to be supplied by the mind of the reader.

Certain actions typical of a particular campaign are described in more detail than straight forward actions. Such descriptions in no way imply that the battle described was of more importance to the overall picture than other engagements, taking place simultaneously. The device is used in some cases only to show the nature of the fighting at that particular time.

The 3rd Armored Division is organized on Table of Organization No. 17, March 1, 1942, and so retains the regimental organization both for tanks and infantry.

There are several basic schemes for dividing and subdividing the combat elements into teams for active operations. The designation of these teams varies from time to time, and so a brief discussion of their names and organization is in order.

**THE COMBAT COMMAND:** This unit is referred to most frequently in the following narrative. It is usually abbreviated as "C Com'd" or "CCA" or "CCB". When the strength of the division is split so as to provide three units of approximately equal strength, the third unit is referred to either as a Combat Command and given the name of its commanding officer, e. g. "Combat Command LEONE" or "CCL" or as "Division Reserve". The regular combat commands are also referred to by the name of the Commanding General on occasion, e. g. "CCA" may be called "C Com'd HICKEY" and "CCB" becomes "C Com'd BOUDINOT". In some earlier actions, a typical Combat Command organization was:

#### C COM'D HQ

- 1 Tank Regiment, less one battalion
- 1 Infantry Battalion
- 1 Artillery Battalion
- 1 AAA Battery
- 1 Engineer Company
- 1 Tank Destroyer Company
- 1 Medical Company
- 1 Maintenance Company.

Later, it became common practice to attach an Infantry Regiment to the Division, providing sufficient strength to give each Combat Command two Infantry Battalions.

Also two light Armored Artillery Battalions were provided for direct support in each Combat Command by the attachment of at least one additional battalion to the division.

**DIVISION RESERVE:** The Division Reserve is usually built on the Infantry Regiment less the Battalions attached to Combat Commands. The Infantry Regimental Commander becomes the Division Reserve Commander. Until actual commitment, there is not normally any artillery attached to Division Reserve, since any organic or attached artillery not firing direct support of Combat Commands remained under direction of the Division Artillery Commander. The normal fighting strength of Division Reserve, as evolved through experience, was precisely the same as that of the two Combat Commands.

**THE TASK FORCE:** Elements of a Combat Command normally operate as two or more Task Forces. These Task Forces were originally given letter or number designations. Combat Command "A" had Task Forces X and Y and sometimes Z. The abbreviations were TFX, TFY and TFZ. Task Forces in Combat Command "B" were given number designations, i. e.: TF1, TF2 etc. Later, it became the practice to refer to these Task Forces by the name of their commanding officer, e. g.: TF DOAN.

#### TYPICAL TASK FORCE ORGANIZATION

- TFX
  - Tank Regimental Hq
  - 1 Tank Battalion
  - 1 Infantry Battalion less one company
  - 1 Platoon of Engineers
  - 1 Platoon of Tank Destroyers
- TFY
  - 1 Tank Battalion
  - 1 Infantry Company
  - 1 Platoon of Engineers
  - 1 Platoon of Tank Destroyers

When additional Infantry was attached to the Division, as in most major actions, each Task Force had a full Battalion of Infantry. It was normal to afford each Task Force the direct support of a full battalion of artillery.

The Combat Command direct support artillery usually supported both task forces as required. Reconnaissance, service elements and the remainder of the forces remained under Combat Command control.

**THE BATTLE GROUP:** Task Force commanders frequently subdivided their forces for special jobs. This particular subdivision was referred to as a BATTLE GROUP and was given the name of its commanding officer. These groups varied greatly in composition according to the nature of their mission. For a "clean-up" job the composition might be:

- Infantry Company
- Tank platoon and/or Tank Destroyer platoon
- Mortar platoon
- Engineer Squad

None of these organizations were fixed. The composition varied from day to day, and mission to mission. One factor remained constant. The 32nd Armd Regt has always fought under CCA and the 33rd Armd Regt, under CCB.



# NORMANDY

## CHAPTER I

### Villiers-Fossard

#### First Action

(See sketch No: 1)

26 June, 1944, was rainy in Normandy. The 3rd Armored Division had already come through the milling activity of Omaha Beach. Vehicles were de-water-proofed, and men and machines were made ready in the crowded assembly areas.

Activity was at a feverish pitch. Combat Command "A" was ordered to move by infiltration to the zone of the 29th Infantry Division, prepared to repel enemy counter-attacks in that zone. The reorganization of the tank regiments was in progress. This reorganization removed the light battalions as entities, and resulted in the formation of three like battalions of two medium companies and one light company each.

The composition of Battalions in the two Armored Regiments is shown in the following table.

| 32nd ARMD REGT      |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1st BATTALION       | 2nd BATTALION       |
| A Co (Light Tanks)  | B Co (Light Tanks)  |
| D Co (Medium Tanks) | E Co (Medium Tanks) |
| G Co (Medium Tanks) | F Co (Medium Tanks) |
| 3rd BATTALION       |                     |
| C Co (Light Tanks)  |                     |
| H Co (Medium Tanks) |                     |
| I Co (Medium Tanks) |                     |
| 33rd ARMD REGT      |                     |
| 1st BATTALION       | 2nd BATTALION       |
| A Co (Light Tanks)  | B Co (Light Tanks)  |
| F Co (Medium Tanks) | D Co (Medium Tanks) |
| I Co (Medium Tanks) | E Co (Medium Tanks) |
| 3rd BATTALION       |                     |
| C Co (Light Tanks)  |                     |
| G Co (Medium Tanks) |                     |
| H Co (Medium Tanks) |                     |

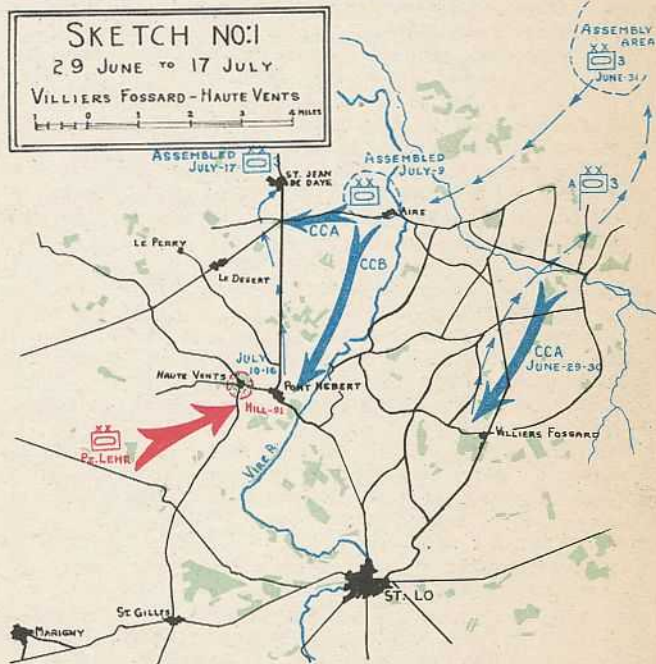
The following three days were spent in further preparation. Division Artillery fired some missions under Corps control. Combat Command "A", in the zone of the 29th Infantry Division prepared for its first action.

On 29 June there existed an enemy salient in the zone of the 29th Division. This salient was some three thousands yards deep, and protected the town of VILLIERS-FOSSARD just east of the Vire River. The mission given Combat Command "A" was to reduce this salient, seize and hold VILLIERS-FOSSARD until relieved by the 29th Division. The troop list for this operation was:

HQ C COM'D A,  
BRIGADIER GENERAL DOYLE O. HICKEY, COMDG.  
TFX — COL. T. E. BOUDINOT  
3rd Bn, 32nd Armd Regt  
3rd Bn, 36th Armd Inf Regt  
A Co, 703rd Tank Destroyer Bn  
C Co, 23rd Armd Engr Bn (- 1 Sqd.)  
5 Tank Dozers  
TFY — COL PARKS  
2nd Bn, 32nd Armd Regt  
2nd Bn, 36th Armd Inf Regt  
B Co, 703rd Tank Destroyer Bn  
A Co, 23rd Armd Engr Bn (- 1 Sqd.)  
5 Tank Dozers

TFZ — LT COL ABNEY  
1st Bn, 32nd Armd Regt  
1st Bn, 36th Armd Inf Regt  
703rd Tank Destroyer Bn (- 2 Co's)  
Rcn Co, 32nd Armd Regt  
2 Sqds Engrs  
1 Angle Dozer  
C COMD. TRAINS — LT COL BROWN  
Service Co, 32nd Armd Regt  
Maint Co, 32nd Armd Regt  
Service Co, 36th Armd Inf Regt  
Co A, Maint Bn, 3rd Armd Div.  
Co A, 45th Armd Med Bn  
DIV ARTY — (COL BROWN)  
54th Armd FA Bn, Direct Support TFX  
54th Armd FA Bn, Direct Support TFX  
391st Armd FA Bn, General Support  
967th FA Bn, General Support

Defending this salient in the sector where Combat Command "A" attacked, was a strongly reinforced Fusilier Battalion of the 353rd Infantry Division. Their position was well prepared and supported by a normal artillery compliment and antitank weapons. Their defensive pattern took full advantage of the small hedge-bound fields and a little stream that ran just North of VILLIERS-FOSSARD. It was known that tanks could not negotiate the thickly built-up hedge rows until Tank



Dozers (ordinary tanks to which bulldozer blades were attached) cleared a passage way, so each Task Force in the assault was given some of these improvised weapons.

At 0900 on 29 June, the attack was launched with two Task Forces abreast and one in reserve. Task Force X attacked on the left, and Task Force Y, on the right. Following the artillery preparation, there was a short, rapid advance. Task Force X reached La Forge-



Bois de BRETEL at 1130 and was ordered to remain there. The tank and infantry teams of Task Force Y advanced slowly against the enemy's well dug-in positions, and reached the little stream North of VILLIERS-FOSSARD. The next day the attack was resumed. Both Task Forces pressed forward to the objective, where they stabilized and secured the position until they were relieved by elements of the 29th Division.

Troops of the 3rd Armored learned much in this, their first combat. It was a simple, straight forward action, but it showed the tankers and infantrymen alike, how their enemy could fight, even when, faced by overpowering odds. They learned what it was to face the withering small-arms fire and to advance through mortar and artillery barrage. They learned that the well concealed German bazooka and panzerfaust teams were as dangerous to a medium tank, as a high velocity anti-tank gun. And they learned that tanks and infantry together can fight in almost any type of terrain even the Bocage hedge rows. The losses were relatively high.

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| TANKS .....       | 31  |
| OTHER VEHICLES .. | 12  |
| OFFICERS .....    | 18  |
| ENLISTED MEN .... | 333 |

However, there is no doubt but the lessons learned saved many lives in the sensational drives that these men were soon to make.

## Build up

There were no further combat operations until 9 July. The 3rd Armored Division was at that time in the zone of the 30th Division. They had crossed the Vire River at AIREL, under heavy enemy artillery fire and occupied a shallow bridgehead held by the 30th Division. When the occupation of this bridgehead was completed, Combat Command "B" was attached to the 30th Division and ordered to attack south toward ST. GILLES. Combat Command "A" was ordered to protect the right flank of XIX Corps and to attack in the direction of LES LENDES and LE PERRY. Combat Command "A" made some slow progress toward its objective, and, on 10 July, was attached to the 9th Infantry Division of the VII Corps. On 11 July, Combat Command "A" was moved to the vicinity of ST. JEAN de DAYE to counter an enemy tank threat. Here the tank companies were parceled out to infantry regiments, and, in conjunction with elements of the 9th Division, CCA fought a stiff and successful defensive action against some choice elements of the Wehrmacht, principally paratroops, strongly supported by tanks.

Combat Command "B" during this period, was engaged in the battle of hill 91, or HAUT VENTS. A task force commanded by Colonel DORRANCE ROYSDON, took hill 91 on 10 July with a badly depleted force. On 11 July they were driven off, and then proceeded to retake the hill and hold it in the face of very heavy resistance by the enemy. The hill got hotter and hotter. Numerous counter-attacks were thrown at Colonel ROYSDON's force. Relieving elements from the 30th Division finally reached and relieved him at 1430 on 16 July.

During this period Combat Command "B" had contributed largely to the defeat of an abortive attempt by the Panzer Lehr Division to take ISIGNY. The Panzer Lehr was fresh, it had excellent new equipment, but it took a terrific beating at HAUT VENTS, PONT HERBERT and BELLE LANDE.

Our losses from 9 to 15 July (inclusive)

|             |    |
|-------------|----|
| TANKS ..... | 52 |
|-------------|----|

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| ARTILLERY .. . . . | 1   |
| OTHER VEHICLES ..  | 52  |
| OFFICERS .. . . .  | 30  |
| ENLISTED MEN . . . | 425 |

On 16 July both Combat Commands reverted to Division control, and the Division assembled just west of ST. JEAN DE DAYE on 17 July. The 3rd Armored Division was now in VII Corps.

It was during this period that the fast spreading gas alarm came. Early on the evening of 21 July the first alarm was sounded based on information that passed like the wind from unit to adjacent unit. On the following day, again in the evening, there were four more such alarms causing a widespread scrambling for masks. All of these alarms proved false. They were based on smells and sights that the troops soon learned to identify as normal battlefield occurrences. None of the rumors were originated in the units of the 3rd Armored Division, but they spread there as elsewhere.

The rest period was also disturbed by a noticeable increase in Luftwaffe activity. The enemy planes usually came just as the last squadrons of P-47's and P-38's left the area. They dropped flares and bombed in widely scattered areas and not in any very great strength, usually two and three plane elements operated together. Division Trains suffered a few casualties on the night of 23 July from bombing and strafing. Other elements of the division suffered light casualties from enemy air action during the same period.

From 18 to 25 July the Division refitted. On the 25th its strength was about:

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| TANKS .....        | 96.5%   |
| ARTILLERY .....    | 100.0%  |
| OTHER VEHICLES ... | 100.0%  |
| OFFICERS .....     | (97.7%) |
| ENLISTED MEN ..... | (99.8%) |

## The Breakthrough

The SAINT LO breakthrough was all set and waited only on the weather. The period 22-24 July was one of almost continual rain. On the morning of 26 July the weather broke, and the greatest air show of the war prepared the way for the breakthrough out of Normandy.

The breakthrough was to be in the zone of VII Corps. A rectangular area about three miles by five miles between MARIGNY and ST. GILLES (see sketch No 2) was the target of the saturation bombardment by elements of both the 8th and 9th Air Forces.

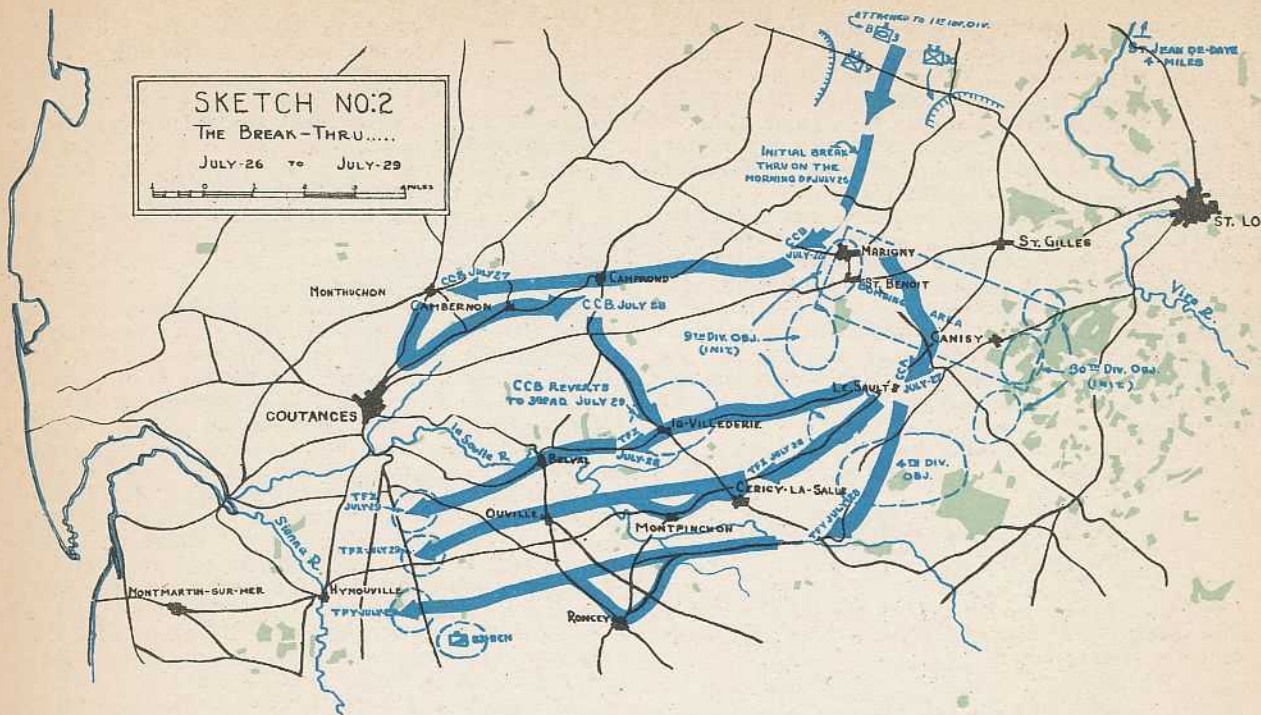
The 9th Infantry Division, on the west, was to attack through this saturated area and seize and hold the right flank of the penetration. The 30th Infantry Division, on the east, was to attack south, seize and hold the line CERENCES, TESSY SUR VIRE, SAINT LO. The 4th Infantry Division was to seize the high ground in the vicinity of and east of CERISY LA SALLE.

The 1st Infantry Division (Combat Command "B", 3rd Armored Division attached) was then to move through the sector of the 9th Division, turn west near LE SAULT and secure the COUTANCES area, thereby extending the line of the 9th Division, and cutting off the enemy facing the VIII Corps on the west.

The 3rd Armored Division (less Combat Command B) would then move rapidly through the 4th Division, seize the south exits of COUTANCES and secure the south flank of the 1st Division between HYMOUVILLE and CERISY LA SALLE.

The 2nd Armored Division, further to the east, was to move through the sector of the 30th Division, push south and then west and secure the line CERENCES—ST. DENIS LE GAST.



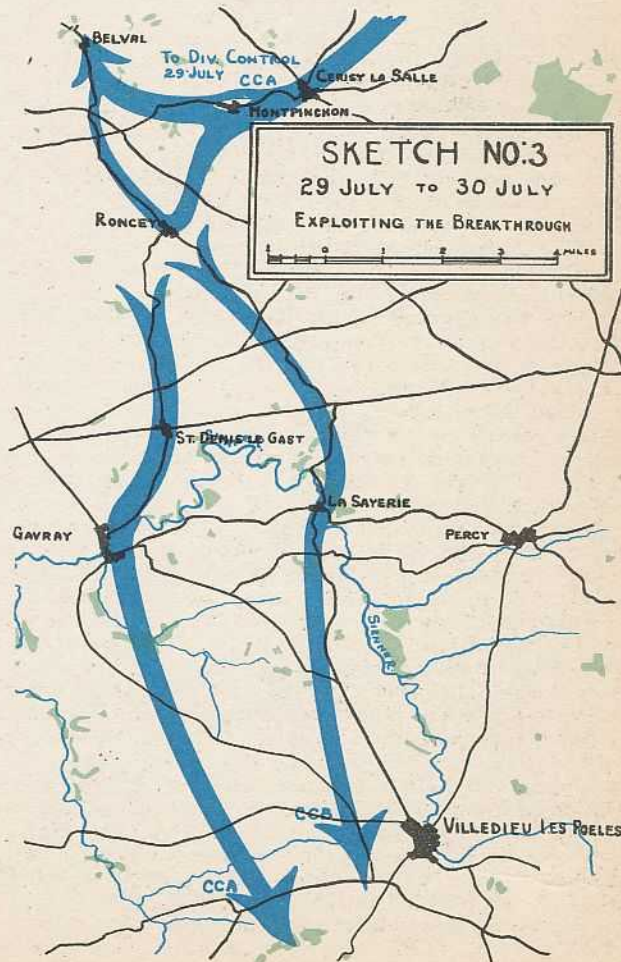


The attack moved successfully. On 26 July Combat Command "B", attached to the 1st Division, had fought its way to a position just west of MARIGNY. Continuing the attack to the west, the next day elements of Combat Command "B" reached MONTHUCHON. Then, on 28 July, they were in sight of COUTANCES. They did not get into the city, but were ordered to turn back east and assist the 1st Division in reducing an enemy strong point near COMPROND.

On 25 and 26 July, the 3rd Armored (less Combat Command "B") remained in assembly areas west of St. JEAN DE DAYE. Then, on 27 July, they attacked south at 0630. Initially the road craters caused by the saturation bombing and a bypassed enemy pocket south of MARIGNY slowed the advance. This enemy strong point near ST. BENOIT, estimated at one infantry battalion was later bypassed, and the Combat Command reached LE SAULT.

The next day Combat Command "A" turned southwest toward MONTPINCHON, one of the Division's Objectives. There was moderate enemy resistance all day—principally infantry, but anti-tank fire was encountered and scattered groups of tanks were met. By night, Combat Command "A" had forces in position to attack the enemy-held MONTPINCHON from the north-east and southeast.

On 29 July, German columns were moving south on all possible roads. One column with many armored vehicles tried to use a secondary road through MONTPINCHON and RONCEY. Near ST. DENIS LE GAST the 2nd Armored Division had effectively blocked this road. About fifty German tanks (probably part of the column trying to escape to the south) were in the vicinity of MONTPINCHON. These tanks added greatly to the strength of the already strong position at MONTPINCHON. Combat Command "A" was ordered to bypass the strongpoint to the north and south. Meanwhile, the supporting groups of fighter bombers were becoming cognizant of the situation around RONCEY where enemy vehicles were in double columns and bumper





to bumper, and MONTPINCHON, where the defenders were virtually surrounded. In this area the Air Corps got in one of its most telling blows. All friendly vehicles were notified to keep their identification markings prominently displayed while the P-47's worked from ST. DENIS LE GAST to MONTPINCHON. When the bombing and strafing were finished a single battle group from Combat Command "A" tended to mopping up MONTPINCHON. Another battle group was sent through RONCEY. Roads and streets had to be cleared with bulldozers. During the remainder of the afternoon and night the SOULLE River was bridged, and Combat Command "A" reached BELVAL.

Combat Command "B" reverted to Division control and moved from COMPROND to LA VILLEDERIE.

On the 30th July Combat Command "A" was attached to the 1st Division and Combat Command "B" to the 4th Division.

#### COMPOSITION

##### C COMD "A" (BRIG GEN HICKEY)

32nd Armd Regt  
 3rd Bn, 36th Armd Inf Regt  
 2nd Bn, 26th Inf Regt (1st Div)  
 Co A, 703rd TD Bn  
 Co A & C, 23rd Armd Engr Bn  
 54th Armd FA Bn  
 67th Armd FA Bn  
 Co A, 413th AAA Bn  
 Btrys B & C, 486th AAA Bn  
 Co A, Maint Bn, 3rd A.D.  
 Co A, 45th Armd Med Bn

##### C COMD "B" (COL BOUDINOT)

33rd Armd Regt  
 36th Armd Inf Regt (- 3rd Bn)  
 83rd Armd Rcn Bn  
 Co B & C, 703rd TD Bn  
 Co B & D, 23rd Armd Engr Bn  
 391st Armd FA Bn  
 58th Armd FA Bn  
 Co B, 413th AAA Bn  
 Btrys A & D, 486th AAA Bn  
 Co C, 45th Armd Med Bn  
 Co C, Maint Bn, 3rd A.D.

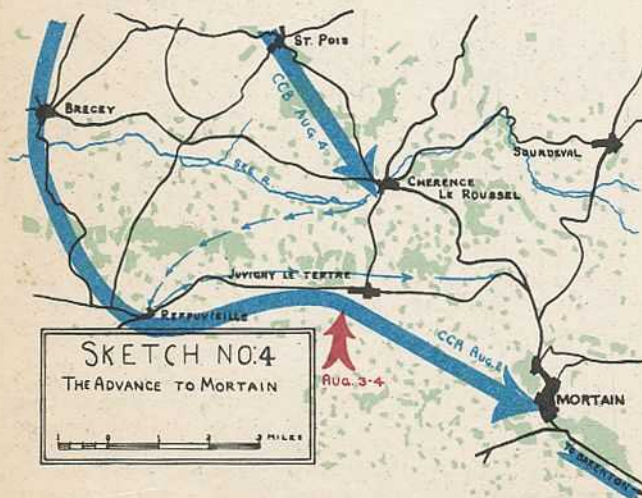
When this attachment became effective, Combat Command "A" had moved south through the still cluttered RONCEY area and established a bridgehead across the SIENNE River. In this crossing operation Lt. Col. Doan, commanding Task Force X, personally led his infantry across the river when they were stopped by heavy enemy fire from the opposite bank. His action earned him the Distinguished Service Cross. Combat Command "B" had advanced south, and elements had forded the river at LA SAYERIE and reached position on the Division objective west of VILLEDIEU-LES-POELES. A bridge was under construction.

The next objective for Combat Command "A" was MORTAIN. The See River had to be crossed. This was accomplished just south of BRECEY on 1 August. Then they were in the enemy's rear areas and moving fast. It was a job well suited to the employment of armor. German service troops as well as combat elements were completely surprised, and the tanks had a brief field day. Severe actions occurred at JUVIGNY LE TERTRE and REFUVIEILLE where the Germans managed to organize very well. MORTAIN was reached on 2 August. For two hard-fought days the enemy attempted to retake the high ground around JUVIGNY, but Combat Command "A" held its gains.

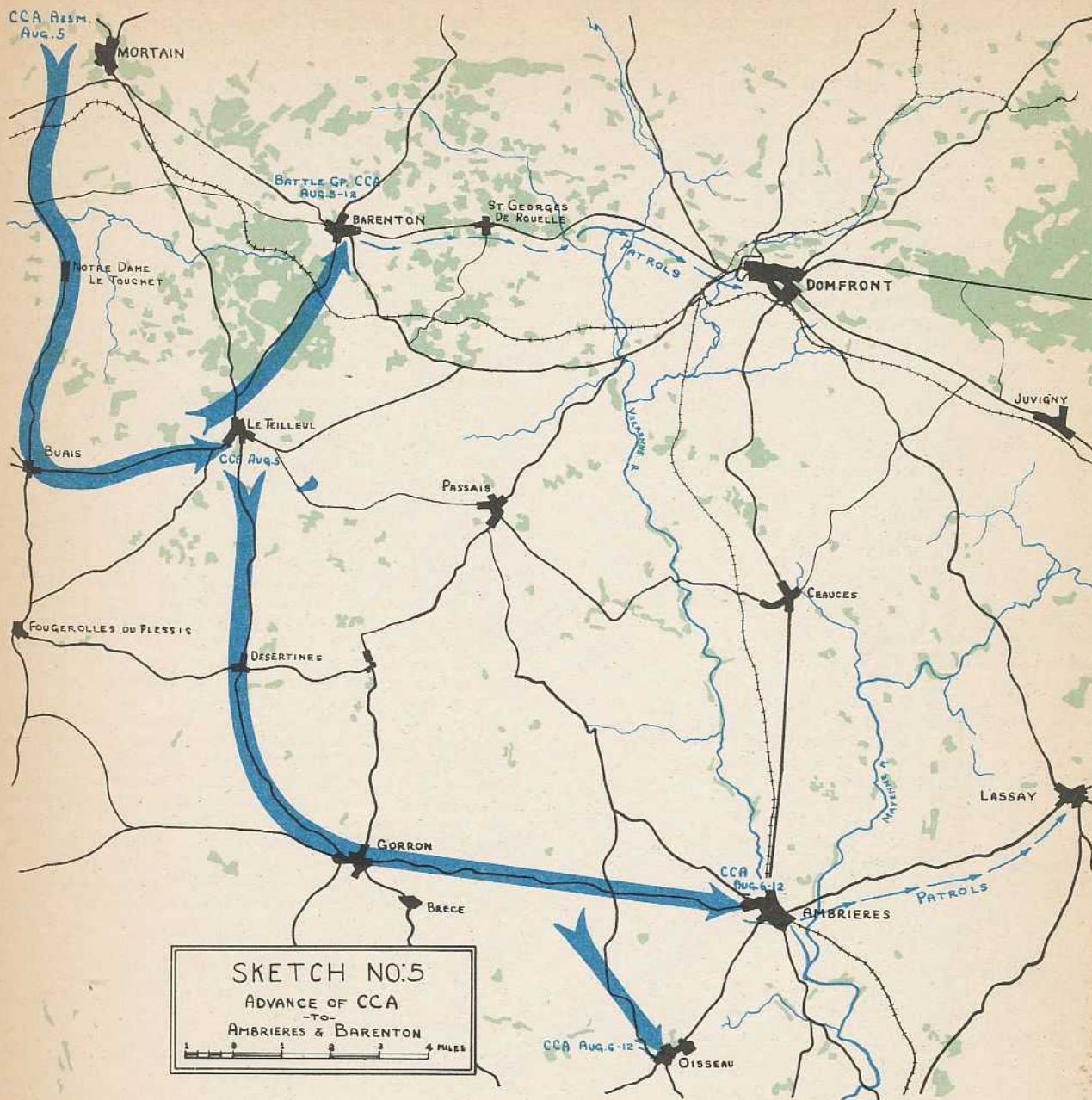
Combat Command "B", meanwhile, had bypassed VILLEDIEU-LES-POELES and moved toward SAINT POIS. At this time they were given the new objective of CHERENCE-LE-ROUSSEL. The next day, 5 August, the Combat Command was attached to the 1st Division and ordered to make a bridgehead over the SEE river in the vicinity of CHERENCE-LE-ROUSSEL. This mission was accomplished, and Combat Command "B" held the bridgehead until relieved by elements of the 30th Division on 6 August.

On 5 August, Combat Command "A" was ordered to move deeper into enemy territory. The objective was AMBRIERES LE GRAND on the MAYENNE River, and the route ran through BUAIS and LE TELLEUL. Scattered opposition was met, but the Combat Command reached its objective on 6 August. One Battle Group was sent to BARENTON, where it was attached to the 2nd Armored Division and remained in that status until 12 August. Strong patrols went into DOMFRONT and LASSAY.

(See sketch No: 5 on next page)







## Counter Attack

(See sketch No : 6)

The 30th Infantry Division relieved the 1st Infantry Division at MORTAIN, and, almost immediately, found itself in dead serious trouble. The enemy had massed his forces, principally armor, and launched an all out effort to the West. His intentions were to seize AVRANCHES and cut off the allied forces to the south thereof completely from their supplies. The main weight of this attack fell on the 30th Division in the vicinity of MORTAIN.

At 0245 on 7 August the counter attack first struck

in force. The 120th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Division was driven out of MORTAIN, and before morning the attack had carried to LE MESNIL TOVE. A complete battalion was cut off on a hill east of MORTAIN.

Combat Command "B" of the 3rd Armored Division had been fighting continuously for 12 days and was just closing into what was to be a rest and maintenance area in the vicinity of REFUVIEILLE, when word of the German counter-attack was received. At 0730 on 7 August, Combat Command "B" was attached to the 30th Infantry Division, and at 1050 orders were received to send out strong reconnaissance forces to LE MESNIL ADELEE and CUVES.



The Combat Command was divided into four Task Forces for this operation.

**TASK FORCE 1 — COL ROYSDON**

1st Bn, 33rd Armd Regt  
1st Bn, 36th Armd Inf Regt  
Rcn Co, 33rd Armd Regt  
1 Pl. Co C, 703rd TD Bn  
1 Pl. Co B, 23rd Armd Engr Bn  
Med, Maint Detachments

**TASK FORCE 2 — COLONEL CORNOG**

2nd Bn, 33rd Armd Regt  
2nd Bn, 36th Armd Inf Regt  
Co A, 83rd Armd Rcn Bn  
1st Pl., Co B, 703rd TD Bn  
2nd Pl., Co C, 703rd TD Bn  
2nd Pl., Co B, 23rd Armd Engr Bn  
Med, Maint Detachments

**TASK FORCE 3 — LT COL HOGAN**

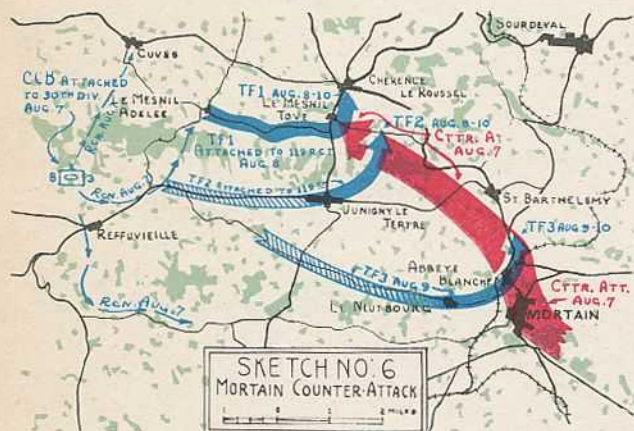
3rd Bn, 33rd Armd Regt  
2nd Bn, 119th Inf (atchd)  
Co B, 83rd Armd Rcn Bn  
3rd Pl., Co "C", 703rd TD Bn  
3rd Pl., Co "B", 23rd Armd Engr Bn  
Med, Maint Detachments

**TASK FORCE CABANISS — LT COL CABANISS**

83rd Armd Rcn Bn (- Cos A & B)  
Co B, 703rd TD Bn (- 1st Pl.)  
Co D, 23rd Armd Engr Bn  
Co C, 703rd TD Bn (- 3 Pls)  
Co B, 23rd Armd Engr Bn (- 3 Pls)  
Co B, 45th Armd Med Bn  
Co C, Maint Bn, 3rd A.D.  
Det Co E, 23rd Armd Engr Bn

**ARTILLERY GROUPMENT — LT COL GARTON**

391st Armd FA Bn  
87th Armd FA Bn  
Btrys A & D, 486th AAA Bn



By 1610 on 7 August the leading elements of Task Force 1 had reached a point east of LE MESNIL ADELEE, and, since the Infantry following, did not come up, Task Force 1 was forced to dig in and establish all-around defenses for the night. In the meantime, Task Force 2 meeting light resistance on its reconnaissance mission towards CUVES was pulled back and ordered to launch an attack towards JUUVIGNY LE TERTRE. Almost immediately this Task Force ran into very poor tank terrain and very heavy enemy resistance.

On 8 August Task Force 1 moved via LE MESNIL ADELEE to take LE MESNIL TOVE. Task Force 1 was attached to the 119th Regimental Combat Team and led the attack on LE MESNIL TOVE. Fierce fighting

followed, and losses on both sides were heavy. In general, the mission was to seize and secure LE MESNIL TOVE and to establish a contact with the 8th Infantry Regiment which was pushing down from the north.

The enemy was employing crack armored troops in an effort to cut our forces by a drive along the CHERENCE - LE ROUSSEL - LE MESNIL ADELEE - AVRANCHES corridor. Throughout the day heavy fighting took place. Terrain was very difficult for employment of armor, but tanks continued to do battle where infantry might have fared better. Twice during the day the force suffered loss of ground, but by nightfall contact had been made with the 8th Regimental Combat Team at CHERENCE LE ROUSSEL. In the meantime, Task Force 3 was moved to LE MENTS and placed on an alert to go to the aid of either Task Force 1 or Task Force 2. The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion outposted the Combat Command area to the south and east.

Throughout the day and night of 9 August, Task Force 1, placed well in front of the remainder of the 119th Combat Team, to which this Task Force was attached, continued to hold its ground at LE MESNIL TOVE, but was sustaining very heavy casualties.

At daybreak Task Force 2 launched an attack via JUUVIGNY LE TERRE to establish a road block east thereof. By early afternoon, the mission was accomplished. The right flank of the 119th was contacted and Task Force 2 was also placed under control of the 119th Combat Team. The South side of the German counter-attack was now shored up, and Task Force 3 of Combat Command "B", with a battalion of the 119th Infantry Regiment attached, was ordered to attack to the east through the zone of the 120th Infantry Regiment and then towards the north to seize the Road Junction 238 just north of MORTAIN. By 1400, the force was rolling against light resistance and continued until the turn north was made. At this point, they met the enemy in strength, defending with artillery, anti-tank guns, tanks and bazookas. The Task Force Commander outmaneuvered the enemy tanks encountered and bypassed much of the resistance, but although only one hundred yards from the objective by late evening, the bitter resistance of the enemy forced the Task Force to go into a defensive leaguer for the night. They were ordered to hold at all costs until relieved by the 12th Regimental Combat Team.

For the next two day and nights fierce fighting went on continuously. The task force was cut off on all sides for a greater part of this time and the relief unit was unable to make contact. Counter-attack after counter-attack was launched by the enemy, but the task force held its ground against superior forces. It can be readily seen that these battles played a major part in disrupting the whole German counter-attack. By sealing off the advance to the west, Task Forces 1 and 2 played decisive parts.

When the enemy elected to drive to the South he threatened to cut off MORTAIN and the vital supply links of the First U.S. Army, which, by this time, had driven far to the south and to the east of MORTAIN and was rolling towards Paris. Here Task Force 3 played a major part. The enemy did everything in his power to keep open the gap between Task Force 3 and the supporting elements to the west and to keep open the road leading through MORTAIN. Task Force 3 held its ground in spite of severe infantry losses and the loss of 23 of its tanks. By 12 August, the German counter-attack had spent itself.

The Air Corps had paralyzed his supply columns and chopped reinforcement troops to pieces.



When the withdrawal of the German forces began the offensive had not gained the momentum that the Germans had hoped for. The 116th Panzer Division was the principal attacking unit, and it was cut to pieces, losing one third to one half of its effective strength. On the north of the 116th, the 85th German Infantry Division, already battered, suffered further. And to the south, remnants of the 2nd and 17th SS Divisions took their share of the drubbing. The attack was never properly coordinated, and consequently gained little for its severe losses.

On the 7 August Major General (then Brigadier General) Maurice Rose took command of the 3rd Armored Division. By 12 August, all units were again under division control. The strength of the division was approximately:

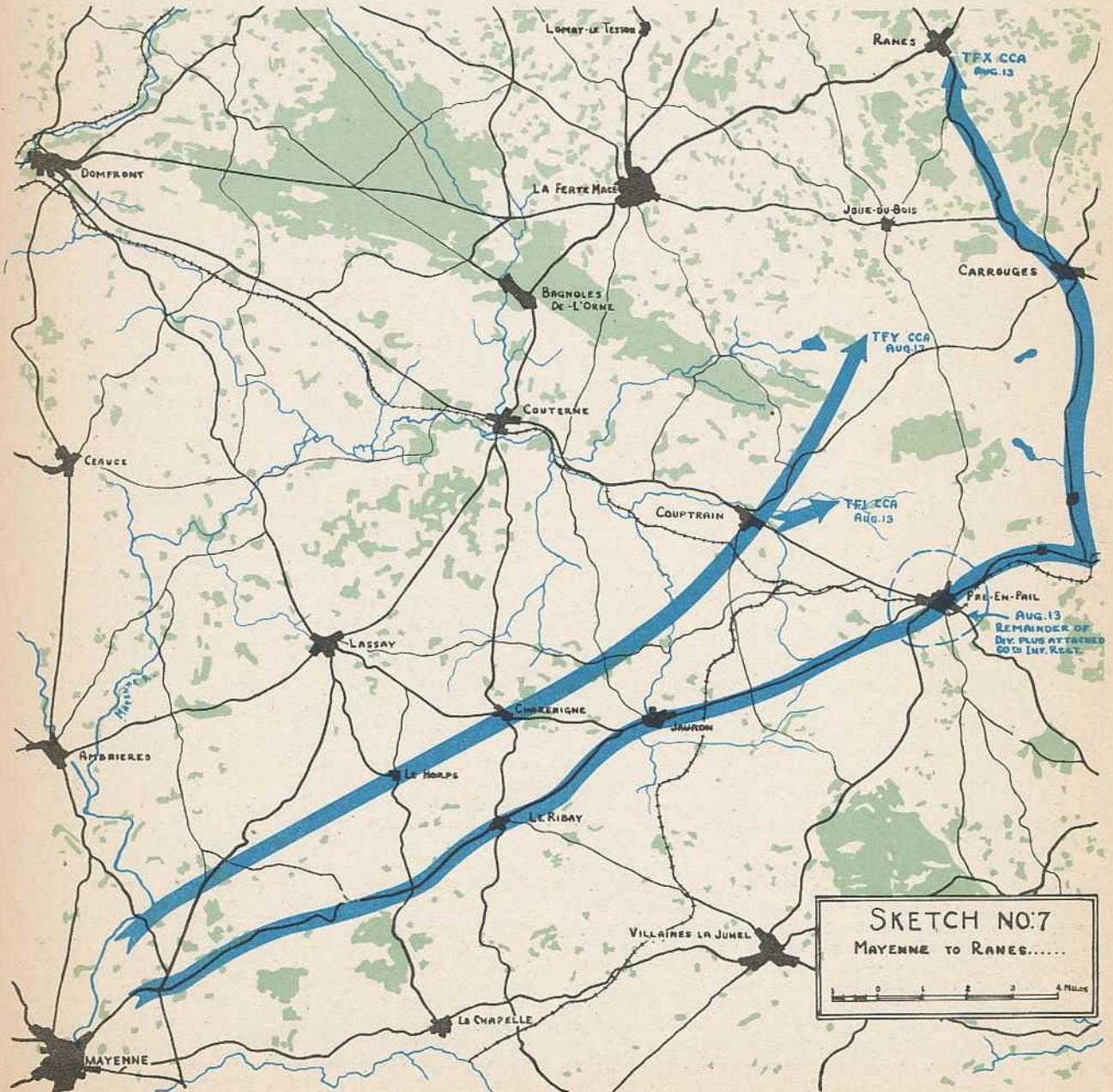
|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| TANKS . . . . .          | 93.5%  |
| ARTILLERY . . . . .      | 100.0% |
| OTHER VEHICLES . . . . . | 99.0%  |
| OFFICERS . . . . .       | 91.3%  |
| ENLISTED MEN . . . . .   | 96.4%  |

Again supply and replacements had worked miracles to achieve a comeback. The value of combat experience gained could not be measured.

## The Falaise Gap

(See sketches 7 and 8)

On 12 August the Division moved into new assembly areas west of MAYENNE, and prepared to attack to the northeast on the following day.





The British, driving south from CAEN and the American First Army, pushing eastward, had created a potential trap around a considerable portion of Field Marshal Von Kluge's Seventh Army. The escape gap of this trap later became defined between FALAISE and

north and east of COUPTRAIN. The remainder of the Division was in and around PRE EN PAIL. The 60th Infantry Regiment was attached to the 3rd Armored Division for this operation. It was in Division Reserve.

The area between PRE EN PAIL and RANES became a battle area. There were no particular front lines, and contact was everywhere. The road from CARROUGES to RANES was littered with both German and American tanks and other equipment destroyed in the running fight.

On 14 August, Task Force X attempted to extend their position to the North but were unsuccessful. Elements of the 1st and 9th SS Divisions made strong counter-attacks from both the North and South. All were repulsed. Task Force Y attempted to join Task Force X at RANES. They met strong resistance at JOUE DU BOIS. When they couldn't overcome this resistance they bypassed it to the east and got about halfway between JOUE DU BOIS and RANES by dark.

The 3rd Battalion, 33rd Armored Regiment, was ordered to move on a route further to the east and reinforce Task Force X in RANES. This battalion encountered some resistance, but reached RANES at 1800 hours.

JOUE DU BOIS was assigned as an objective for Division Reserve. Operation against this town was not completed until elements of the 9th Infantry Division reinforced elements of the 3rd Armored Division.

Combat Command "B" seized LA MOTTE FOUQUET. Elements of the Division during the day took about 1300 prisoners and destroyed 16 enemy tanks. Supporting dive bombers destroyed many other tanks and vehicles.

On 15 August fighting continued to be heavy. At the close of the day the entire Division was in a tight position around RANES. The attack of Combat Command "A" toward FROMENTEL had not progressed much beyond the outskirts of RANES, but 500 more prisoners were taken.

The next morning, 16 August, the 3rd Armored launched a coordinated attack toward FROMENTEL. Combat Command "A" met tank resistance and heavily defended roadblocks, causing their attack to move slowly. At about 1230 the covering shell cracked a little, and the Combat Command advanced rapidly to LA NOGUERIE. Then, at 1500, the Germans launched a counterattack in some strength. This caused Combat Command "A" to withdraw about a thousand yards. At 1630 the advance continued and by 2200 there was fighting on the outskirts of FROMENTEL.

Combat Command "B" followed a route generally to the west of Combat Command "A". They met heavy resistance all the way. By dark Task Force 1 had reached LES YVETEAUX just southwest of FROMENTEL and Task Force 2 leaguered a little to the southeast of Task Force 1. Fifteen enemy tanks were destroyed and 400 more prisoners were taken.

During the day of 17 August, Combat Command "A" fought its way into FROMENTEL from the East. Task Force 1 of Combat Command "B" attempted to launch an attack on FROMENTEL from the southwest in conjunction with Combat Command "A"'s attack, but such heavy resistance was met that the town itself was not reached. At about 1700 when all but the western part of the town had been cleared of the enemy, flights of P-38s heavily bombed FROMENTEL. Combat Command "A" was forced to withdraw, and small forces of Germans reoccupied the center and western parts of the town. At 1900 hours Company C of the 32nd Armored Regiment was sent into FROMENTEL and the friendly planes made the same mistake again. This time the



ARGENTAN. The 3rd Armored Division was going to be in at the kill.

Division Field Order Number 6 fixed the Division axis of advance: MAYENNE - PRE EN PAIL - CARROUGES - RANES. At 0530 on the morning of 13 August the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion crossed the line of departure and the Division was moving toward RANES - FROMENTEL and to some of the bitterest fighting of the war. The objective was the high ground around RANES.

Combat Command "A", following the reconnaissance screen, led the Division attack in two parallel columns. Task Force X, commanded by Lt. Colonel Doan, was on the right and Task Force Y, commanded by Lt. Colonel Richardson, was on the left. Elements of the 728th German Infantry Regiment were encountered in JAVRON and COUPTRAIN. Anti-tank and machine gun fire was encountered at other points, but by 2030 hours elements of Task Force X were at RANES.

Task Force Y had finally bypassed the strong enemy position near COUPTRAIN, and, at the end of the day, had covered about one-third of the distance from COUPTRAIN to RANES. Task Force 1 of Combat Command "B" in conjunction with part of Division Reserve was in contact with the enemy in some strength just



eastern part of the town was retained by Combat Command "A".

Task Force 2 (Lt Col. King), the other half of Combat Command "B", attached to seize the high ground at LA PIERRE HUREL—MESNIL JEAN. This Task Force fought stubborn resistance all day. At about 1600 hours they got across the railroad east of FROMENTEL, seized HILL 216 South of PUTANGES, and leaguered for the night just south of their objective.

Task Force "Hogan" from Division Reserve in conjunction with elements of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion protected the Division right flank by seizing the road junction west of ECOUCHE. During the day, as for days previously, the German Army streamed South and East between FALAISE and ARGENTAN. About twelve hundred enemy vehicles passed the front of the 3rd Armored Division that day receiving artillery fire and attack from the air all the way.

A coordinated attack by Combat Command "B" gained the objective at PUTANGES at 1210, and 1237 on 18 August, Sergeant Donald Ekdahl of the 33rd Armored Regiment met advance elements of British armor on the road near PUTANGES. Other such meetings occurred to our right and left. The so-called FALAISE gap was closed. The operation was more accurately described as a "squeeze-play", since the enemy, by fanatical and

skillful rear-guard action, succeeded in keeping his escape routes open until the major portion of his forces were extricated from the potential trap.

Combat Command "A" completed mopping up in FROMENTEL.

Combat Command "B" held its objective, the high ground south of PUTANGES.

Elements of Division Reserve mopped up the TREIZE SAINTS-BATILLY area and Task Force "Hogan" remained on his objective.

The 60th Infantry Regiment was released at 0800 on 19 August.

The whole battle of RANES—FROMENTEL was close-in fighting with a "Fluid Front." Tanks and tank destroyers had many engagements at ranges less than one hundred yards. Elements of the Division frequently found themselves engaged in stiff fights on ground already passed over by other elements of the Division. The enemy was everywhere, and frequently had no idea where American troops were, hence many surprise engagements were fought.

During this operation, as in some later ones, the Reconnaissance Battalion was busy establishing road blocks on both flanks sometimes to the rear of the Division. They served, also, to maintain communication between units by means of patrols.

# NORTHERN FRANCE AND BELGIUM

## CHAPTER II

### Seine to Siegfried Line

While the German Seventh Army was being pummeled in the FALAISE-ARGENTAN area, the armor of the American Third Army was running almost at will over western France, and, by long hops, had reached the SEINE south of PARIS.

The 3rd Armored Division completed its part in the mopping up of the RANES-FROMENTEL area on 19 August and spent 20, and 21 August in maintenance and refitting in assembly areas south of FROMENTEL. Then, on 22 August a long and uneventful march brought the Division to new assembly areas in the vicinity of COURVILLE and CHATEAUNEUF between DREUX and CHARTRES. On the 24th another march brought the Division to CORBEIL and MELUN, where they prepared to cross the SEINE River.

The 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions closed into assembly areas near the 3rd Armored and prepared to follow the advance of the 3rd across the SEINE. These three divisions of VII Corps were soon to be referred to by many as the "First Team of the First Army". This team led the First Army's pursuit of the defeated German forces from the Seine through MONS and to the SIEGFRIED LINE in eighteen days.

Spearheading this historic drive, the Third Armored Division crossed the SEINE River at TILLY just south of CORBEIL. Crossing started on the night of 25 August over an existing bridge. Division Engineers in the meantime constructed a second crossing which was ready by daylight. Spreading into multiple columns on 26 August the Division cracked through the shell that the enemy was holding stubbornly around the 4th

Infantry and 7th Armored Division's bridgehead east of the SEINE, and moved swiftly to the east and northeast. The enemy was withdrawing too rapidly to offer strong resistance, but was found on all routes holding road blocks at all favorable points. He opened fire on the armored columns from concealed positions only to find himself quickly overrun or bypassed, contained and left to be dealt with by closely following infantry. Parts of the 48th German Infantry Division, the 9th Panzer Division and an extensive assortment of other enemy troops were encountered. Several enemy columns were overtaken moving in the direction of the Third Armored's advance. These columns were engaged and as a result never reached the predesignated assembly areas of their battered units.

Initially, elements of the 4th Cavalry Group combed a broad front with a reconnaissance screen out in the lead, the First and Ninth Infantry Divisions followed the Third Armored to liquidate pockets of bypassed enemy resistance and to consolidate the gains. Soon, the Task Force columns of the Third Armored each consisting of a reinforced tank battalion overtook the Reconnaissance elements and it became apparent that the enemy could not and had no intention of trying to hold a consolidated defensive line. Whereupon, the Cavalry elements sideslipped to the north and south and continued to screen the flanks of the Corps' advance. The armored columns moved on at maximum speed, and the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions followed the "Spearhead" generally abreast of each other, the 1st Division on the left.



On 27 August, the 3rd Armored reached the MARNE River at LA FERTE SOUS JOUARRE where both Combat Commands crossed on existing bridges which were repaired and strengthened by Division Engineer troops. There had been brief fighting for MEAUX and COULOMMIERS. Upon completion of the crossing, Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "B" started moving again in Task Force columns toward their respective objectives of PONT D'ARCY and SOISSONS to seize and secure the crossings of the AISNE River at those locations.

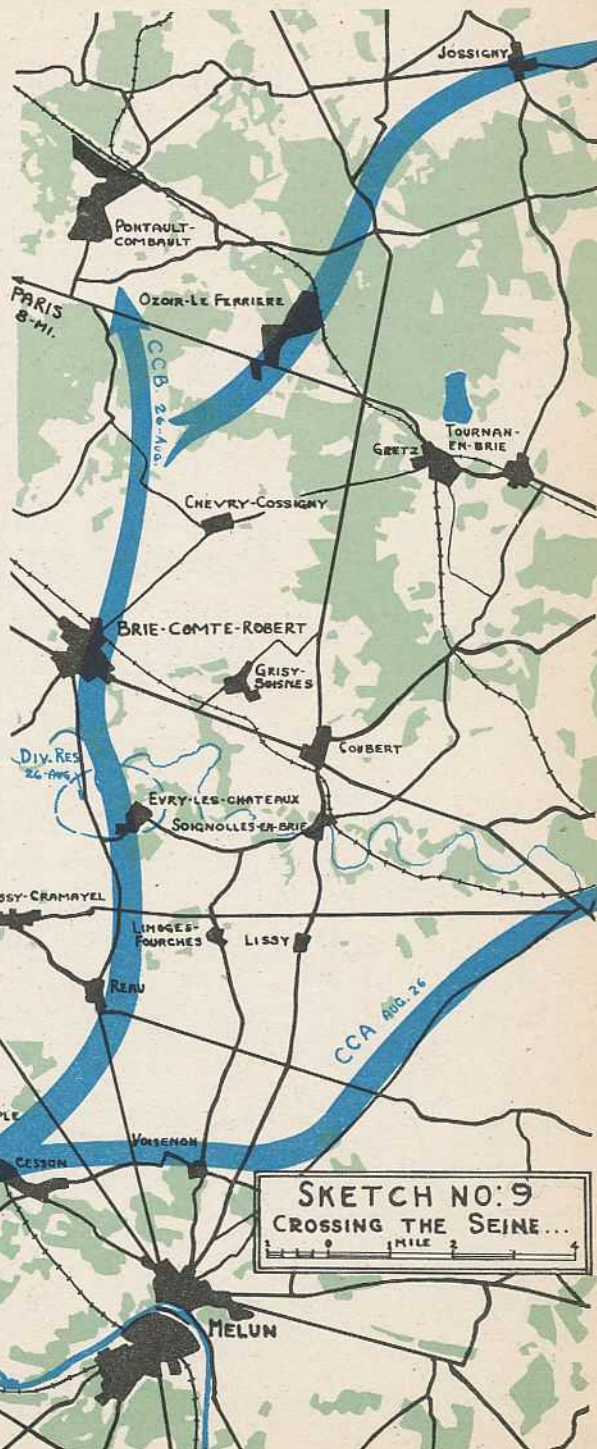
Driving at such speed soon brought the 3rd into the heart of the enemy's communications zone, where the remnants of enemy combat troops fought in isolated and disorganized groups while other troops attempted to extricate valuable dumps and depots. Near SOISSONS and BRAISNE, elements of the Division destroyed three railway trains which were evacuating personnel and equipment to move east. Tankers of the 32nd Armored Regiment and Artillerymen of the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion engaged and destroyed four enemy tanks which were located on flat cars and manned by their crews. The attached 486th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion stopped one of these trains, and raked the troop cars with their multiple fifty caliber machine guns. The countryside was littered with all types of equipment, cosmetics, clothing and wine bottles abandoned by the loot-laden German soldiers in their panic. Passage through the towns and villages so quickly evacuated by the Wehrmacht was slowed markedly by milling crowds who swarmed on and about the vehicles in delirious exhibitions of their happiness.

On 28 August, the AISNE River Crossings at both SOISSONS and PONT D'ARCY were seized intact.

It was here that General Rose usually with the leading elements of the Division crossed one of the bridges suspected of being damaged to check its condition. This was one of the acts for which he was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. (The main highway bridge was destroyed by the enemy, but others to the east were intact.) A few mines had to be lifted from the approaches and the existing spans strengthened. There was increased enemy resistance along the AISNE.

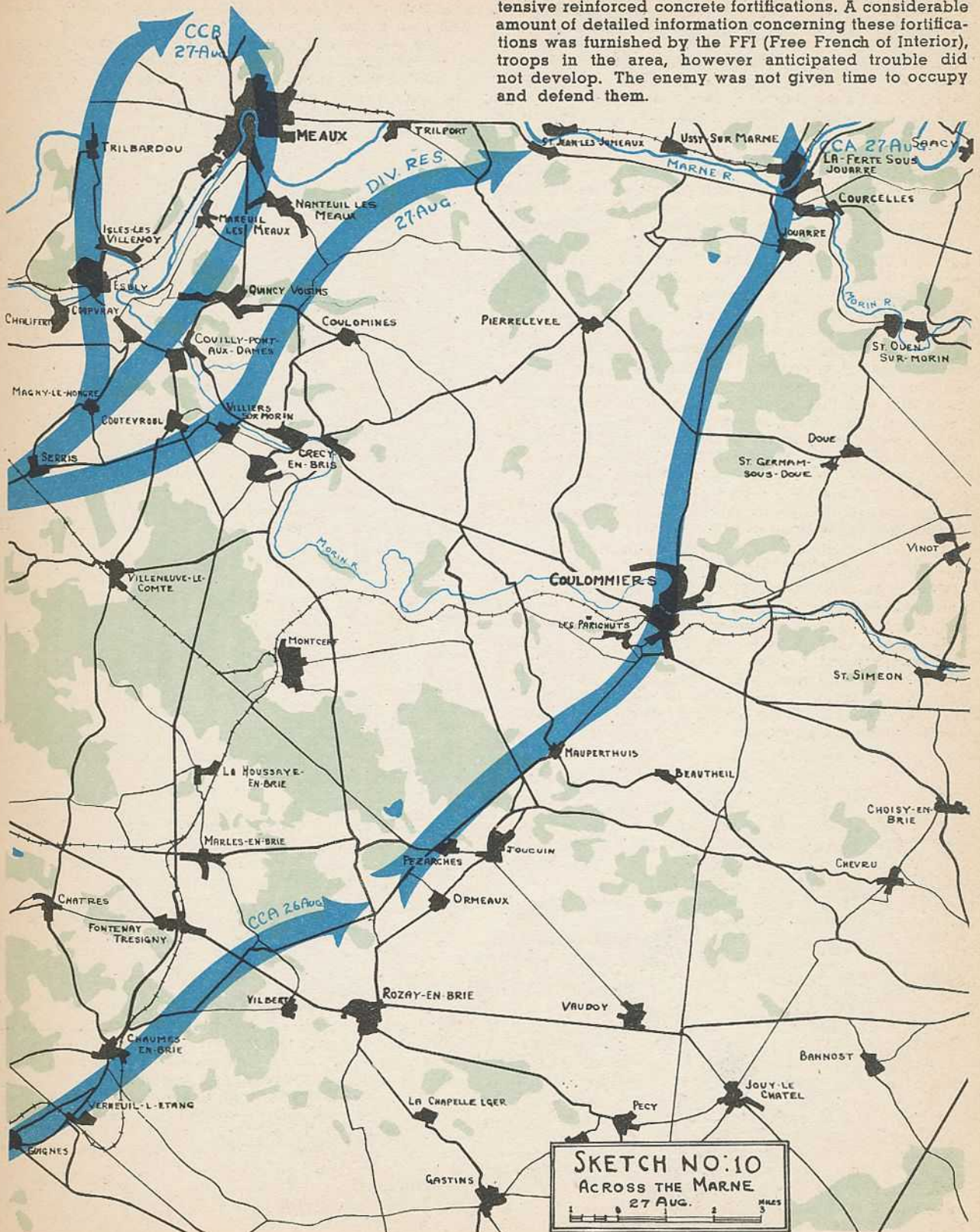
In addition to his small arms and mortars, the German used a few self-propelled and other anti-tank guns as artillery. In general, the indirect fire of these weapons was inaccurate.

The AISNE bridgehead was expanded and secured on 29-30 August by first seizing the high ground north of the river and then pushing out to the northeast to the line shown on sketch number 12.





In the left of the division sector on the high ground just across the river from SOISSONS there were extensive reinforced concrete fortifications. A considerable amount of detailed information concerning these fortifications was furnished by the FFI (Free French of Interior), troops in the area, however anticipated trouble did not develop. The enemy was not given time to occupy and defend them.





Troops of the "Spearhead" Division securing SOISSONS and the river crossings were relieved of these duties early in the morning of 30 August by infantry elements that had come up during the night, but even with this increase in available fighting strength, the 3rd Armored had a rather broad front to cover in securing the proposed bridgehead line. Accordingly, the Division Reserve was committed between Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "B". The bridgehead line was seized on 30 August and firmly held. The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion patrolled the principal road nets within the zone to keep the small isolated enemy groups from disrupting communications.

Without waiting to be relieved on the bridgehead line by the infantry divisions who were following, the 3rd Armored Division was assembled in preparation for another push to its new objective, SEDAN and CHARLEVILLE. Five routes (see sketch) were assigned for this advance, which began on the morning of 31 August 1944.

The composition of the columns that started for CHARLEVILLE and SEDAN on 31 August were:

C COM'D "A"

32nd Armd. Regt.

1st Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.

Co. A, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.

Co. A, 703rd TD Bn.

Co. A, 45th Armd. Med. Bn.

Det. Co. B, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

67th Armd. FA Bn.

54th Armd. FA Bn.

C COM'D "B"

33rd Armd. Regt. (-3rd Bn.)

2nd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.

Co. D, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.

Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.

Det. Co. C, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

391st Armd. FA Bn.

87th FA Bn.

C COM'D "R"

36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (- 1st & 2nd Bn.'s)

3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.

703rd TD Bn. (- A & B Co.'s)

23rd Armd. Engr. Bn. (- A & D Co.'s)

Co. C, 45th Armd. Med. Bn.

Det. Co. A, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

991st Armd. FA Bn. (155 Gun)

183rd FA Bn. (155 Howitzer)

Combat Commands "A" & "B" each moved in two columns. Division Reserve moved on the center route in a single column.

As on previous occasions, the enemy used the hours of darkness, while the Third Armored was halted, to build up a thin screen of resistance with the mission of delaying the advance of the American armor. When the attack started on the morning of 31 August, this initial resistance was quickly overcome and a rapid advance was made throughout the morning.

The Reconnaissance Battalion advanced in front of the division, covering the entire zone and utilizing the road net to the maximum extent possible. They encountered slight resistance all along the front, much of which they reported and bypassed, even so, the prisoners they took constituted a problem.

Combat Command "A" crossed their line of departure at 0930 and moved rapidly.

Combat Command "B" was delayed in starting their attack because of having to assemble troops from positions held on the bridgehead line. (This circumstance later proved to be fortunate) Their attack started at

1224, and moved initially against light resistance.

By 1300 hours the five columns had encountered resistance, and leading elements of the four columns of Combat Commands "A" and "B" were engaged with the enemy. At 1315 a staff officer from VII Corps arrived at the Command Post of the 3rd Armored Division near LAON. He had flown from Corps Headquarters located at LA RUE with instructions to change the direction of attack from east to north. The objective assigned the Third Armored was to secure MONS. New routes of advance were through HIRSON and VERVINS.

A message was sent by radio from the Division Command Post directing the advancing columns to halt, coil off the roads and await further orders. Also information concerning the change in attack plans was relayed by voice radio to the Division Commander, who was with leading elements of the Division, near SERAINCOURT. A staff officer went forward to join the Division Commander immediately with detailed information concerning the change in plans. Combat Commanders were also given orders by voice radio to join the Division Commander at SERAINCOURT.

A meeting of the above column commanders and staff officers was accomplished, and oral orders were given by the Division Commander at 1430 hours, directing a change in routes of advance for the columns, with a change in mission for the Division.

When orders directing a change in mission and the route of advance were received by Task Force "X" of Combat Command "A", this force was heavily engaged by the enemy in the vicinity of NOVION PORCIEN. A successful disengagement from the enemy was accomplished by this force, a column reformed and their route retraced to HAUTEVILLE, where a change in direction to the north was made.

Task Force "Y" of Combat Command "A" was fighting German rearguard forces just west of the village of RETHEL, when orders were received directing the change in route of advance. The column turned northwest on the RETHEL-ROZOY road with little or no resistance from the enemy, a complete disengagement with the enemy being accomplished by the change in the route of advance. By dark the forces of Combat Command "A" had advanced to locations approximately three miles north and northeast of ROZOY, where they bivouacked for the night.

Combat Command "B" columns, due to a late start on the morning of 31 August, had reached the towns of PIERREPONT and NOTRE DAME de LIESSE. Their mission had been to protect the left flank of the Division while advancing toward CHARLEVILLE and secure the town of VERVINS as an intermediate objective for the day. Consequently when the order changing the mission for the Division was received, no change in direction of the routes of Combat Command "B" had to be made. By dark, the columns of Combat Command "B" had reached MARLE and HARY where they bivouacked for the night.

The Division Reserve, moving in a single column and between Combat Commands "A" and "B", received orders to halt their advance to the east, coil forward with the rear of their column and wait orders. This halt was made in a wooded area just west of HERBIGNY. After receipt of orders directing their route of advance be turned north, they proceeded along a secondary road toward CHAUMONT and WADIMONT with an assigned mission of securing HIRSON. A well defended road block stopped the advance of the column just north of WADIMONT. This block was not reduced prior to dark so the Division Reserve bivouacked for the night at this location.







When night came the Combat Commands and Division Reserve were again in contact with even stronger enemy forces than those met during the morning, but had made good progress toward the new objective.

The Division's Reconnaissance Battalion, moving north from the farthest points of advance toward SEDAN and VERDUN, provided a screen on the right flank of the Division. They moved in multiple columns on the secondary road net.

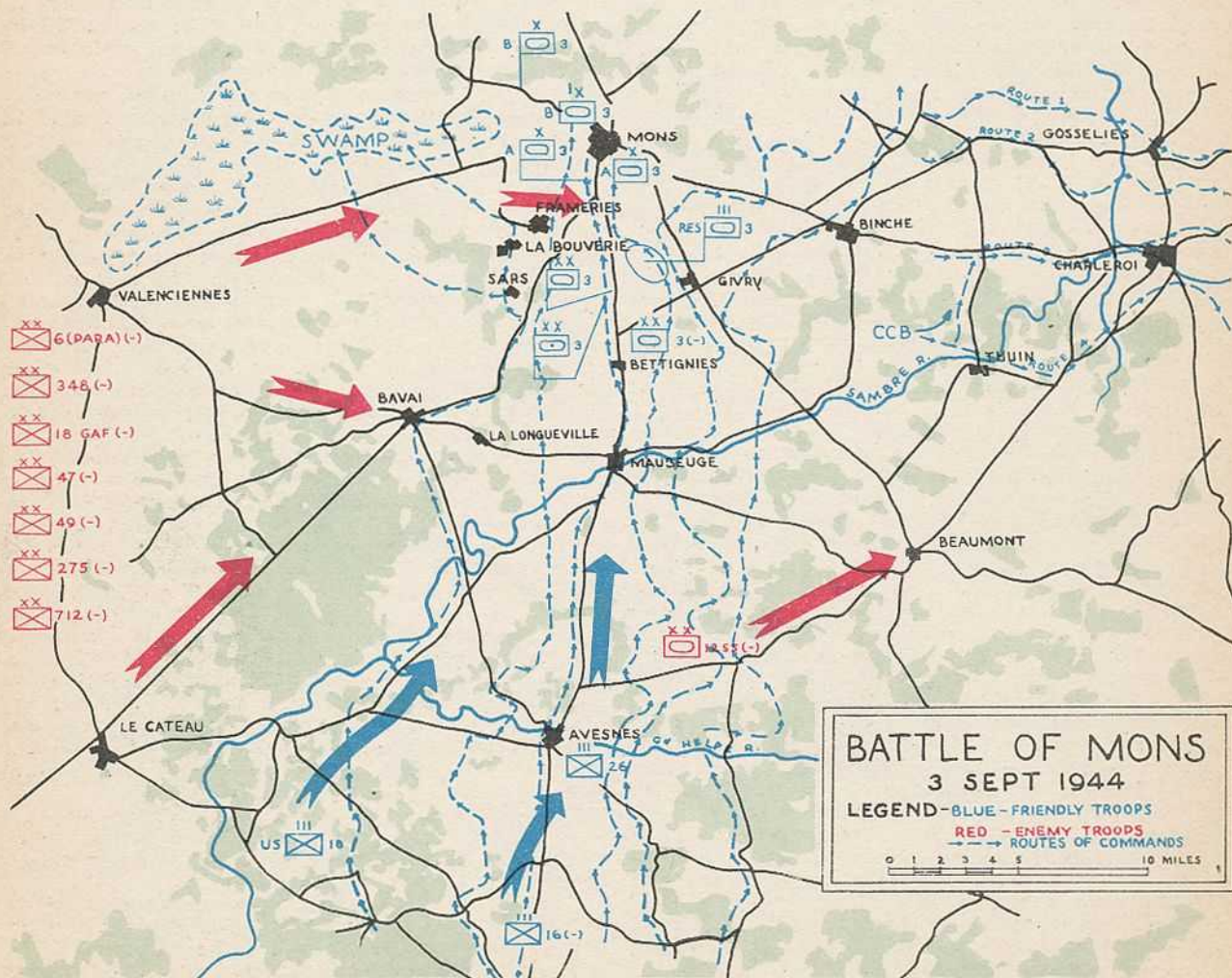
On 1 September, six columns started toward MONS. They were from left to right Combat Command "B", Combat Command "A" and Division Reserve or Combat Command "R", each in two columns. The advance was steady against moderate resistance all day. About five hundred prisoners were taken. They represented elements of many divisions, previously met, making their way to designated assembly areas to the east in small groups. Security regiments from Paris, flak battalions and the staff of the 58th Panzer Corps were also represented.

A number of enemy columns were spotted by or called to the attention of supporting aircraft who worked

them over well. Combat Command "A" reached AVESNES. Combat Command "B" worked north through VERVINS, passed LA CAPELLE and reached a position west of AVESNES by night. Combat Command "R" reached and held HIRSON.

During the night Combat Command "B" was cut off from its service elements and did not receive its fuel and lubricants until the morning of 2 September.

Supplies had to be "fought" forward. This circumstance caused a delay in Combat Command "B's" resuming the attack on 2 September, but the other two Combat Commands started early. Moderate opposition of all arms was encountered. Elements of the Division crossed the Belgian border at 1610. The objective west of MONS was reached at 1700. At about 1700 Combat Command "A" reached its objective at MONS and Combat Command "R" reached it, to the east of MONS. Combat Command "R" was then disengaged and moved west into zone of Combat Command "A". Road blocks were set up all around and covered well with fire. The prisoners were beginning to come in, first in trickles, then in droves, and it got worse.





## The Battle of Mons

Thousands of words have been written and will continue to be written about the Battle of MONS. One salient fact seems to stand out: neither the American First Army nor the Wehrmacht expected it to happen exactly as it did. Nevertheless, MONS developed into the decisive battle of the West. As a result of this battle, troops that should have manned the Westwall never got there.

On the morning of 3 September, the 3rd Armored Division and other elements of VII Corps were disposed as shown on sketch titled "Battle of Mons". Roads north and west of MONS were blocked and defended.

For two days remnants of several German divisions and an assortment of Corps, Army and GHQ troops had been marching north parallel to VII Corps advance, and just to the west of the First Army forces. On the morning of 3 September they turned east and headed straight thru MONS to the relative safety of the SIEGFRIED LINE. Supporting aircraft picked up the close-packed columns early and destroyed vehicles by the hundreds, but still they came. Double and triple columns jammed the roads. All road blocks held firmly, and soon the confused German columns began to filter both north and south of MONS. To the south they were passing between the 3rd Armored and the 1st Infantry Division which was advancing north, and struck the retreating columns full in their long, soft flanks.

One German officer, a prisoner of war, is reported to have said, "You Americans don't want to fight, you just want to slaughter us."

Within the 3rd Armored Division's perimeter at MONS there was no front and rear. The enemy was on all sides. At RANES - FROMENTEL it had been a matter of days; here it was a matter of hours. The Division's total bag of prisoners at MONS was 8,000, including three General officers. This number of prisoners constituted a difficult problem for the Division Military Police Officer and his sixteen enlisted men. (An additional 27 infantrymen were attached from the 1st Division). In the vicinity of the Prisoner of War cage in an old sugar refinery, these MP's and attached infantrymen captured three hundred prisoners in a pitched battle and guarded their prisoners at the same time.

The Division Command Post was not in MONS, but was set up about five miles south of the city. A tank company and an infantry company were employed as command post protection. This force was deployed in a complete defense perimeter around the command post. Even such a system did not prevent the enemy from infiltrating in considerable numbers to the vicinity of the command post proper. The Chief of Staff, charged with the responsibility for the defense of the Division Headquarters supervised the organization of all elements of the Headquarters that could be spared from their normal operational duties into combat groups. This force, colloquially referred to as "C Com'd Smith" captured over six hundred prisoners.

In addition to the divisions represented on the accompanying sketch considerable elements of the 48th, 245th, and 272nd German Infantry Divisions and 17th GAF Division were identified. Part of eleven other divisions and eleven Corps, Army or GHQ units were represented among the prisoners at the 3rd Armored's Prisoners cage on 3 September.

Many thousands of prisoners were still to be had for the taking when the 3rd Armored was relieved by the 1st Division on 4 September. The dead could be counted in thousands.

## Charleroi to Liege

(See route map on next page)

At 1400 on 4 September, the 3rd Armored moved out to the east in four columns, Combat Command "B" on the right, moved in two task force columns and Combat Command "A" on the left in a similar formation. The advance was rapid except through the towns and villages where the citizens crowded the streets cheering and giving food and wine to the soldiers. Everyone seemed to know where "A large group" of Germans was hiding, and some of this information was followed up. However, such reports were so numerous and so frequently in error that our troops paid little attention to them in general.

The objective was NAMUR. One task force of Combat Command "B" reached NAMUR that day and found the bridges blown. They went by way of JEMEPPE. The remainder of the Combat Command, following a route south of this task force, found the bridges across the SAMBRE River out in the vicinity of LOBBES, so they turned north and followed the main CHARLEROI-NAMUR highway. Further to the north Combat Command "A" reached positions east of CHARLEROI and coiled for the night. Combat Command "A" reached positions just northwest of Namur on 5 September.

Combat Command "B" secured a bridge site across the MEUSE at NAMUR, and the engineers completed the bridging operation across the river during the night of 5th and 6th September.

On the 6th, Task Force "King", from Combat Command "B" was crossed over the MEUSE and attached to the 9th Infantry Division to assist that Division in the vicinity of Dinant. This force was released to control of 3rd Armored on the same day. The remainder of Combat Command "B" crossed the river and advanced toward HUY with the mission of securing that town and the river crossings there. The Division Commander ordered that Combat Command "B" send one column at maximum speed to secure a bridge which members of the White Belgian Army reported to be intact in HUY. This column moved at nearly thirty-five miles per hour and secured the bridge. Combat Command "A" was given additional infantry support from Division Reserve to assist in the passage through NAMUR. About ten miles east of NAMUR they encountered stubborn resistance. The advance was slowed, but the Combat Command pushed on to the vicinity of ANTHEIT.

Combat Command "B" secured HUY with the bridges intact.

Task Force "Hogan" which had been attached to 1st Division in the vicinity of MONS reverted to Division control, and met considerable resistance from by-passed units as they moved up to join Combat Command "B". These by-passed enemy elements did not offer any serious organized resistance, but they harassed our columns with sniper fire and hasty road blocks which yielded quickly under pressure.

The direct route from NAMUR to LIEGE, the Division's next objective, was down the MEUSE valley. Down this corridor, the Germans were preparing to defend stubbornly.

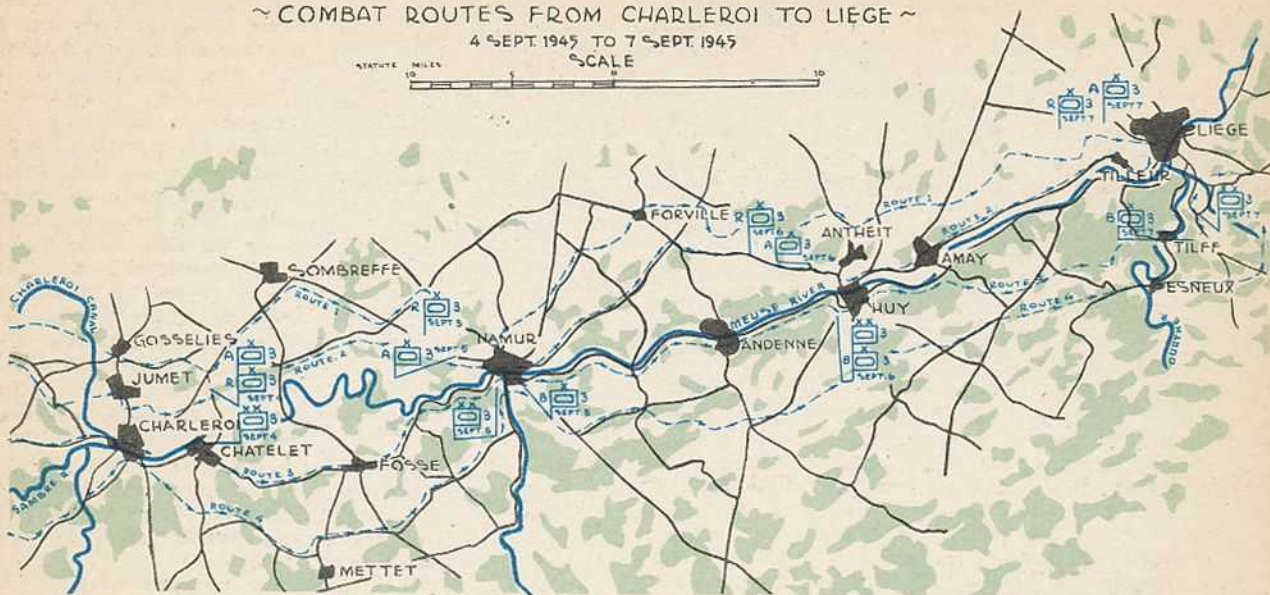
The Division Commander continued to take maximum advantage of the enemy's lack of complete organization by pushing rapidly. He sent Combat Command "A" straight down the valley in a frontal attack, and ordered Combat Command "B" to follow secondary roads on the high ground south of the river, approaching LIEGE from the southeast. Combat Command "A" met enemy road blocks and strong points all the way in increasing



~ COMBAT ROUTES FROM CHARLEROI TO LIEGE ~

4 SEPT 1945 TO 7 SEPT 1945

SCALE



strength. As they neared LIEGE they came under fire of anti-aircraft artillery batteries that protected the city. General Hickey and his artillery commander were in a position to observe these guns whose position was a permanent installation including barracks. A withering concentration of time fire silenced them. Combat Command "A" worked patrols into the city.

Meanwhile Combat Command "B" moving rapidly along the high ground south of the river had taken the enemy completely by surprise. His gun positions, in many cases, were not set up to meet General Boudinot's forces, and the bridge south of the town had not been destroyed. General Rose accompanied the maneuver force. He watched their approach to the river crossing from a nearby observation point. As the leading elements began to cross the river the General crossed with them to maintain better control.

The German positions in the city were rendered untenable with elements of the 3rd Armored on both sides of the river. Accordingly they began to withdraw, finding themselves hard put to discover suitable escape routes.

On 8 September Combat Command "A" mopped up the north side of LIEGE. General Hickey described the flak installations destroyed by his artillery as, "A sight to see".

Meanwhile Combat Command "B" cleared the south of the city. Two more German General Officers were accounted for at LIEGE, one killed and one captured.

The Division Engineers constructed a 510 foot treadway bridge across the MEUSE.

Much enemy equipment was destroyed trying to force road blocks that day and night. The personnel of one road block in Combat Command "B" zone accounted for 35 enemy vehicles, killing a Lieutenant General as he tried to run the block in a high powered staff car; and another, manned by Division Reserve, got seven MK IV tanks.

At 1700, the Reconnaissance Battalion moved across the river with the mission of reconnoitering in the vicinity of VERVIERS and securing crossing of the LA VESDRE River.

At 1000 on 9 September elements of the 1st and 9th Divisions relieved the 3rd Armored at LIEGE and the advance on VERVIERS started.

## Liege to the Siegfried Line

(See route sketch on next page)

Combat Command "A" advanced against light resistance and secured the high ground north and northwest of VERVIERS by 2100 hours.

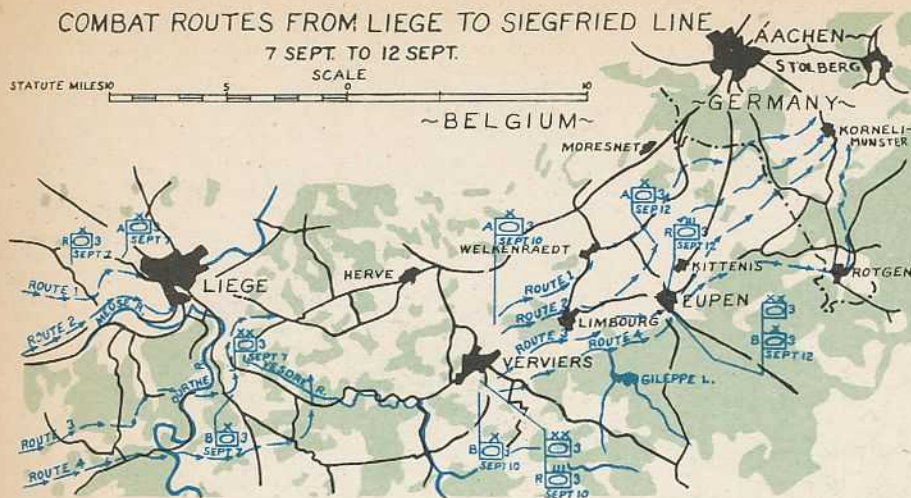
Combat Command "B" met stronger resistance from the time it crossed the line of departure. Anti-tank guns, artillery, and tanks opposed its advance. After crossing a stream at THEUX a minefield was encountered, and the Combat Command did not reach its assigned objective south of VERVIERS. It coiled for the night between PEPINSTER and THEUX.

At the end of the period, (midnight on 9 September) the 83rd Reconnaissance was outpostting the high ground east of VERVIERS and pushing patrols forward in an attempt to secure the dam southeast of LIMBOURG. This objective was not reached because of heavy enemy resistance. Division reserve was still crossing the MEUSE and moving to the east.

The next day VERVIERS was secured, and strong patrols worked eastward.

On 11 September, EUPEN fell to Combat Command "B", and Combat Command "A" seized its objective just northwest thereof. Resistance was stronger now. Coordinated defense positions were encountered. Numerous road blocks and blown bridges impeded the advance. Elements of the German divisions decimated at MONS were forming into battle groups, and new units were appearing.





## Breaching the Siegfried Line

(See sketch on next page)

The Division had now come close to the first barrier of the SIEGFRIED LINE. The Division Commander ordered both Combat Commands to initiate vigorous patrols beginning at 0800 on 12 September to probe the line and find a weak spot, if possible.

Both Combat Commands sent patrols as instructed. Combat Command "A" patrols reached the first tank barriers of the SIEGFRIED LINE at about 1630. Combat Command "B"'s first patrol (reinforced company) was stopped by bad terrain.

Another similar patrol was sent out immediately from Task Force Lovelady, and at 1451 on 12 September, this patrol crossed the German border and a few minutes later was in the town of ROTGEN, Germany. The remainder of Task Force Lovelady, following the advance patrol, found the resistance within the town was negligible. The town was outposted while the bulk of the Task Force moved on through and bivouacked just north of the outskirts of the town. Rotgen was the first German town to fall to the Allies in world war II. Combat Command "B" was but a short distance from the tank barriers. Now both Combat Commands were face to face with the SIEGFRIED LINE and plans were made to breach the first defenses on the following day. The action which followed is really two separate stories, and will be so treated here.

Brigadier General Hickey Commanding Combat Command "A" elected to make a penetration of the first line of defenses with Task Force "X" composed of a battalion of tanks from the 32nd Armored Regiment, a battalion of infantry from the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, a Tank Destroyer platoon from the 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion and a company of engineers from the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion. This force was commanded by Colonel (then Lt. Colonel) Leander L. Doan. The point selected for the penetration was about one kilometer south of OBER FORSTBACH and just to the east of the EUPEN-EYNATTEN road.

In the OBER FORSTBACH vicinity the outer defenses of the SIEGFRIED LINE ran in a northwest to southeast direction, one thousand yards or less behind the border. The defenses were faced all along the line with "dragon's teeth," and large pillboxes every one hundred yards or so to the rear on favorable terrain, and further

supported by some hasty trenching and numerous large caliber guns and mortars in depth. These defenses were placed in fairly open, moderately rolling terrain. The high ground at OBER FORSTBACH commanded observation of the area. Across the possible north-south lines of fire, however, ran a gentle east-west ridge. Both ridge and draw were on the German side of the barrier and immediately covered by pillboxes. However these terrain features provided some concealment from observation to the north, and offered a route for flanking movement to the east.

During the night of 12-13 September, Task Force "X" assembled in the concealment of the AACHEN-EYNATTEN woods with the Command Post near LANGFELD. Night patrols were sent out and contact was made with the enemy at the line of obstacles.

The plan for breaching the line was simple. The infantry, supported by direct tank and tank destroyer fire would move through the dragon's teeth and secure the first high ground beyond. Next, the engineers of the 23rd would breach the obstacle line with demolitions and the tanks would follow through.

The exact point selected for penetration was covered by one pillbox to the immediate front about one hundred and fifty yards beyond the dragon's teeth. While waiting for the tanks to move into supporting position, the infantry commander fired about fifty rounds of tank destroyer fire into the pillbox. It was penetrated in several places and did not return the fire. The infantry moved through the barrier and as they came to the crest of the first ridge, about two hundred yards beyond, they were raked by machine gun fire from another pillbox to the right front and forced to withdraw to the dragons teeth for cover. An attempt was made to approach this second pillbox from the west in a flanking maneuver but fire started coming from the first pillbox believed to have been knocked out. (There were 12 Germans in this pillbox and when called on to surrender they answered, "Go to hell, we will fight it out.") This attack and a third failed, and heavy mortar fire began to cover the area. For the next two hours the situation did not improve. During this period the engineers were working at placing demolition charges in spite of the heavy mortar fire.

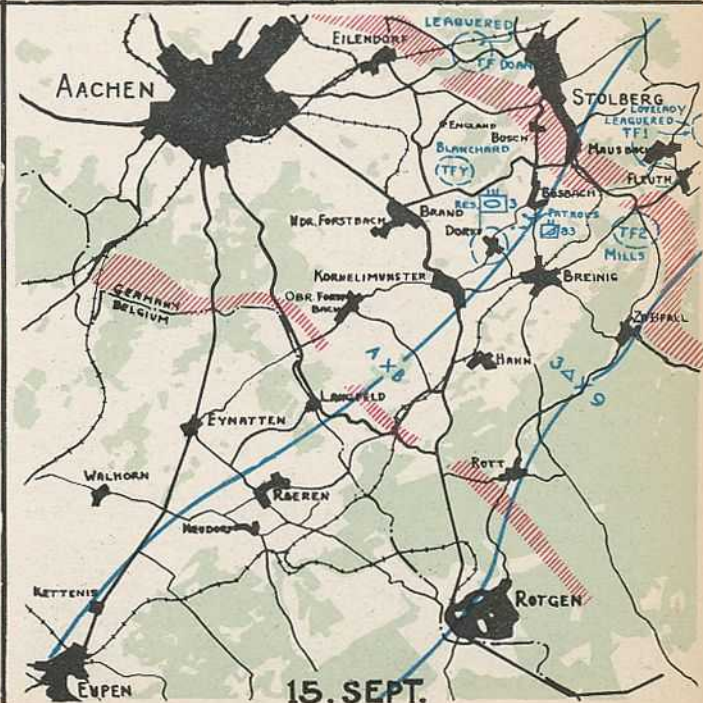
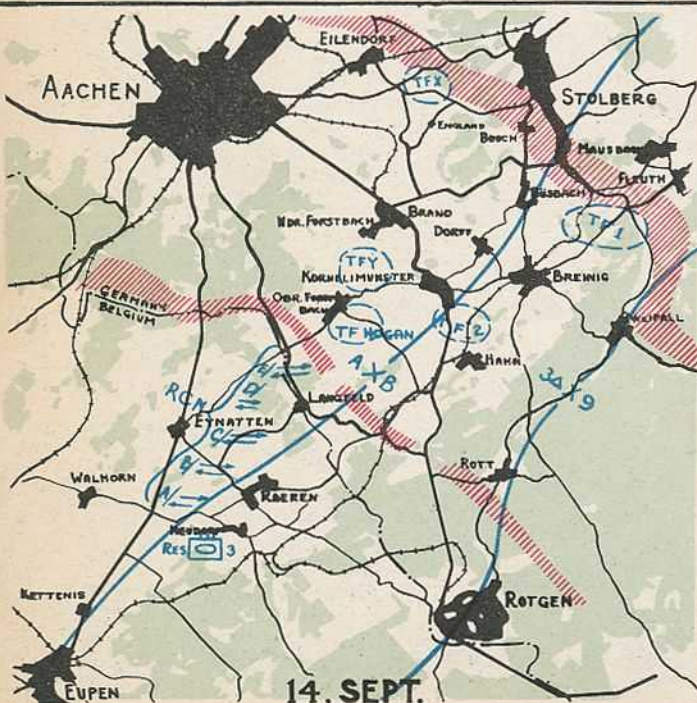
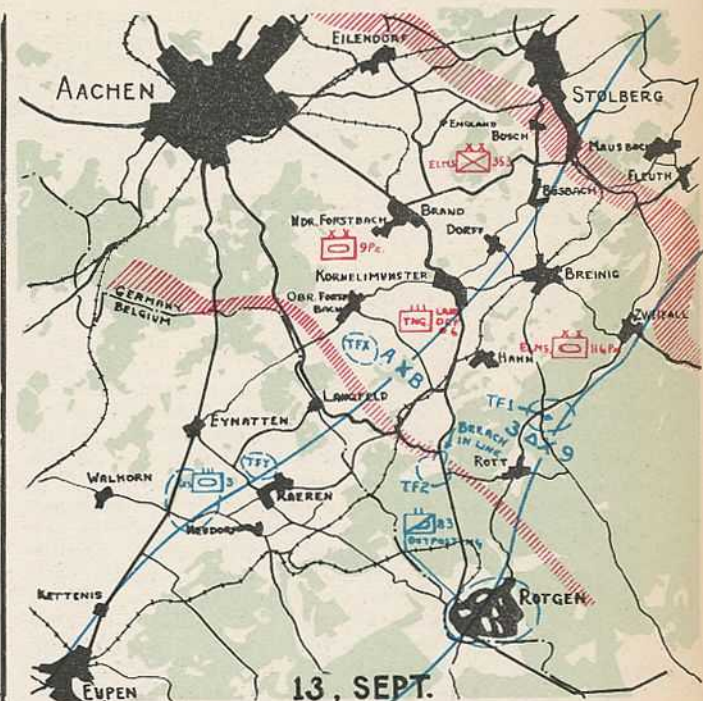
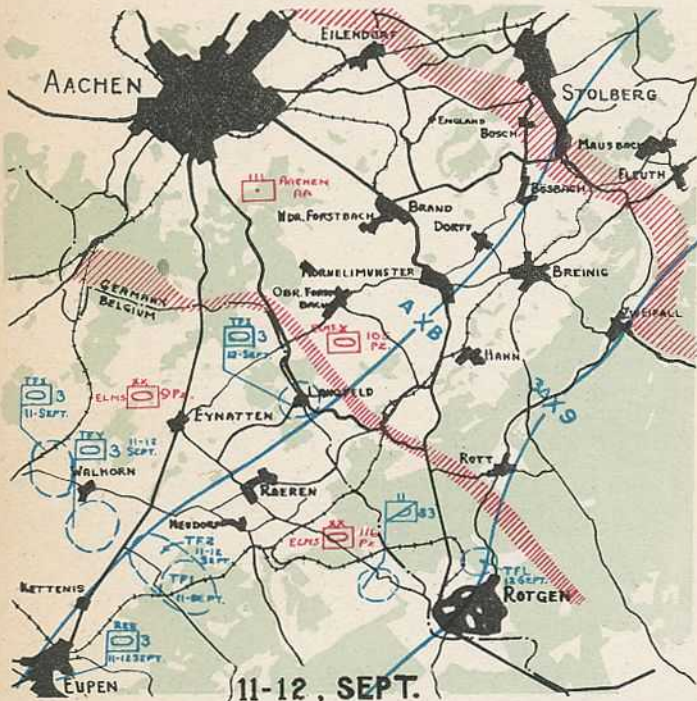
At about 1500, Colonel Doan conferred with the Division Commander and Combat Command "A" Commander. It was decided to use a previously discovered crossing over the barrier about three hundred yards to the right of the intended point of penetration. This crossing was a roadway made by filling in between the teeth with stone and earth and was apparently constructed by local civilians for their own convenience. The passage was under heavy mortar fire and was reported to be mined, so a flail tank was sent over first. It stuck in the loose earth and threatened to tip over and block the passage. Two tanks were used to tow the flail tank off the roadway, and immediately the twenty tanks of Task Force "X" started to cross the barrier. All were across by 1550 and had started to



cruise the bilibox area and the draw south of VERSCHEID. Six pillboxes and several 88's were destroyed. Some of the guns were unmanned.

Meanwhile, the infantry battalion had suffered sixty casualties. Captain Plummer, Battalion Commander was seriously wounded and the opposition continued to be stubborn. Lt. Colonel William R. Orr was then placed in command of the Infantry Battalion and ordered to turn east toward NUTHEIM. The tanks were to also move on NUTHEIM.

As the tanks cleaned out the nearest pillboxes and moved over the crest to the north, German artillery and anti-tank fire became extremely heavy, especially from the vicinity of OBER FORSTBACH. To control his tanks, the Task Force Commander had to dismount and confer with individual tank commanders on several occasions, because command tanks had been knocked out. The attack continued toward NUTHEIM and soon drew anti-tank fire from the vicinity of that town. A halt was made to reorganize between 1700 and 1800. Ten



BREACHING THE SIEGFRIED LINE SEPT. 44





tanks remained in action. Col. Doan radioed General Hickey that he would have to have more stuff to get through. He was told that the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment (1st Division), which was attached to Combat Command "A", was on his left rear, and had been ordered to attack at 1830 to approach NUTHEIM from the west. Also that two tank platoons of Task Force "Y" were being sent to reinforce Task Force "X"

The first platoon of reinforcing tanks arrived at about 1900, just at dusk, and the second about an hour later. The Armored Infantry Battalion joined the tanks, and with Combat Command Artillery firing support on the road leading into the village, the attack proceeded with the tanks leading. Small arms fire from the vicinity of NUTHEIM continued to be heavy, and enemy Anti-Tank guns knocked out two more of the tanks. At about 2300, Task Force "X" had reached a position just west of NUTHEIM and closed into a close leaguer for the night. The Armored Infantry Battalion was disposed with one company along the road to the east and other elements at the north and southwest ends of the leaguer area. The Battalion of the 26th previously referred to was in position to the west of Task Force "X" and contact was established with them. The Task Force Commander talked with the Infantry Battalion Commander, and it was determined that the Infantry Battalion would clean out NUTHEIM on the following day, allowing the armored force to continue as ordered, to EILENDORF. The remainder of the Combat Command coiled for the night at positions shown on sketch, "Operation 12 September". The depleted 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Armored Regiment was relieved by the 3rd Battalion, 32nd, and on the morning of 14 September, Task Force "X" was ordered to attack north to the vicinity of EILENDORF. The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was released to Division control in place. The Task Force left NUTHEIM about noon, and except for a skirmish at BRAND, there was no considerable fighting during the day. The southern outskirts of EILENDORF were reached at about 1930. Some anti-tank fire was encountered. Elements of Combat Command "A" leaguered for the night at positions shown on the sketch, "Operation 14 September". On the morning of the 15th, Task Force "Y" of Combat Command "A" started moving at 0850 to come abreast of and to the south of Task Force "X". This advance was directed at MUNSTERBUSCH.

During the day elements of the 16th Infantry Regiment were contacted on the left.

Not long afterwards elements of Task Force "X" were against the second row of dragons teeth about 2 kilometers east of EILENDORF in the vicinity of a place called England. This barrier extended northwest and southeast across the low ground on the southern approaches to STOLBERG. Here a platoon of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment was pinned down by heavy fire from pillboxes on the other side. The platoon of infantry withdrew slightly under the cover of tank fire. The tanks soon found a passage through the obstacles blocked only by a few old farm wagons, and the tanks that had supported the infantry pushed these aside and went through. Observing this action the Combat Command Commander ordered the entire Task Force to move to the east through the gap.

At about 1500, as the first tanks advanced to a road junction at AM GEISBERG they received anti-tank fire from the direction of WURSELENER WOODS. Additional tank and anti-tank fire came from the northeast along the road to STOLBERG. Six tanks were lost in quick succession. The Armored Infantry Battalion of Task Force "X" now started to come through and deepen the

bridgehead. General Hickey told the Division Commander; "I am pushing infantry out to locate and clear out A. T. Guns. Perimeter is considered large for one battalion. Operation will be slow and probably no more than some support for infantry in the bridgehead can be crossed tonight."

Quick advantage of an opening had been seized. A breach in the main defenses of the SIEGFRIED LINE existed, but the towns of MUNSTERBUSCH, STOLBERG, and the WURSELENER WOODS area still needed attention. The Corps Commander ordered the 1st Infantry Division on the left of the 3rd Armored to cooperate in this mop-up process, and the 3rd Armored to assist them in getting on their objective to the northwest. This cooperation was effected with complete success.

Combat Command "B" commanded by Brigadier General (then Colonel) Boudinot, operated in the right half of the 3rd Armored Division zone. A study of their operations for the period covered above will complete the picture of the breaching of the SIEGFRIED LINE in the zone of the 3rd Armored.

On 12 September, the Combat elements of Combat Command "B" were split into two task forces as follows:

LT. COLONEL WILLIAM B. LOVELADY  
2nd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
2nd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (-Co. F)  
1 Btry., 391st Armd. FA. Bn.  
Rcn. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt. (-3rd Plat.)  
1st Plat. Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.  
1st Plat. Co. B, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
Detachment, 45th Med. Bn.  
Maintenance Unit

LT. COLONEL R. H. KING  
1st Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
F Co., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
2nd Plat., B Co., 23rd Engr. Bn.  
2nd Plat., B Co., 703rd TD Bn.  
54th FA Bn.  
Detachment, 45th Med. Bn.  
Maintenance Unit

Positions of Combat Command "B" units on the night of 12 September are shown on sketch. "Operations 12 Sept." It was planned to move the two task forces north in parallel columns with Task force 1 on the right. The initial route followed by Task Force 1 was a good road from ROTGEN TO ROTT. About halfway between these two towns this road turns sharply to the west and runs east-west for about two kilometers. Part of this section is along steep cliffs, and here the enemy had blocked the road with a deep crater defended by small arms fire. The work of filling this crater started on the morning of 13 September.

Task Force 2's route was a good, straight road leading from ROTGEN to KORNELIMUNSTER. The first block on this road consisted of cables stretched across the roadway, a steel gate, mines on the roadway and on the shoulders. This block was defended by small arms fire from pillboxes, and dug in positions to the north. The Task Force attacked this position with infantry and the enemy speedily withdrew. The Armored Infantry Company then moved onto the high ground about five hundred yards to the north, and the engineers removed the mines and destroyed the cables and gate with prepared charges. This job was finished by 1100 hours, and the main body of the Task Force started to move north from KITTENIS. The dragon's teeth with tank ditches defended by pillboxes were visible ahead (East and Southeast of SCHMIDTHOF) and Colonel King decided that his depleted infantry company was insufficient for the job. Accordingly, he asked for reinforce-



ments and went forward to study the situation more closely.

On the right Task Force 1 had filled the first crater, and had moved north to within one and one half kilometers of ROTT where further demolition again halted the column. Patrols discovered that the bridge across VICHT CREEK, one and one half kilometers south of VENWEGEN on LAMMERSDORF-KORNELIMUNSTER road had been destroyed by the enemy. The Task Force Commander planned to put in this bridge during the night, and move on the following morning, 14 September. The Task Force was coiled as shown on the operations sketch and the engineers got underway with the night bridging operation.

At 1800 Task Force 2 received as reinforcements H and I Companies of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment from Division Reserve. In the meantime Colonel King had decided to attack SCHMIDTHOF with his depleted F Company of the 36th, supported by tanks and artillery. These sixty men jumped off after a ten minute artillery preparation at 1730. They were stopped short after initial advances and ordered to hold what they had taken. Two tanks were knocked out by enemy anti-tank fire.

Five hundred yards to the south the engineers were preparing passage over the obstacles. During the night extremely heavy mortar and artillery fire forced F Company to retire to its jump-off position but the breaching operation went on to completion at 2245. While the bridging operation already referred to was in progress, Task Force 1 proceeded to mop up and secure the town of ROTT.

During the day the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion occupied ROTGEN. This Battalion secured the town of ROTGEN until relieved by elements of the 9th Division on 14 September.

At 0800 on 14 September, both Task Forces of Combat Command "B" resumed the attack. By 1100 Task Force 1 had advanced to the road junction at the southwest edge of BREINIG. They had met light resistance all the way and had fought their way through several minor road blocks of a hasty nature. Task Force 2, on the left, had met much stiffer resistance. They advanced about three hundred yards and met resistance from several pillboxes and other prepared positions. Artillery fire on these pillboxes caused the occupants to leave the shelter but did not destroy the structures. Because of the slow difficult progress on the left, a company of tanks from Task Force 1 was sent to assist Task Force 2. This force advanced to the town of HAHN. The remainder of Task Force 2 was still occupied with taking SCHMIDTHOF and removing barriers. (I beams were fixed in the roadway. These had to be cut with explosives.)

On the left flank a dangerous gap had developed between elements of Combat Command A and elements of the 1st Division. To cover this gap and protect the Division left flank the Division Commander sent a Task Force from Division Reserve composed of the 1st Battalion, 33rd Armored Regiment and the 1st Battalion,

26th Infantry Regiment (1st Division). This force was commanded by Lt. Colonel Hogan, the tank battalion commander.

Having sent the force to assist Task Force 2, Task Force 1 coiled just south of BREINIGERHEIDE. Both task forces were able to renew the advance at 1515 and reached the positions shown on the operations sketch for the day. Lt. Colonel King had been evacuated because of wounds, and Major Mills assumed command of Task Force 2 southeast of KORNELIMUNSTER.

By 1000 on the 15th of September, Task Force 2 had fought its way to a nose just east of BUSBACH. Several pillboxes and fortifications were fired on in passing.

Task Force 1 was again held up by a blown bridge. This bridge was over GIESCH CREEK on the road from BREINIG to MAUSBACH. Another bridging operation was undertaken, and by 1100 the force started to cross to the northeast. Soon it was stopped by fire from enemy tanks and anti-tank weapons from the area at the southeast edge of MAUSBACH. This was the second line of the SIEGFRIED defenses and seemed to be rather strongly manned, with some supporting tanks, mortars, and artillery in position to the rear. Task Force 1 launched a coordinated attack with tanks and infantry and by 1400 had entered MAUSBACH, breaching the second line of SIEGFRIED defenses.

Task Force 2, meanwhile, was held up by another blown bridge in the south end of STOLBERG. It was determined that considerable time would be required to prepare a crossing here, and the Combat Command Commander decided to withdraw Mills' Task Force and have him follow through the breach made by Lovelady's force.

On the following day the Division Reserve started mopping up remaining pillboxes and pockets of resistance in the BUSBACH area.

The breaching was widened and deepened during succeeding days and several counterattacks ranging in strength from reinforced company to battalion size were defeated.

Mopping up in the STOLBERG-MAUSBACH area continued until 23 September. At that time, the Division front was narrowed when the 1st Division took over the part of Combat Command "A"'s sector west of the VICHT river.

The eighteen day trek from the SEINE to the SIEGFRIED LINE had sapped the strength of the 3rd Armored. The mopping up and consolidation around STOLBERG was extensive too. The men were tired and the machines needed maintenance in the worst way. On 18 September there were one-hundred-and-fifty-three medium and one-hundred-and-forty-eight light tanks operative in the whole division. Of the mediums about thirty would run only in low gear. A total of about one hundred tanks were in satisfactory operating condition.

Sixty-six officers and eight hundred and eighty-seven enlisted men had been received as reinforcements between 15 and 23 September, but the strength report showed that the Division was up to only 90.4% of full strength in officers and 90.9% of full strength in enlisted personnel.



## The Build-up

At the time VII Corps first made successful attacks on the vaunted West Wall defenses, the First Army plan anticipated bypassing and surrounding the city of AACHEN, allowing it to fall when it would after the main attack had passed. This decision was later changed. AACHEN would have to be taken. The plan for securing the city was to cut off its easterly escape and supply routes, draw a tight cordon about the town and then demand capitulation of the German garrison. The 30th Infantry Division of XIX Corps, north of the city, and the 1st Infantry Division of VII Corps, to the south, made an effective closure of the gap east of AACHEN on 10 October and the surrender ultimatum was carried into the city by an officer representative from the 1st Division.

When the ultimatum terms expired shortly before noon on 11 October there had been no answer from the German Commander. Accordingly, the attack on the city began. The IX Tactical Air Force dropped tons of bombs on targets within AACHEN, and supporting artillery of VII Corps fired one-hundred and sixty-nine tons of ammunition into the city. Elements of the 26th Infantry Regiment started advancing into the city from the northeast while other elements of the 1st Division beat off determined enemy attacks east of AACHEN.

Within AACHEN proper the mopping-up operations proceeded slowly and systematically. American losses were at a minimum. An expert job was being done.

The 3rd Armored Division was represented at AACHEN, too. On 18 October Task Force "HOGAN" (3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt. and 2nd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.) was attached to the 1st Division. This Task Force operated in the western part of town. They seized the strategic LOUSBERG HILL on 19 October. During the course of the operation Task Force "HOGAN" maintained contact with elements of the 30th Division (XIX Corps) on the north, and together with the 26th Infantry Regiment, took over 700 prisoners.

Colonel Wilke, Commander of the AACHEN garrison, surrendered on 21 October.

While this operation at AACHEN was going on the 3rd Armored and the 9th Infantry Divisions continued to improve and hold defensive positions in their zones.

The first Army was proceeding with regrouping and resupply activities preparatory to continuing the offensive into Germany. Twenty-four hours a day the roads in rear areas were crowded with convoys bringing tons of supplies and thousands of fresh troops to the front. The unprecedented rapidity of the drive across France and Belgium had strained communication lines almost to the elastic limit. But now the Allied Armies at the Western Gates of Germany were daily gaining new strength at a rapidly accelerating pace.

During this build-up period, the 3rd Armored held a rather narrow zone, (STOLBERG to MAUSBACH) except for the period 25 October to 10 November when the 47th Regimental Combat Team of the 9th Division and the 294th Engineer Combat Battalion were attached. The zone then extended south through the HURTGEN forest to the V Corps boundary just east of ZWEIFALL. The 9th Division (less the 47th Regimental Combat Team) was released from assignment to VII Corps about this time. Troops holding the line were rotated within the division in order to give all units the maximum time to rest and refit. New replacements to the ranks could be brought up to a state of training impossible in a moving situation. Abandoned houses provided shelter for many of the troops and served as protected kitchens, mess-halls and command posts.

Maintenance troops worked long hours to get the hundreds of tanks and vehicles in the best possible condition. Now they had the advantage of good places to work. Houses were occupied, and the hard-standings at railway sidings and stations became workshops.

Hospital facilities were made available to the Division Medical personnel near KORNELIMUNSTER.

Rear Echelon elements set up house-keeping in and around RAEREN where there were many billets available for troops, and large buildings of all kinds became offices and storerooms.

Combat Command "A" established its headquarters in a section of BREINIG where most of the houses had been evacuated, and operated a comfortable indoor command post.

Combat Command "B" found good buildings to occupy between BREINIG and KORNELIMUNSTER.

Division Headquarters was ensconced in the plush luxury of the Prym Mansion, just south and east of STOLBERG.

The rainy winter weather soon turned the entire Division area into a sea of mud. All operations, even in a relatively quiet defensive zone, were made more difficult because of the almost continual rain. The quiet was only relative, too. On the front there were daily skirmishes and firefights, and at night patrols probed for information. Artillery action was continuous. A few exchanges developed into actual artillery duels.

The Division Engineers were busy people, too. To their routine water and map supply jobs which still occupied part of their time, road maintenance and sign posting in the Division area were added. To keep roads open, they built six bridges, averaging sixty feet in length, and operated two quarries from which they removed over seven thousand cubic yards of road material.

They conducted extensive experiments in methods of destroying pillboxes and other obstacles. The section of SIEGFRIED LINE defenses in American hands was used for these experiments. In addition to these jobs, they restored the city water supply in the occupied parts of STOLBERG, flushing all the pipes and repairing generators and engines.

With the entry into Germany proper, the Division Civil Affairs Section became in name and in fact, the Military Government Section. The 3rd Armored Division was the first unit of the Allied Armies to establish Military Government in Germany in World War II. On 14 September, Civil Administration was established in ROTGEN and a temporary Burgermeister appointed. In quick succession, the towns of KORNELIMUNSTER, BRAND, BREINIG, BUSBACH, WALHEIM and STOLBERG were added to the list. During the build-up period ZWEIFALL, VICHT and MAUSBACH were also administered by the Military Government teams of the 3rd Armored. Town officials who were NAZI party members had to be weeded out. The police had fled with the NAZI, and new and inexperienced personnel had to be recruited. Minor infractions occurred, the Commanding General appointed the first Summary Military Government Court on 29 September to try four women for entering a prohibited area without proper pass — but there were no known overt acts against the Military by civilians in the Division area.

By 11 November, the regrouping of forces had been completed in the VII Corps. The 104th Infantry Division had been attached on 6 November and had taken over the zone of the 1st Division. The 4th Infantry Division was attached on 8 November and Combat Command "R" of the 5th Armored Division and the 4th Cavalry Group followed. VII Corps was ready to resume the offensive.



# Winter Offensive

(Sketches on next page)

To meet the expected allied offensive the German Army utilized the time and forces available to them to the best advantage possible. Between Allied lines and the RHINE River there was much strong defensive terrain. On this terrain, they strengthened the natural barriers with strong field fortifications. The first such natural barrier to VII Corps front was the ROER River. Between the front lines and this river, the enemy was well dug-in. The villages and towns were organized as strong points. Minefields were laid all along the front and well covered with defensive fires. The actual identified enemy units in contact are shown on Sketch No. 13.

On the 15th November, the G-2, 3rd Armored Division learned through prisoners-of-war sources that the 47th German Infantry Division was preparing to relieve the 12th German Infantry Division on the immediate front of the 3rd Armored. For the coming offensive, the objective of the 3rd Armored was the ridge just northeast of the road connecting HAMICH and HASTENRATH. The mission was to attack and seize this ground and secure it until relieved by elements of the 1st Division, mopping up all resistance in the sector. The part of the line just east of STOLBERG was to be held until passed through by elements of the 104th Division. When the Division objective was secured, the 3rd Armored was to be prepared to exploit any breakthrough in the sector of either the 1st or 4th Divisions by attacking east toward COLOGNE.

Combat Command "A" was given the missions of holding the STOLBERG line and supporting the attack of the 104th Division.

Combat Command "B" was to seize the Division objective. The units of Combat "B" fought as reinforced battalions.

## COMPOSITION OF COMBAT COMMAND "B"

1st BN. 33rd ARMD. (REINF.) LT. COL. MILLS,  
COMMANDING

1st Bn. 33rd Armd. Regt. (- 3rd Plat. Co. A)  
3rd Plat. Rcn. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
Co. F, 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
2nd Plat. Co. C, 703rd TD Bn.  
2nd Plat. Co. D, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
Medical Detachment

## 2nd BN. 33rd ARMD. REGT. LT. COL. LOVELADY, COMMANDING

2nd Bn. 33rd Armd. Regt. (- 3rd Plat. Co. B)  
2nd Plat. Rcn. Co. 33rd Armd. Regt.  
Co. E 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
1st Plat. Co. C, 703rd TD Bn.  
1st Plat. Co. D, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
Medical Detachment

## C COMD. RESERVE, MAJOR TOUSEY, COMMANDING

Rcn. Co. 33rd Armd. Regt. (- 1, 2, 3rd Plats.)  
2nd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (- E & F Co's)  
Co. C, 703rd TD Bn. (- 1 & 2 Plats.)  
Co. D, 23rd. Armd. Engr. Bn. (- 1 & 2 Plats.)  
391st ARTILLERY GROUPMENT, LT. COL. GARTON,  
COMMANDING

391st Armd. FA Battalion  
58th Armd. FA Battalion

Two tank platoons accompanied Combat Command Headquarters. The zone of the 1st Battalion, 33rd Armored Regiment, was on the left. Their objectives were HASTENRATH and SCHERPENSEEL. The 2nd Battalion was to advance in the right of the Division zone up to the little village of KOTTENICH just north and west of HAMICH. Leaving a holding force here, they

were to move from the northeast on to the objective west of HAMICH.

On 16 November, there was a break in the weather. The preparation for the offensive began at 1115 hours. On the VII Corps front thirteen hundred heavy bombers, escorted by more than six hundred fighters of the Eighth Air Force hit targets in the ESCHWEILER-LANGERWEHE area. About seven hundred medium bombers of the Ninth Air Force and one thousand heavies struck targets further to the east during the afternoon. Fighter bombers of the IX Tactical Air Force hit prearranged targets close to the front of the 1st and 4th Infantry Divisions. Bad weather hampered close support missions on call, but some were flown.

The attack was launched at 1300. The 2nd Battalion, 33rd, advanced rapidly on the right. Part of the force went directly into WERTH while another part proceeded further north, took KOTTENICH, and then advanced on WERTH from the northeast. A small infantry force was left to secure KOTTENICH.

The 1st Battalion advanced in two columns toward HASTENRATH and SCHERPENSEEL. Soon after crossing the line of departure the left column was stopped by a minefield. Several tanks were lost to mines while trying to find a route around the field. The minefield was protected by Anti-Tank, mortar, artillery, and small arms fire. It was liberally sprinkled with anti-personnel mines. That night part of Mills' force was just south of HASTENRATH. The column held up by the minefield was moved through Lovelady's zone and up into position to continue the attack on HASTENRATH.

On the left, the line remained virtually the same in the vicinity of STOLBERG. On the right, the 47th Infantry Regiment (attached to the 1st Division) had fought its way into the southeast corner of GRESENICH.

The attack had fallen while the 47th German Infantry Division was in the process of relieving the 12th German Infantry Division. Both of these units remained in the line and suffered heavily.

On 17 November the 1st Battalion reached its objective at 1012 hours. The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion worked at mopping-up in the Division zone. That night the 1st Battalion beat off a minor counter attack in SCHERPENSEEL. By noon the next day, mopping up was completed except for the HASTENRATH area. The Division commander considered the situation "Well buttoned up", and moved the 83rd Reconnaissance to WERTH as a reserve.

On the left, elements of the 104th Division reached positions in their zone due west of WERTH. Elements of the 1st Division, on the right, had taken HAMICH only to be driven out that night, when the enemy counter-attacked with a battalion of infantry supported by a company of tanks.

Cleaning up HASTENRATH was a slow job. The town was subjected to almost continual fire from enemy artillery and mortars. Lt. Colonel Mills was killed on 18 November and Colonel Welborn, Commander of the 33rd Armored Regiment, took command of the forces in that zone.

By 21 November, the 104th Division and the 1st Division advances pinched out the 3rd Armored Division sector. Combat Command "A" was regrouping in the vicinity of BUSBACH. Combat Command "B" had moved its command post to MAUSBACH. Its units were regrouped in the area they had taken.

Resistance had been stubborn. The Germans were selling every foot of ground at a good price.

Elements of the 1st Division reported some of the hardest fighting they had experienced in any of the operations to date.



SKETCH NO.13  
SITUATION  
16 Nov 44



SKETCH NO.14  
VII CORPS FRONTS  
21 + 24 Nov 1944



SKETCH NO.15  
SITUATION  
2 Dec 1944



SKETCH NO.16  
SITUATION  
9 DEC. 44





On 24 November (See Sketch No. 14), the Division Commander gave verbal instructions to the Commanding General Combat Command "A" to organize a task force to attack from positions east of ESCHWEILER and secure the high ground between LANGERWEHE and FRENZ. The enemy holding this ground had slowed the advance of a long section of the Corps front. The task force organized to do this job consisted of: 3rd Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt. (Lt. Col. Richardson, Comdg.) 2nd Bn., 47th Inf. Regt. (Attached to 3rd Armd. Div.) 2nd Plat., Co. A 703rd TD Bn. 2nd Plat., Co. A 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn. 67th Armd. FA Bn. in direct support. Attacking northeast between two railroads (see sketch No. 14) this force met with very strong opposition. By night they had seized and secured HUCHELN and prepared to continue to advance the next morning.

At 0830 Richardson's reinforced battalion resumed the attack. Soon twelve of the thirteen tanks in the attack were bogged down in mud. The main burden of the assault then fell on the attached infantry. The attack moved slowly and cautiously. On 26 November, the Task Force was in a position to launch a coordinated attack on the objective. The tanks had been stopped by mud in the left of the sector and by heavy anti-tank fire from the vicinity of LANGERWEHE on the right. The infantry made the assault supported by direct fire from tanks and close support aircraft. The objective was taken. The infantry organized the position, and the remainder of the Task Force rejoined Combat Command "A" in the vicinity of BUSBACH on 27 November.

During the period 16-27 November, the 3rd Armored Division captured six-hundred and twenty-six prisoners.

From 27 November to 9 December the 3rd Armored was not in contact. The VII Corps attack moved slowly toward the ROER River, reaching the general line shown on Sketch No. 16, on 9 December.

In an effort to loosen the stubborn enemy defense in the VII Corps zone where the situation seemed to be developing into a stalemate, the Corps launched a coordinated attack on 10 December.

Combat Command "R" of the 3rd Armored Division was committed to this attack in the zone of the 9th Infantry Division with the mission of attacking from the vicinity of LANGERWEHE through OBERGEICH and GEICH, and moving rapidly forward to seize and secure ECHTZ.

#### COMPOSITION OF COMBAT COMMAND "R"

(Col. Howze Commanding)

##### TF HOGAN

3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
3rd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (- Co. A)  
1st Plat. Co. C, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
1st Plat. Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.  
1st Sect., Co. A, 738th Tank Bn., SP (ME)  
54th Armd. FA Bn. (Direct Support)

##### TF KANE

1st Bn. 32nd Armd. Regt. (- Co. A Light Tanks)  
Co. A, 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
1st Plat. Co. C, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
1st Plat. Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.  
1st Sect., Co. A, 738th Tank Bn., SP (ME)  
58th Armd. FA Bn. (Direct Support)

##### COMBAT COMMAND RESERVE

Company A, 32nd Armd. Regt.  
Company B, 83rd Armd. Rcn. Bn.

Company C, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn. (- 2 Plats.)  
Company B, 703rd Tank Destroyer Bn. (- 2 Plats.)  
Company A, 738th Tank Bn. SP (ME) (- 3 Plats.)  
4th Plat., Co. C, 83rd Rcn. Bn. (4.2 Chemical Mortars).

Hogan's Task Force made the attack while Kane supported the assault by fire from the high ground in the vicinity of STUTGERHOF. The whole of Division Artillery was employed in support of this action. While Hogan's tanks struggled over the extremely muddy terrain the enemy brought artillery and anti-tank fire to bear. A minefield at the western edge of OBERGEICH stopped the tanks. Then, while the town was smothered with tank, artillery and mortar fire from the northwest and south, the two infantry companies of the Task Force advanced. Artillerymen consider this action one of their finest operations. In spite of heavy losses in forward observer personnel, the use of time fire and screening smoke was superior. By 1700, OBERGEICH was secured. When the attack continued toward GEICH equally strong resistance was again met. Elements reached the edge of GEICH, but, at dark, the advance stopped and the entire task force took up positions between GEICH and OBERGEICH.

Task Force Kane displaced from their supporting position at 1400, and advanced across the muddy terrain toward ECHTZ. They met little resistance until they approached ECHTZ, where enemy mortar, and small arms fire opposed them. By 2100, this resistance was overcome and the town was secured.

The next morning Task Force "Hogan" continued the attack on GEICH, and, after heavy fighting secured the town by 1000. Sufficient force was left in GEICH to hold road blocks, and the Task Force moved out to join Task Force Kane, which had been ordered to continue the attack to the east toward HOVEN. Kane had started this attack on HOVEN at first light and had made good progress initially. However, there were about six well-positioned anti-tank guns covering his route of advance. These guns in conjunction with mortar and artillery fire (the enemy had concentrated artillery in this sector until it about equalled our own) stopped his attack. When Kane and Hogan launched a coordinated attack in the afternoon the same enemy guns plus three enemy tanks, operating in a well concealed position in HOVEN again stopped the attack cold, and enemy artillery caused heavy casualties to the infantry. That night the 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment (9th Division) was attached to Combat Command "R" to be used in continuing the attack on HOVEN.

Kane's Task Force was reconstituted to include 1st Battalion, 32nd Armored Regiment, 1st Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, Company G, 33rd Armored Regiment, and a platoon of tank destroyers from the 703rd. The attack on HOVEN was continued at 0800. The same heavy opposition continued, but, by 1630, the town was secured. A system of protective road blocks was established around the town. At midnight the 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry, assumed responsibility for the security of HOVEN, and Combat Command "R" moved on 13 December to assembly areas near MAUSBACH.

So ended a phase. By 16 December the VII Corps front ran generally along the ROER RIVER. The enemy made the next move.



# THE ARDENNES

## CHAPTER III

### To the defensive

The German counteroffensive in the ARDENNES started on 16 December and, on 18 December, elements of the 3rd Armored Division were on their way to meet the attacking German Columns as they raced westward.

Combat Command "A" was the first of the Spearhead's elements to move south out of the AACHEN area. This command consisting of

- Hq Detachment Combat Command "A"
- 32nd Armored Regiment (- 1st Bn.)
- 3rd Bn., 36th Armored Infantry Regt.
- 67th Armored FA Bn.
- Company "A" 23rd Armored Engineering Bn.
- Company "A" 45th Medical Bn.
- Detachment of Co. A, Maintenance Bn.
- 1st Plat. Co. A 738th Tank Bn., (SP) ME

was detached from the Division and attached to V Corps. They cleared the area near BUSBACH at 1200 and moved into new assembly areas near EUPEN as mobile reserve. They remained attached to V Corps until 1530 on 21 December, when they were reattached to the 3rd Armored Division and started moving to the Division's sector near GRANDMENIL. During this period, General Hickey's force was charged with the defense of Eupen.

There was one combat job to be done; this was handled by part of the Combat Command's infantry. A few German paratroopers (part of the force whose mission was to cut the EUPEN-MALMEDY road) were in the woods along the west side of this road just south of Eupen. The infantry quickly liquidated this force, taking a few prisoners and a considerable amount of ammunition and light weapons, principally Machine Guns and Mortars, which had been dropped to the surrounded paratroopers.

Combat Command "B" was detached from the 3rd Armored on 19 December and attached to V Corps, initially with the mission of protecting VERVIERS. When they arrived in assembly areas they were attached to XVIII Corps (Airborne) and committed to action in the LA GLEIZE - STAVELOT sector on 20 December.

#### TASK FORCE LOVELADY

- 2nd Bn., 33rd Armored Regiment
- B Co., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.
- Platoon Rcn. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.
- Platoon B Co., 23rd Armd. Engineer Bn.

was attached to the 30th Infantry Division on 20 December, and was given another infantry company (E Co., 120th Infantry). The job assigned this task force was to move south from PONT DE LORRAIN which had been reached without making contact, and establish a road block on the LA GLEIZE - STAVELOT road east of La GLEIZE at main road junction and to assist in the capture of STAVELOT, where the 30th Division was already fighting.

As the Task Force moved south they met an enemy convoy of several ammunition trucks, two 150 mm. towed guns and a towed 75 mm. field piece at the junction of their route with the La GLEIZE - STAVELOT highway. This convoy was destroyed and a block was established as ordered. The Task Force then continued south and reached a road junction near TROI PONTS, where they intended to turn east toward MALMEDY. Here they met enemy anti-tank fire and lost the four leading

tanks of the column. Since the enemy seemed to be concentrated in some strength between this point and MALMEDY, Lovelady set up another road block here and left Major Stallings, his executive officer in charge of this critical position. For support, another block was set up further to the north of GRAND COO. These three road blocks employed all of the infantry of the Task Force except the attached E Company, 120th.

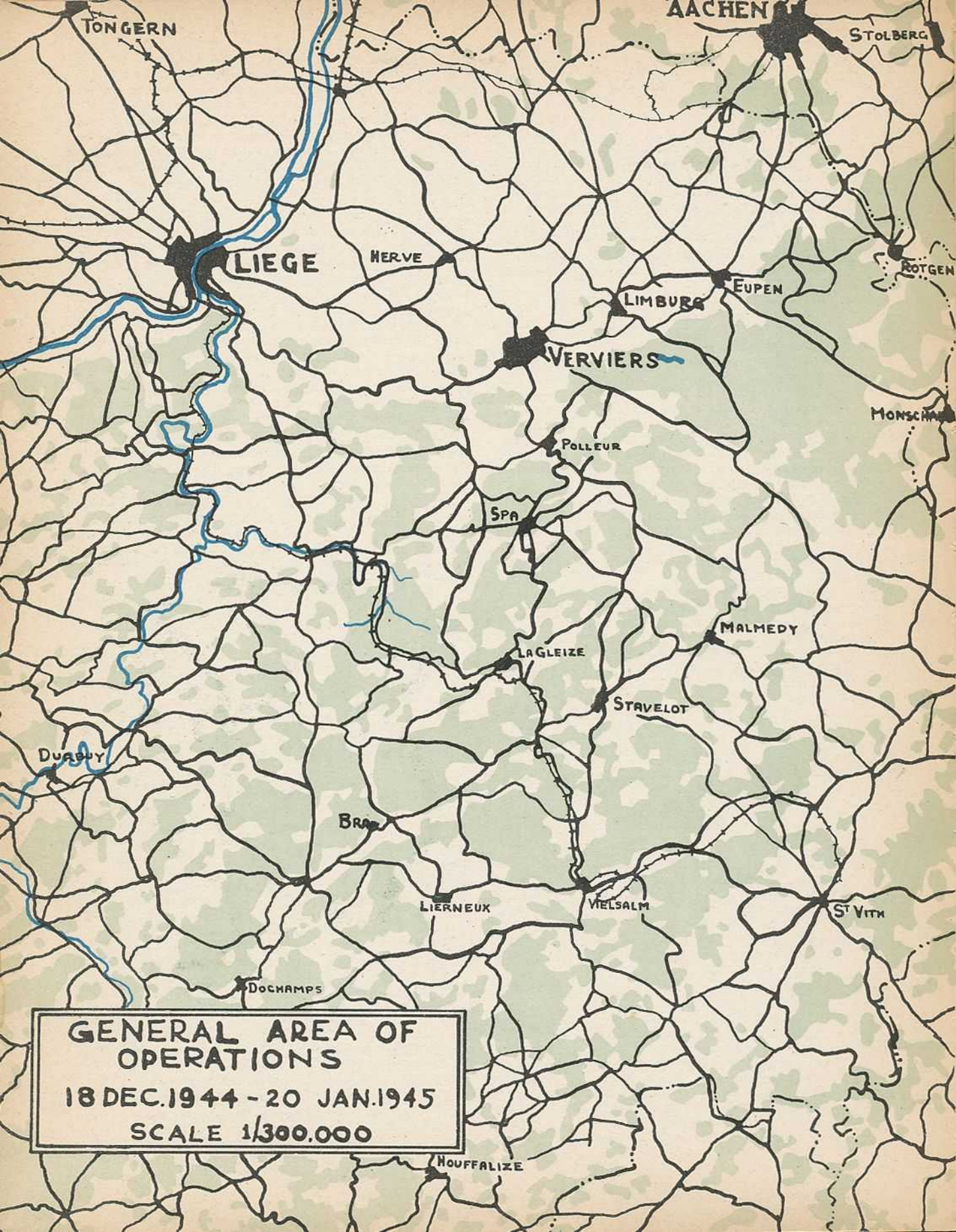
When the situation had developed to this stage, Lovelady was ordered to move east from PETIT COO, across the high ground, to PARFONDROY and cut off the road south of PARFONDROY at its junction with the La GLEIZE - STAVELOT highway. (All these operations were parts of a general attack bent on retaking STAVELOT and establishing a strong defensive line running generally East and West just South of STAVELOT.) On the morning of 20 December Task Force "Lovelady" moved out in the attack toward PARFONDROY following the secondary road across the hill from PETIT COO. A heavy ground fog covered this movement, and the town was reached without incident. It was here that Colonel Lovelady's forces found evidence of German atrocities against civilians. They



discovered the bodies of several murdered women, children and old people in some of the buildings.

On 21 December, the Task Force held its positions while the STER-PARFONDROY area was consolidated. Patrols from Stallings's road block found that the enemy occupied the high ground to his Northeast. When Lovelady was ordered on the next day to take this hill he found that he could not use the road on which he





**GENERAL AREA OF  
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had entered PARFONDROY since it was cut by the enemy. To further complicate the situation the enemy had attacked from the woods of PETITE COO, overrun the Battalion aid station and cut the road leading south to Stalling's force.

On 23 December Lovelady had got his forces back to GRAND COO in position to attack south, clear the enemy from the high ground and open the road to Stallings. The attack started that day but only reached PETIT COO. Then another infantry company was attached to the task force from the 30th Division, and, on 24 December the enemy position was overcome. Late that afternoon the Task Force was relieved in position and reverted to control of Combat Command "B", assembling, again, near SPA.

Meanwhile, the other task force of Combat Command "B", Task Force "McGeorge" was fighting just to the West. On the morning of 20 December, Task Force "McGeorge" attacked South from La REID in two columns. General Boudinot had assigned these columns (McGeorge on the East and Jordan on the West) the joint mission of passing through elements of the 30th Division at COUR and CHEFNA and clearing the road from STOU MONT to La GLEIZE. Jordan was to take STOU MONT then turn east and join McGeorge in La GLEIZE. The fighting strength of each column consisted of a company of tanks and a company of Armored Infantry, reinforced.

Jordan's column on 20 December, met no opposition until they were just North of STOU MONT where enemy tanks and anti-tank guns stopped their advance. On the next day Jordan's force was attached to the 119th Infantry Regiment (30th Division) and the attack on

STOU MONT was resumed (Jordan had withdrawn slightly during the night) but little progress was made until 22 December when a coordinated attack by a Battalion of the 119th, plus Company F, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment supported by the tanks of Task Force "Jordan" was launched following a heavy artillery preparation by the 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalion. This attack took both STOU MONT and the adjoining town of ROUAT.

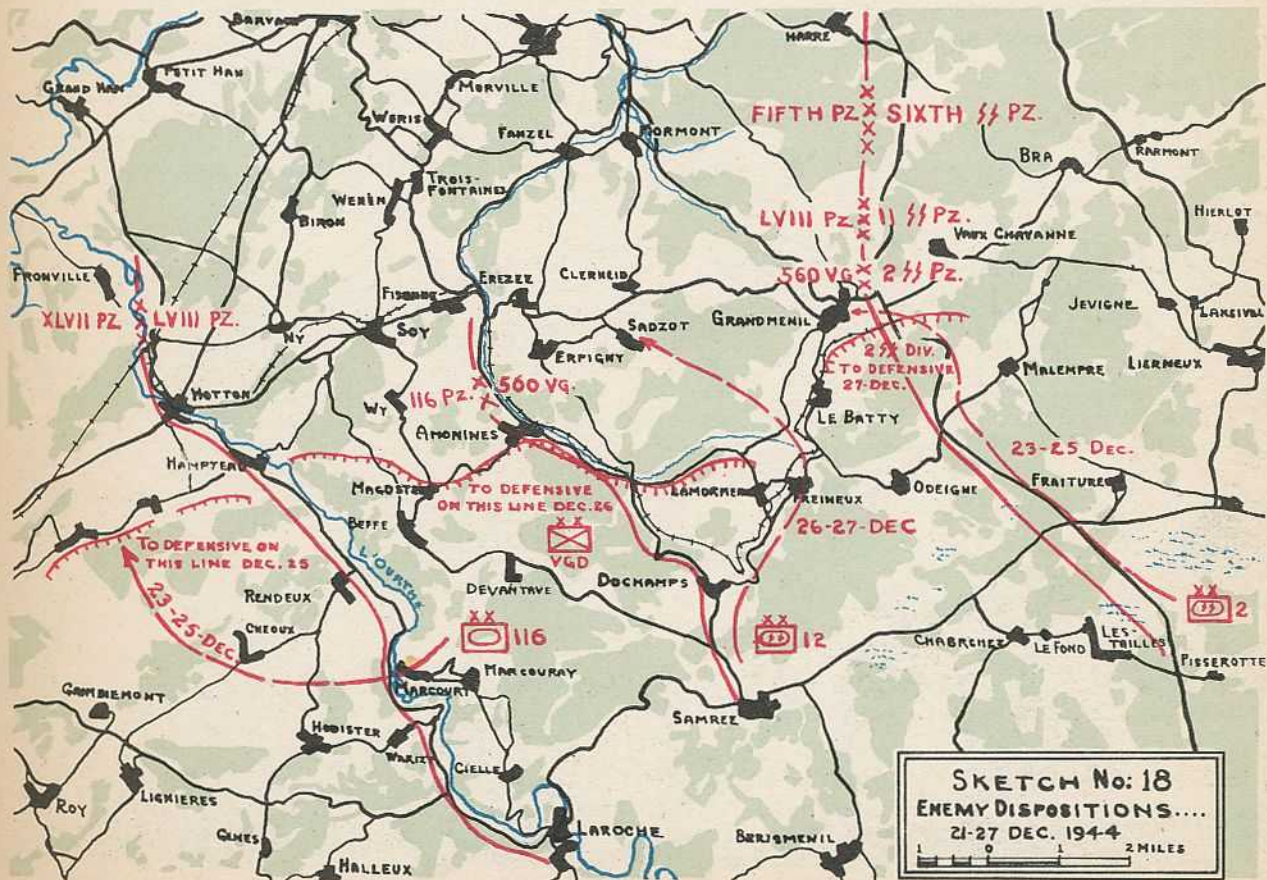
McGeorge was having trouble trying to get into La GLEIZE. He was stopped by tanks and anti-tank fire on his main route and on all the routes that he attempted to use to bypass the opposition, but he continued to press his attack.

On 24 December Jordan's force had reached a point near the western edge of La GLEIZE, having continued the attack to the east from STOU MONT. From here a battalion of the 119th Infantry Regiment launched a coordinated attack on the town with Jordan's tanks and assault gun platoon supporting the three infantry companies while the fourth infantry company moved in an envelopment to the north. McGeorge continued his attack from the North and East.

Jordan's troops forced the town, capturing or destroying twenty-six enemy tanks, four self-propelled guns and taking 150 prisoners. The battalion of the 119th took an additional 300 prisoners.

On 25 December, Task Force McGeorge assembled with the remainder of Combat Command "B" near SPA.

Back in the STOLBERG area, the 3rd Armored Division shorn of about two-thirds of its combat strength was attached to XVIII Airborne Corps at 1145 on 19





December and was ordered to move to the vicinity of HOTTON - LE GRAND PRE.

At 1145 on 20 December all elements had closed in this area after an all night march through STOLBERG, AACHEN, VERVIERS, AYWAILLE, BARVAUX, HOTTON.

Upon arrival, orders were issued to attack South and Southeast from the vicinity of HOTTON - LE GRAND PRE, destroy all enemy in the zone and secure the road from MANHAY to HOUFFALIZE. The attack was made by the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance (reinforced) in three columns. The left column followed the MANHAY-HOUFFALIZE road. The right column followed a secondary road parallel to the OURTHE River on the East of this river and the center column went through EREZEE, AMONINES, DOCHAMPS, SAMREE, etc.

TROOPS

LEFT COLUMN, LT. COL. KANE

- Hq. 1st Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt.
- (One Co. M-4's)
- D Co., 83rd Rcn. Bn.
- A Battery, 54th FA Bn.
- AA Sect. from 486th AA (AW) Bn.
- 3rd Plat. Co. C, 83rd Rcn. Bn.
- 1 Sq. Engr. Rcn. Plat., 23rd Engr.

RIGHT COLUMN, LT. COL. HOGAN

- Hq. 3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.
- A Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.
- A Co., 83rd Rcn. Bn.
- 1st Plat. Co. C, 83rd Rcn. Bn.
- A Battery, 54 FA Bn.

CENTER COLUMN, LT. COL. ORR

- B Co., 83rd Rcn. Battalion
- 2nd Plat. Co. C, 83rd Rcn. Bn.
- 1 Co. M4's from 3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.
- B Battery, 54th FA Bn.

Section of 486th AAA Bn.

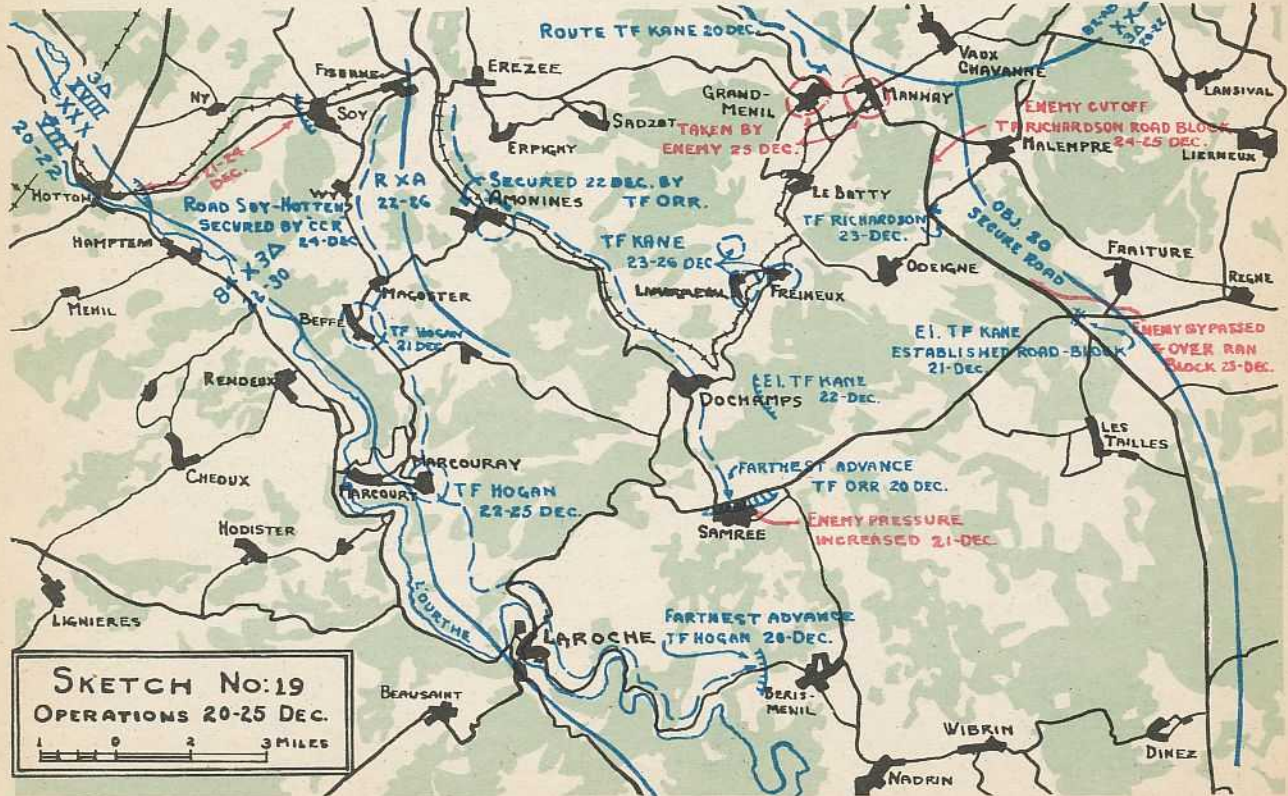
The attack was launched at 1220 on 20 December and advanced initially against no resistance. As the center column approached SAMREE, they met heavy artillery and encountered resistance of infantry supported by tanks. But they succeeded in getting a patrol north of SAMREE and down to the objective line. This patrol set up a block on the La ROCHE - VIELSALM road just East of where it crosses the MANHAY-HOUFFALIZE highway. The vicinity of this road junction was the scene of much hard fighting that followed for the next month. The right column (Hogan) reached a point near the OURTHE River 3-1/2 kilometers due south of SAMREE, where it was ordered to coil for the night. The left column reached the MANHAY-HOUFFALIZE road just west of MALEMPRE and was ordered to establish contact with the 82nd Airborne Division at HEBRONVAL. Division Reserve following the center task force sent the 1st Battalion of the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment, less one company, to reinforce Orr and stabilize the situation at SAMREE.

The 83rd Armored Field Artillery battalion was attached to 3rd Armored Division at 1100 on 20 December.

So far, so good. The attack to the Southeast by the Spearhead's relatively light forces may be called, with some reason, a bold bluff. How well this move succeeded in screening the assembly and deployment of VII Corps, may be gauged by the story of the actions that followed.

## Enemy Order of Battle

For a clearer picture of the part played by the 3rd Armored Division in stopping the German Ardennes offensive, it is well to consider the actions of those elements of the enemy force which were met, in whole





or in part, by the 3rd Armored from 20 December to the time when the German offensive power was spent, about the end of December. The following account of enemy intentions and movements is based entirely on intelligence information available at Division level. It may not agree in detail with more precise interpretations which will no doubt be made as more and more material is collected, but it will serve to outline the enemy's operations with sufficient clarity for the purpose of this account. It is interesting, moreover, to take a "Back-sight" on just what was known about the enemy while the battle was in progress.

Two Panzer Armies were, by 20 December 1944, attacking West and Northwest with the probable objective of enveloping the American and British forces in Belgium, Holland and Northwestern Germany. On the left of the offensive, the Fifth Panzer Army consisting of XLVII and LVIII Panzer Corps was apparently directing its efforts to secure a bridgehead across the MEUSE River and to drive on toward ANTWERP. On the right, the Sixth SS Panzer Army, made up of the I and II SS Panzer Corps was thought to be directing its main effort toward LIEGE with a possible further objective of AACHEN.

The boundary between these two armies during this period of action was in the vicinity of the highway running from HOUFFALIZE, via crossroads 576853, to MANHAY and north of AYWAILLE.

In the Fifth Panzer Army, the LVIII Panzer Corps was on the right flank. It operated west of the HOUFFALIZE-MANHAY highway and north from the vicinity of SAMREE and La ROCHE. Two of its divisions, the 116th Panzer and the 560th Volksgrenadier were attacking in the HOTTON GRANDMENIL sector.

In the Sixth Panzer Army, the II SS Panzer Corps was operating on the left (western) flank adjoining the HOUFFALIZE-MANHAY highway. However, its main effort at the beginning of these ten days were in the direction of VIELSALM, and as yet none of its divisions were north of the crossroads 576853 along the boundary route.

Composition of the LVIII Panzer Corps: 116 Panzer, 560 Volksgrenadier Division, 62 Volksgrenadier Division, II SS Panzer Corps: 2nd SS Panzer Division, 9th SS Panzer Division.

When the 3rd Armored attacked on 20 December in the sector HOTTON-MANHAY, they were opposed by the 116th Panzer Division on the West and the 560th Volksgrenadier on the East which were likewise attacking.

After the 116th failed to seize HOTTON (21-23 December) and penetrate farther to the Northwest, elements of the 560th were used to bolster the attack. This latter unit had been fighting on the East of the 116th in the area between DOCHAMPS and the boundary highway. Beginning on 23 December it was shifted farther west assisting and then relieving the 116th, which then attacked on the west side of the OURTHE River and MARCHE. On the same date the pivotal crossroad 576753 was attacked and bypassed by elements of the 2nd SS Panzer Division. The boundary highway had now become the main axis of advance for the II SS Panzer Corps, and, in successive attacks (23-25 Dec.), the 2nd SS Panzer Division reached MANHAY and GRANDMENIL. However, by the following day, its efforts were spent and American troops reoccupied first GRANDMENIL and then MANHAY. Likewise, on 26 December the 560th was organized into two Combat Commands with the mission of holding at all costs on the west of the 2nd SS Panzer between the OURTHE and AISNE Rivers.

The consolidation of the 2nd SS Panzer Division position south of MANHAY and GRANDMENIL and the organization of the 560th south of HOTTON and SOY left a gap between the two armies. Into this gap, with an axis of advance SAMREE-DOCHAMPS, thence north through the BOIS DU PAYS, the 12 SS Panzer Division was committed on the night of 27-28 December. The immediate objective of this Division was to cut the HOTTON-GRANDMENIL road and seize the town of GRANDMENIL. This may have been an effort to shake loose the defense in the GRANDMENIL-MANHAY sector in order to provide a penetration through which the SS Panzer Army could proceed toward LIEGE. The attack failed to accomplish its immediate objective, and any plans for more extensive operations were therefore abandoned.

By 30 December, the American forces had established a secure line of defense south of the HOTTON-MANHAY road. No further major effort was made to break through this sector.

Within their sector, the 3rd Armored Division engaged four German divisions. Captured documents, prisoner interrogation, and intelligence reports from adjacent and higher headquarters give us considerable detailed information about these divisions.

The 116th Panzer Division had the apparent mission of reaching the MEUSE and striking for Antwerp. Its tanks and infantry worked together in Combat Commands. On 20-21 December it struck at SAMREE, and then drove north to DOCHAMPS. Here the bulk of its leading elements turned west to DEVANTAVE, then north to BEFFE, TRINAL, MELINES and the HOTTON-SOY highway. On the day and night of 20 December, elements of the 116th contacted Task Force "Orr" near SAMREE and north of DOCHAMPS. Other elements first bypassed and then contacted Task Force "Hogan" west of DEVANTAVE and in the vicinity of BEFFE.

The strength, on 20 December, was about three-fourths its full strength (125) in tanks and a proportional number of other vehicles. Personnel was a little more complete. Their zone on 21 December was the SAMREE-DOCHAMPS-AMONINES road inclusive to the OURTHE River on the West.

It is believed that elements of the 560th Volksgrenadier Division worked with the 116th to hold DOCHAMPS against Task Force "Orr" and Task Force "Kane" 21-23 December, while other elements held strong positions at BEFFE and fought against Task Force "Hogan" at MARCOURAY. Combat Command "Bayeux": Elements of the 16th Panzer Regiment and the 60th and 156th Panzergrenadier Regiments reached TRINAL on 21 December, cut the HOTTON-SOY road and attacked HOTTON, holding a road block at a road junction just west of SOY. This roadblock held against Combat Command "R" (3rd Armored Division) while the rest of the German Combat Command attempted to take HOTTON. Probably operating under the general instructions to bypass all possible resistance, they attempted to bypass Combat Command "R" at SOY, but were apparently unwilling to proceed until HOTTON and the river crossing there were secured.

The other Combat Command held DOCHAMPS from 21 to 23 December and fought Task Force "Orr" to take AMONINES, but failed.

Losses in the 116th began to mount up, and, on 23 December they apparently gave up the idea of seizing HOTTON and penetrating the American lines in that vicinity.

The 560th Volksgrenadier Division operated on 20 December in the sector SAMREE-DOCHAMPS road, east to the HOUFFALIZE-MANHAY highway.



The 560th began to relieve the 116th on 23 December. The 116th then crossed the OURTHE somewhere south of HOTTON and went into position south of HAMPTEAU, MENIL and perhaps MARENNE. On 24-25 this movement was completed, and for the next ten-day period the 116th faced elements of the American 84th Infantry Division and 2nd Armored Division and made no progress. Infantry companies were down to forty to fifty men and tank losses were proportional.

On 22 December a regiment supported by tanks (probably from 116th Panzer Division) attacked Task Force "Orr" in DOCHAMPS. This was probably the 1128th, since the 1129th was in WY in zone of the 116th Panzer, and the 1130th replaced Combat Command "Bayeux" astride the HOTTON-SOY road.

2nd and 3rd Battalions, Headquarters Company, and the anti-tank company of the 116th Panzer were attached to 1130th at time of relief. The bazooka teams of the anti-tank company were split up among the infantry companies of the 1130th Infantry Regiment. Company strengths were about 70 men.

The general plan appeared to be for the 560th to attack in conjunction with the 2nd SS Panzer Division on the East, take AMONINES, and cut the HOTTON-MANHAY road near SOY, but they lost their grip on the HOTTON-SOY road on 25 December and failed in the AMONINESS attack against Task Force "Orr" after which they abandoned the offensive on 26 December and reorganized on a defensive line: WERPIN, TRINAL, MAGOSTER, to the AISNE River south of AMONINES, thence East along the valley towards road junction (500869).

The last offensive action in this sector was a local attack against 1st Battalion, 289th Infantry Regiment (American) which gained nothing. Losses had been heavy.

#### THE 2nd SS PANZER DIVISION "DAS REICH".

Mission: Apparently, with the 6th SS Panzer Army and the LVIII Corps of the Fifth Panzer Army halted and contained strongly, it was decided to commit the 2nd SS Panzer Division and send it up the highway from HOUFFALIZE, through MANHAY, WERBOMONT and AYWAILLE toward LIEGE. Army boundaries were shifted to give the attacking division the road net. The strength of American forces in this sector was probably miscalculated.

Elements of the 2nd SS Panzer Division attacked the road block at crossroads (576853) on 22 December, bypassed and overran this block on 23 December and took ODEIGNE. They pushed on up the highway and attacked Task Force "Richardson's" road block at BELLE HAIE, and attacked FREINEUX 23-24 December.

On 24-25 December a Battalion of infantry from the 355th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and 15-20 tanks seized MANHAY and GRANDMENIL. Another column of infantry and tanks attacked at 1130 on 25 December to secure OSTER and the road net, but American Air Support and Artillery defeated this push. Elements of the 4th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment pushed north of MANHAY on 25 December and encountered Combat Command "B", 7th Armored Division, and were stopped.

A force of thirteen tanks and an unknown number of infantry tried to push north from GRANDMENIL, but on 26 December, the whole force was driven out of the town completely. Tank losses were heavy. Ten were lost between MANHAY and GRANDMENIL alone. The infantry surrendered in large numbers. (One fourth were Hungarians, Italians, or Slovaks). After MANHAY was retaken by the American 7th Armored Division on 27 December the bulk of 2nd SS went on the defensive in the vicinity of GRANDMENIL-MANHAY. The 3rd SS

Panzer Grenadier Regiment was sent west to DOCHAMPS on 27 December to furnish a combat group, for the newly arrived 12th SS Panzer Division on its west flank. The Sixth SS Panzer Army now took over more of the Fifth Panzer Army's sector, at least as far as the SAMREE-DOCHAMPS highway.

On 28 December 1st Battalion 2nd SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment attacked from TRINAL towards AMONINES, which was held by Task Force "Orr". Three tanks and five artillery pieces supported the attack. Heavy artillery concentrations broke up the attack and the Battalion suffered over two hundred casualties.

This attack, which was coordinated with the attack of the 12th SS Panzer Division to the East, was the last offensive action of the 2nd SS in this sector for the period.

#### THE 12th SS PANZER DIVISION "HITLER JUGEND"

On 26 or 27 December this Division moved into the center of the HOTTON-MANHAY sector in the vicinity of DOCHAMPS, between the 560 Volksgrenadier Division and 2nd SS Panzer Division. The apparent mission was to break the American defensive position in the vicinity of GRANDMENIL, and allow the attack to continue to the north. On the night of 27-28 December the 25th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment attacked north. The 1st and 2nd Battalions which penetrated the American lines through a gap, planned to capture the town of SADZOT and cut the East-West highway to the north thereof. In the fighting that followed (27-29 incl.) these two battalions were defeated, and suffered very high casualties. The 26th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment was not committed. (Probably as a result of the failure of the 25th to take their objective.) No further offensive action was undertaken by the 12th SS.

On 21 December, Combat Command "A" was reattached to the 3rd Armored and started to move into assembly areas near GRANDMENIL. The additional force was most welcome, since the enemy was applying heavy pressure throughout the Division zone. Late on the afternoon of 20 December the Division Command Post moved to EREZEE, leaving its Signal Company, Headquarters Company (except for necessary operating personnel) and Headquarters Company and E Company, 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion in HOTTON to follow the next morning. During the night, a force of enemy, later estimated to be an infantry company supported by seven tanks and a mortar platoon, moved northwest and occupied the high ground between SOY and HOTTON overlooking HOTTON. At about 0730 on 21 December this force fired a brief mortar preparation on HOTTON and started to move into the town with four tanks followed by a few foot troops. Available for defense were only machine guns, bazookas and one M-4 tank. The enemy tanks got into town all right, and destroyed six engineer bridge trucks and several lighter vehicles, but two were knocked out, and the crew abandoned a third undamaged. By noon the town was quiet.

Combat Command "R" was ordered to move his force via SOY to HOTTON to repulse enemy action there but was unable to get through a German roadblock just west of SOY. A force of four medium tanks and three light tanks accompanied by about twenty infantrymen succeeded in reaching HOTTON by bypassing the SOY roadblock to the north. Under the command of Major Fickesson, executive officer, 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion, a defense was set up in HOTTON, and, except for patrol activity, there was no further action at HOTTON that night.

The main force of Combat Command "R" remained engaged at the SOY roadblock for the rest of the period.



Task Force "Hogan" moved out at 0800 on 20 December to seize the crossings of the OURTHE between GOUFY and HOUFFALIZE and to contact friendly elements on his right. He met strong enemy elements and engaged tanks and infantry supported by heavy artillery and mortar fire and was unable to gain his objectives. Due to the fact that he was in danger of being surrounded, he was ordered to withdraw north of BEFFE.

Over on the left, Kane had made the contact with the 82nd Airborne at HEBRONVAL, and beat off a determined attack by tanks and infantry at this road block.

Orr, in the center, reinforced by 1st Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment (-1 company), continued his attack on SAMREE against increased enemy pressure. Enemy tanks and infantry with supporting weapons countered in force, and Orr was forced to withdraw north about a kilometer.

The 3rd Armored was further reinforced by the attachment of the 1st battalion of the 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment on 22 December, also the 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed).

Very early (0130) on the morning of 22 December, Combat Command "A" closed into assembly areas astride the MANHAY WERBEMONT road.

#### TASK FORCE "DOAN"

32nd Arm. Regt. (-1st & 3rd Bn's)  
3rd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (-Co I)  
1st Plat. Co. A, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
1st Plat. Rcn. Co., 32nd Armd. Regt.  
67th FA Bn.

was ordered to move to the main highway junction seven kilometers north of MARCHE; cut the MARCHE-BASTOGNE road and gain the line SAINT HUBERT-LA ROCHE and establish road blocks at intersections in this area. Doan cut this road at HARGIMONT and about 5 kilometers east thereof by 1615. Combat Command "A" also furnished a tank company and an infantry company from Task Force "Richardson" to reinforce Combat Command "R" in the SOY area.

In BEFFE, Hogan was receiving strong attacks from both the north and Southeast. He was very short of gasoline, and cut off from supplies. After beating off determined attacks all day, Hogan fought his way to MARCOURAY, which was on high ground and generally better suited to the defense, where he secured the town and set up an all-round defense. Arrangements were made to drop supplies to him by air the following day.

Kane continued to defend his road blocks south of MANHAY and pressed his attack on DOCHAMPS where the enemy defended strongly with artillery, mortars and small-arms fire. He reached a position about one thousand yards north of the town and was stopped.

Task Force Orr received reinforcements consisting of one tank platoon and one infantry platoon from Combat Command "A" and continued to advance southwest. He repelled a strong counterattack, and secured AMONINES.

In HOTTON, elements of Combat Command "R" plus Division Headquarters Company, Signal Company and Battalion Headquarters Co. 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion received an infantry attack at about 2230. The attacking force, according to a prisoner taken, was two companies. Some penetration was made, but the town has held.

On 23 December several changes in troop lists were made. The 3rd Armored reverted to control of VII Corps. The 290th Regimental Combat Team of the 75th Infantry Division was attached (One battalion moved into the Division area on the night of 23-24-remainder

followed at first light.) The 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion and the 188th Field Artillery (155 mm Howitzer Towed) were attached. Task Force "Doan" was attached to the 84th Infantry Division.

Combat Command "R" continued with its mission of clearing the SOY-HOTTON road. One Company, 1st Battalion, 517 Parachute Infantry Regiment, plus one platoon of medium tanks was sent from SOY northwest through NY then south into HOTTON arriving about 0400. The mission of this force was to attack east from HOTTON toward SOY and meet the force attacking west from SOY. Their presence in HOTTON relieved the pressure on HOTTON, but their attack met very stubborn resistance just east of the town and, at the end of the period, had not advanced past the edge of town. The force attacking West also met heavy resistance, it advanced very slowly South of the road but was pinned down North of the road.

Kane continued to attack DOCHAMPS but enemy resistance stiffened. His attack was made from North to South up a smooth open hillside. The defending force was equal to his own. Logically enough, the attack failed. Over to the East, his road block on the highway was heavily attacked by infantry and tanks which succeeded in cutting the road between the block and MANHAY. Six medium tanks and one company from the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion were sent from Task Force "Richardson" to restore the block, and Richardson took over the sector from Kane. The block was further attacked and at 1958, was overrun. Richardson succeeded in establishing and holding a block three kilometers further North in a defile at BELLE HAIE.

Task Force "Hogan" remained surrounded in MARCOURAY. C-47's attempted to drop supplies to him, but missed.

Task Force "Doan's" blocks received heavy pressure throughout the day, but they all held firmly.

Task Force "Orr" continued to attack Southwest, he was engaged throughout the period, and succeeded in securing the town of AMONINES.

With the attachment of the 289th Regimental Combat Team (75th Division) the 730th Field Artillery Battalion and two companies of the 87th Chemical Battalion (4.2 Mortar) on 24 December, and the return of Combat Command "B" on Christmas day, General Rose had under his command a force approaching Corps strength. In addition to the organic elements of the Division there were two complete Regimental Combat Teams, two battalions of parachute infantry, four battalions of artillery, two tank destroyer battalions and two companies of 4.2 mortars. Division Artillery controlled nine battalions of artillery.

On 24 December the North flank of the German salient was stabilized along most of the line. However, the best intelligence information available indicated that the enemy was regrouping and massing preparatory to continuing his attack to the North with at least part of his main effort directed at the 3rd Armored Division sector. Accordingly, the Commanding General, VII Corps ordered the establishment of a strong defensive line (See Sketch No. 20) tying in firmly with the 7th Armored Division (XVIII Corps) near GRANDMENIL on the East and with the 84th Infantry Division in the vicinity of MELREUX on the West flank.

To establish this line, it was necessary to attack South in the Combat Command "R" sector and withdraw Richardson's roadblock, on the left, narrowing the sector from MANHAY to GRANDMENIL. The withdrawal operation was to be conducted after dark in coordination with the 7th Armored Division. Combat Command "A" now controlled the entire left sector and Combat Command



"R", the right.

The 290th Regimental Combat Team attacked in the zone of Combat Command "R" to secure the main line of resistance, already described, at 2330 and made good progress against light resistance. Other elements of Combat Command "R" cleared the SOY-HOTTON road.

Task Force "Hogan" remained cut off. Air supplies dropped, missed him again.

At 2230 elements of Combat Command "B", 7th Armored Division started moving back to the proposed defensive line in the vicinity of MANHAY, and a contact point, at the railroad station in the South edge of GRANDMENIL was agreed on. Richardson was to withdraw his roadblock forces beginning at about 2330 and act as the contacting element.

At about the same time 7th Armored Division elements started moving back through MANHAY, eight enemy tanks and some infantry moved Northeast out of ODEIGNE, and got behind Richardson's road block. These tanks moved rapidly on MANHAY, which was then full of traffic and not very strongly defended, and soon got into the town and opened fire on several houses and vehicles.

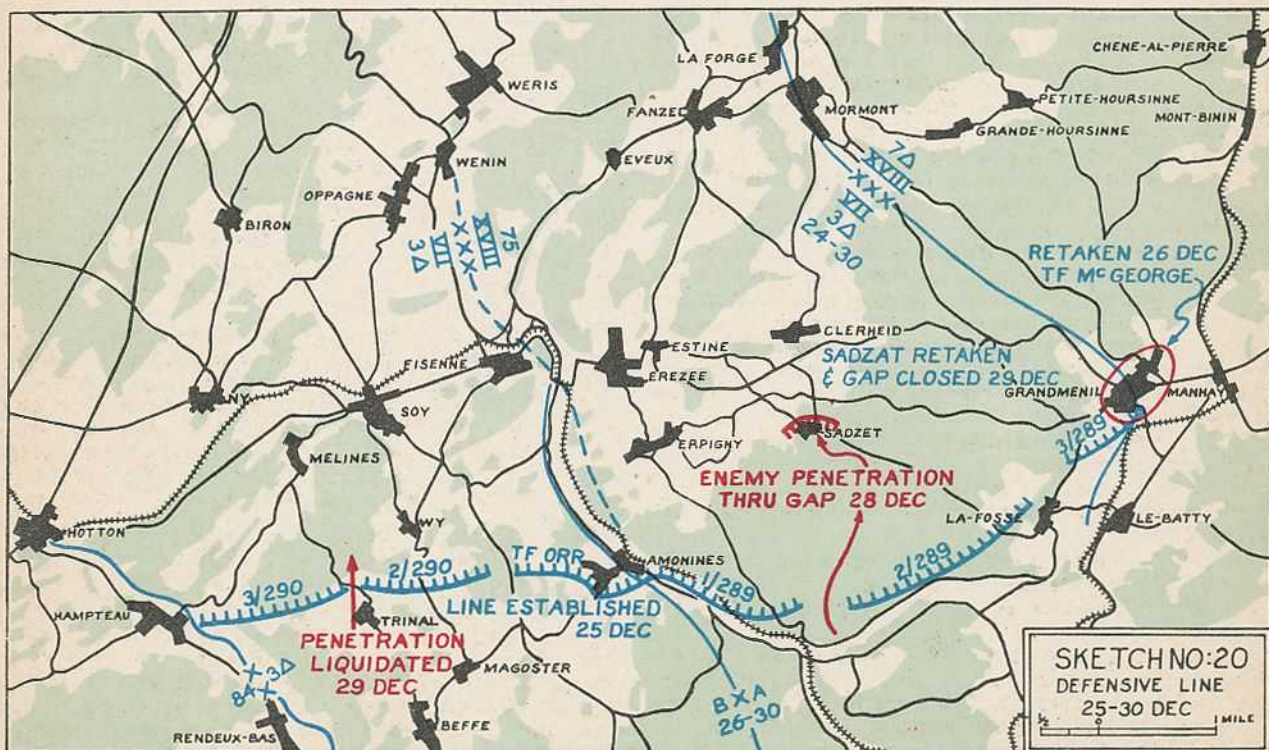
As soon as Richardson saw that he would not be able to defend MANHAY successfully with his headquarters personnel and the light tank platoon attached, he issued orders to Major Brewster at the roadblock to withdraw to the Northeast through MALEMPRE and rejoin him. He then moved his headquarters to GRANDMENIL, where Task Force "Kane" had a headquarters, in order to warn Kane and assist in stopping enemy tanks already moving from MANHAY toward GRANDMENIL. Meanwhile, Brewster, in attempting to withdraw through MALEMPRE, met tank and small arms fire in the town and was fired on from the rear. Two of his four tanks were hit and destroyed. He was forced to abandon and destroy his remaining vehicles and with-

draw his troops (two platoons, H Company, 32nd Armored Regiment) one company, 509th Parachute Infantry and one company, 75th Infantry Division on foot. The majority of this force succeeded in fighting through to friendly lines. Enemy tanks and infantry occupied MANHAY and GRANDMENIL by 0330 on Christmas morning.

On Christmas Day Combat Command "B" reverted to division control and assembled in the Division area, except for Task Force "McGeorge" which moved to the Combat Command "A" sector.

In the morning Combat Command "A" attacked to secure the objective line (proposed MLR), and Task Force McGeorge, (2nd Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment less Company E; F & I Companies, 33rd Armored Regiment; Company A, 33rd Armored Regiment; 2nd Platoon, D Company, 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion) attacked with a tank and an infantry company to retake GRANDMENIL and restore road blocks to the east thereof. Tank, anti-tank and heavy weapons fire from the town stopped McGeorge's advance initially. The remainder of the force was committed with infantry leading. Eventually, on 26 December, the 3rd Battalion, 289th Infantry Regiment (75th Division) was also committed to this attack and the town was secured at 1800. The Combat Command objective line was reported taken by the 289th Infantry Regiment.

Combat Command "B" sent a tank company and an infantry company to secure the Division right flank by occupying the high ground and crossroad, in the vicinity of MELREUX. This objective was secured against little opposition and a firm link was established with the 84th Infantry Division. Combat Command "R" reached its objective line after overcoming small arms and artillery fire which necessitated the commitment of 1st Battalion, 517th Parachute Infantry to assist the 290th Infantry Regiment.





In MARCOURAY Hogan prepared to destroy his equipment and infiltrate back to friendly lines after dark.

Attempts had been made by the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion whose battery C was with Task Force "Hogan", to fire medical supplies into MARCOURAY in smoke shells; but the supplies were damaged beyond use.

Two attempts to supply the surrounded Task Force by air failed. After long and tedious preparations involving complicated arrangements through G-4 channels and dissemination of instructions from Army to Task Force, the planes carrying the supplies missed the targets.

A German officer had visited Hogan at his Command Post and demanded surrender, threatening the surrounded Task Force with attack by three divisions and two Corps of Artillery. Hogan refused this ultimatum, and continued to defend his position. "I figured it would take at least a Regiment to kick us out, and apparently they (the enemy) didn't consider it worthwhile," he said later.

Meanwhile the troops of Task Force "Hogan" beat back many enemy patrols, taking a few prisoners. They were in position to observe the enemy's movements and direct artillery fire on his columns and on his installations.

Casualties suffered in MARCOURAY were relatively light but the situation looked almost hopeless when the Division Commander ordered Task Force "Hogan" to destroy all equipment in place and return on foot to the American lines.

All equipment had to be destroyed without burning or demolition to avoid attracting attention. Motors were run without oil and with sugar added to the gasoline. Sand and dirt was put into transmissions and other moving parts. Weapons were rendered useless by destroying and burying certain parts. When this was finished about dark, the Task Force started north in groups of twenty at twenty minute intervals with only individual arms and such personal equipment as they felt able to carry over the ten miles of wooded, snow-covered mountains. The wounded had to be left behind. A medical officer, a dental officer, and several aid men volunteered to stay with them. The prisoners were guarded by one of the less seriously wounded.

By noon of the following day all but a few of the four hundred had returned safely and reequipping was under way.

In a letter of commendation to Lt. Col. Hogan, Major General Collins, C. G. VII Corps said, in part, "Acting with the characteristic spirit of the 3rd Armored Division, Task Force "Hogan" had pushed out in front . . . ., the entire VII Corps was thrilled with your refusal (to surrender) and with your continued fight which contained the German forces and prevented their joining in the battle farther north.

". . . . Your indomitable courage and leadership not only assisted in checking the German advance to the north, but resulted in saving some four hundred men from capture. Equipment can always be replaced, but not such men."

On 26 December Task Force "Kane" was withdrawn from their positions South of the main line of Resistance of Combat Command "A", under heavy fog cover along trails thru SADZOT.

The Division front then seemed pretty solid except for the left flank where contact had not been made with the 7th Armored Division. There were four enemy tanks in dug-in positions on the high ground about one half kilometer due north of the road junction at GRANDMENIL still causing considerable trouble. Contact had to be

made by patrol at the GRANDMENIL road junction.

Combat Command "B" took over Combat Command "R" sector on the 27th December. The Division front was now held by the 290th Regimental Combat Team on the right and the 289th Regimental Combat Team in the Combat Command "A" sector in the left. The defenses were improved and some elements of the 3rd Armored conducted what maintenance and rehabilitation was possible in assembly areas near the front lines.

There was only one action of note on the 3rd Armored Division front on 28 December. It started soon after midnight on 27 December and developed into a somewhat confused battle in and around SADZOT in Combat Command "A"'s sector. The troops refer to this action as "The Sad Sack Affair". It is discussed at some length here because it was typical of many of the confused actions that, together, make up the Ardennes campaign.

By the night of 27 December the defensive line in Combat Command "A"'s sector was established by the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 289th Infantry Regiment (75th Division) with the 1st Battalion on the right (west). The exact position of the 1st Battalion was not determined. Its right flank was tied in with Task Force Orr near AMONINES. Its left flank was reported to be fifteen hundred yards to the west of the contact point with patrols on the point (this patrol was probably eight hundred yards farther to the west). The 2nd Battalion was securely established along a line from the south edge of GRANDMENIL through La FOSSE and thence southeast along the edge of the BOIS DU PAYS to the point where contact should have been established with the 1st Bn. There existed, therefore, a gap between the 1st and 2nd Battalions as General Hickey knew. Due to a virtual breakdown of communication in forward elements and faulty location reports, and particularly to the nature of the information, the extent of the gap was not known.

At this time the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion was assembled west of EREZEE along the main highway and remnants of Task Force "Richardson" were between them and EREZEE.

At about 0200 the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion which was in position north of SADZOT with forward elements in the town reported that enemy were in SADZOT and in the woods south of the town. (The infantry battalions on the line had been sending in negative reports up to within an hour of this time.) In SADZOT, C Company, 87th Chemical Battalion a platoon of Tank Destroyers and forward elements of the 54th were resisting the attack.

General Hickey immediately sent the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion south with instructions to secure SADZOT, and protect the artillery positions. All three companies were committed in a short time. One held a reserve position north of the town while the other two companies executed a double envelopment to the east and west. Elements were sent into the town itself while the main forces planned to join to the south thereof.

Task Force "Richardson" reduced to 2 platoons of infantry, a medium tank company at one half strength, and a light tank company at full strength was alerted and moved to BRISCOL. They were told they might have to assist the 509th. Fighting continued that night, and, when the Commanding General of Combat Command "A" arrived in SADZOT about 0830 on the morning of 28 December he discovered that SADZOT had not been completely lost as previously reported. Elements of the 87th Chemical Battalion in the town resisted the enemy strongly and held several houses



in the north part of town. By 1100 the enveloping companies of the 509th joined south of the town.

The enemy force in this attack was identified as two companies of sixty to seventy men each from 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, 12th SS Panzer Division. Their losses, killed, wounded or captured were about ninety men.

There was still sniper fire in the woods as far north as the east-west road through GRANDMENIL, so strong patrols were ordered to comb the woods to determine enemy positions and strengths. The 509th and Task Force "Richardson" continued to protect the artillery positions by a defense line south of SADZOT.

Before the patrols finished their work the 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry (28th Division) was attached to Combat Command "A". The Commanding General planned to use them to close the gap between the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 289th, by moving them south and then east behind the 1st Battalion, 289th. This movement got under way after dark. The 1st Battalion, 289th reported that the tail of the column of 2nd Battalion, 112th passed its east flank at 2000 hours. At this time, communication failed and runners had to be used. The exact position of the 2nd Battalion, 112th was not determined that night, but it was known that they had not made contact with the 2nd Battalion, 289th. Patrols sent from the 2nd Battalion, 289th, to try to make the contact, found enemy on the ridge in the gap.

At about 0900 on 29 December the executive officer, 289th who was with 2nd Battalion 112th, reported that he could see friendly troops about four hundred yards away. He thought they were the 2nd Battalion, 289th, but it developed later that they were elements of the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion and Task Force "Richardson" south of SADZOT. The Battalion had missed its direction, and formed a line running from the east flank of the 1st Battalion, 289th, almost due north, to the defenses south of SADZOT. This fact was not known until much later. The Combat Command plan called for two leading companies to close the gap and the third company to face north toward SADZOT to resist any attempt of the enemy to break out of the trap. It was not known how many of the enemy had slipped in.

Thinking the gap was effectively closed, General Hickey ordered the 509th to attack southeast from SADZOT with the trail toward La FOSS as a right boundary.

This attack began early on the morning of 29 December supported by some light tanks of Richardson's force. They advanced about twelve hundred yards and met an enemy attack by the remaining two companies of the 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment supported by two 75 mm anti-tank guns.

Three of the light tanks were lost, but the paratroops soon overran the enemy guns and inflicted severe losses. The shock of this engagement was considerable and the 509th withdrew slightly about noon to reorganize. At this time A Company, 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion which was screening south of the highway from HAZEILLE to GRANDMENIL was committed to the attack. It was coordinated with the attack of the 509th and started about 1800. Very light resistance was met.

The same night, the 2nd Battalion, 289th, was issued some illuminating mortar ammunition and flares, and these were used to assist the 2nd Battalion, 112th, in correcting its position and making contact with the 2nd Battalion, 289th.

While these movements were in progress at 1600, the responsibility for the sector passed from the 3rd Armored Division to the 75th Infantry Division. General

Hickey, however remained in command, his forces being attached to 75th Division. On the morning of 30 December, the lines were well established and Combat Command "A" moved with the rest of the Division to assembly areas in the vicinity of OCQUIER and OUFFET.

From 30 December to 2 January, the 3rd Armored remained in assembly areas in the OCQUIER-OUFFET area and rested and refitted preparatory to the launching of a counter offensive aimed at liquidating the German's Ardennes salient.

## Allied Counter Offensive

3-19 January 1945

(See sketch No. 21)

On 3 January, VII Corps started a new offensive to the southeast with the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions abreast followed by the 84th and 83rd Infantry Divisions. The objective of this attack was to drive rapidly to the southeast, with the armor leading, seize HOUFFALIZE and its vital road net, and join up with the Third Army coming up from the south, thereby pocketing elements of the German Army, that had penetrated further to the west before they could be withdrawn.

In the zone of the 3rd Armored, the attack was made with Combat Commands "A" and "B" abreast. Combat Command "B" was on the right (west) of the zone. Each Combat Command moved out to the attack in two Task Force columns:

C COMD. "A" (BRIG. GEN. HICKEY)  
TF "DOAN"

Hq 32nd Armd. Regt.  
2nd Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt.  
3rd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
1st Plat., A Co., 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
1st Plat., A Co., 703rd TD Bn.  
54th Armd. FA Bn.

TF "RICHARDSON"  
3rd Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt.  
2nd Bn., 330th Inf. Regt.  
2nd Plat., A Co., 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
2nd Plat., A Co., 703rd TD Bn.  
67th Armd. FA Bn.

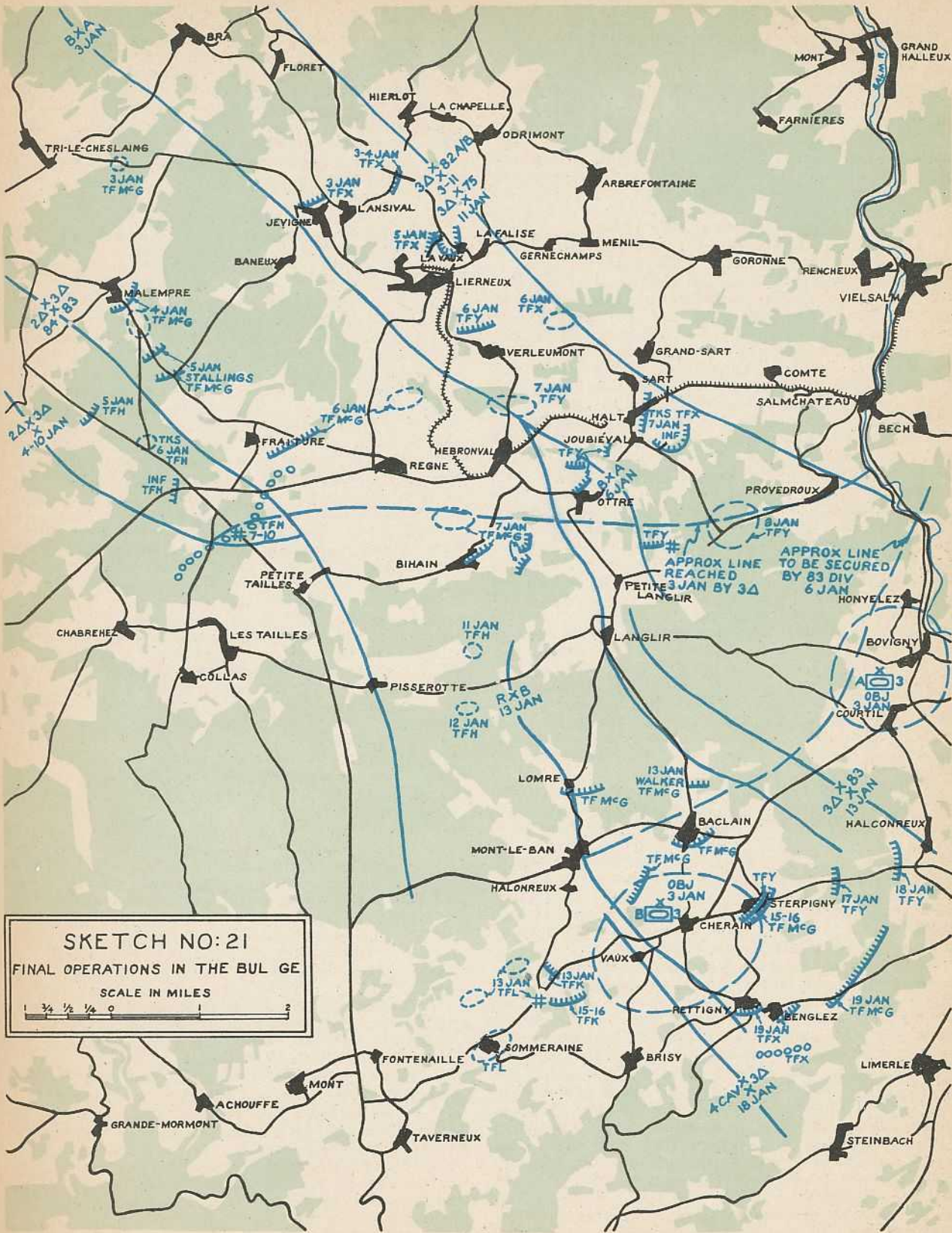
C COMD. "B" (BRIG. GEN. BOUDINOT)  
TF "McGeorge"

Hq 33rd Armd. Regt.  
1st Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt. (- 3rd Plat., Co A)  
2nd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
2nd Plat., Co. D, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
2nd Plat., Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.  
3rd Plat., Rcn. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
83rd Armd. FA Bn.

TF "LOVELADY"  
2nd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt. (- 3rd Plat., Co. B)  
3rd Bn., 330th Inf. Regt.  
1st Plat., Co. D, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
1st Plat., Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.  
2nd Plat., Rcn. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
1st Plat., AT Co., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
391st Armd. FA Bn.

In addition to the organic elements of the Division, the strength was bolstered by the attachment of the 330th Infantry Regiment (83rd Division) and three artillery battalions, the 83rd Armd., 991st (S.P. 155 Guns), and the 183rd (155 Hows.). Each Combat Command had two battalions of infantry and two battalions of artillery in direct support. If a penetration could be effected quickly it was felt that the forces were in sufficient





SKETCH NO: 21  
 FINAL OPERATIONS IN THE BUL GE  
 SCALE IN MILES  
 1 3/4 1/2 1/4 0 1 2



strength and depth to drive very rapidly to the objectives CHERAIN and BOUVIGNY bypassing enemy pockets of resistance and leaving them for the 83rd Division to mop up. That was how it had worked all the way from the SEINE to the SIEGFRIED LINE back in August and September. On this occasion, however, there were several factors that prevented a duplication of that performance. The weather conditions were such as to preclude effective close support by air, and affected adversely the use of our potentially overpowering artillery. To secure its maximum effect, this artillery must have good visibility and flying weather for its air observation planes. Snow and ice slowed vehicular movement to a marked degree, and in many cases rendered the columns roadbound. Cold weather, in itself, was an obstacle. It reduced efficiency somewhat by rendering ordinary physical tasks harder to perform. In addition, the German had been given time (30 December to 3 January) to establish a fair system of defense in depth, which he continued to improve as he began to sense the American intentions. The cumulative effect of these conditions resulted in the division of the offensive into three phases.

The first phase covers the period from 3 to 9 January inclusive. During this phase the Division fought its way slowly against strong rearguard action, reaching a line PROVEDROUX-OTTRE-REGNE-Cross Roads (576853).

The next phase runs from 9 to 13 January. During this period the Third Armored was passed through by the 83rd Infantry Division whose mission was to continue the attack to the southeast through the heavily wooded area that ran across the 3rd Armored zone in a band three to four miles deep beginning at the line reached by the 3rd Armored on 9 January. They were to establish a bridgehead on the south side of this woods on a line BOUVIGNY-BACLAIN-MONT LE BAN.

This line was not reached in its entirety when the 3rd Armored resumed the attack on 13 January, beginning the third phase of the action. This phase was characterized by many bitter battles of attrition against strong enemy positions centered around the little towns and villages, culminating in the seizing of BRISY and the high ground in that vicinity north of the OURTHE River, on 19 January. On 20-21 January, the division was relieved by elements of the 4th Cavalry Group and the 84th Infantry Division and moved to assembly areas in the BARVAUX-DURBY area for rest and rehabilitation.

The attack started on 3 January.

Minefields and road blocks covered by both small arms and anti-tank fire slowed the first day's advance. Task Force "Lovely" got into and secured MALEMPRE after moderate fighting. Task Force "Doan" cleared FLORET and moved south on the main LIERNEUX highway, clearing a defended minefield in the wooded defile southeast of FLORET. They reached the GROUMONT Creek, where they found the bridge was out, and stopped for the night.

The next day the attack was resumed.

South of MALEMPRE, where the road enters the woods, Task Force "Lovely" struck a minefield covered with heavy fire of all types. Lovelady pushed his infantry on ahead and started to clear the field. Meanwhile, Task Force "McGeorge" had bypassed a blown bridge over HEID Creek, reached JEVIGNE, where they made contact with elements of Combat Command "A" and drove on to BANEUX which they took from the enemy's infantry garrison.

Task Force "Richardson" fought through JEVIGNE toward LANSIVAL. They encountered a minefield north of LANSIVAL which they breached and moved on in to secure the town. Task Force "Doan" fought to

secure a bridgehead over the GROUMONT Creek where they had stopped the previous afternoon. When this bridgehead was established by the infantry to the depth of about four hundred yards the bridging operation was almost complete.

At this time, Task Force "Hogan" (3rd Battalion, 33rd Armored Regiment, 1st Battalion, 330th Infantry Regiment (83rd Div), 1st Platoon, Anti-Tank Company, 330th Infantry Regiment, 1st Platoon, Company B, 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion and 1st Platoon, Company C, 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion), was moved to the vicinity of MANHAY with the mission of advancing south down the main highway from there and securing Cross Roads (576853). Division boundaries were adjusted to accommodate this attack which was to begin on the morning of 5 January. This new sector was given to Combat Command "R".

Elements of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion patrolled the Division zone between the advancing columns, encountering many anti-personnel mines and rounding up a few prisoners.

On 5 January, Task Force "Doan" passed through its bridgehead and moved on through the town of La VAUX. When they had done this, a part of the infantry was sent west to assist Task Force "Richardson" in its attack on LIERNEUX which was in progress and getting hotter. The 1st Battalion, 36th Armored Infantry Regiment was replaced by the 3rd Battalion, 36th, having suffered heavy casualties.

Task Force "Richardson" was counterattacked by tanks and infantry early in the morning, but the attack was defeated and Richardson resumed the attack on LIERNEUX hampered by extremely poor visibility. Heavy artillery and mortar fire continued on his position north of the town. He succeeded in getting tanks and infantry into the north and west part of the town.

Task Force "McGeorge" continued to attack from BANEUX and worked tanks into position to support by fire Richardson's attack from the west. The infantry of Task Force "McGeorge" worked through the woods toward the town.

Major Stallings took over Lt Col Lovelady's command when Lovelady was evacuated for sickness. He continued the attack to the south but failed to get out of the woods due to continuing heavy opposition and very limited visibility.

In Combat Command "R", Task Force "Hogan" encountered strong dug-in infantry and anti-tank positions but was able to advance to a point on the main road near BEL HAIE where the enemy had forced Task Force "Richardson's" road block on 24 December.

On 6 January, Task Force "Doan" mopped up in LAVAUX and La FALAISE and moved south out of the town. The bridge south of the town was blown. This was bridged and the Task Force moved on, reaching the intersection of several secondary roads about one and one half kilometers northeast of VERLEUMONT where they coiled for the night and sent strong patrols toward GRAND SART.

Task Force "Richardson" secured LIERNEUX by noon, and attached to reach the high ground south of the town. The infantry elements were able to gain the objective, but the tanks were stopped by mines. The work of clearing these mines started after dark.

Task Force "McGeorge" supported Task Force "Richardson" during the first part of the day and then continued to advance and seized a commanding hill two kilometers south of LIERNEUX.

Task Force "Stallings" got out of the woods in the morning and advanced all the way down to FRAITURE.



Here there was considerable house to house fighting. An enemy battalion scheduled to make a relief the following day had been surprised by the Task Force and about 300 prisoners were taken.

Task Force "Hogan" continued to advance against moderate opposition. Felled trees blocked the only available road, so the infantry was sent on ahead. This infantry force reached the objective cross road, and work on clearing the road for the tanks was started.

The 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion continued to sweep the division area in rear of the advance elements.

At this time, new orders were issued to continue the attack on the following day to secure an objective line just north of the next wooded area, running generally PROVEDROUX-OTTRE-REGNE-CR (576853). When this line was secured, the 83rd Infantry Division was to pass through the 3rd Armored and attack through the woods, then the 3rd Armored would resume the attack.

On the morning of 7 January, Task Force "Richardson" entered VERLEUMONT in the face of considerable small arms fire and artillery fire. Before noon the town was cleared of enemy and the Task Force started to move in two battle groups, one east toward SART and the other, south to seize the high wooded hill about one kilometer to the south. Both of these forces were stopped by mine fields just at the edge of the town. Before these fields could be breached, Task Force "Doan" had succeeded in driving the enemy from GRAND SART and SART. Task Force "Richardson", therefore, continued south with the whole force reaching the high ground east of HEBRONVAL. A holding force of infantry was left on the wooded hill south of VERLEUMONT.

Task Force "Doan" started toward GRAND SART. They met and overcame an enemy outpost strong point about one kilometer west of the town and continued. The town itself was protected by a mine field covered by strong anti-tank positions. An attempt was made to by-pass the town to the south under cover of a smoke screen layed by artillery but this approach was also well covered by anti-tank fire. Continued pressure finally forced the enemy garrison to retire, and Doan's column continued through SART, cleaning it up on the way, to positions just south of the main highway through REGNE and SALMCHATEAU near its junction with the road running north to LIERNEUX.

Task Force "McGeorge" advanced on REGNE, and, with the support of Task Force "Lovelady" (Lovelady had returned to duty) from the northwest, secured the town about noon. Task Force "Lovelady" remained in the town to secure it, and Task Force "McGeorge" moved on to the high ground east of BIHAIN, just south of the new objective line.

Task Force "Hogan" got the road north of its objective cleared of mines and felled trees and moved tanks down to the objective. Road blocks were established south of the Cross Roads and patrol contact was made with the 2nd Armored Division on the right and with Task Force "Lovelady" on the left.

On 8 January, Doan continued to attack toward PROVEDROUX, meeting dug in infantry, anti-tank and artillery fire. PROVEDROUX was secured and "buttoned up" by nightfall. Richardson continued his attack through JOUBIEVAL which was well defended, and reached his objective by dark.

Task Force "Lovelady" remained in REGNE. Col. Welborn took command of Task Force "McGeorge", when McGeorge was wounded. Task Force "Welborn" attacked east to secure HEBRONVAL and then south to

OTTRE. They encountered two mine fields and some anti-tank and small arms fire, but by 1705, OTTRE was secured.

Task Force "Hogan" continued to defend at the cross roads. Hogan's infantry battalion (1st Bn. 330th Inf. Regt. 83rd Div.) was relieved by 1st Bn. 333rd Inf. Regt. 84th Div.

The objective line was secured, and arrangements were made for the 83rd Infantry Division to attack through the 3rd Armored lines the following day.

On 9 January, Task Force "Doan" continued some mopping up business in the PROVEDROUX area and maintained contact with the 82nd Airborne Division on the left.

Task Force "Lovelady" moved to HEBRONVAL, while the remainder of Task Force "Welborn" moved from HEBRONVAL to OTTRE.

Task Force "Hogan" was relieved by elements of the 84th Infantry Division and moved to REGNE.

The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion moved into FRAITURE.

On the night of 10-11 January, the 75th Infantry Division relieved the 82nd Airborne Division on our left. Their mission was to defend the line of the SALM River and protect the left flank of the VII Corps.

On 11 January elements of the 83rd Infantry Division directed their attack against LANGLIR and PETITE LANGLIR. The 3rd Armored issued Field Order 22. The mission was to secure the CHERAIN area and cut the roads in that locality. Combat Command "B" was to make the attack and was assigned the initial objective of the high ground northeast of BACLAIN. The Division Commander directed that Combat Command "B" clear the enemy in the MONT LE BAN area only sufficiently to allow the passage of the column, then proceed rapidly to secure CHERAIN. After which, they would secure the entire division objective which included VAUX, STERPIGNY, BRISY and RETTIGNY.

Combat Command "A" was ordered to protect the left flank, and Combat Command "R" to be prepared to move on to the objective if the attack of Combat Command "B" slowed down.

On 11 January, the 1st Battalion of the 389th Infantry Regiment started moving into Task Force "Doan's" sector to assume responsibility for the sector, while the 83rd Division was heavily engaged in the center of the zone.

Task Force Hogan consisting of 1st Bn. 330th, H Company, 33rd Armd. Regt., 1st Plat. Co. C, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn., was committed on the right with the mission of attacking south from BIHAIN at 1600 to secure the line of the LANGLIR CREEK from PISSEROTTE to a point two kilometers east thereof. The Task Force met little resistance and secured the stream crossing on the objective line at 1900. Hogan was ordered to button up there and prepare for the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion to pass through him the next day. At dark, the enemy counterattacked with infantry supported by three tanks. This attack was defeated and one enemy tank was destroyed. A second counterattack by infantry at 2100 was also beaten off.

The 83rd Reconnaissance moved from REGNE to BIHAIN, where "A" Company was attached to Task Force "Hogan" to assist in outposting the position there.

Hogan's fairly easy advance to PISSEROTTE indicated that it might be possible to side slip the enemy's main defenses which appeared to be in the center of the division zone, and get far enough south to cut the east-west roads north of HOUFFALIZE which the Germans were using to evacuate the part of their forces which remained west of HOUFFALIZE and were in



danger of being cut off.

Combat Command "B" started to move into the LANGLIR - PETITE LANGLIR area, but there was still fighting in the LANGLIR area so the move was delayed.

When the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion moved through Task Force "Hogan", progress was slow. The road south of BIHAIN was blocked by knocked out enemy vehicles which had been destroyed by our artillery and supporting aircraft. Enemy artillery, mortar and rocket fire was heavy throughout the period. An advance of about one kilometer was made along the wooded trails.

It became apparent that the 83rd Division was not going to reach the objective line assigned on 6 January in time for the proposed attack of the 3rd Armored on 13 January to proceed as planned. Accordingly a new Field Order was issued, (F. O. 23) directing an attack with Combat Commands abreast to secure CHERAIN, VAUX, SOMMERAINE and the high ground northwest of SOMMERAINE. Combat Command "B" was to seize CHERAIN; Combat Command "R" to take VAUX, SOMMERAINE and the high ground.

Composition of forces for this attack was:

COMBAT COMMAND "R" (COL. HOWZE)

TF KANE

1st Bn. 33rd Armd. Regt.  
3rd Bn. 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (-1 Plat. Co. I)  
Plat. Co. C 23rd Armd. Engr.  
Plat. Co. C 703rd TD Bn.

TF YEOMANS

83rd Armd. Rcn. Bn.  
Plat. Co. C 703rd TD Bn.  
TF HOGAN  
3rd Bn. 33rd Armd. Regt.  
1st Bn. 330th Inf. Regt.  
Plat. Co. I, 36th Armd. Inf.  
Plat. Co. C 23rd Armd. Eng. Bn.  
Plat. Co. C 703rd TD Bn.

C COM'D CONTROL

54th Armd. FA Bn.  
Co. C 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn. (-2 Pl'ts)  
Co. C 703rd TD Bn. (-3 Pl'ts)  
Det. Co. B Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

COMBAT COMMAND "B" (BRIG. GEN. BOUDINOT)

TF LOVELADY

2nd Bn. 33rd Armd. Regt. (-3rd Plat. Co. B)  
3rd Bn. 330th Inf. Regt.  
1st Plat. Co. B 703rd TD Bn.  
2nd Plat. Co. B 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
2nd Plat. Rcn. Co. 33rd Armd. Regt.  
391st Armd. FA Bn. Direct Support

TF WALKER

3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
2nd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
2nd Plat. Co. B 703rd TD Bn.  
1st Plat. Co. B 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
3rd Plat. Rcn. Co. 33rd Armd. Regt.  
83rd Armd. FA, Direct Support

COMBAT COMMAND CONTROL

Co. B 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn. (-2 Platoons)  
Co. B 703rd TD Bn. (-2 Platoons)  
Rcn. Co. 33rd Armd. Regt. (-2 Platoons).

When the attack started on 13 January, Task Force "Kane" advanced initially on a very poor trail that required a great deal of engineer work to make it usable. The enemy held MONT LE BAN in such strength that a company of infantry was left to contain it while the rest of Task Force "Kane" by-passed to the west.

Task Force "Yeomans" met moderate resistance all day. By 1700, two companies had secured the high

ground northwest of SOMMERAINE while the rest of the force proceeded south to cut the CHERAIN-SOMMERAINE road at its junction with the MONT LE BAN road. They were soon in position to fire on this road and before midnight Yeomans was joined by elements of Kane and a secure road block was established. The last of the enemy's main escape routes was cut. Task Force "Hogan" remained in BIHAIN and attempted to establish contact with the 2nd Armored Division in PISSELOTTE without success.

Task Force "Lovely" attacked from LANGLIR toward LOMRE, along the road. In the woods north of LOMRE they were stopped by felled tree obstacles with booby traps. When this was cleared, a coordinated attack was launched on LOMRE, which was strongly held. By 2200 the town was occupied and secured, and a strong road block force (a Company of Infantry) was astride the BACLAIN-MONT LE BAN ROAD in the edge of the woods just east of MONT LE BAN.

Task Force "Walker" reached a bridge north of BACLAIN that was blown and prepared to bridge it.

On the morning of 14 January, Walker encountered a mine field after crossing the stream, which was defended by anti-tank, small arms and supporting fires. When this was reduced the task force launched a coordinated attack on BACLAIN and occupied and secured the town.

Meanwhile, Task Force "Lovely" met tanks and anti-tank fire as they attacked south from LOMRE. They bypassed MONT LE BAN to the east and reached a point about one thousand yards north of CHERAIN at the end of the day's fighting.

Task Force "Kane" on the north and Task Force "Hogan" on the west launched a coordinated attack on MONT LE BAN at 1330. By 1500 the town was seized. Kane secured the town until relieved by Task Force "Miller", of Combat Command "A", while Hogan re-organized, and at 2400, launched an attack to take VAUX.

Task Force "Yeomans" had attacked toward VAUX at 1040, but very heavy artillery and mortar fire forced them to withdraw to their road block on the CHERAIN-SOMMERAINE road. There the Task Force reverted to Division control and was ordered to hold.

Many enemy columns were spotted moving east and northeast out of HOUFFALIZE. The weather had cleared somewhat and both air and artillery worked them over.

Orders were issued for Combat Command "A" to assemble in the MONT LE BAN area as soon as it was cleared to protect the division rear and maintain contact on the right and left. The objectives were changed slightly: Combat Command "B" was assigned the CHERAIN-STERPIGNY-RETIGNY area. Combat Command "R" the VAUX-BRISY area. Task Force "Yeomans" was ordered to clear enemy from its zone (Principally SOMMERAINE).

Task Force "Hogan's" night attack on VAUX was unsuccessful, but during the day they fought their way into the town against heavy enemy fire and secured the town on the night of 15 January, after about thirty hours of sustained attack.

Task Force "Yeomans" attacked SOMMERAINE from the east, but was unable to penetrate its defenses.

Enemy opposition became very heavy in the whole division sector on 15 January. Tanks, anti-tank guns, small arms fire and very heavy artillery and mortar fire were met all day. Losses in this day's fighting were severe.

On the night of 14-15 Task Force "Lovely" had been driven out of his position just north of CHERAIN and had withdrawn about one kilometer north.



The plan for the day of 15 January called for Task Force "Orr" and Task Force "Miller" (Combat Command "A") to take over BACLAIN and MONT LE BAN; Task Force "Kane" to pass through Yeomans and take the high ground south of BRISY; Task Force "Welborn" (Formerly Task Force "Walker") to attack through STERPIGNY, thence to RETIGNY, allowing Lovelady to come into CHERAIN under reduced pressure. However Task Force "Kane" was able to advance only a short distance and Task Force "Welborn" got only into the western edge of STERPIGNY. Task Force "Lovelady" attempted to advance on CHERAIN. Again they ran into mines in a defile. Anti-tank guns caught the vehicles in column, and at 1530 they had NO medium tanks left.

Adding fuel to a fire that was already hot enough, an enemy column moved into STERPIGNY to reinforce the garrison there, whereupon Task Force "Richardson" from Combat Command "A" was attached to Combat Command "B" and committed to the STERPIGNY fight, but the situation remained virtually static. Only the western edge of the town was taken.

Task Force "Lovelady" was relieved in place by Task Force "Bailey" (a Company of medium tanks and a company of Infantry from Combat Command "A") Lovelady's badly depleted force moved back into the Combat Command "A" area to refit and reorganize.

When Welborn and Richardson continued the attack on STERPIGNY on 16 January another enemy column attempting to enter the town from the east was dispersed by artillery. Anti-tank and small arms fire started coming into the town from the woods to the northeast which was thought to be clear. The town itself was secured, but direct fire continued to come in.

Task Force "Hogan" was ordered to send a force into CHERAIN in the morning. He was able to get only Infantry into the town because of a blown bridge between VAUX and CHERAIN. This force met little resistance. Having fought stubbornly for days, the enemy then withdrew. Task Force "Bailey" was sent into the town to relieve Task Force "Hogan's" Infantry and secure the town to allow Hogan to assemble his whole force in VAUX for an attack on BRISY in conjunction with Task Force "Kane".

Task Force "Kane's" attack toward BRISY was stopped cold by heavy fire of all types. When Task Force "Hogan" got their infantry back out of CHERAIN they attacked toward BRISY to assist Task Force "Kane", but were also stopped after a very short advance.

Task Force "Yeomans" secured SOMMERAIN, forcing the enemy to withdraw south.

By 17 January, Task Force "Hogan" was reduced to twelve medium and ten light tanks. The Infantry Battalion (1st Bn., 330th Inf. Regt.) was down to one hundred and twenty-five riflemen. Task Force "Kane" had eleven medium and seventeen light tanks left. The infantry strength, including Battalion Headquarters Company, was three hundred and eleven. Both of these task forces held their positions as did Task Force "Yeomans" in SOMMERAIN. Task Force "Richardson" continued operations over in STERPIGNY.

Task Force "Welborn" attacked from CHERAIN to secure the first hill to the southeast there, a distance of about one thousand yards. On the first attack elements of the force succeeded in reaching the objective, but were forced to withdraw. The second attack carried to the hill and Task Force Welborn held there.

Elements of the 4th Cavalry Group took over the sector from VAUX west to the division boundary on 18 January relieving Yeomans, Kane and Hogan.

On 18 January, Task Force "Richardson" continued to attack to secure the east edge of the woods east of

STERPIGNY. When they secured this objective line Combat Command "A" in two task forces, Task Force "Doan" and Task Force "Lovelady", assembled in the vicinity of STERPIGNY preparatory to continuing the Division's attack south. It was planned that Doan should seize RETIGNY, RENGLEZ and the high ridge south of these towns while Lovelady screened his advance and protected his left flank along the wooded ridge southeast of STERPIGNY. Task Force "Kane", of Combat Command "R", was to attack south from CHERAIN and take BRISY and the dominating hill to the south thereof. Richardson secured his objective and the scheduled attack moved rapidly against very light resistance. Both objectives were taken on the afternoon of 19 January. The next day the division started moving northwest to rest areas centering around BARVAUX and DURBUY.

The portion of the German salient west of HOUFFALIZE had been liquidated, but the enemy had conducted an efficient withdrawal. The effort had cost him heavily, but he had succeeded in withdrawing a very large part of his forces not expended in the fifteen days of bold offensive fighting in December and the stubborn rearguard actions of 3-16 January. In rare cases was he forced to give ground where the loss would seriously endanger the extrication of his carefully hoarded armor without inflicting severe losses on the attacking force.

During a rest period there is plenty of work to do. The "rest" means that you are not in contact with the enemy. New reinforcements have to be fitted into their places and given additional training. New equipment has to be tested, and there is maintenance work in whatever quantity time permits. It is a time of rest, though. The tension of battle is gone. There is time for a few movies and recreational convoys to nearby cities, and there is time to count the score.

The decisive fighting in the Ardennes salient lasted from 16 December 1944 to 16 January 1945.

For this period there are two sets of concrete figures that can be juggled at will to propagandize either our cause or the German. They are the losses of men and material on each side. A third item for speculation: "what did Von Rundstedt's gamble gain or lose?", does not concern us directly in this outline.

Taken separately, loss figures may be used to prove almost anything. Together they serve only to emphasize that it was a hard fight. Here they are.

During the period 16 December to 16 January, the 3rd Armored Division suffered 1,473 battle casualties, of this number 21 officers and 166 enlisted men were killed in action. The rest were wounded or missing.

Battle losses in vehicles were as follows:

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| MEDIUM TANKS . . .     | 125 |
| LIGHT TANKS . . . . .  | 38  |
| ARTILLERY PIECES . . . | 6   |
| OTHER VEHICLES . . .   | 158 |

A carefully prepared day to day estimate of losses inflicted on the enemy for this period totals up to:

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| 1,705 estimated killed          |
| 545 estimated wounded           |
| 2,510 Prisoners (actual count). |

The estimated vehicular casualties inflicted counting only those known to have been destroyed are:

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Tanks . . . . .        | 98 (31 of them Mk V's) |
| SP Guns . . . . .      | 20                     |
| Motor Transport . . .  | 76                     |
| AT or AA Guns . . . .  | 23                     |
| Artillery pieces . . . | 8                      |



# THE RHINELAND

## CHAPTER IV

### The Roer

With the "Battle of the Bulge" relegated to the history files, the Spearhead Division rested and refitted while the snow melted in the area BARVAUX - EREZEE - HOTTON - MAFFE - OCQUIER, in Belgium. This refitting period continued until 7 February. On that date the Division started moving back to familiar surroundings. The new assembly positions were in the STOLBERG - BREINIG - HASTENRATH - WERTH area in Germany. VII Corps took over a sector of the ROER front roughly corresponding to the sector that the Corps held in December when they left to take part in the ARDENNES Campaign.

Facing VII Corps ROER front, the enemy had two infantry divisions, the 353rd and the 363rd. These divisions totaled approximately 10,000 men. The artillery of the 59th, 85th, 272nd, 353rd and 363rd German Infantry Divisions, as well as one GHQ Battalion were capable of firing into the American VII Corps Zone.

In addition to the ROER trench system, there was another belt of enemy trenches to be met before reaching the ERFT Canal. This belt ran from southwest of ELSDORF, west of ETZWEILER, west of MANHEIM, west of BLATZHEIM, thence down the western bank of the NEFFEL River. Most of the villages were protected by trench systems making them potential strong points. MANHEIM and ELSDORF were especially well protected, and occupied artillery and anti-aircraft positions existed around MERZENICH and BUIR. A stiff defense of HAMBACH WOODS was expected.

While the 8th and 104th Infantry Divisions of VII Corps prepared to force crossings of the ROER in the vicinity of DUREN, the 3rd Armored continued to refit and train reinforcements.

At 0300 on 23 February the 8th and 104th Divisions made initial crossings of the ROER which was subsiding somewhat from recent flood stage. The 3rd Armored Division was placed on a six hour alert at 1000 that morning.

The plan for the operation called for the 8th and 104th Divisions to seize the Corps Bridgehead line, shown on the Sketch No. 22. When crossings were prepared and the bridgehead secure, the 3rd Armored was to pass through and attack northeast to seize ELSDORF area and secure a bridgehead across the ERFT CANAL in that vicinity, at the same time blocking any attempt of the enemy to move troops north into the ELSDORF area by seizing BLATZHEIM, KERPEN HEPENDORF and SINDORF. Elements of the 8th and 104th Division were to follow the 3rd Armored Division closely to secure the objective gained, allowing the armor to continue to advance rapidly.

The 13th Infantry Regiment of the 8th Infantry Division was attached to the 3rd Armored Division for the operation. Its Battalions were, in turn, attached to the Task Forces of the three Combat Commands. The three Combat Commands were organized into Task Forces as shown below.

C COMD. "A" (BRIG. GEN. HICKEY)  
TF "DOAN"

32nd Armd. Regt. (- 1st & 3rd Bns.)  
1st Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
3rd Plat. "A" Co., 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
3rd Plat. "A" Co., 703rd TD Bn.  
67th Armd. FA Bn. (Direct Support)

TF "KANE"

1st Bn. 32nd Armd. Regt.  
1st Bn. 13th Inf. Regt.  
1st Plat. "A" Co., 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
1st Plat. "A" Co., 703rd TD Bn.  
67th Armd. FA Bn. (Direct Support)  
C COMD. "B" (BRIG. GEN. BOUDINOT)

TF "WELBORN"

33rd Armd. Regt. (- 2nd & 3rd Bns.)  
2nd Bn. 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
3rd Plat., "B" CO., 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
2nd Plat., "B" Co., 703rd TD Bn.  
3rd Plat., Rcn. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
391st Armd. FA Bn. (Direct Support)

TF "LOVELADY"

2nd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
2nd Bn., 13th Inf. Regt.  
3rd Plat., "B" CO., 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
1st Plat., "B" Co., 703rd TD Bn.  
2nd Plat., Rcn. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.  
391st Armd. FA Bn. (Direct Support)  
C COMD. "R" (COL. HOWZE)

TF "HOGAN"

3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt. (- 1st Plat. C Co.)  
3rd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.  
3rd Plat. "C" Co. 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
3rd Plat. "C" Co. 703rd TD Bn.

TF "RICHARDSON"

3rd Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt. (- 3rd Plat. Co. I)  
3rd Bn., 13th Inf. Regt.  
1st Plat., "C" Co., 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
2nd Plat., "C" Co., 703rd TD Bn.

The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance was reinforced by the 1st Platoon of Company "C", 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion; one Bridge section from the 23rd Armored Engineer Battalion and the direct support of the 83rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion.

The 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was ordered to perform general support missions for the division until the commitment of Combat Command "R", at which time the Battalion was to revert to direct support of Combat Command "R". The 155 mm Self-Propelled guns of the 991st Field Artillery Battalion were in general support.

The attack was to be made with Combat Command "A" on the right, in two task force columns, Combat Command "B" on the left in similar formation and the 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion, reinforced by the direct support of the 83rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion and a platoon of Tank Destroyers, following a route between the two Combat Commands. Combat Command "B" was to move rapidly to the Division objective while Combat Command "A" performed the blocking mission on the south flank. The mission of the Reconnaissance Battalion was to move as rapidly as possible to the ERFT CANAL, on its assigned route, and seize a crossing. The Reconnaissance Battalion was ordered to establish a line along the west bank of the Canal, if it were not possible to seize a crossing.

By 25 February, the DUREN area cleared, and it was apparent that the Corps bridgehead line would be secured, almost in its entirety by the following day. Accordingly, the 3rd Armored Division was ordered to move into the bridgehead on the day of 25 February and the night of 25-26 February.

Since only four crossings of the ROER were available for the movement, it was necessary to move the 83rd

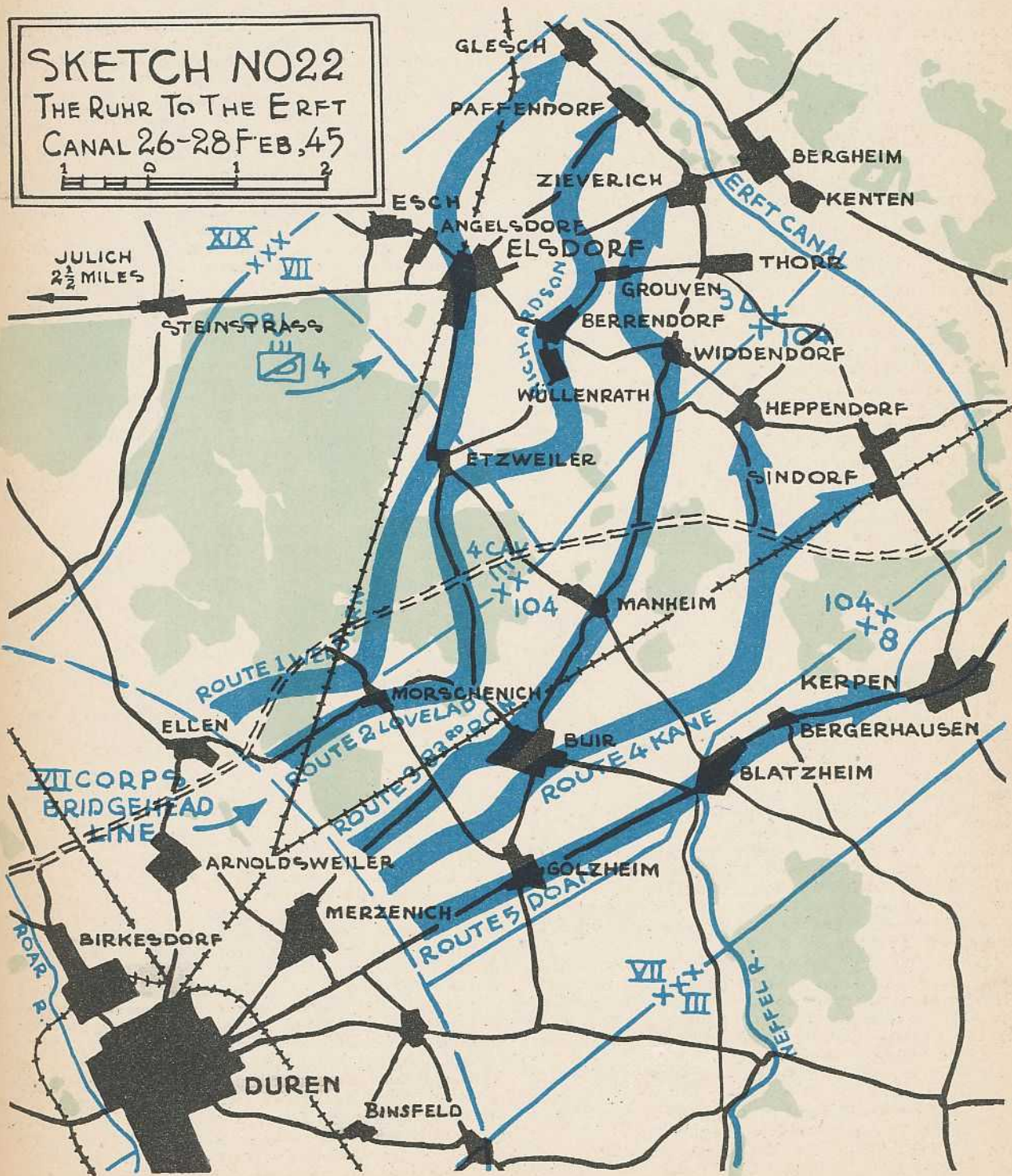


Armored Reconnaissance Battalion into an assembly area in DUREN during daylight hours. Then, at midnight 25 February Combat Commands "A" and "B" started moving from the STOLBERG area. Combat Command "B" used the two north crossings; Combat Com-

mand "A" used the two south crossings. Combat Command "R", in Division Reserve, followed Combat Command "B".

After both leading Combat Commands crossed into the Duren area, the 13th Infantry Regiment was physi-

**SKETCH NO22**  
**THE RUHR TO THE ERFT**  
**CANAL 26-28 FEB, 45**



cally attached and integrated into the Task Forces. Arrangements for these attachments were made by commanders concerned several days prior to this time. The attached Foot-Infantry Battalions were transported on the tanks of the Task Forces.

At 0600 on 26 February, all five columns of the Spearhead attacked to break out of the bridgehead. It was a cold day with a drizzle of rain. The breaking up of the winter thaw and the rains since had left the secondary roads, over which the routes lay in part, virtually impassable to heavy traffic. In addition American Artillery and Aircraft had made rubble heaps of most of the towns and villages. This desolation and destruction, probably the worst area in Germany, continued all the way to the RHINE River.

On the left, Combat Command "B" made good advances against scattered resistance all day. The enemy did not defend HAMBACH WOODS as expected. By nightfall, both Task Forces of the Combat Command were engaged with the enemy's prepared positions in the vicinity of ELSDORF and BERRENDORF. Neither had found it necessary to bypass HAMBACH WOODS, but both had experienced considerable trouble in negotiating the secondary roads and cross country portion of their routes.

It was on the drive to ELSDORF that the U. S. First Army first contacted the German Volkssturm (People's Army). A Company of Volkssturm troops, led by officers of the Wehrmacht, had the mission of defending the entrances to the town of BERRENDORF. When our troops were reported approaching the town, the Volkssturm assembled, and took up their assigned defensive positions. The Officers made inspections to assure that everything was in order. Then the Officers disappeared.

The Volkssturm promptly abandoned their positions, assembled, and waited for our troops to come in. They surrendered en masse. Thus the first units of the highly publicized people's army, the strategic reserve so heavily counted on by Adolph Hitler to sell each German town dearly, had collapsed. During the remainder of the Campaign there were only isolated cases of the "People's Army" putting up any sort of resistance.

That evening elements of the 4th Cavalry Group, on the 3rd Armored Division's left flank, reached the northeast edge of HAMBACH WOODS.

On the right and in the center, the resistance developed earlier. The day's operation netted about five and one half miles. All roads leading into GOLZHEIM were blocked by strong log road blocks. The town itself was covered by heavy artillery and mortar fire. When passage through GOLZHEIM was cleared Task Force "Doan" continued toward BLATZHEIM which was strongly defended by anti-tank guns and an intricate trench system. In the initial assault, Doan lost four tanks to enemy anti-tank guns and met such strong artillery, mortar and small arms fire that a withdrawal had to be made, under the cover of smoke, to effect a reorganization. The second assault proceeded rapidly, and carried into BLATZHEIM, 175 prisoners were taken and four anti-tank guns were destroyed.

Task Force "Kane" met dug-in 88 mm anti-tank guns as they approached BUIR. Enemy artillery and mortar fire covered the approaches to the town.

While Kane was engaged in BUIR, the 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion bypassed to the north and attacked MANHEIM. A battle group from Task Force "Kane" assisted in the attack on MANHEIM after finishing up BUIR.

On 27 February the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion attacked northeast from MANHEIM and took GROUVEN and ZIEVERICH in quick succession. The

ERFT crossing at ZIEVERICH was blown and from the east bank the enemy opposed all attempts to force a crossing with very heavy mortar and medium caliber artillery fire.

In the meantime Combat Command "B" was meeting stubborn house-to-house fighting in clearing out ELSDORF. All streets were heavily defended by heavy log blocks and suicide bazooka teams, plus self-propelled anti-tank guns. During the afternoon, the Germans launched a counter-attack supported by four Tiger Tanks and two Mark IV's. Task Force "Lovelady", in excellent position at GIESENDORF, to the south and east of ELSDORF, moved one of the new T26E3 (The General Pershing) tanks into position and, at a range of approximately one thousand yards, knocked out two Tigers and one Mark IV. When this counterattack was broken up, the enemy tanks withdrew to the east. ELSDORF was buttoned up by 1900, and Task Force "Hogan" was moving through the eastern portion of ELSDORF in an attack on ESCH.

Task Force "Kane" in Combat Command "A"'s sector moved into HEPPENDORF and SINDORF against moderate resistance. However, to the south Task Force "Doan" had beaten off a counterattack by enemy infantry and tanks in BLATZHEIM; and continued east against BERGERHAUSEN at 0400. In BERGERHAUSEN enemy infantry defended stubbornly, firing bazookas and small arms from well-dug-in positions. They were finally routed by the infantry of Task Force "Doan", using hand grenades and small arms and closely supported by the direct fire of tanks. In midafternoon the enemy counterattacked again with an infantry company and several tanks. Division artillery broke up this attacking force before it made any gains.

To complete the blocking mission on the south flank, it was essential that the town of KERPEN be taken. The canal bridge just east of BERGERHAUSEN was destroyed by the enemy, and the site was covered with heavy artillery and mortar fire, so the Infantry of Task Force "Doan" waded across, and the Engineers constructed a treadway bridge under the continued enemy fire. By dark the crossing was ready. The attack on KERPEN was made in conjunction with the 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment which attacked from the southwest. Elements of the 8th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the 12th German Infantry Division defended KERPEN. Their anti-tank defenses were well placed, covering the approaches in Doan's sector. Consequently, it was decided to move the tanks into the town after dark. It was an exceptionally dark night, and this maneuver worked well. On the morning of the 28 February KERPEN was secured.

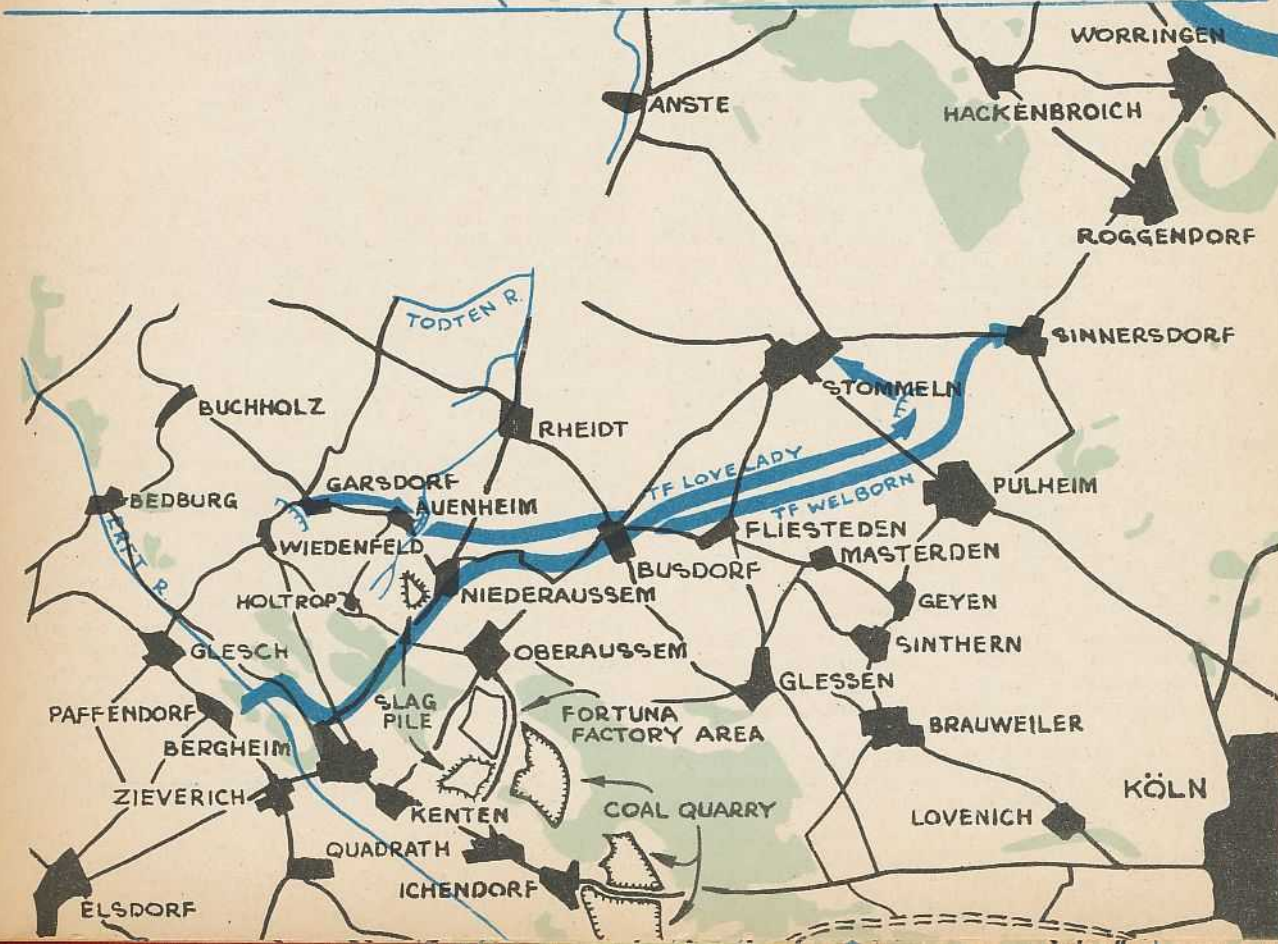
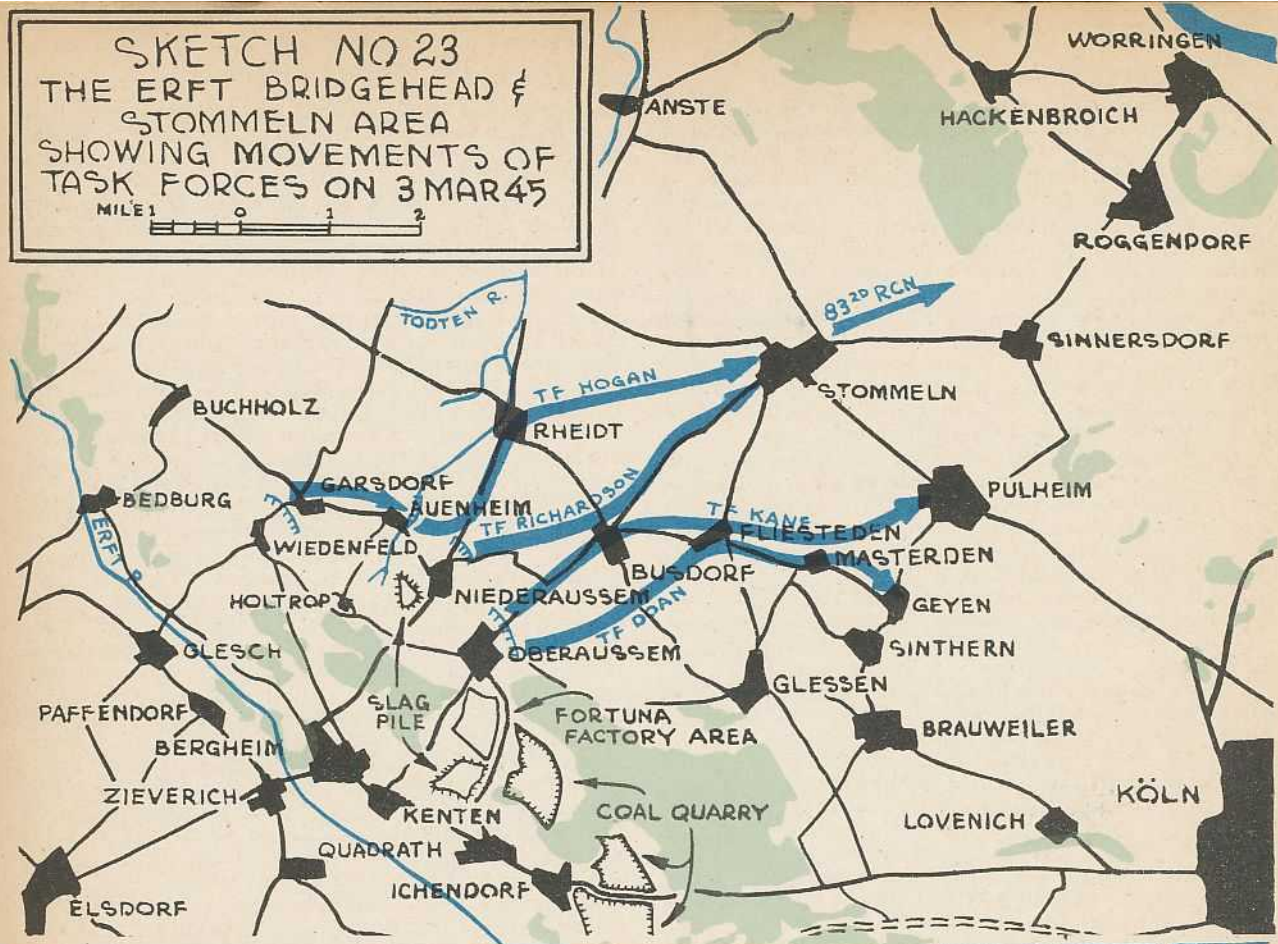
## The Erft

Early on the morning of 27 February when the attack had reached the stage just described, General Rose decided to commit the Division Reserve, Combat Command "R", to force a crossing of the ERFT Canal. It had become apparent that the enemy was not to be caught napping there, and a forced crossing was necessary. Accordingly, Combat Command "R" moved out of their assembly positions around BIRKESDORF and followed routes one and two to the ELSDORF area. Here, Task Force "Hogan" was ordered to pass through Task Force "Welborn" in ELSDORF and seize a crossing at GLESCH. At the same time, Task Force "Richardson" was ordered to pass through Task Force "Lovelady" in the BERRENDORF sector and seize another crossing at PAFFENDORF. This maneuver was executed on the afternoon of 27 February.



SKETCH NO 23  
 THE ERFT BRIDGEHEAD &  
 STOMMELN AREA  
 SHOWING MOVEMENTS OF  
 TASK FORCES ON 3 MAR 45

MILE 1 0 1 2





At GLESCHE, Task Force "Hogan" found a bridge that was not completely destroyed. About four platoons of infantry scrambled across on the remains to establish the first shallow bridgehead. Very heavy mortar and artillery fire and considerable small arms fire pinned this force to the ground.

At PAFFENDORF, Task Force "Richardson" found the existing bridge completely destroyed. A bridgehead was established by two companies of infantry who waded across. As at GLESCHE, enemy artillery and mortar fire was very heavy.

During the day of 28 February, infantry elements of the 104th and 8th Infantry Divisions relieved Combat Command "A". Task Force "Doan" then assembled in WIDDENDORF and THORR, while Task Force "Kane" relieved the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion in ZIEVERICH. The Reconnaissance Battalion then assembled in GROUVEN.

Meanwhile, bridging operations at GLESCHE were held up because of direct enemy fire on the site. The small infantry force that had been able to cross could not advance sufficiently to take this fire off the site.

Bridging operations at PAFFENDORF were successful in spite of the heavy mortar and artillery fire that the enemy continued to throw in. The last treadway dropped neatly into place at 0945, just in the time to allow the passage of supporting tanks for the infantry which was at that time receiving a counterattack by a battalion of enemy infantry and two enemy tanks. With strong artillery and air support, this counterattack was defeated without loss of ground. Task Force "Hogan" also moved a tank company across this bridge to assist in expanding the shallow GLESCHE bridgehead where the four platoons of infantry were still confined to the spot they had initially taken and were receiving continual enemy pressure.

The 395th Regimental Combat Team (99th Infantry Division) and the 4th Cavalry Group were attached to the 3rd Armored Division for continuing the bridgehead operation. There was considerable hard fighting to be done before continuing the attack toward the RHINE. The enemy still had observation on both bridge sites. The GLESCHE and PAFFENDORF bridgeheads were shallow and not linked up strongly.

On the night of 28 February the Luftwaffe made a strong attack on both bridge sites and supporting artillery positions. The damage was not serious, however, and four or five of the attacking planes were destroyed by anti-aircraft fire.

The 395th Regimental Combat Team attacked southeast through forces of Task Force "Richardson" at 0300 on 1 March. Their immediate mission was to expand the bridgehead by seizing the high wooded ground north and east of BERGHEIM and KENTEN, taking the enemy's observation off PAFFENDORF bridge and providing suitable assembly areas for the rest of the division to be brought over the canal preparatory to continuing the attack to the north and east. In the hours of darkness, an initial advance of about one thousand yards was made against very light resistance but, at daylight, resistance stiffened and remained strong. However, both BERGHEIM and KENTEN were cleared of the enemy.

The 4th Cavalry Group also moved over the PAFFENDORF bridge thence north, attacking northeast against moderate resistance between GLESCHE and WIENFELD. This operation materially assisted in securing the northern flank of the bridgehead.

The bridge at GLESCHE continued to receive heavy mortar and artillery fire. At noon it collapsed, and repairs were not finished until midnight. At that time

there were three crossings available. (A third was constructed at ZIEVERICH, which was occupied by Task Force "Kane".)

After dark, the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was moved east of the ERFT at PAFFENDORF and was attached to Combat Command "R". This battalion was ordered to attack east, clear the woods north of BERGHEIM and seize the high slag pile near HOLTROP.

Other elements remained in position prepared to attack east on 2 March to seize the STOMMELN-SINNERSDORF - PULHEIM - FLIESTEDEN - SINTHERN area and reach the RHINE River past ROGGENDORF, thereby securing a suitable line for turning the attack southeast toward COLOGNE.

On 2 March the attack was launched, and met stubborn and organized resistance at every point. Enemy artillery and mortar fire continued heavy and tanks were employed in the vicinity of NIEDERAUSSEM. The gains for the day were good, however, and further expanded the bridgehead.

On the northern flank, Task Force "Hogan" advanced steadily against enemy mortar, small arms and anti-tank fire through WIENFELD and GARS DORF to AUENHEIM where they secured their position for the night. Task Force "Welborn", of Combat Command "B", which was in Division reserve, moved up close behind Hogan relieving him of securing WIENFELD.

By daylight, the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion had accomplished the mission started the previous night, allowing Task Force "Richardson" to pass thru at 0700 and attack NIEDERAUSSEM. The enemy resisted Richardson's attack strongly with all arms including tanks, but the task force was able to clear NIEDERAUSSEM by night.

The attack of the 395th Regimental Combat Team progressed well. The FORTUNA Factory area east of BERGHEIM was cleared by 1430. This enabled the two Task Forces of Combat Command "A" to attack OBERAUSSEM simultaneously. Task Force "Kane" crossed at ZIEVERICH and Task Force "Doan" crossed in the zone of the 104th Infantry Division near ICHENDORF, moving through QUADRATH and the FORTUNA Factory area. Both these task forces struck at the strongly defended town of OBERAUSSEM at 1615, and in three hours the town was in their hands.

Task Force "Lovely", the other task force of Combat Command "B", remained in PAFFENDORF. The 395th reverted to control of the 99th Infantry Division.

#### — TO THE RHINE —

From these positions, on 3 March, the 3rd Armored launched one of the most complicated attacks it had ever attempted and one of the most successful. The maneuver, feints and timing had many of the aspects of an often-rehearsed "Touch-down-play" as executed by exponents of the "Razzle-Dazzle" game of football.

Elements of the Ninth Army had reached the Rhine near NEUSS. This fact caused remnants of the Wehrmacht that faced that power drive to move south into the zone of the FIRST ARMY. These remnants along with many others began to appear in the Prisoner of War cages of the 3rd Armored. It was further established that many of the small units being encountered were operating under the newly organized control of the 476th "WESTPHALIA" Division. Daily, these units were reinforcing the remnants of the 9th Panzer and 363rd Volksgrenadier Divisions which faced the 3rd Armored Division's front. These forces defended in the towns and from prepared field fortifications, delaying to the maximum. Their remaining armor was used to fire anti-tank and direct fire, then was withdrawn as rapidly as



possible when further delay could not be effected. Such a defense is costly to the attacker and hard to disrupt. But it was disrupted to a great degree on 3 March by an armored attack that perfectly exemplifies the speed and shiftiness of armor.

On the Division right flank, Combat Command "A" attacked at 0400. Before dawn, Task Force "Kane" was in the outskirts of BUSDORF and Task Force "Doan" was entering FLIESTEDEN. At BUSDORF, heavy fighting developed rapidly. The enemy, however, had been caught asleep and his casualties were heavy. By 0830 the town was cleared. At FLIESTEDEN, the surprise was more complete. Task Force "Doan" did not suffer a single infantry casualty, and the infantry had led the way into town. Enemy losses were severe. The town was secured by 0655. Task Force "Doan" then remained in FLIESTEDEN, allowing Task Force "Kane" to pass through and attack MASTEDEN. MASTEDEN was taken easily. The forces that would have withdrawn to there were destroyed at FLIESTEDEN and BUSDORF.

By 1500, Task Force "Doan" had moved up abreast of Task Force "Kane", and while Kane attacked PULHEIM, Doan attacked GEYEN and SINTHERN in turn. Both GEYEN and SINTHERN were seized and secured by 2000 and PULHEIM, by 1915 against light resistance.

Combat Command "R" attacked at 0700 on the Division left (north). On the Combat Command left, Task Force "Hogan" attacked Northeast toward RHEIDT. Here the enemy had manned his delaying positions and supported them with tanks and anti-tank fire. It was 1545 when, after a sharp engagement, Task Force "Hogan" cleared RHEIDT and prepared to move on toward STOMMELN. Task Force "Richardson" also attacked from NIEDER-AUSSEM at 0700. Their attack was directed at INGENDORF. The movement to attack position was made through BUSDORF where Task Force "Kane" was still engaged in clearing the last of the surprised garrison from cellars and houses. With Task Force "Hogan" pinning down the RHEIDT garrison and BUSDORF and FLIESTEDEN already taken, INGENDORF proved relatively easy to seize. At 1145 Richardson reported the town clear and moved on STOMMELN, which was better defended. A minefield covered with AT fire guarded the approach directly to Richardson's front.

It can be readily seen that BUSDORF was a focal point in the entire day's action. As might be expected, traffic control there was a major problem. When Task Force "Lovely" was moved through BUSDORF from BERGHEIM, the situation was further aggravated; and Task Force "Welborn", following Hogan through NIEDER-AUSSEM, followed Lovely through BUSDORF. This maneuver of Combat Command "B" was effected to fill the gap between Combat Command "R" and Combat Command "A", that developed when the right Combat Command outdistanced the left.

From FLIESTEDEN, Lovelady moved northeast to an attack position which afforded an approach on STOMMELN from the southeast. The Task Force joined in the battle for STOMMELN at 1500.

The enemy in STOMMELN then found his defenses engaged from three directions by three Task Forces. Before dark, several groups of P-47's checked into the Division Controller and in turn, to the Task Force Controllers. They attacked enemy tanks, self propelled guns and anti-tank guns with their bombs and strafed personnel and vehicles with excellent results.

The maneuver of Task Force "Lovely" succeeded in outflanking the resistance which had prevented Richardson from making more than a slight penetration for hours. Task Force "Lovely" entered and cleared the eastern part of STOMMELN while Task Force

"Hogan" and Task Force "Richardson" fought their way into the western part. The three task forces secured the town for the night.

Meantime, Task Force "Welborn," the other task force of Combat Command "B", had moved into attack positions near BUSDORF. Task Force "Welborn" had, on very short notice, reassembled holding forces in the vicinity of WIEDENFELD, pulled back to the west of the ERFT Canal, moved south to BERGHEIM and then northeast to NIEDER-AUSSEM, trailing Task Force "Lovely" and by 1700 was in position near BUSDORF to launch an attack on SINNERSDORF. This rapid shifting of forces, smooth handling of masses of traffic on a limited road net, completely took the enemy by surprise and Task Force "Welborn" moved in on SINNERSDORF against a dazed enemy. Anti-tank fire was intense, but infantry resistance was moderate. By 2015 the town was cleared.

At 1620, the 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion, the Division's only uncommitted combat element, was passed through Combat Command "R" in the vicinity of STOMMELN, launching its attack toward ROGGENDORF. This attack continued through the night and strong patrols were sent probing east and north. At 0420, on 4 March, one of these patrols reached the RHINE River north of WORRINGEN. They found both WORRINGEN and ROGGENDORF to be strongly defended. There was heavy traffic on the river roads as beaten elements of the Wehrmacht streamed toward the COLOGNE bridges and the ferry sites at WORRINGEN. The main force of the Reconnaissance Battalion attacked north toward HACKHAUSEN. At that little town, the enemy was again surprised by a night attack, and many prisoners were taken and much equipment captured. After daylight, a holding force was left in HACKHAUSEN while the remainder of the battalion moved back to SINNERSDORF, and, in conjunction with Task Force "Lovely" attacked ROGGENDORF and WORRINGEN. The enemy counter-attacked at both towns, ROGGENDORF from the north and WORRINGEN from the south, but by 1845 both towns were secured.

On the left flank the 4th Cavalry Group cleared the woods west of HACKENBROICH and HACKHAUSEN.

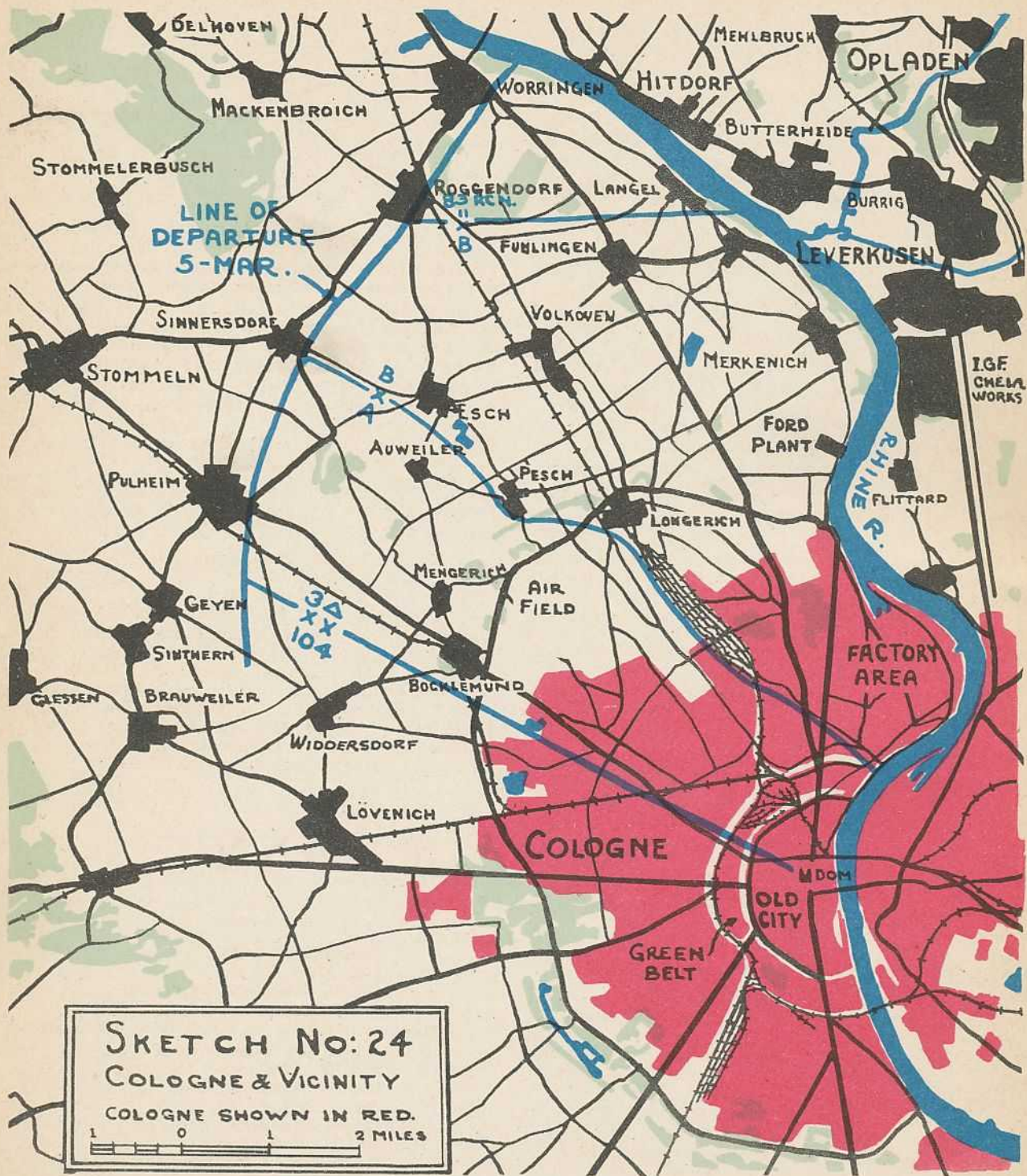
On the south, elements of the 104th Division relieved Task Force "Doan" in GEYEN and SINTHERN. Doan then moved into PULHEIM, and the Division was set for the attack on COLOGNE.

## "Nach Köln"

At 0400 all task forces attacked in their zones (see sketch No. 24). Resistance on the Division right was scattered and light. On the left, resistance was more stubborn, increasing with proximity to the RHINE River.

Leading elements of Combat Command "A"'s Task Force "Doan" entered COLOGNE at 0710. House to house fighting developed, but the enemy defended with little spirit. The sharpest engagement occurred in the vicinity of the airfield which was defended by 16 88 mm guns, both anti-tank and dual-purpose weapons. All these guns were overrun by a tank charge across the flat terrain executed under smoke cover with infantry riding the tanks of Task Force "Kane". The factory area along the river proved more difficult than the rest of the city, Task Force "Lovely" encountering massed anti-aircraft dual-purpose 88's and well dug-in infantry supported by self-propelled assault guns. Artillery and mortar fire from east of the river covered the withdrawal of scattered enemy units with heavy fire. In the northern part of the Division sector (See sketch No. 25) the 4th Cavalry Group continued to





**SKETCH NO: 24**  
**COLOGNE & VICINITY**  
 COLOGNE SHOWN IN RED.  
 1 0 1 2 MILES





advance steadily against enemy tanks and infantry strong points, seizing HORREM and DORMAGEN and the IGF TEXTILE PLANT.

On 6 March, all elements completed clearing the enemy from their zones with the exception of a small sector in the northeastern part of COLOGNE which was cleared the following day.

Defensive sectors were established within the Division boundaries on 8 March. Patrols covered the entire area, and established contact on the north with the 4th Cavalry, now operating under Corps control, and on the south with 104th Infantry Division.

Down to the south, the 1st Infantry Division prepared to take BONN by a night attack in an attempt to seize a bridge known to be still intact there.

**COMBAT COMMAND "R" (COL. HOWZE)**

- 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (- 1st & 2nd Bns.)
- 2nd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.
- 3rd Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt.
- 3rd Bn., 13th Inf. Regt. (8th Div.)
- 54th Armd. FA Bn.
- Co. C, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn. (- 3rd Plat.)
- Co. C, 703rd TD Bn. (- 3rd Plat.)
- 1st Plat., Co. B, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.
- 3rd Plat., Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.
- 2nd Plat., Ren. Co., 33rd Armd. Regt.
- Co. C, 45th Armd. Med. Bn.
- Det. Co. B, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

was attached to the 1st Infantry Division and moved to the LIBLAR area prepared to exploit any crossing that might be seized. They were not committed.

On 17 March the 104th Infantry Division relieved the 3rd Armored Division in its defensive sector and the 3rd Armored moved into assembly areas generally northwest of BONN for regrouping and refitting.

On 20 March the expansion of the REMAGEN bridgehead to the north was in progress against increasing resistance, as American forces approached the SIEG River. In order to give additional strength to this attack, Combat Command "R" reconstituted:

- 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (- 1st & 2nd Bns.)
- 3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.
- 3rd Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt.
- 54th Armd. FA Bn.
- Co. C, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.
- Co. C, 703rd TD Bn.
- Co. C, 45th Armd. Med. Bn.
- Co. C, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

was attached to the 1st Infantry Division and moved into the bridgehead. They operated first under control of the 1st Infantry Division then, on 21 March, under 78th Infantry Division control, in the area generally north and east of BEUEL. Combat Command "R" returned to control of 3rd Armored Division on 22 March, and assembled in the northern part of the newly assigned Division area in the vicinity of HONNEF.

# CENTRAL GERMANY

## CHAPTER V

### Breaking Loose

On 23 March the remainder of the Division closed into the new area east of the RHINE, prepared to break out of the bridgehead and carry the attack to the east. The 414th Infantry Regiment of the 104th Infantry Division was attached to the 3rd Armored Division and assigned to Combat Commands by battalions.

**COMPOSITION OF COMBAT COMMANDS**

24 March 1945

**COMBAT COMMAND "A" (BRIG. GEN. HICKEY)**

- 32nd Armd. Regt. (- 3rd Bn.)
- 1st Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.
- 1st Bn., 414th Inf. Regt.
- Co. A, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.
- Co. A, 703rd TD Bn.

- 83rd Armd. FA Bn.
- 67th Armd. FA Bn.
- Co. A, 45th Armd. Med. Bn.
- Co. A, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

**COMBAT COMMAND "B" (BRIG. GEN. BOUDINOT)**

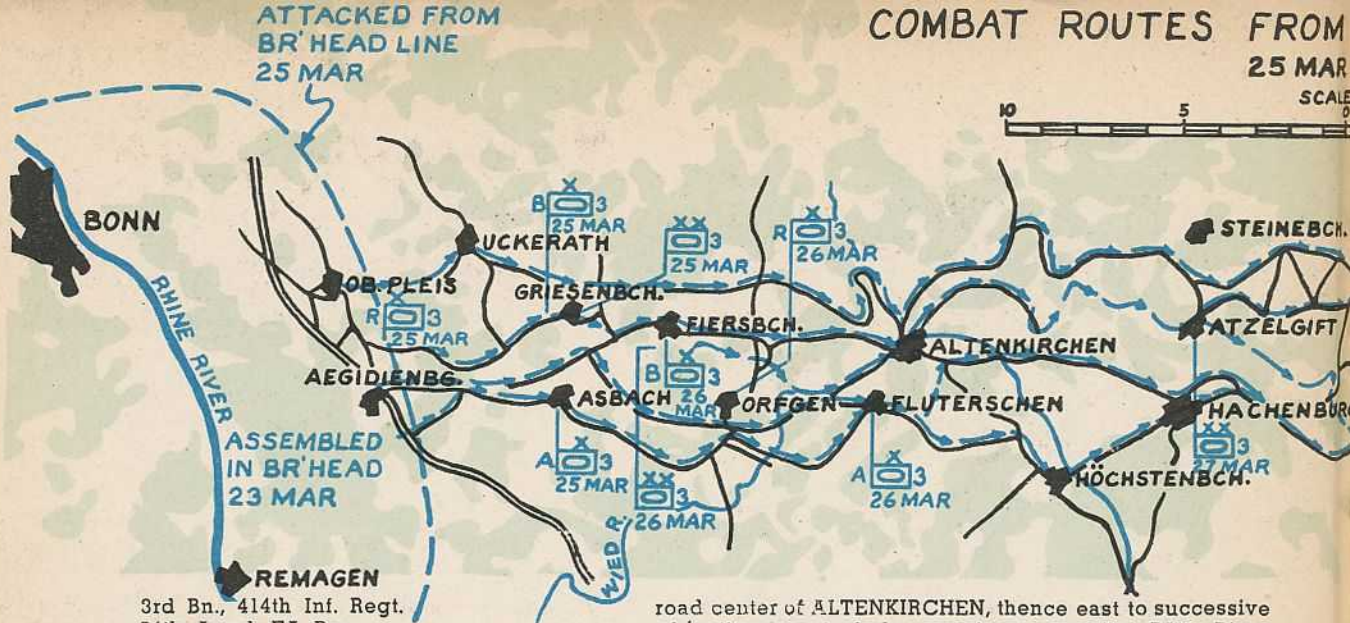
- 33rd Armd. Regt. (- 3rd Bn.)
- 2nd Bn., 36th Armd. Inf. Regt.
- 2nd Bn., 414th Inf. Regt.
- 391st Armd. FA Bn.
- Co. B, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.
- Co. B, 703rd TD Bn.
- Co. B, 45th Armd. Med. Bn.
- Co. B, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

**COMBAT COMMAND "R" (COL. HOWZE)**

- 36th Armd. Inf. Regt. (- 1st & 2nd Bns.)
- 3rd Bn., 32nd Armd. Regt.
- 3rd Bn., 33rd Armd. Regt.



# COMBAT ROUTES FROM 25 MAR



3rd Bn., 414th Inf. Regt.  
54th Armd. FA Bn.  
Co. C, 703rd TD Bn.  
Co. C, 23rd Armd. Engr. Bn.  
Co. C, 45th Armd. Med. Bn.  
Co. C, Maint. Bn., 3rd Armd. Div.

#### DIVISION CONTROL

83rd Armd. Rcn. Bn.  
414th Inf. Regt. (- 1st, 2nd & 3rd Bns.)  
703rd TD Bn. (- Cos. A, B & C)  
23rd Armd. Engr. Bn. (- Cos. A, B, C & E)  
486th AAA AW SP Bn. (Cos. A, B, C & D)  
(atchd. to Arty. Bns.)  
183rd FA Bn. (155 How.).

The Fifteenth German Army, with Headquarters at ALTENKIRCHEN, was charged with the defense of the sector between the SIEG and LAHN Rivers.

In the zone of the VII U. S. Army Corps where the 3rd Armored Division was to make the break-out of the bridgehead on 25 March, were eight German Divisions in various stages of depletion. Six of these Divisions defended in the actual breakthrough zone. Their effective combat strength was, however, probably roughly equivalent to two full strength Divisions. In the north the 363rd Volksgrenadier Division recently reinforced by the 62nd Volksgrenadier Division faced the U. S. 1st Infantry Division. In the center, the 3rd Parachute Division, (only one regiment of which the 5th, appeared to be present) was supposedly being relieved by the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division. Both of these divisions became engaged, and no relief was made. To the south the remains of the 9th Panzer Division faced the 104th U. S. Infantry Division. Still further south, and overlapping into VII Corps zone, was 340th Volksgrenadier Division and 11th Panzer Division. There were in the sector several miscellaneous Engineer Regiments and many service elements. As to Reserves, the only unit known to be immediately available was the 15th Panzer Regiment, of the 11th Panzer Division, in the Forest ALTENKIRCHEN just north of the city of ALTENKIRCHEN. This Regiment was fairly strong and equipped with Panthers and a few Tigers. From the south, it was believed that units of Battle Group (Kampf Gruppe) size were capable of intervention. The 5th Panzer Army to the north had the 116th Panzer and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions and possibly battle groups from the 130th (Panzer Lehr) Division which were a threat not considered too serious in view of the powerful American Ninth Army attack developing from WESER Bridgehead.

The 3rd Armored Division's initial objective was the

road center of ALTENKIRCHEN, thence east to successive objectives to include crossings over the DILL River between DILLENBURG and HERBORN.

The attack formation was Combat Commands abreast with Combat Command "A" on the right and Combat Command "B" on the left, each in two task force columns. Combat Command "R" followed the two center routes prepared for intervention in either zone. The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion followed the left Task Force of Combat Command "B" on the northern route, protecting the left flank.

In this formation the Division passed through elements of the 1st Infantry Division on the north, and the 140th Infantry Division on the south, at 0400 on 25 March.

Contact was immediate. Enemy positions were strongly supported by anti-tank and artillery fire. In the hilly wooded terrain, tanks were virtually road bound, and the enemy had constructed road blocks on all routes. In some cases mines were employed. During the first day (25 March), an advance of about 12 road miles was made by reducing successive road blocks with combined infantry, tank and artillery action. The fighting continued through the night and bridgeheads across the MEHR River were secured.

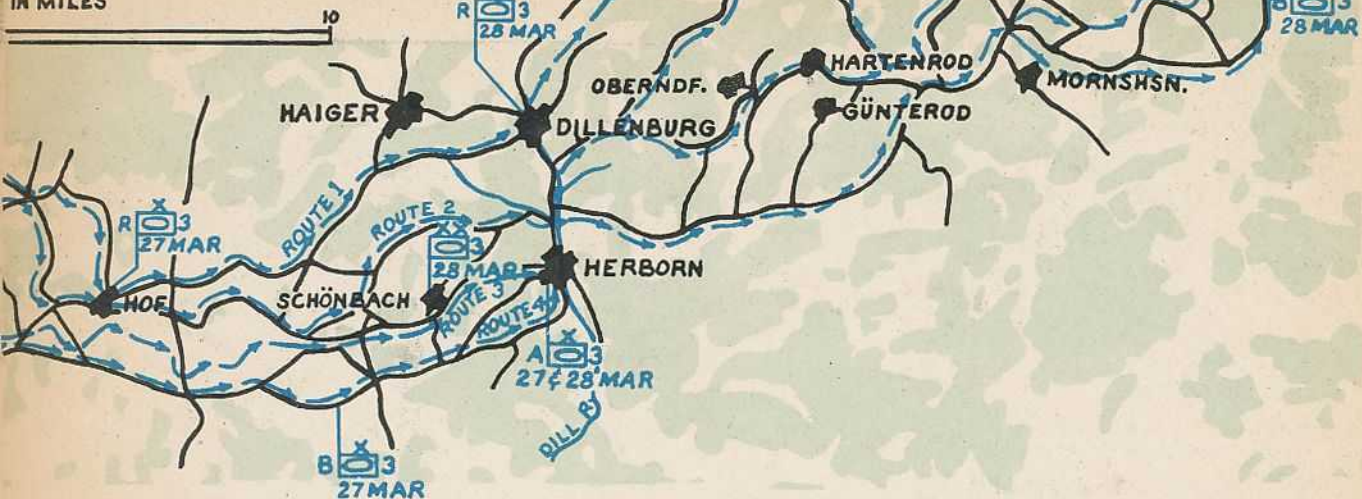
On 26 March both Task Force "Doan" and Task Force "Kane" (Combat Command "A") broke through enemy defenses and made rapid, lightly opposed gains to ALTENKIRCHEN. On the north flank, however, both Task Force "Lovely" and Task Force "Welborn" (Combat Command "B") met stubborn defenses as they approached ALTENKIRCHEN. Enemy tanks and artillery were active. Close support fighter bombers destroyed many enemy vehicles while working with the Ground Controllers of Combat Command "B", especially in the woods north of ALTENKIRCHEN. As the advance of Combat Command "B" became slower and more costly in midafternoon, Combat Command "R" was committed between Combat Commands "A" and "B", to complete the clearing of ALTENKIRCHEN and advance the division's left flank to a point abreast of Combat Command "A" on the right. Flanking the stubborn defenses northwest of ALTENKIRCHEN, both Task Force "Richardson" and Task Force "Hogan" (Combat Command "R") advanced easily. The outflanked German forces withdrew to the north and Combat Command "B" assembled just west of ALTENKIRCHEN in Division Reserve that night.

On the extreme right flank, Task Force "Doan" was held up by destroyed bridges across the WIED River, southeast of ALTENKIRCHEN, and again fought through



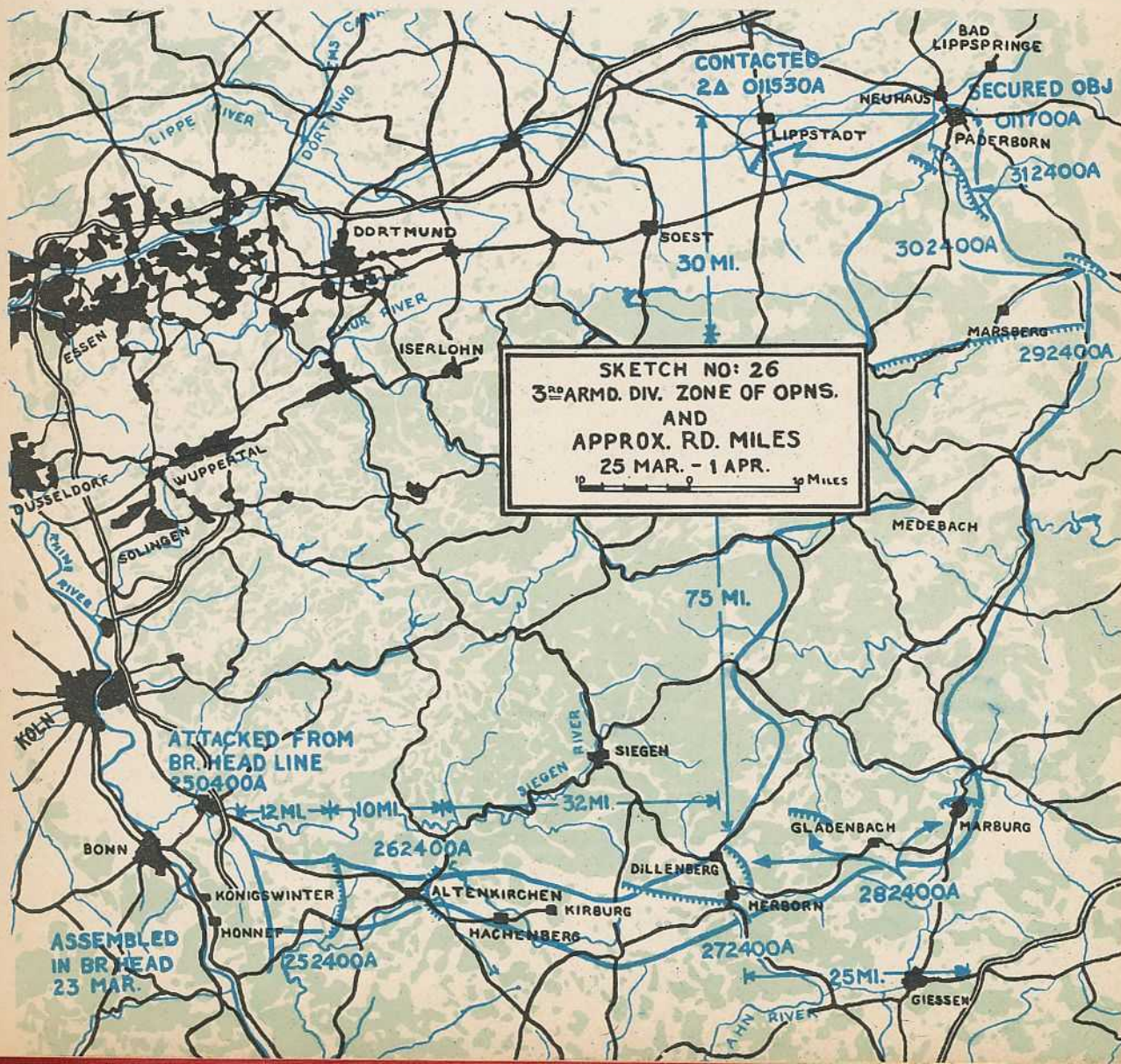
# BRIDGE HEAD TO MARBURG

28 MAR  
IN MILES



the night. The other task forces coiled for the night.  
On the left, the attack of the 1st Infantry Division was held by heavy enemy resistance. The 104th Infantry

Division following closely behind the 3rd Armored Division to mop up bypassed pockets of resistance advanced generally to the vicinity of ALTENKIRCHEN.

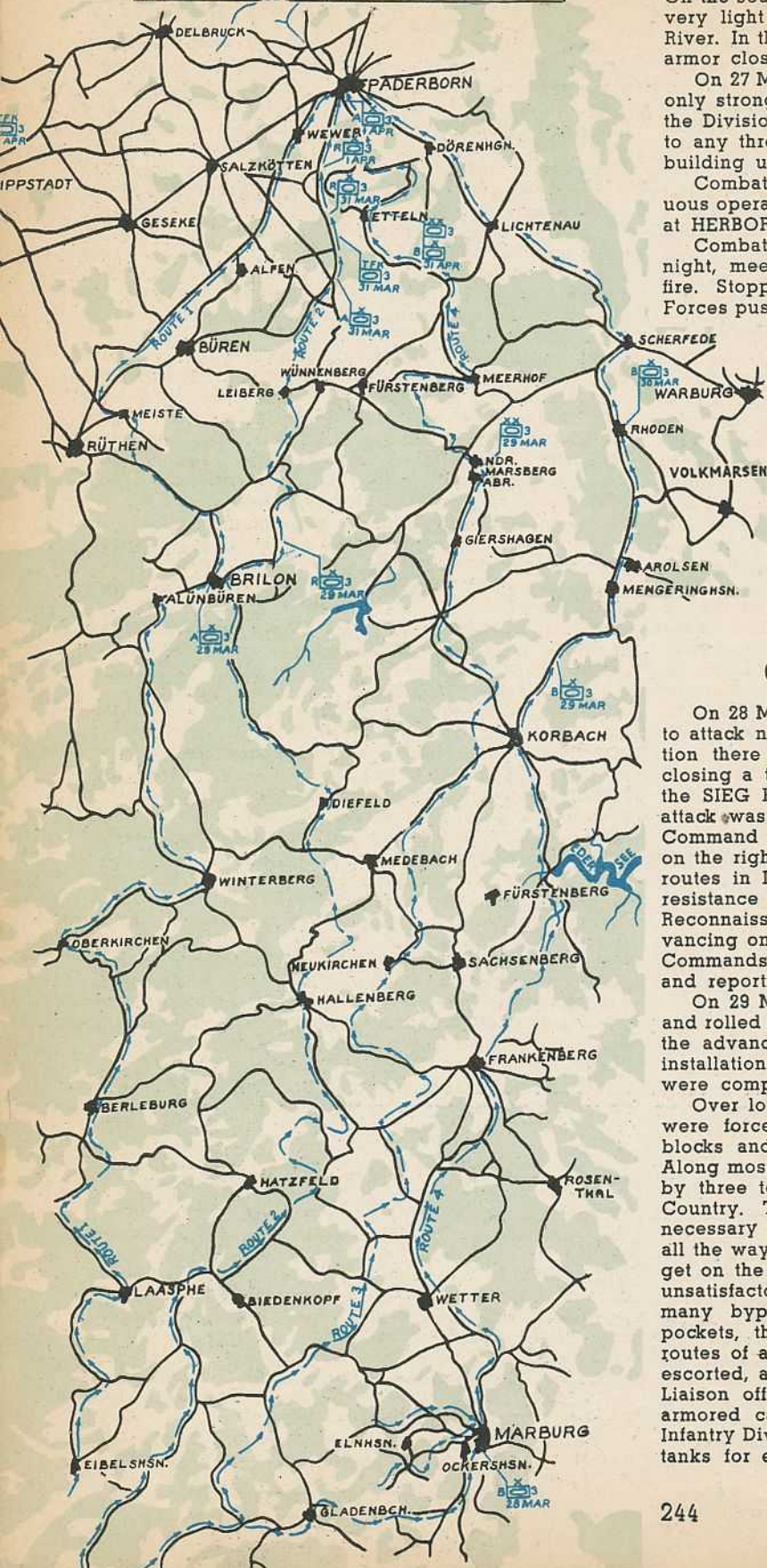




# COMBAT ROUTES FROM MARBURG TO PADERBORN

28 MAR. TO 1 APR.

SCALE  
STATUTE MILES 10 5 0 5 10



On the south, III Corps armor, advancing rapidly against very light and scattered resistance, reached the DILL River. In that zone the 9th Infantry Division followed the armor closely.

On 27 March the breakthrough became a reality. The only strong resistance met was in the northern part of the Division zone where the enemy reacted sensitively to any threat to the SIEG River line on which he was building up.

Combat Command "A" completed 72 hours of continuous operation by seizing crossings over the DILL River at HERBORN intact.

Combat Command "R" fought straight through the night, meeting considerable small arms and anti-tank fire. Stopping only long enough to refuel, both Task Forces pushed on to DILLENBURG and seized the crossings there.

Combat Command "B" closed up close behind Combat Command "A" and, during the late afternoon of 27 and night of 27-28 March, both task forces passed through Combat Command "A" and attacked east against little or no resistance seizing MARBURG and RUNZHAUSEN. The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion passed through Combat Command "R" at DILLENBURG and moved to BOTTENHORN and HOLYZHAUSEN without resistance, thus extending the line from MARBURG to DILLENBURG in preparation for the swing to the north.

## Circling the Ruhr

On 28 March, the 3rd Armored Division was ordered to attack north to secure PADERBORN and make junction there with elements of the Ninth Army, thereby closing a trap around all the German troops between the SIEG River and the Ruhr. The formation for this attack was again Combat Commands abreast, Combat Command "R" on the left and Combat Command "B", on the right, with Combat Command "A" following two routes in Division Reserve. This time, however, since resistance was scattered and weak and unlocated, the Reconnaissance Battalion was given the mission of advancing on the two center routes ahead of the Combat Commands and either "brushing aside" or bypassing and reporting all resistance encountered.

On 29 March, the attack to the north started at 0600 and rolled until 2200 that night. There was little to stop the advance even though enemy troops, vehicles and installations were encountered in large numbers. They were completely surprised and disorganized.

Over long miles of each route the armored columns were forced to travel cross country to bypass road blocks and stretches of poor road or weak bridges. Along most of the way, the four routes were separated by three to five miles of the rugged Western-Woods Country. To get from one column to another it was necessary to use the artillery liaison planes or travel all the way back to the line of departure, cut over and get on the route desired. Even this latter method was unsatisfactory, because the spaces between routes held many bypassed pockets of resistance. From these pockets, the enemy continually infiltrated across our routes of advance. Supply vehicles had to be strongly escorted, and even so, several were lost to ambushes. Liaison officers frequently traveled in light tanks or armored cars. To reach the Headquarters of the 1st Infantry Division a liaison officer took a platoon of light tanks for escort.



Burning German vehicles dotted the countryside, and prisoners marched back to collecting points almost in an unbroken line. Only the extreme left column, Task Force "Hogan", struck strong resistance of defended road blocks. When the advance ended that night leading combat elements had covered about 75 miles of road distance. Other elements had covered over 90 miles in the lightning advance to PADERBORN, the longest single day's advance of the entire war.

On 30 March the SS Panzer Reconnaissance Training Regiment stationed near PADERBORN ordered its two battalions to build up a defensive line from HELMERN to HOLTHEIM immediately. (See sketch No. 27). The Regimental Command Post proposed to move to LICHTENAU. (Quite accurately, German intelligence reported American armored columns in WUNNENBERG (8 kilometers southwest of HELMERN) and at NIEDER MARSBERG, as of 2400 on 29 March). This line was the first coordinated attempt to stop the 3rd Armored's drive toward PADERBORN. All but two of the companies actually reached and occupied this line, but since it covered only about half of the American threat (the eastern half), it was easily turned at its right flank. However, PADERBORN was not to be taken so simply. Its defenses, though not as originally conceived by the German Commanders, were strong and many of the defenders were fanatically determined. The defense finally evolved was controlled by three major units: The 507th GHQ Tiger Tank Battalion, SS Armored Reconnaissance Replacement Training Regiment and the SS Tank Replacement Training Regiment. These units were greatly increased in size if not strength by stragglers from many other units and odds and ends of Luftwaffe personnel from nearby airfields. The 326th German Infantry Division is believed to have been scheduled to move from NORTHEIM (116 kilometers to the east) to PADERBORN, as well as many 88 mm dual purpose guns from WARBURG, but neither appeared. The 512th Heavy Tank Destroyer Battalion was known to be in the vicinity of DAHL, SCHWANEY, and HERBRAM. Equipped with twenty-five 128 mm guns mounted on Tiger chassis, this battalion, while never engaged, was a constant potential threat. Sectors assigned to the controlling units were:

West of NORDBORCHEN - KIRCHBORCHEN road — 1st Bn. Armd. Rcn. Repl. Tng. Regt.; east of LICHTENAU (exclusive) — 2nd Bn. Armd. Rcn. Repl. Training Regt.; LICHTENAU to SCHERFEDE — 500th Tank Repl. Tng. Regt. The 507th GHQ Tank Bn. operated in both Regimental sectors.

When the 3rd Armored Division resumed the attack on 30 March, the two Reconnaissance columns became engaged at WUNNENBERG and HUSEN, and were passed through by Task Force "Richardson" and Task Force "Welborn". Task Force "Hogan" had continued operations throughout the night and reached WEWER. On the right Task Force "Lovely" became strongly engaged near WREXEN (about 2 miles southwest of SCHERFEDE). Task Force "Richardson" found KIRCHBORCHEN strongly defended and engaged many enemy tanks. The fighting was heavy all day at WREXEN, KIRCHBORCHEN and WEWER with slow progress. Task Force "Welborn", after fighting almost all day to clear the stubbornly defended towns of HUSEN, HENGLARN, and ETTELN, returned to the road that runs east out of the northern edge of ETTELN and moved through the heavy woods northeast of ETTELN. Tank elements of Welborn's Task Force debouched from the northern edge of the woods against no resistance, so the infantry mounted on halftracks and prepared to follow. The route turned north about two miles east of KIRCHBORCHEN. It was late afternoon when enemy tanks

and self-propelled guns, which had cleverly maneuvered into positions, took this strip of road (from the intersection where the route turned north to the point of debouchment) under heavy fire from both sides after allowing tank elements and one infantry company to pass. It was here that the Division Commander and his party, which at the time included the Division Artillery Commander, the G-3 and an Artillery Battalion Commander were pinned down by the enemy tank fire while attempting to reach Welborn's headquarters. At dusk General Rose issued radio orders to Task Force "Doan", that was following Task Force "Welborn", to clear out this enemy force. Shortly thereafter he was captured while trying to make an escape to the west, and killed by his nervous captor who fired at the General with a machine pistol from the turret of a Tiger tank.

At first light on 31 March an artillery liaison plane was dispatched to Combat Command "A" command post, which was following the number two route back of Task Force "Kane" and brought General Hickey to the Division Command Post on route three to assume command of the Division. Colonel Doan assumed command of Combat Command "A" and Lieutenant Colonel Boles assumed command of Doan's Task Force.

All during the night patrols and commanders of Task Force Boles had scouted out the position of the enemy that had cut Task Force "Welborn's" column while close enemy contact kept the other committed elements pinned in place.

Enemy positions were well dug in and manned by hundreds of panzerfaust and bazooka teams. Even heavy artillery and mortar concentrations could not rout them out. Task Force "Richardson" found that flame throwers skillfully used could be persuasive however. During the day Hogan secured WEWER, Richardson, NORDBORCHEN and the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, DORENHAGEN and EGGERINGHAUSEN. Task Force "Lovely" was relieved at WREXEN by the first elements of the 104th Division to arrive in the area and moved through HUSEN and ETTELN to relieve the Reconnaissance Battalion.

A part of the Tank-Infantry force that had cut Welborn's column withdrew to the north and east during the night after destroying many American vehicles caught in the cross fire. They took a few prisoners with them on their tanks and other vehicles. However the main strength of the force remained to fight it out with Boles and Welborn, and resisted stubbornly. One force composed of about 200 infantrymen supported by five Tiger Tanks counterattacked at HAMBORN, but were beaten back. By nightfall, the area was cleared sufficiently to allow the preparation for a coordinated attack on PADERBORN to get under way.

## Closing the Gap

The original plan for attacking PADERBORN called for the commitment of the two relatively fresh task forces of Combat Command "A", that is Task Force "Kane" and Task Force "Boles", by passing them through Combat Command "R" in the vicinity of WEWER and NORDBORCHEN in a northeasterly direction toward the city. Task Force "Welborn" was to attack due north and clear the east side of PADERBORN, while Task Force "Lovely" covered the Division right by attacking to seize LICHTENAU. Combat Command "R" was to take SALZKOTTEN, on the Division left.

Before this attack could be launched as planned, orders came from higher headquarters that necessitated



certain changes in the plan. At 0300 on 1 April Commanding General, VII Corps ordered the 3rd Armored Division to send a force to LIPPSTADT, some 20 miles to the west, to make junction there with elements of the 2nd Armored Division, which had broken out of the Ninth Army's Rhine bridgehead and was driving rapidly eastward north of the industrial RUHR district. In order to accomplish this mission, Task Force "Kane" was diverted from the PADERBORN attack, and Task Force "Lovely" was ordered to leave only a blocking force west of LICHTENAU and join in the PADERBORN attack on the right of Task Force "Welborn". Task Force "Kane" was ordered to move via GESEKE and BOCKENFÖRDE as rapidly as possible to LIPPSTADT and establish contact with the 2nd Armored Division.

Task Force "Kane" moved out before first light on this mission. Most of the resistance met was not determined and not organized. Many Non-German prisoners were taken from flak units which fired a few rounds and then either fled or surrendered. By 1520, the Air OP planes of the 2nd Armored and 3rd Armored Divisions were in radio contact in the vicinity of LIPPSTADT, and each had identified leading ground troops of both divisions.

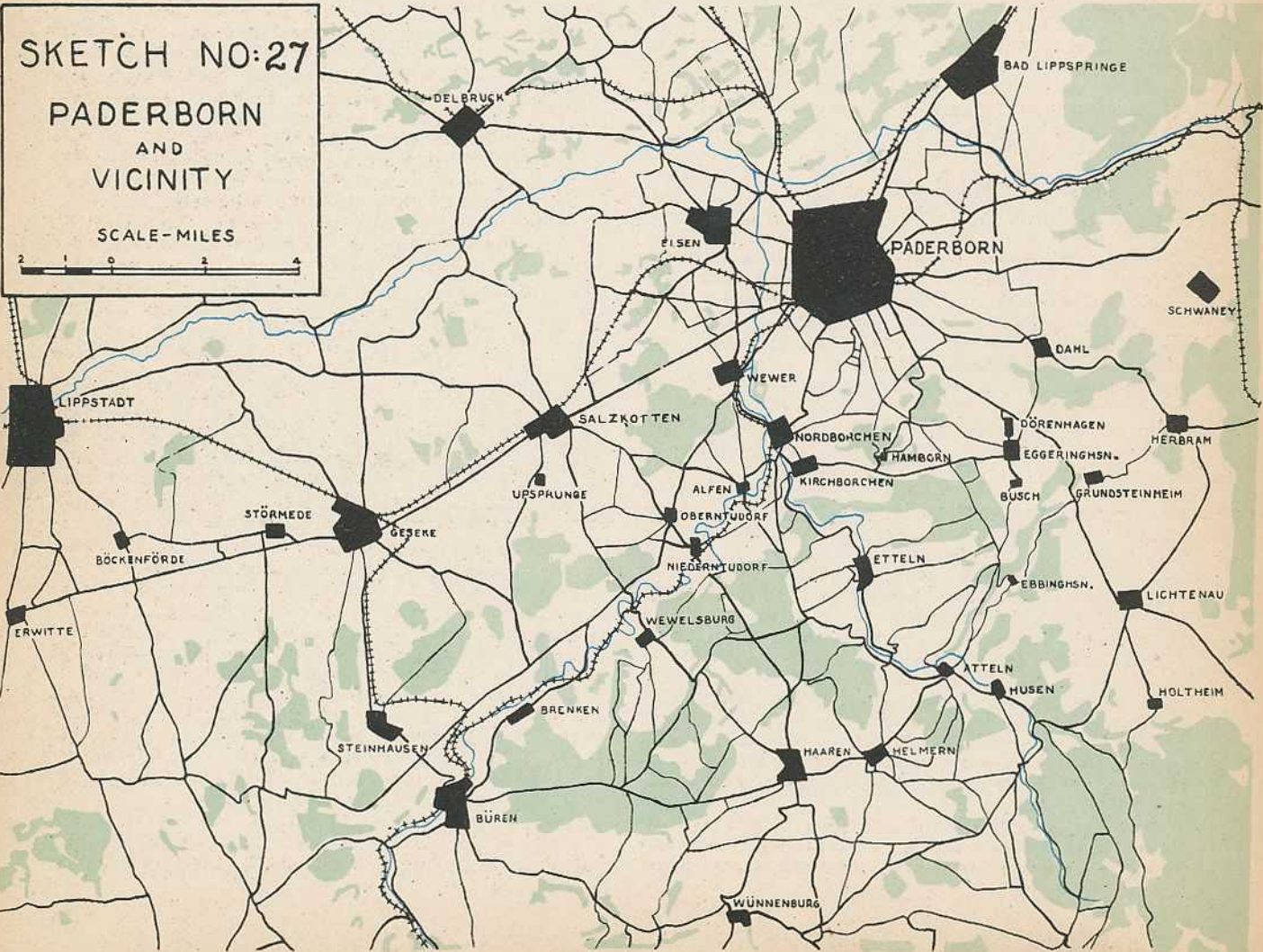
At 1530 Task Force "Kane" made physical contact with elements of the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment. The great RUHR pocket, which yielded 374,000 German prisoners of war was closed.

The fall of the bomb-torn and burned city of PADERBORN at 1700 was partially anti-climax. Its defenses had crumbled rapidly before the three converging Task Forces making the assault. Initially, a few dug in tanks at the southern outskirts delayed the attack and several isolated groups offered some resistance before surrendering. On the whole, however, the job was lighter than might have been expected in a city that controlled the entire remaining communications net connecting the German forces surrounded in the RUHR POCKET with the rest of Germany.

From the day when the 3rd Armored Division broke out of the RHINE bridgehead, 25 March, to the meeting with the 2nd Armored on 1 April, the SPEARHEAD PW cage processed 20,193 prisoners. Counted enemy losses in material that the Division inflicted are given by the following table:

|                             |      |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Tanks .....                 | 35   |
| SP Guns .....               | 31   |
| Arty Pieces .....           | 48   |
| RR Guns .....               | 2    |
| Heavy AA and AT Guns ..     | 49   |
| Heavy AA Guns .....         | 146  |
| Staff Cars & Sedans .....   | 25   |
| Trucks .....                | 1263 |
| Aircraft on the ground .... | 8    |
| RR Trains .....             | 6    |
| Assault boats .....         | 15   |

SKETCH NO:27  
PADERBORN  
AND  
VICINITY  
SCALE - MILES





These figures do not include the tons of equipment overrun and captured in dumps and warehouses which run the figures to a staggering total.

During the same period, the 3rd lost 125 killed and 504 wounded. Material losses are shown in the following table:

|                          |    |
|--------------------------|----|
| MEDIUM TANKS . . . . .   | 42 |
| LIGHT TANKS . . . . .    | 11 |
| HALF TRACKS . . . . .    | 19 |
| 2½ Ton GMC . . . . .     | 15 |
| Motorcycles . . . . .    | 5  |
| ¼ ton 4 x 4 . . . . .    | 11 |
| Misc. vehicles . . . . . | 11 |

On 2, 3, and 4 April, the Division area was swept for remaining enemy pockets and defenses were further coordinated and strengthened. On 4 April the northeast corner of the RUHR pocket was a secure weld and the business of clearing the pocket itself was under way.

The 8th Armored Division which had driven north of PADERBORN to BAD LIPSPRINGE, reassembled and attacked southwest of PADERBORN and GESEKE.

Further to the north the Ninth Army's 2nd Armored Division resumed the attack to the east followed by the 83rd Infantry Division.

Southwest of the 3rd Armored Sector, the 1st Infantry Division had established a defensive sector facing generally west. While southeast of the 3rd Armored was the 104th Division facing north and east and prepared to continue the attack to the east.

The next natural barrier in the zone of the VII Corps was the WESER River, over 30 miles to the east. Intelligence reports indicated that the bridges over this stream were still intact on 5 April. Accordingly, the 3rd Armored Division was ordered to attack as rapidly and as soon as possible and to take these crossings if possible.

## To the East

(See combat route maps on following pages)

At about noon on 5 April, the attack to the East was resumed. Again, there were four parallel routes on which Combat Commands "A" and "B" moved abreast in Task Force columns with Combat Command "B" on the right. From north to south the leading task forces were; Boles, Kane, Welborn and Lovelady. Combat Command "R," in Division Reserve, followed on the two center routes, Hogan, behind Kane and Richardson, following Welborn. The 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion followed Task Force "Lovelady" on the south route. Resistance was scattered and light initially, consisting principally of road blocks defended by bazooka teams and small arms—a familiar pattern. All that afternoon and through an exceptionally dark night, the advance continued.

On 6 April, it was apparent that a coordinated defense line had been reached along the WESER River, and that the WESER bridges could not be taken intact. Task Force "Boles" was heavily engaged in OTTBERGEN, where strong road blocks had been erected by the enemy and were defended with small arms, anti-tank and artillery fire. Boles was able to reach AMELUNXEN with one battle group. Another, attacking south from OTTBERGEN toward DRENKE, into which town enemy tanks were seen to withdraw, encountered a very strong enemy position about halfway between OTTBERGEN and DRENKE.

Kane fought his way through RHEDER and ERKEIN to TIETELSEN where he left a containing force and bypassed to the south only to become engaged just

to the east with strongly defended road blocks.

Welborn cleared HAINHOLZ and BORGHOLZ and reached HAARBRUCK.

Lovelady reached MANRODE where strong defenses supported by anti-tank and artillery fire halted his advance.

On the south and southeast, the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion probed with strong patrols toward TRENDELBURG. On the north flank the 83rd Infantry Division had moved up well abreast, and, on the south, the 104th Infantry Division was approaching the WESER in their zone.

On 7 April, the 3rd Armored closed on the west bank of the WESER, taking the towns of GODELHEIM, WEHRDEN, BLANKENAU, BEVERUNGEN, HERSTELLE, CARLSHAFEN and HELMARSHAUSEN and finding all the bridges blown by the enemy. The small enemy garrisons left in these towns defended stubbornly.

Two bridgeheads were securely established over the WESER River by this time. One in the zone of the 83rd Division and another in the 2nd Infantry Division's zone immediately south of the 104th Division.

The 1st Infantry Division began moving up into the 3rd Armored Division zone on 7 April. It was planned that the 1st and 104th Divisions would force crossings simultaneously to form VII Corps bridgeheads while Combat Command "R" would cross in the zone of the 2nd Division and attack USLAR from the south to assist this operation. Combat Command "R" was reinforced with the 54th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and Company D, 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

When the operation got underway on 8 April, it was seen that things were going easier than had been anticipated. The 104th Division crossed with minor opposition as did the 1st Division. By night, elements of the 104th Division were closing on USLAR. Accordingly, Combat Command "R" was given the new objective of HARDEGEN. The WESER crossing was made at GIESELWERDER. That night Combat Command "B" started moving into the 104th Division bridgehead, followed by the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

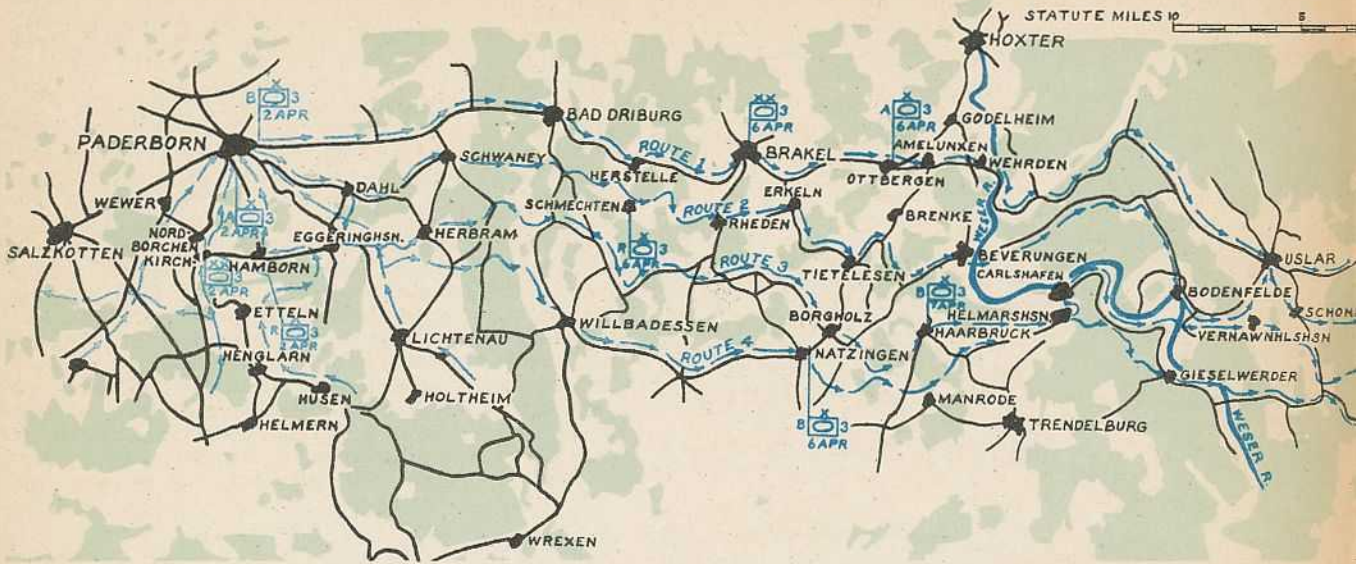
On the morning of 9 April, Combat Command "R" attacked northeast from the vicinity of IMBSEN while the Combat Command "B" column was still crossing the river. Howze's left column, Task Force "Hogan" moved rapidly and with light opposition, and took HARDEGEN easily. Task Force Richardson engaged a strong concentration of enemy tanks near HARSTE early in the morning. This task force was disengaged about noon, bypassed the HARSTE position to the west and continued on to come abreast of Task Force "Hogan." Together, these Task Forces pushed on to NORTHEIM which was cleared that night.

With Task Force "Welborn" on the North and Task Force "Lovelady" on the South, Combat Command "B" formed and attacked east immediately after the crossing of the WESER was completed. The enemy tanks in the HARSTE area were outmaneuvered. In addition, fighter-bomber support attacked them in strength, and in conjunction with the fire of Combat Command "B"'s tank and anti-tank weapons. Several were destroyed and the others were forced to withdraw. That night Task Force "Lovelady" secured a bridgehead over the LEINE Creek and Division Engineers constructed a treadway bridge. Task Force "Welborn" captured an intact bridge by infantry action.

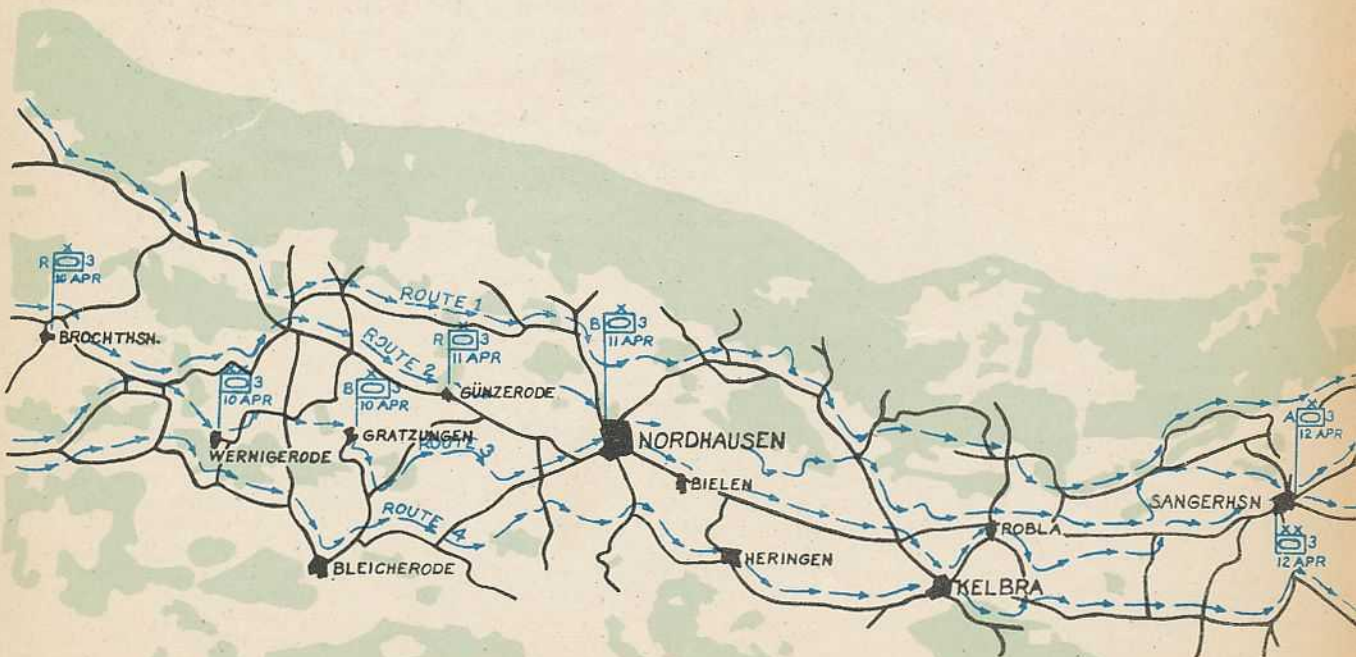
Meanwhile Combat Command "A" crossed the WESER at BEVERUNGEN and GIESELWERDER and followed the advance, remaining in Division Reserve.



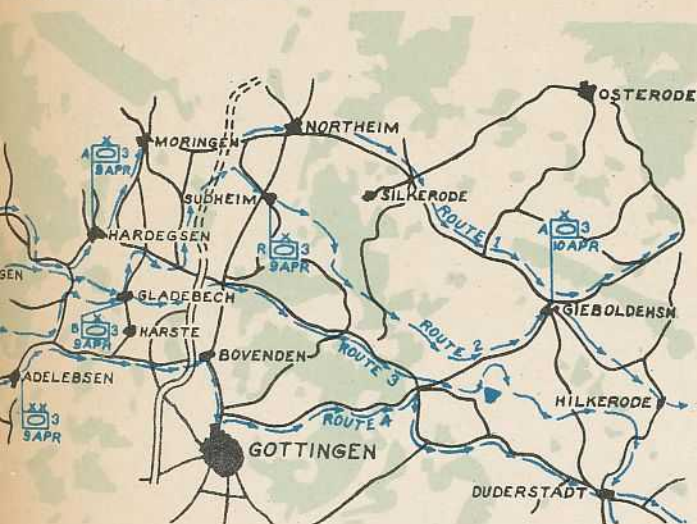
COMBAT ROUTES FROM PADERBORN TO DUDERSTADT  
2 APR. TO 10 APR.



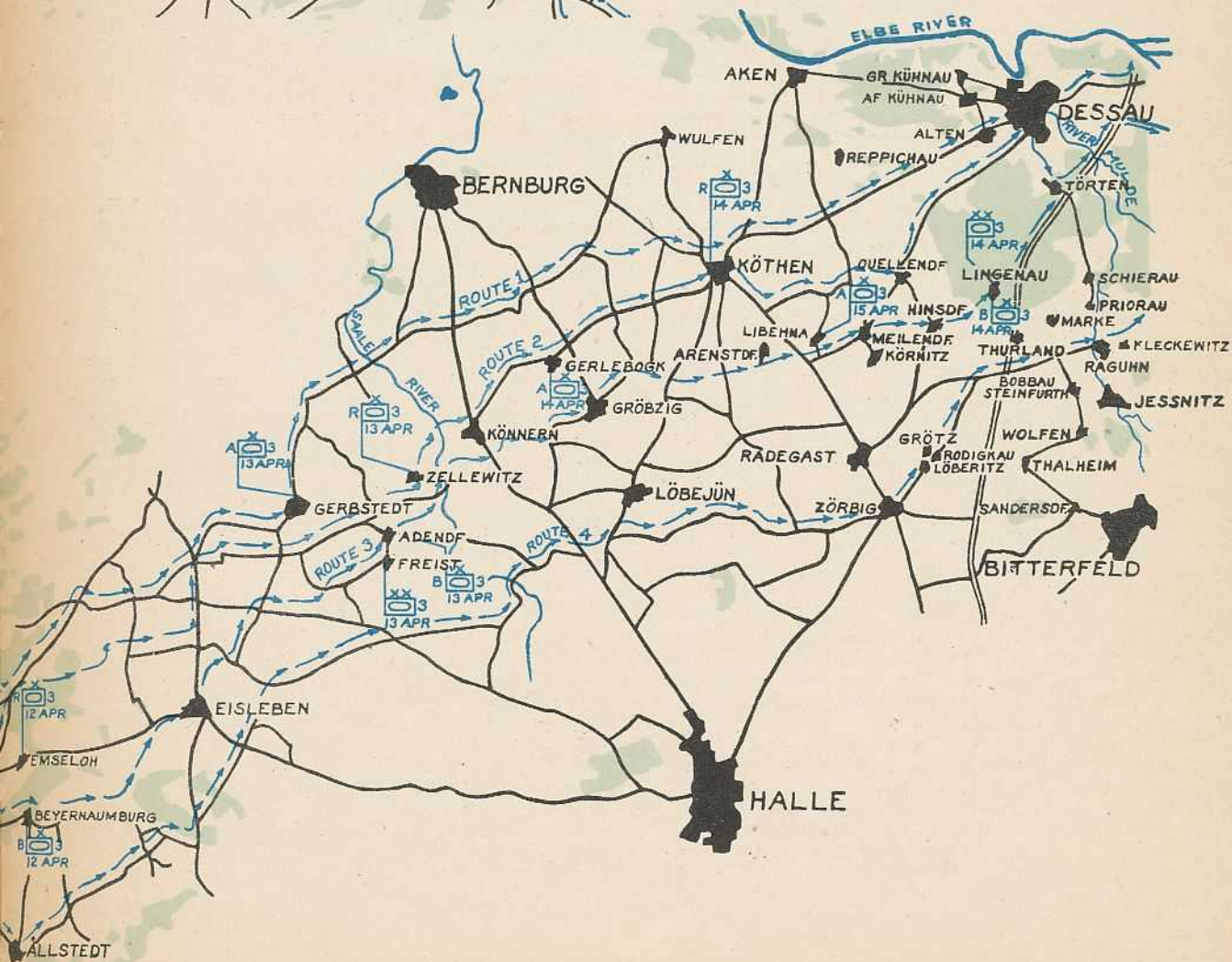
COMBAT ROUTES FROM DUDERSTADT TO THE FINAL  
OBJECTIVE, THE ELBE, MULDE RIVER 10-25 APRIL







The Corps Commander ordered the 3rd Armored Division to pay particular attention to blocking the south exits of the HARZ MOUNTAINS where the enemy was building up a very strong redoubt position. Enemy troops on the south edge of these mountains were given the mission of covering the deployment of troops already in the mountains and others coming in from the East and Northeast. A separate command, was established to organize and defend this position. The nucleus of this new Corps was strengthened initially by certain SS tank and infantry formations which withdrew from the PADERBORN area. The nature of the HARZ mountain terrain was particularly suited to such defensive fighting; but, from the beginning, the plan was doomed to failure. At best it could only accomplish a delay in one particular sector. The redoubt could be bypassed both on the North and South and sealed off effectively. Regardless of the number of troops the enemy was able to bring into the mountain position (they eventually assembled 80,000 there) they would be committed to defensive fighting, and sooner or later, as the RUHR Pocket was cleared, sufficient pressure could be brought to bear to reduce the position whatever its strength. Nevertheless, the enemy was





determined to carry out this mission for whatever it was worth.

The 3rd Armored was further ordered not to proceed beyond NORDHAUSEN until relieved by infantry elements of VII Corps.

On 10 April, the advance continued toward NORDHAUSEN. Enemy resistance was scattered, as on previous days, and the scattered groups continued to withdraw to the north into the HARZ. Any attempt to turn north from the main routes was met with vigorous enemy action. In and around GIEBOLDEHAUSEN, Combat Command "R" encountered enemy infantry and tanks, and after a full day of hard fighting, succeeded in occupying the little towns of SILKERODE and BOCKELNHAGEN.

Combat Command "B" advanced to positions just west of NORDHAUSEN without serious resistance. The muddy terrain slowed the advance considerably however.

Meanwhile Combat Command "A" had been given the mission of seizing OSTERODE and HERZBERG. Both Task Forces of the Combat Command moved out on this mission on the afternoon of 10 April, and by late that night the two towns were cleared. The enemy had resisted stubbornly in both towns and continued to maintain strong defenses on the routes leading north into the HARZ mountains. Eight or ten heavy tanks or self-propelled guns and a battalion of medium artillery located near LONAU supported the SS troops defending OSTERODE and HERZBERG.

NORDHAUSEN was entered on 11 April by Combat Command "B". The enemy offered little opposition in the town itself. Perhaps they feared being connected in some way with the notorious NORDHAUSEN concentration camp near the city. This camp was uncovered in all its depravity by the 3rd Armored Division and steps were taken to insure that photographic and other evidence was collected before any changes were made. Even the great piles of starved dead were left as found.

Division medical personnel quickly removed the hundreds of starvation cases to emergency hospitals where they could be cared for. Many of the less severe cases were cared for on the premises while systematic arrangements were made to save as many lives as possible by organizing the facilities of the camp. Medical Officers of the 3rd Armored remained in charge until relieved as the Division moved on.

North of NORDHAUSEN at a place called "Dora" the 3rd Armored uncovered one of the German's most extensive and elaborate underground factories. This factory, devoted to the construction of V-1, and V-2 weapons and Junkers Airplane Motors as well as extensive experimentation with a super-secret V-3 anti-aircraft weapon, was completely underground. Some of the tunnels were at a depth of six hundred feet and extended for two miles. Here and at the V-2 Assembly plant at KLEINBORDUNGEN, the most able-bodied of the inmates from the NORDHAUSEN Concentration Camp were forced to work at manufacturing and assembling parts. Both of these plants were taken and secured by the 3rd Armored until relieved.

The blocking positions at NORDHAUSEN covered a front stretching from OSTERODE and HERZBERG, where Combat Command "A" was attacking a strong and stubborn enemy, through the comparatively quiet sector from BARTOFELDE to WOFFLEBEN, held by Combat Command "R" and the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, thence south to include NORDHAUSEN and vicinity, held by Combat Command "B".

On 11 April, the 414th Infantry Regiment (less 2nd Battalion) was detached from the 3rd Armored Division. The 2nd Battalion, 414th Infantry Regiment remained

attached and with Task Force "Lovely". The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment and the 3rd Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment were attached to the 3rd Armored and, in turn, attached to Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "R".

The continuation of the attack from NORDHAUSEN depended largely upon being relieved by infantry elements and on securing sufficient supplies of 50 weight oil for tank engines as well as gasoline. The reliefs were made quickly, and a sufficient quantity of oil was secured to reach SANGERHAUSEN. Only light resistance barred the way. SANGERHAUSEN was reached easily, the first task force entered the town about midday on 12 April. That night the Division closed into a tight leaguer around SANGERHAUSEN and pushed strong patrols to the east. These patrols drew heavy anti-tank fire four or five miles northeast of town. The attack was ordered to continue to the northeast on the following day to seize crossings over the ELBE River in the vicinity of DESSAU and WITTENBERG. Heavy weight oil and gasoline were again short. This time some lighter oil was substituted, sacrificing a certain degree of engine performance for time gained.

The attack carried to the SAALE River on 13 April. Task Force "Hogan" and Task Force "Lovely" forced crossings and two bridges were constructed during the night 13-14 April, allowing the attack to continue early 14 April.

## The Last Push

Along the next natural barrier, the ELBE-MULDE River line, parts or all of three new German Divisions occupied defense positions. These positions were the outer defenses of BERLIN. They were the POTSDAM, SCHARNHORST, and VON HUTTEN Divisions. Their personnel was drawn from Officers' Candidate Schools of the Army and from the Navy and Hitler Jugend organizations. In addition many convalescents and most of the Luftwaffe Personnel in the ROSSLAU-DESSAU area had been recruited. For a task that might be called "scraping the bottom of the manpower barrel", the High Command had done an excellent job. These three divisions, totaling 4000-6000 combat strength each, were by no means motley crews. They were formed in March and had little training as units, but each contained a good proportion of trained and experienced personnel. For what it may have been worth, Hitler himself had allegedly paid them a visit on 13 April. He made a pep talk in which he promised not only to defend BERLIN with these fine Divisions and other like them, but also that he would "Personally direct a powerful counter-attack" at the proper time.

The POTSDAM Division was on the north. Its southern boundary included AKEN where it joined the SCHARNHORST. The SCHARNHORST sector extended from AKEN along the ELBE and MULDE to the Autobahn, south of DESSAU. There the sector of the VON HUTTEN Division began and extended along the west bank of the MULDE River to include RAGHUN, thence southwest to RODIGKAU.

Upon crossing the SAALE River, enemy resistance stiffened notably along the entire front. On the north, Task Force "Hogan" forced their way into the southern part of KOTHEN on the afternoon of 14 April. About two battalions defended KOTHEN, and their defense was determined and skillful.

Task Force "Richardson" had crossed the SAALE following Hogan. About seven kilometers west of KOTHEN the Task Force was stopped by a strong







further incidents occurred.

In order to provide further security for the long, loose front, Combat Command "A" was committed facing DESSAU, which was considered the greatest threat, and built up a defensive sector in the QUELLEN-DORF area between Combat Commands "R" and "B".

The Reconnaissance Battalion sent heavy patrols through RENDIN, THALHEIM and SANDERSDORF clearing minor resistance there. They found the larger towns of WOLFEN and BITTERFELD were strongly defended.

On 16 April, the Division was engaged in many directions. The front was about forty miles long. It reached from BERNBURG, where Task Force "Richardson" had sealed one of the enemy's last remaining exits of the HARZ mountains, through KOTHEN to the MULDE River at the Autobahn crossing, where Task Force "Welborn" was attempting to construct a bridge, then south through the western edge of RAGUHN and southwest through THALHEIM. The rear areas were not completely cleared, many villages still harbored small groups of enemy, and the HAIDEBURG Forest which reaches from just south of DESSAU almost to THURLAND, provided a convenient build-up area for enemy counterattacks and raids.

Combat Command "B" had extended the line to the south by seizing the western half of RAGUHN and the town of PRIORAU, MARKE, SCHIERAU and SIEBENHAUSEN. Simultaneously, the infantry of Task Force "Orr" (Formerly Task Force "Kane") plus one company of the 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion swept the northern part of the HAIDEBURG Forest that lay between Combat Commands "A" and "B".

At about 1030 on 17 April a group of about one hundred and fifty enemy troops using commando tactics attacked and captured the Command Post of Task Force "Lovely" which was in THURLAND, and another day of thrusts and parries was started. Company "D" of the 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion attacked from ZORBIG to retake the town. Late in the afternoon after battling all day against heavy artillery, mortar and small-arms fire, the Reconnaissance Company retook the town. Most of the Task Force Headquarters personnel were recovered.

Task Force "Hogan" pushed on to the north and entered AKEN on the ELBE River.

Task Force "Richardson" was placed under Division control and moved south to HINSDORF to attack BOBBAU-STEINFURTH and JESSNITZ. Just as Richardson's attack got under way at about 1400, an enemy tank and infantry force launched a counterattack from BOBBAU-STEINFURTH. This attack was quickly turned back by heavy artillery and air cooperation fighter bombers which accounted for eight enemy tanks.

Late in the afternoon, higher headquarters ordered that the MULDE bridgehead be withdrawn to the west bank. The First Army's limit of advance had been set as the west bank of the ELBE-MULDE River. Welborn started withdrawing his forces that night.

To accomplish the mission of clearing the enemy from its zone up to the Army limiting line, the 3rd Armored had yet to seize DESSAU, part of RAGUHN, BOBBAU-STEINFURTH, JESSNITZ, WOLFEN and GREPPIN on 18 April. The Division Commander decided that the attack on DESSAU would have to be delayed until the rest of the zone was cleared in order to provide sufficient strength to accomplish each separate mission.

In the northern part of the zone, Task Force "Hogan" continued to attack in AKEN. By 1720 the town was cleared and contact was established with the 83rd Infantry Division.

Having withdrawn the bridgehead force, Combat Command "B" established and maintained a defensive system from TORTEN to RAGUHN.

In the south, Combat Command "R" assumed command of Task Forces Richardson and the 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion which was reinforced by Battle Group "Miller" of Combat Command "A". Battle Group "Miller" consisted of one Company each of tanks and infantry and one section of tank destroyers. Lt. Col. Yeomans, Commanding the Reconnaissance Battalion was killed by artillery fire early on the morning of 18 April. The Executive Officer, Major Bradley, took command of the Battalion. Attacking to seize WOLFEN and GREPPIN, elements of the Reconnaissance Battalion reached and cleared the smaller towns of THALHEIM and RENDEN. The enemy counterattacked at RENDEN with about fifty infantrymen supported by three tanks, but gained nothing.

Having reached BOBBAU-STEINFURTH, Task Force "Richardson" continued to press the attack against strong enemy defenses and heavy mortar and artillery fire. A determined counterattack by about one hundred enemy infantrymen supported by three tanks was beaten back.

On 19 and 20 April, the heavy street fighting continued in BOBBAU-STEINFURTH and in WOLFEN and GREPPIN. It was not until 21 April that Task Force "Richardson" finally reached and crossed the small stream that separates BOBBAU-STEINFURTH and JESSNITZ. WOLFEN and GREPPIN were cleared on 20 April.

The attack on DESSAU was launched at 0600 on 21 April. The maximum artillery support was provided, including a sound and flash battery, and the coordinated assault was made by four Task Forces. Task Force "Hogan" attacked from the west. Task Force "Boles" and Task Force "Orr" attacked from the southwest. Task Force "Welborn" made a limited objective attack from the south with their right flank on the MULDE River. At the same time Task Force "Lovely" crossed the SPITTLE WASSER Creek to take the east portion of RAGUHN, and Task Force "Richardson" continued the attack on JESSNITZ in the face of heavy artillery and mortar fire.

The fighting in DESSAU proper developed as was expected, into a house to house battle that lasted through 22 April as the defenders were beaten back slowly toward ROSSLAU. On 23 April, there remained only one enemy pocket to be dealt with. In the bend of the MULDE River just north of DESSAU, the last of the DESSAU garrison occupied a wired-in position in the soft almost swampy ground defending the railroad bridge that led to ROSSLAU. Combat Command "A" spent a full day routing out these "Last-Ditch-Standers".

The 3rd Armored Division completed its 221st combat day on the continent of Europe on 24 April. By 25 April the 9th Division had relieved the 3rd in the whole of the DESSAU sector, and the 3rd moved into the SANGERHAUSEN area to occupy and govern that area temporarily. The Division remained in the SANGERHAUSEN area until 12 May. On that day movement began to a new occupation area generally south of Frankfurt and extending south to include DARMSTADT, east almost to ASCHAFFENBURG and west to the RHINE River. The Division closed in this area on 13 May and set about its occupation and governing duties under XIX Corps, while awaiting whatever disposition the Army Redeployment Plan might dictate.

During the 221 days of Combat on the continent of Europe the 3rd Armored Division destroyed or overran a staggering total of enemy equipment. Although an effort was made throughout the Campaign to gather



statistics of enemy vehicles and equipment destroyed, the reports could never be considered statistically accurate. When the advance was most rapid, the destruction of enemy equipment was frequently at the maximum, but at the same time, it was impossible to assess enemy losses accurately. In many cases, records were lost due to enemy action. In other cases duplications are certain to exist. For example, the destruction of enemy equipment at Mons was enormous and never can be properly segregated between direct support aircraft and ground action or, on the ground, between the 3rd Armored and 1st Infantry Divisions. With these limitations the figures given in the following table can be considered only as the best possible estimate.

| Type                         | Destroyed by<br>Air Action | Destroyed by<br>GF Action | Destroyed or<br>Abandoned<br>By the enemy | Totals      |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|-------------|
| TANKS .....                  | 348                        | 1023                      | 423                                       | 1794        |
| SP GUNS .....                | 183                        | 452                       | 307                                       | 942         |
| ARMD. Cars .....             | 279                        | 468                       | 214                                       | 961         |
| ARMD. PERS. CARRIERS         | 469                        | 1677                      | 881                                       | 3027        |
| Light AA-SP .....            |                            | 27                        |   | 27          |
| <b>TOTAL COMBAT VEHICLES</b> | <b>1279</b>                | <b>3647</b>               | <b>1825</b>                               | <b>6751</b> |

It is virtually useless to attempt to estimate the number of enemy killed and wounded in a particular action. However, the number of prisoners taken is a tangible and indisputable figure. From the time the 3rd entered combat on 29 June 1944 until the end of the European war on 8 May 1945, the 3rd Armored took 76,720 prisoners, five times the total strength of the Division.

The cost to the 3rd Armored Division of inflicting these losses is shown in the two tables that follow.

Personnel Losses \* 29 June 1944 to 12 May 1945.

#### KILLED IN ACTION

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| (including dead of wounds and injuries) . . . . .         | 2214         |
| WOUNDED in ACTION (includes injured) . . . . .            | 7451         |
| MISSING IN ACTION (includes reported prisoners) . . . . . | 706          |
| <b>TOTAL CASUALTIES</b> . . . . .                         | <b>10371</b> |

\* Includes attached 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 486th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion.

#### VEHICULAR LOSSES \*\*

29 June 1944 to 22 April 1945

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Medium Tanks . . . . .     | 633 |
| Light Tanks . . . . .      | 147 |
| Artillery Pieces . . . . . | 17  |
| Assault Guns . . . . .     | 38  |
| Half-Tracks . . . . .      | 204 |
| Armored Cars . . . . .     | 53  |
| Motorcycles . . . . .      | 115 |
| 2-½ ton Trucks . . . . .   | 88  |
| ¼ ton Trucks . . . . .     | 340 |
| All others . . . . .       | 197 |

In addition to the losses reflected in the above table, there were "temporary" losses resulting from combat operation. Crews of the Division Maintenance Battalion repaired a total of 6,324 vehicles of all types. Of this number there were 1305 Medium Tanks, 395 Light Tanks, 728 Halftracks, 1063 two and one half ton trucks, and 1260 one quarter ton trucks (peeps).

\*\* This table does not include damaged vehicles repaired within the division. It includes only those for which replacements were requested.

## — THE END —

### UNITS ATTACHED TO THE 3RD ARMORED DIVISION

| Unit                                 | Date Atchd               | Date Relieved  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| 803rd TD Bn . . . . .                | 25 June 1944 . . . . .   | 2 July 1944    |
| 703rd TD Bn . . . . .                | 25 June 1944 . . . . .   | 17 Sept 1944   |
| 486th AAA, 90mm gun . . . . .        | 25 June 1944 . . . . .   | Remained atchd |
| 967th FA Bn, 155 How . . . . .       | 29 June 1944 . . . . .   | 30 June 1944   |
| 413th AAA Bn . . . . .               | 7 July 1944 . . . . .    | 16 July 1944   |
| 963th FA Bn . . . . .                | 7 July 1944 . . . . .    | 9 July 1944    |
| 258th FA Bn . . . . .                | 8 July 1944 . . . . .    | 10 August 1944 |
| 113th Cav Group . . . . .            | 8 July 1944 . . . . .    | 10 August 1944 |
| 87th FA Bn . . . . .                 | 9 July 1944 . . . . .    | 28 August 1944 |
| 60th Inf Regt, 3rd Bn . . . . .      | 13 August 1944 . . . . . | 15 August 1944 |
| 2nd Bn, 60th Inf Regt . . . . .      | 17 August 1944 . . . . . | 19 August 1944 |
| 58th Armd FA Bn . . . . .            | 8 July 1944 . . . . .    | 10 August 1944 |
| 58th Armd FA Bn . . . . .            | 18 August 1944 . . . . . | 1 Oct 1944     |
| 258th FA Bn, SP, 155 Rifle . . . . . | 8 July 1944 . . . . .    | 10 July 1944   |
| 258th FA Bn, 155 Gun . . . . .       | 9 August 1944 . . . . .  | 14 August 1944 |
| 1st Bn, 26th Inf Regt . . . . .      | 3 Sept 1944 . . . . .    | 25 Sept 1944   |
| 47th Inf Regt . . . . .              | 6 Sept 1944 . . . . .    | 10 Sept 1944   |
| 47th RCT . . . . .                   | 25 Oct 1944 . . . . .    | 10 Nov 1944    |
| 47th Inf Regt                        |                          |                |
| 84th FA Bn                           |                          |                |
| Co "B", 9th Med Bn                   |                          |                |
| Co "C", 899th TD Bn                  |                          |                |
| Co "A", 746th Tank Bn                |                          |                |
| Batt "D", 376th AAA Bn               |                          |                |
| 1 Plat, Co "B", 15th Eng Bn          |                          |                |
| 294th Eng (C) Bn . . . . .           | 25 Oct 1944 . . . . .    | 9 Nov 1944     |
| 84th FA Bn . . . . .                 | 24 Oct 1944 . . . . .    | 11 Nov 1944    |
| 298th Eng (C) Bn . . . . .           | 9 Nov 1944 . . . . .     | 26 Nov 1944    |



| Unit  | Date Atchd               | Date Relieved  |
|---|--------------------------|----------------|
| 2nd Bn, 47th Inf Regt . . . . .                         | 24 Nov 1944 . . . . .    | 26 Nov 1944    |
| 991st FA Bn, 155 Gun . . . . .                          | 12 August 1944 . . . . . | 20 Sept 1944   |
| Co "A", 738th Tk Bn, SP ME . . . . .                    | 6 Dec 1944 . . . . .     | 15 Jan 1945    |
| 1st Bn, 60th Inf Regt . . . . .                         | 11 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 12 Dec 1944    |
| 83rd Armd FA Bn . . . . .                               | 20 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 31 Dec 1944    |
| 991st FA Bn, 155 Gun, (-2 Btrys) . . . . .              | 21 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 31 Dec 1944    |
| 1st Bn, 517th Prcht Inf Regt . . . . .                  | 22 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 26 Dec 1944    |
| 643rd TD Bn (T) . . . . .                               | 22 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 26 Dec 1944    |
| 290th RCT . . . . .                                     | 23 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 31 Dec 1944    |
| 290th Inf Regt  |                          |                |
| 898th FA Bn   |                          |                |
| Co "B", 375th Med Bn                                    |                          |                |
| Btry "B", 440th AAA Bn                                  |                          |                |
| 1 Plat, Co "B", 275th Eng Bn                            |                          |                |
| 188th FA Bn, 155 How (T) . . . . .                      | 23 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 31 Dec 1944    |
| 509th Prcht Inf Bn . . . . .                            | 23 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 29 Dec 1944    |
| 289th RCT . . . . .                                     | 24 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 29 Dec 1944    |
| 289 Inf Regt  |                          |                |
| 897th FA Bn   |                          |                |
| Co "A", Med Bn  |                          |                |
| 730th FA Bn, 155 How                                    |                          |                |
| Btry "A", 440th AAA Bn                                  |                          |                |
| Cos "A" & "C", 87th Chem Bn . . . . .                   | 24 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 31 Dec 1944    |
| 298th Eng (C) Bn . . . . .                              | 27 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 30 Dec 1944    |
| Co "B", 297th Eng (C) Bn . . . . .                      | 27 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 30 Dec 1944    |
| 2nd Bn, 112th Inf Regt . . . . .                        | 28 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 30 Dec 1944    |
| 331st Inf Regt . . . . .                                | 29 Dec 1944 . . . . .    | 31 Dec 1944    |
| 330th Inf Regt . . . . .                                | 1 Jan 1945 . . . . .     | 18 Jan 1945    |
| 703rd TD Bn . . . . .                                   | 2 Jan 1945 . . . . .     | Remained atchd |
| 991st FA Bn, 155 Gun . . . . .                          | 2 Jan 1945 . . . . .     | 11 Jan 1945    |
| 83rd Armd FA Bn . . . . .                               | 2 Jan 1945 . . . . .     | 10 May 1945    |
| 183rd FA Bn, 155 How . . . . .                          | 2 Jan 1945 . . . . .     | 11 Jan 1945    |
| 183rd FA Bn, 155 How . . . . .                          | 12 Jan 1945 . . . . .    | 20 Jan 1945    |
| 2nd Plat, Co "B", 635th TD Bn . . . . .                 | 15 Jan 1945 . . . . .    | 20 Jan 1945    |
| Btry "A", 991st FA Bn SP . . . . .                      | 17 Jan 1945 . . . . .    | 19 Jan 1945    |
| 1st & 3rd Plats, Co "B", 738th Tk Bn, (SP) ME . . . . . | 12 Jan 1945 . . . . .    | 17 Jan 1945    |
| 335th Inf Regt (-AT Co) . . . . .                       | 16 Jan 1945 . . . . .    | 21 Jan 1945    |
| 183rd FA Bn, 155 How . . . . .                          | 25 Feb 1945 . . . . .    | 24 Apr 1945    |
| 991st FA Bn, 155 Gun, SP . . . . .                      | 25 Feb 1945 . . . . .    | 9 Mar 1945     |
| 13th Inf Regt . . . . .                                 | 26 Feb 1945 . . . . .    | 17 Mar 1945    |
| 395th RCT . . . . .                                     | 28 Feb 1945 . . . . .    | 2 Mar 1945     |
| 395th Inf Regt  |                          |                |
| 924th FA Bn   |                          |                |
| Co "C", 786 Tk Bn                                       |                          |                |
| C "C", 629th Tk Bn                                      |                          |                |
| Co "C", 324th Med Bn                                    |                          |                |
| 4th Cav Gp . . . . .                                    | 28 Feb 1945 . . . . .    | 1 Mar 1945     |
| 4th Cav Gp . . . . .                                    | 3 Mar 1945 . . . . .     | 8 Mar 1945     |
| 3rd Bn, 13th Inf Regt . . . . .                         | 17 Mar 1945 . . . . .    | 19 Mar 1945    |
| 188th FA Bn, 155 How . . . . .                          | 29 Mar 1945 . . . . .    | 8 Apr 1945     |
| 991st FA Bn, 155 Gun, SP . . . . .                      | 29 Mar 1945 . . . . .    | 1 Apr 1945     |
| 991st FA Bn, 155 Gun, SP . . . . .                      | 6 Apr 1945 . . . . .     | 13 May 1945    |
| 1st Bn, 18th Inf Regt . . . . .                         | 11 Apr 1945 . . . . .    | 25 Apr 1945    |
| 47th Inf Regt . . . . .                                 | 11 Apr 1945 . . . . .    | 12 Apr 1945    |
| Btry "A", 13th FA Obsn Bn . . . . .                     | 17 Apr 1945 . . . . .    | 23 Apr 1945    |
| 60th Inf Regt . . . . .                                 | 22 Apr 1945 . . . . .    | 24 Apr 1945    |

## ATTACHED INTELLIGENCE UNITS

|   |                       |                |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| 503rd CIC Det, (Originally designated as Det 4) . . . . . | 26 Dec 1942 . . . . . | Remained atchd |
| IPW No. 29 . . . . .                                      | 14 Jan 1944 . . . . . | Remained atchd |
| IPW No. 32 . . . . .                                      | 16 Feb 1944 . . . . . | 21 August 1945 |
| IPW No. 36 . . . . .                                      | 16 Feb 1944 . . . . . | 7 May 1945     |
| PI No. 38 . . . . .                                       | 25 Apr 1944 . . . . . | 27 July 1945   |
| OB No. 9 . . . . .  | 12 Feb 1944 . . . . . | Remained atchd |
| MII No. 418 . . . . .                                     | 16 Feb 1944 . . . . . | 28 Nov 1945    |
| MII No. 418-G . . . . .                                   | 20 Oct 1944 . . . . . | Remained atchd |



## ENEMY DIVISIONS ENCOUNTERED

The following is a list of enemy divisions which were met in sufficient strength by the 3rd Armored Division on the field of battle in Europe to warrant their inclusion in such a list.

### St. Lo to the Siegfried Line

27 July to 15 September

10 Panzer Divisions: 2, 9, 21, 116, 130, 1st SS, 2nd SS, 9th SS, 10th SS, 12th SS.

1 Panzer Grenadier Division: 17th SS.

3 Parachute Divisions: 3, 5, 6.

2 Luftwaffe Field Divisions: 17, 18.

16 Infantry Divisions: 47, 48, 49, 77, 84, 91, 243, 272, 275, 326, 331, 347, 348, 353, 363, 708.

### Siegfried Line to the Roer

15 September to 18 December

2 Panzer Divisions: 9, 116.

1 Parachute Division: 3.

6 Infantry Divisions: 12, 47, 246, 275, 353, 526.

### Ardennes

18 December, 1944, to 20 January, 1945

5 Panzer Divisions: 116, 1st SS, 2nd SS, 9th SS, 12th SS.

2 Panzer Grenadier Divisions: 3, 15.

6 Infantry Divisions: 12, 59, 62, 326, 363, 560.

### Roer to Cologne

23 February to 5 March, 1945

2 Panzer Divisions: 9, 11.

1 Panzer Grenadier Division: 3.

3 Infantry Divisions: 12, 363, 476.

Honnef to Paderborn  
25 March to 3 April, 1945

3 Panzer Divisions: 9, 11, 130.

1 Panzer Grenadier Division: 3.

6 Infantry Divisions: 26, 62, 272, 277, 340, 353.

Paderborn to Dessau  
5 April to 25 April, 1945

4 Infantry Divisions: 166, Scharnhorst, von Hutten, Potsdam.

Total During The Five Campaigns  
49 Enemy Divisions

11 Panzer Divisions: 2, 9, 11, 21, 116, 130, 1st SS, 2nd SS, 9th SS, 10th SS, 12th SS.

3 Panzer Grenadier Divisions: 3, 15, 17th SS.

3 Parachute Divisions: 3, 5, 6.

2 Luftwaffe Field Divisions: 17, 18.

30 Infantry Divisions: 12, 26, 47, 48, 49, 59, 62, 77, 84, 91, 243, 246, 272, 275, 277, 326, 331, 340, 347, 348, 353, 363, 476, 526, 560, 708, 166, Scharnhorst, von Hutten, Potsdam.

## ENEMY DIVISIONS DESTROYED

**DESTROYED ENEMY DIVISIONS**—To a civilian this brings a picture of a silent battlefield on which the enemy is sprawled in death and of a unit which will never again return to combat. To a soldier in the lines it means nothing at all, for during that particular action he was concerned only with the problem of killing the enemy before they killed him, and many times he was not even sure that the tide of battle was running his way. Actually, few, if any, divisions are completely destroyed in combat, due to the complex administrative processes of modern armies. The enemy may be hurled from the battlefield in confusion leaving behind vast numbers of prisoners and burning vehicles or he may blunt himself on unexpected and prepared positions. This latter happened at Mons, where the 3rd Armored Division helped to defeat a German army corps. However, in most cases, the division staff and enough of the personnel remained after the fight to become the cadre for the reformation of the unit. There were cases of "cannibalization," in which a division would be so reduced in personnel and equipment after a battle that another division, usually one which had itself incurred heavy losses in action, would take over the first organization, staff and all. In this case, one division number would disappear from the Order of Battle. The only real instance in which the Germans lost whole divisions was in the Rose Pocket, where units were completely encircled. Usually a beaten division was able to retire to non-operative status in the rear, there to lick its wounds and refit: then to appear on the lines again. In a broad interpretation of the word, when such a circumstance occurred to an enemy division, it could be called destroyed. It is such destruction that the following list attempts to enumerate.

The following divisions were considered by the Germans to have been destroyed in Normandy. The 3rd Armored Division participated in their destruction.

4 Infantry Divisions: 77, 91, 243, 348.

The following divisions had been almost completely destroyed by the end of the Argentan-Falaise operation. They had been heavily contacted by the 3rd Armored Division during the period.

3 Panzer Divisions: 2, 116, 2nd SS.

1 Panzer Grenadier Division: 17th SS.

2 Parachute Divisions: 3, 5.

The following divisions were so badly cut up at Mons, Belgium, that, although they were later reconstituted, they may be considered destroyed at that time by the 3rd Armored Division. Some indeed were no more than the remnants of divisions destroyed in Normandy which were retreating across France to reform in the Third Reich.

4 Panzer Divisions: 2, 2nd SS, 9, 12th SS.

3 Parachute Divisions: 3, 5, 6.

3 Infantry Divisions: 47, 275, 353.

The following divisions, all of which were heavily engaged by the 3rd Armored Division in the Ardennes, were no more than meagre remnants after the operation.

2 Panzer Divisions: 9th SS, 116.

2 Volksgrenadier Divisions: 12, 560.

From this point on it becomes increasingly difficult to determine what constitutes a destroyed division, since the units would lose all their personnel except the division staffs and within two to three weeks after withdrawing from the line would return to combat, their ranks filled to the tune of 1000—3000 former service troops, hospital convalescents, and hastily recruited civilians.

Of these following, hardly more than the staffs escaped across the Rhine at the end of the drive to Cologne.

2 Panzer Divisions: 9, 11.

1 Panzer Grenadier Division: 3.

3 Infantry Divisions: 12, 363, 476.



These divisions were destroyed in the Paderborn drive. In addition, the 3rd Armored Division was the major factor in the destruction and capture of the divisions in the Rose Pocket, although not actually participating in their final downfall.

- 2 Panzer Divisions: 9, 11.
- 1 Panzer Grenadier Division: 3.
- 2 Infantry Divisions: 26, 272.

These infantry divisions were decimated at the end of the Dessau operation.  
Scharnhorst.

Von Hutten.

Insofar as a conclusion may be drawn from these statistics, it could be said that the 3rd Armored Division defeated on the field of battle so decisively and irrevocably the best the following divisions had to offer, in many cases more than once, that these units may be considered destroyed by the "Spearhead" Division.

- 6 Panzer Divisions: 2, 9, 11, 2nd SS, 9th SS, 12th SS.
- 1 Panzer Grenadier Division: 3.
- 3 Parachute Divisions: 3, 5, 6.
- 4 Infantry Divisions: 12, 353, 363, 560.

## DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION

The following units of the 3rd Armored Division were awarded the DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION for heroism in action against the enemy in Europe.

MEDICAL SECTION, 1ST BATTALION, 32ND ARMORED REGIMENT, at Ranès and Fromentel, France, on 14 to 17 August, 1944.

FORWARD ECHELON AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION, with attached personnel of the 143RD ARMORED SIGNAL COMPANY, in France and Belgium, on 26 August to 4 September, 1944.

RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY, 32ND ARMORED REGIMENT, at Mons, Belgium, on 3 to 4 September, 1944.

2ND BATTALION, 32ND ARMORED REGIMENT, at Nutheim, the Siegfried Line, Germany, on 11 to 13 September, 1944.

1ST BATTALION, 36TH ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, at Munsterbusch, the Siegfried Line, Germany, on 12 to 22 September, 1944.

MEDICAL SECTION, 3RD BATTALION, 36TH ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, at Stolberg, Germany, on 17 to 21 September, 1944.

1ST BATTALION, 33RD ARMORED REGIMENT, (Less Companies "B" and "C", and 3rd Platoon, Company "A" with "F" and "I" Companies) at Hastenrath and Scherpenseel, Germany, on 16 to 19 November, 1944.

COMPANY "A", 36TH ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, at Echtz, Germany, on 10 to 13 December, 1944.

COMPANY "C", 36TH ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, at Obergeich and Hoven, Germany, on 10 to 13 December, 1944.

## AWARD OF BELGIAN FOURRAGERE

The Third Armored Division and attached units have been cited by the Belgian Government for participation in the liberation and defense of Belgium during the period 3 September 1944 to 13 September 1944 and 20 December 1944 to 31 January 1945, dates inclusive. The decree as issued by the Belgian Government on 3 November 1945, stated that the Third United States Armored Division and attached units including

- 703rd Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP) 90mm
- 486th AAA Battalion (AW) (SP)
- 503rd CIC Detachment
- OB Team . . . . . 9
- Interrogation Prisoner of War Team — 29
- Interrogation Prisoner of War Team — 32
- Interrogation Prisoner of War Team — 36
- Photo Interpreter Team . . . . . 38
- Military Intelligence Interpreter Team — 418-G
- 991st Field Artillery Battalion — (155 gun)

were cited on two occasions in the General Orders of the Belgian Army and awarded the FOURRAGERE 1940.

All personnel assigned, or attached unassigned, to the Third Armored Division and attached units during the period 3 September 1944 to 13 September 1944 and 20 December 1944 to 31 January 1945, dates inclusive, are authorized to wear the Fourragere 1940 of the Belgian Government. Personnel must have been assigned or attached unassigned to the Division or attached units during all or part of both periods.



# ERRATA

The following errors which warrant correction have been noted in the text. Grammatical and typographical errors have not been included in this list. Spelling of place names conforms to the 1/100,000 series maps issued to troops.

Page 9: The last two sentences under G-1 should read:

"A graduate of North Dakota Agricultural College, Colonel Boulger entered military service in 1939 and is one of the division's original officer cadremen. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Bronze Star with cluster, and the Purple Heart."

The last paragraph under G-3 should read: "Colonel Sweat is a graduate of the University of Florida, entered military service in 1941 and is one of the division's original officer cadremen. He holds the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Bronze Star with two clusters and the Purple Heart."

First paragraph under G-5, beginning with line 6, should read:

"Lt. Col. William E. Dahl was the division's first Military Government Officer and served with the division until 9 April 1945, when he was transferred to the 15th Army. Lt. Col. Cake assumed responsibility at that time and later, this section was designated the G-5 section of the general staff."

Page 20: "Roysden" should read "Roysdon". The same error appears on pages 44, 66, 67, 71 and 75.

Page 26: Last paragraph: "ZSCHEPKAU" should read "THALHEIM".

Page 33: In the picture caption "Radio Maintenance Trucks" should read "High power radio trucks".

Page 38: "Major J. L. Billo's" should read "Major J. J. Billo's".

Page 39: "Lt. Colonel W. S. Jones, Jr." should read "Lt. Colonel W. H. Jones, Jr."

Page 45: "Major General Lindsay McD. Sylvester" should read "Major General Lindsay McD. Silvester".

Page 50: "Colonel James O. Taylor" should read "Colonel James B. Taylor".

Page 55: "Major General Hugh Woodruff's" should read "Major General Roscoe B. Woodruff's".

To the sketch on this page should be added: "32nd Armored Regt, Maintenance Bn. and Supply Bn. at CODFORD ST. MARY and 486 AAA Bn at EAST KNOYLE."

Page 64: CP dates should be corrected as follows:

"June 24—July 7" should read "June 24—July 8".

"July 8" should read "July 9".

"July 17—23" should read "July 17—28".

"July 24—29" should read "July 29—30".

"July 30—Aug 3" should read "July 31—Aug 3".

Page 65: CP dated "Aug 22" should read "Aug 22—24".

Page 99: In right picture caption "James Cassady" should read "George Hicks".

Page 103: Column one, line 33 and column two, line 4: "LOUEBERG" should read "LOUSBERG".

Page 104: Column two, line 2, "administration" should read "admiration".

"NOTHBURG" should read "NOTHBERG".

Page 105: "Colonel Robert H. Howze, Jr." should read "Colonel Robert L. Howze, Jr.". 10

Page 124: Column two, paragraph 3, "KENTON" should read "KENTEN".

Page 130: Column one, line 8: "STAATS GEFANGT" should read "STAATSGEFAENGNIS".

Page 134: "NORDBERCHEN" should read "NORDBORCHEN".

Page 141: Column one, line 14: "HOLYHAUSEN" should read "HOLZHAUSEN".

Page 144: Column one, line 30: Insert after "small arms fire" "and direct tank and anti-tank fire".

Page 146: Sketch: CP date at SANGERHAUSEN shown as "April 25-May 2" should read "April 25-May 11"; "LINGERAU" should read "LINGENAU".

In picture caption "NIEDER MARBURG" should read "NIEDER MARSBERG".

Page 147: Column one, line 17 and column two, line 4: "ESPCHENRODE" should read "EPSCHENRODE".

Page 150: Column two, picture caption: "Hitler-Yugend" should read "Hitler-Jugend".

Page 151: Column two, picture caption: "Hitler-Yugend" should read "Hitler-Jugend".

Page 153: Column two, line 12: "ZCHEPKAU" should read "THALHEIM".

Page 156: Picture caption "Col. Laham" should read "Col. Lanham".



- Pages 164, 166: "FROMENTAL" should read "FROMENTEL".
- Page 173: "Robert L. Patterson" should read "Robert P. Patterson".
- Page 195: Sketch number 1: "June 31" should read "June 30".
- Page 196: Column one, line 33: "AIREL" should read "AIRE".
- Page 197: Line 9: "COMPROND" should read "CAMPROND".
- Page 198: Column one, line 15: "COMPROND" should read "CAMPROND".
- Page 200: Sketch number 6: "JUNIGNY LE TERTRE" should read "JUVIGNY LE TERTRE". Column two, line 15: "LE MENTS" should read "LES MONTS". Location of LES MONTS should show on sketch number 6 approximately 1 1/2 mi. west of JUVIGNY LE TERTRE.
- Page 202: Sketch number 8: "FROMENTAL" should read "FROMENTEL"; "BAPTILLY" should read "BATILLY"; LA PIERRE HUREL should show on sketch approximately 1 mi. east of FROMENTEL; LA MOTTE FOUQUET should show on sketch approximately 2 mi. southwest of JOUE-DU-BOIS.
- Page 204: Column one, line 9: PONT D'ARCY should show on sketch number 11 approximately 1 mi. west of BOURG.
- Page 206: Column two, line 11: HIRSON is located approximately 8 mi. northeast of VERVINS.
- Page 207: Sketch number 11: "BRAINE" should read "BRAISNE".
- Page 210: Sketch: Dates "1945" should read "1944".
- Page 211: Sketch: "KITTENIS" should read "KETTENIS".
- Page 212: Sketches: Town shown as "BUSCH" should read "MUNSTERBUSCH".
- Page 213: Column two, line 67: "KITTENIS" should read "KETTENIS".
- Page 214: Column one, line 8: VENWEGEN is located approximately 1 1/2 mi. south of BREINIG (see sketches on page 212).
- Page 216: Column one and two: HASTENRATH is located just north of SCHERPENSEEL. Column two, line 35: "GRESENICH" should read "GRESSENICH".
- Page 224: Column one, line 57: OSTER is located just west of LE BATTY (see sketch number 19).
- Page 226: Sketch No. 20: "SADZET" and "SADZAT" should read "SADZOT".
- Page 229: Sketch No. 21: "BENGLEZ" should read "RENGLEZ".
- Page 230: Column one, line 47: "DURBY" should read "DURBUY". Column one, line 68: "JEVIGNY" should read "JEVICNE".
- Page 230: Column two, line 54: "LA FALAISE" should read "LA FALISE".
- Page 235: Sketch No. 22: "RUHR" in the caption and "ROAR" in the sketch should read "ROER".
- Page 237: Sketch No. 23: "MASTERDEN" should read "MANSTEDTEN". For location of HACKHAUSEN, which should appear on this sketch, see sketch No. 25.
- Page 239: Column one, line 18: "MASTEDEN" should read "MANSTEDTEN"; INGENDORF, referred to in the third paragraph, should appear on sketch No. 23 approximately midway between BUSDORF and STOMMELN.
- Page 242: Column two, line 13: "140th" should read "104th".
- Page 244: Sketch: "ABR MARSBERG" should read "OBR MARSBERG". CP symbol for CCB dated "31 Apr" should read "31 Mar". Division CP for 30 Mar was on open ground 2 mi. northeast of ETTTELN. "HOLYHAUSEN" should read "HOLZHAUSEN".
- Page 247: Column one, last paragraph: "ERKEIN" should read "ERKELN". Column two, line 2: HAINHOLZ (not shown on sketch on p. 248) is located approximately 2 mi. northwest of BORGHOLZ. Column two, line 15: BLANKENAU (not shown on sketch on p. 248) is located approximately 2 mi. north of BEVERUNGEN. Column two, line 44: IMBSEN (not shown on sketch on p. 248) is located approximately 3 1/2 mi. south of ADELEBSEN.
- Page 248: Top sketch: "RHEDEN, TIETELESSEN, BRENKE" should read "RHIEDER, TIETELSEN, DRENKE". Bottom sketch: "WERNIGERODE" should read "WERNIGERODE".
- Page 250: Column one, line 29: HERZBERG (not shown on sketch on p. 248) is located approximately 22 mi. northwest of NORDHAUSEN. Column one, line 56: "KLEINBORDUNGEN" should read "KLEINBODUNGEN". This town (not shown on sketch p. 248) is located approximately 3 mi. southeast of WERNIGERODE. Column one, line 65: BARTOFELDE and WOFFLEBEN (not shown on sketch p. 248) are located between HERZBERG and NORDHAUSEN.
- Page 251: Sketch No. 28: "RADIGRAU" should read "RODIGKAU". Lines 12 and 20: "KORNETZ" should read "KORNITZ".
- Page 252: Column one, line 8 and column two, line 16: "RENDIN" and "RENDEN" should read "REUDEN". This town (not shown on sketch No. 28) is located approximately 2 mi. northwest of WOLFEN.
- Page 254: Under Attached Intelligence Units, line 7: "28 Nov 1945" should read "28 Nov 1944".



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GERMANY'S FORT KNOX

CAPTURED



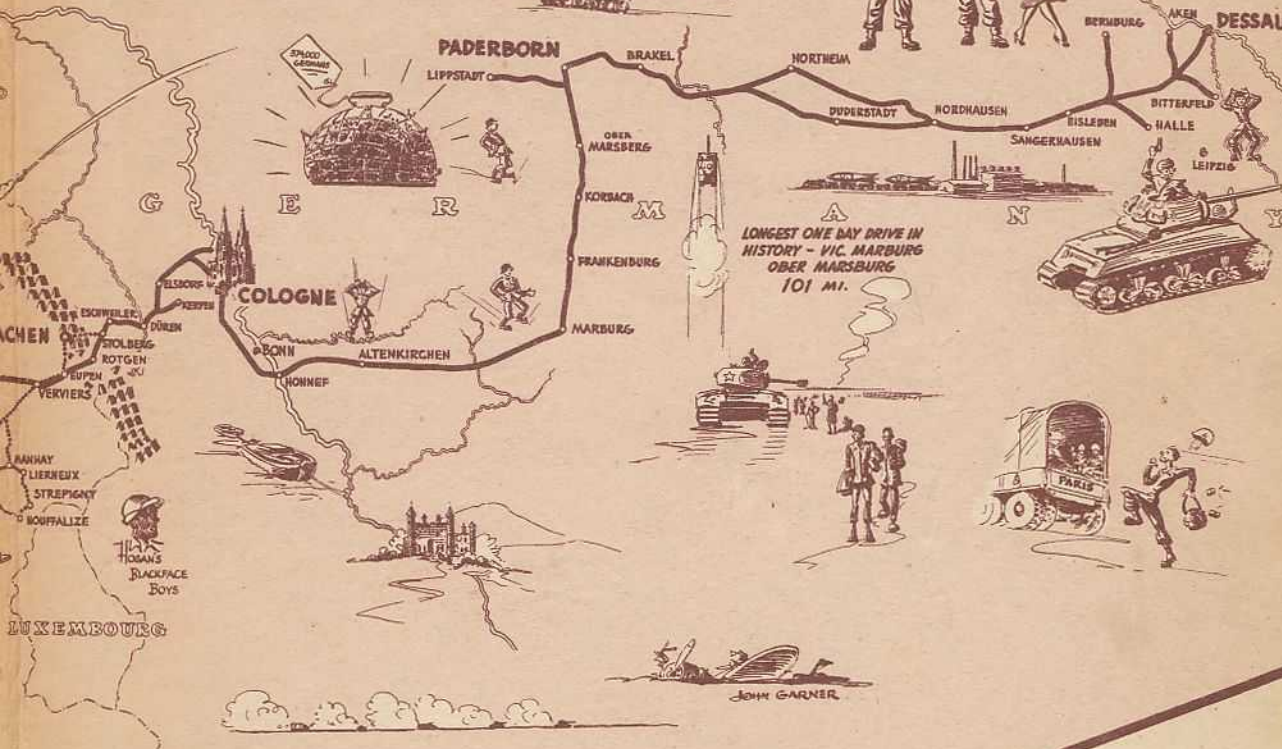
NONFRATERNIZATION  
THE '64 QUESTION



PACKING  
BERLIN  
FOR THE SALE



BERLIN



LONGEST ONE DAY DRIVE IN  
HISTORY - VIC. MARBURG  
OBER MARSBURG  
101 MI.



JOHN GARNER

